SANTA CLAUS PARADE PAGE 13 | KARATE STUDENTS SHINE ON WORLD STAGE PAGE 20

St. Marys Independent

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WINTER IS COMING (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Residents in St. Marys, Perth South and the surrounding area woke up to a light dusting of snow Nov. 24 — the first snow of the season after an unusually warm late fall.

Sue Orr elected Perth County warden as new council begins four-year term

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth South Mayor Sue Orr will lead Perth County council into its new four-year term after defeating outgoing warden and West Perth Mayor Dean Trentowsky in an election at the Perth County courthouse Nov. 19.

Orr, who served as deputy warden alongside Trentowsky over the past year, was elected by secret ballot following speeches from both candidates outlining their priorities for the year ahead. The vote count was not announced.

Perth East Mayor Jerry Smith was subsequently acclaimed as deputy warden after no other councillors put their names forward.

In her pitch for the county's top political position, Orr laid out a vision centred on three priorities – elevate, collaborate and prosper – with a particular emphasis on strengthening relationships with other levels of government, neighbouring municipalities

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

New St. Marys council sworn in as Mayor Brogan Aylward promises to build on town's strengths

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

With a new mayor at the helm and a mix of familiar and fresh faces around the council table, St. Marys officially ushered in a new era of municipal leadership Nov. 17.

Newly elected Mayor Brogan Aylward and councillors Jim Craigmile, Ryan Leaman, Marg Luna, Andrea Macko, Bill Pickering and Fern Pridham took their declarations of office during the inaugural meeting of the 2026-2030 council term inside council chambers at town hall.

The ceremony, attended by family members, friends, municipal staff and residents, began with the national anthem and greetings from Perth-Wellington MP John Nater, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Rob Flack and Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae, none of whom were able to attend the meeting in person.

Town clerk Jenna McCartney administered the declarations of office before presenting Aylward with the mayor's chain of office, a piece of St. Marys history dating back to July 1978.

Now 27, Aylward succeeds Al Strathdee, who served as mayor for 12 years, after spending the previous three years as deputy mayor.

In an emotional inaugural address, Aylward reflected on growing up in St. Marys, the responsibility entrusted to him by voters and his commitment to representing all residents, regardless of

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9

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COMMUNITY

Coyote Nature School receives donation from Ione Grover



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Louise Patterson from McPherson Yarns shows Jack McArthur the correct way to crochet.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Students from the Homestead Program at Coyote Nature School got the chance to learn how to crochet and were able to make either a washcloth or a headband.

KENDRA MARTIN, COYOTE NATURE SCHOOL

Contributed Article

Giving Tuesday is about promoting generosity and community building as a counterbalance to personal consumption.

Coyote Nature School (CNS) has experienced the generosity of St. Marys in the lead up to Giving Tuesday 2026. Ione Grover is a retired minister with unique poetic instincts and an enfolding sense of love for her community. She has authored three books of poetry, the proceeds from which are being directed towards sponsoring families who wish to send their children outdoors to learn with CNS.

Her most recent gift of over $800 will directly make this experience possible.

We have also been blessed with giving in a recent project for our Homesteaders Program. Louise Patterson, new co-owner of McPherson Yarns, volunteered to take on the challenge of teaching 14 preteens how to crochet.

She prepared the yarn choices, hooks and patterns to make either dish clothes or headbands, and brought everything out to the farm cabin to introduce this new skill.

Thankfully, Rose, a neighbour and member of the Mapleview Mennonite Church, came out to provide one-on-one encouragement to keep the kids moving forward slowly, stitch by stitch. These volunteers are community members who make possible these powerful learning experiences for the youth in our community.

We'd like to celebrate these volunteers on Giving Tuesday and recognize everyone who has given money and time to support our mission of reconnecting children with the natural world.

Anyone looking for a way to give back this week or any other can visit our sponsorship page at the Coyote Nature School (www.coyotenatureschool.ca/sponsorship) or contact founder/director Kendra Martin at 519-852-1842 to learn how they can support this amazing local program.



Nieve McCarthy was caught concentrating on her crochet project. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

7 Day Forecast
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Wednesday Nov-25th	Thursday Nov-26th	Friday Nov-27th	Saturday Nov-28th	Sunday Nov-29th	Monday Nov-30th	Tuesday Dec-1st
Mainly sunny	Light rain	Cloudy showers	Cloudy showers	Mainly cloudy	Mainly cloudy	Sun & cloud
5°C	12°C	4°C	6°C	8°C	5°C	4°C
Feels like 0	Feels like 10	Feels like -1	Feels like 2	Feels like 5	Feels like 1	Feels like 1

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Coldest Night of the Year 2027 registration opens

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Soon it will be time to bundle up and walk on a chilly winter day to support those in need.

The Coldest Night of the Year will return to St. Marys and other participating municipalities on Feb. 27, 2027, and online registration is open. Walkers will start and complete their route at the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 317 James St. S and enjoy a light dinner.

Proceeds from the St. Marys event will support United Way Perth-Huron programming, as well as the Nourish Equal Access Market and the St. Marys community outreach worker.

"We're really excited about this year's coldest night of the year. We as a group see nothing but opportunity for growth," said David MacKechnie, United Way Perth-Huron's community development manager for Southern Huron and St. Marys. "The need is huge in the community right now. Food insecurity, housing insecurity were both really big issues when we were talking to politicians and voters during the election phase and generally identified as big priorities across Perth-Huron, so we're really excited to raise some money to both support the community outreach worker in St. Marys and the Nourish Market."

"It's a great initiative and we always appreciate everyone that donates every year. It really helps us out," said Jade Orquin, interim community outreach worker.

The St. Marys community outreach worker provides support to those facing issues regarding mental health, housing, life skills, substance use, legal matters and the like.

"Although it might go unseen at times, this town has a lot of needs in our community and a lot of individuals that need to be connected to different resources," Orquin said. "My job is very important here because sometimes we can be the only service that is available to people when needed and to make those referrals to those external resources for further follow-up."

Twice a month at St. Marys United Church, the St. Marys Nourish Market provides affordable high-quality produce.

"It's not just a way to get good food to people more accessibly. It's another way for community to come together," said Jenn Parsons, manager of food logistics at the Local Community Food Centre, which runs the program in St. Marys. "If you've been to the market, it's a community outing so it's helping people get out of their homes and chat with their neighbours or chat with the volunteers. There's an opportunity for learning about how to make certain food."

To register online and learn more information about Coldest Night of the Year, visit https://en.cnoy.org/location/stmarys.

New TipTap donation stand offers an easy way to support town programs and services

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Residents and visitors attending town events this holiday season may notice something new: a TipTap donation stand offering an easy, optional way to support local programs, services and community initiatives.

The Town of St. Marys is introducing TipTap stands at select events as a simple way for participants who wish to give back to make a contactless donation. The stands allow users to tap a debit or credit card to contribute a predetermined amount (denominations of $5, $10 or $20), with funds going directly toward the initiative being supported at that event.

The new donation stands are part of a town-led fundraising initiative. Donations collected through the stands go directly toward the designated program or cause supporting the programs and experiences delivered by the town and its community partners.

The first TipTap stand appeared at the Craft Show on Nov. 21, with donations supporting the Friendship Centre and the programs and services it provides to the community.

Program and event participants can expect to see the stands at other town events and facilities in the coming weeks, including St. Marys Museum and library events and the WinterLights Night Market. Signage accompanying each stand will clearly identify the program or initiative being supported, so donors know where their contribution is going.

Most importantly, donations are completely optional. There is no requirement or expectation to donate to attend or enjoy any town event, program or facility.

For those who are able and would like to contribute, the TipTap stands simply provide a new and convenient way to show their support.



EDITORIAL

The weather is turning cold and I'm not ready

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Just the other day, birds were chirping, the sun was shining and we were all comfortably dressed in short sleeves as we enjoyed the unseasonably warm late-fall weather.

At the Grant Haven Media Christmas party last week, someone joked it was nice enough to go golfing after lunch. I laughed and mentioned I was already dressed for a quick nine holes, and my clubs were in the trunk of my car, ready to go.

Looking back at that now, I wish I had gone golfing because it's starting to look like I won't get the chance again until the snow melts next spring.

As I'm writing this, the outside temperature is a chilly negative one and there's about five centimetres of snow on the ground. I knew it was coming eventually – though I'd hoped it wouldn't – and there is still so much to do.

As much as many of us would like to put off the inevitable, there are a number of things we can do now to make life a little easier for ourselves once winter arrives in earnest.

Around the house, now is the time to make sure our furnaces are in good working order, replace furnace filters, check for drafts around windows and doors, and ensure our smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working properly. If you haven't already done so, disconnect your garden hoses, shut off and drain outdoor taps where appropriate, and clear any remaining leaves and debris from your eavestroughs to help prevent ice buildup and potential water damage.

It's also worth digging those snow shovels out of the shed or garage, making sure the snowblower starts and stocking up on ice melt or sand before the first major snowfall sends everyone rushing to their local hardware store. Having a few days' worth of non-perishable food, drinking water, flashlights, batteries and other essentials on hand isn't a bad idea either, particularly for those who live in rural areas where a winter storm can leave people without power or access to town for an extended period of time.

Perhaps most importantly, we need to prepare our vehicles and adjust our driving habits for the season ahead. Winter tires are designed to provide better traction in temperatures below 7 °C, regardless of whether there's snow on the ground. Checking tire pressure, topping up with winter-grade windshield washer fluid, testing the battery and replacing worn windshield wipers can also save us some hassle down the road.

Every vehicle should have a winter emergency kit that includes a snow brush and ice scraper, a small shovel, blankets, extra gloves and warm clothing, a flashlight, non-perishable snacks, water, a first-aid kit and a means of charging a cellphone. These are relatively inexpensive items that can make a world of difference should you find yourself stranded on the side of a rural road in the middle of a snowstorm.

Of course, no amount of preparation can compensate for poor driving habits. Give yourself a little extra time to get where you're going, clear the snow and ice from your entire vehicle before leaving the driveway, slow down, leave more space between yourself and the vehicle ahead of you, and check weather forecasts and road conditions before heading out. If conditions are particularly bad, ask yourself whether your trip is actually necessary. Whatever you're rushing to get to can probably wait.

We also need to prepare ourselves for the colder months. Dressing in layers, wearing proper winter boots with good traction and keeping our extremities covered can make even the coldest days a little more manageable. Be mindful of how much you're exerting yourself while shovelling snow, take frequent breaks and don't be afraid to ask for help if the job is too much for you.

And while we're preparing for winter, let's not forget about those around us who may have a more difficult time getting through the season. Check in on elderly neighbours, offer to clear someone's sidewalk or driveway if they're unable to do it themselves and consider donating warm clothing or other necessities to local organizations that support those who don't have the luxury of a warm home.

Winter can be tough on us for so many reasons, but with a little preparation and a willingness to step in and help those in need in our communities, we'll get through this together, just as we do every winter. Hang in there, folks!

Bravo

We have 4 Bravos this week

1) Bravo to the Kinsmen for yet another amazing parade! It was a great success, and so much fun for the kids! The weather was a big bonus too! Thank you for all your effort, it was a great turnout!

2) Bravo to the BIA and all the local vendors that participated in the Merchants Open House! It was so great to see our downtown core so busy with festive shoppers.

3) Bravo to the amazingly decorated cement truck in the parade! The one with the perfectly placed lights all around the barrel was a crafters dream! Amazing work!

4) Bravo to the Front Porch show and associates for yet again broadcasting the parade for all those near and far who couldn't make it in person! I know our local seniors appreciate it a lot!

Boo

We have no Boos this week

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

Quote of the Week

"Leadership isn't about pretending to have all the answers. It's about having the courage to make decisions, the humility to listen and the determination to keep working even when the path forward isn't easy. I know that my election represents something different for St. Marys. I'm aware that at 27 years old, I may not be what everyone pictured when they imagined their next mayor. But I hope that over the next four years, what people remember about my time in this office won't be how old I was when I started. I hope they'll remember that I listened, that I worked hard, that I treated people with respect even when we disagreed and that I never forgot who I was here to serve."

- St. Marys Mayor Brogan Aylward during his inaugural address Nov. 17.

Overheard AT THE COFFEE SHOP

Sponsored by: Tim Hortons

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Looks like Santa has been on Ozempic!

My boyfriend pays more attention to his GTA 6 girlfriend than he does to me.

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

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

St. Marys Independent

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Thoughts OF THE WEEK

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Even the most positive people have negative thoughts. The trick is to not feed them.

The moment you are ready to quit is usually the moment right before the miracle happens.

The greatest gift to give yourself is the freedom from what others think.

Respect is earned not given. Treat others how you want to be treated.

St. Marys turns into a winter wonderland overnight







(WENDY LAMOND PHOTOS)

We have been very lucky to have had warmer temperatures and beautiful weather so far this season and we were due to see some of the white stuff. These photos of Rotary Park, Little Falls and the new pavilion at Milt Dunnell Field show off the beauty of this time of year.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



Overnight Winter Parking Ban

Overnight winter parking ban is in effect to prepare for snow. Parking downtown on local streets and municipal parking lots is prohibited to the public between 2 AM - 6 AM until April 30, 2027. Only residents with 'Annual Downtown Parking Permits' are approved to park in specified/approved municipal lot stalls.

townofstmarys.com/parking





Free Festive Skates & Swims

Join free festive skate and swim sessions this December at the Pyramid Recreation Centre thanks to Optimists of Downie, Veterinary Purchasing, Friends of the Library, and Quadro

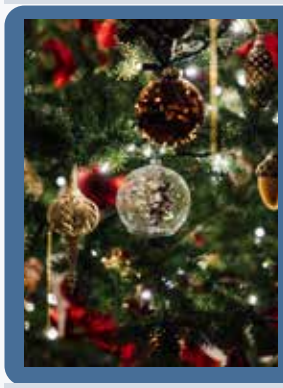
Visit discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays for dates and times



Community Grant Application

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

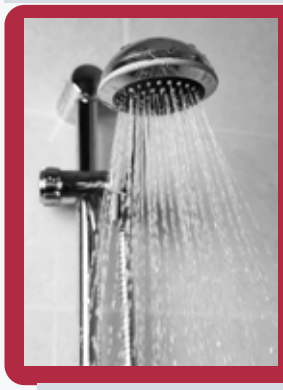
townofstmarys.com/grants



Celebrate the Holiday Season

WinterLights Display: Nightly from 5-11pm Nov 20 - Jan 1
Community Commons Open House: Nov 28 1PM
Giving Tuesday: Dec 1
WinterLights Night Market: Dec 4-5
St. Marys Museum Holiday Open House: Dec 6
PRC Holiday Camps: December 21-23 & 28-30

discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays



Shower Program

Pyramid Recreation Centre

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

Visit Guest Services or call 519-284-2160

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Senior of the Week



Our seniors of the week are John and Kathy Blake. This lovely couple will be celebrating their 40th anniversary on Nov. 28 and both have two big birthdays this year. They love spending time with their eight grandchildren. The couple also love camping and being part of the Avonbank and St. Marys communities. Congratulations on your anniversary.

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

Wildwood Care Centre resident selling handmade shell art

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

Creativity starts in the heart and for Bev Ruthig, that is exactly where her love of shell art started.

When visitors enter her room at Wildwood Care Centre, they can see she has many framed shell craft pictures, showing the result of years of hard work and care that she has put into her art.

"I was in about Grade 3 when I remember a teacher bringing a shell to school. I have no idea why, but the colour and everything about it caught my attention," Ruthig said.

There was a store downtown run by Eleanor Alberts, and Ruthig started going there to buy shells. Then the designing began.

Throughout the years she also made jewellery, but the shell pictures are really where she spent her time. She has made many flower pictures and many bird pictures featuring orioles, cardinals, bluejays, Canadian geese, hummingbirds and even an eagle.

The most popular, according to Ruthig, are her cardinal pictures and her favourite colours to use are pinks and purples. Her inspiration hits when she receives new shells and, throughout the years, she has received some from Dubai and the East Coast.

"I just love creating and it just works as I go." Ruthig said.

Though Ruthig loves her art, she has decided it is time to share it and has decided to host a sale. The sale will be held on Saturday, Nov. 28, from 1-4:30 p.m. in the front foyer area at the Wildwood Care Centre.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Bev Ruthig shows just a few of many of her shell art pieces that will be available to purchase on Nov. 28 at Wildwood Care Centre.

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WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What is a female turkey called?
2. What was Tom Clancy's first novel?
3. In musical notation, there are five lines in a what?
4. Lockjaw is another name for which disease?
5. What color is the Statue of Liberty?
6. Who played the first ever James Bond in Dr. No (1962)?
7. What color of flame is the hottest?
8. In what year was Trivial Pursuit released?
9. Who is the Egyptian Sun God?
10. Who is considered "the Father of Genetics"?

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

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Local author Aaron Kyte brings holiday romance to the St. Marys Public Library

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Romance readers are in for a festive treat this holiday season as the St. Marys Public Library welcomes local author Aaron Kyte for a special evening celebrating his new novel, A Christmas Inn, Maine.

Community members are invited to this free author talk to learn more about the inspiration behind the book and Kyte's writing process, ask questions and have copies of the novel signed. The event takes place Thursday, Nov. 26, at 7 p.m. in the multipurpose room at the Friendship Centre and is open to anyone aged 16 and older.

"We love having opportunities to celebrate local authors and bring community members together," said library services coordinator Rebecca Webb in a press release. "There's something especially fitting about gathering around stories during the holiday season, and we're excited to welcome Aaron to share his experience and his new novel with our community."

A Christmas Inn, Maine is a sparkling queer holiday rom com about a former book editor determined to save his family's failing inn and the infuriatingly charming contractor he can't seem to cut from the narrative.

Registration is free at tinyurl.com/AuthorTalk-AaronKyte. For more St. Marys Public Library events this holiday season, visit the community calendar at calendar.townofstmarys.com.

Questions about the event can be directed to Webb at 519-284-2340 ext. 728 or rwebb@stmaryspubliclibrary.ca.







Sue Orr elected Perth County warden as new council begins four-year term

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

and community organizations.

"We should not simply be asking for a seat at the table when decisions affecting rural Ontario are being made," Orr said. "We should be working together, becoming a county that provincial and federal leaders actively seek out for advice, insights and leadership."

Orr said she wants Perth County to be recognized as a leader in agriculture, infrastructure, housing and economic development while creating opportunities for existing businesses, attracting investment and supporting the next generation.

Drawing on her Dutch heritage, agricultural background and experience as a municipal councillor, mayor and deputy warden, Orr said building relationships and finding common ground have been central to her approach to public service.

"Simply stated, I have the energy, I have the time and I have the desire to make a difference," she said. "I want to be a warden who is present, engaged and accessible, someone who shows up, listens and proudly represents our county at every level of government."

Trentowsky, meanwhile, pointed to his experience as warden and the challenges facing the county, including rising service-delivery costs, development pressures and the need to complete transportation and paramedic services master plans.

"The needs and concerns of our citizens must be continuously brought forward to be represented to the upper levels of government," Trentowsky said. "This will involve a tremendous amount of connected listening and cooperation throughout the year."

Following her election, Orr thanked Trentowsky for his leadership and dedication before accepting the chain of office and gavel from her predecessor.

"Having served alongside you as deputy warden, I've had the opportunity to see firsthand how much time and energy this role requires," she said.

Orr also thanked her family for their support, reflecting on the importance of maintaining perspective while serving in public office.

"Because at the end of the day, the titles we hold are temporary. The people we love, the relationships we build, and the way we treat each other truly matters," she said.

The election followed the swearing-in of Perth County's 10 councillors for the 2026-2030 term.

Representing North Perth are Mayor Doug Kellum, deputy mayor Matt Duncan and Coun. Sarah Blazek. Perth East is represented by Mayor Jerry Smith, deputy mayor Bob McMillan and Coun. Jeremy Matheson. Perth South's representatives are Mayor Sue Orr and deputy mayor Jeff Bell, while West Perth is represented by Mayor Dean Trentowsky and deputy mayor Nicholas Vink.

While county councillors serve four-year terms, the warden and deputy warden are elected annually by their fellow council members.

The inaugural ceremony also included greetings from Perth-Wellington MP John Nater, MPP Matthew Rae, Stratford Mayor Rob Ritz and St. Marys Mayor Brogan Aylward.

"Stratford wants to be a good neighbour and a reliable partner to the county," Ritz said. "My door is open and so is council's. We can share our services, share our ideas, or speak to the province with one voice."

Rae similarly emphasized the importance of regional partnerships in addressing economic growth, infrastructure and access to services across rural Perth County.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

New Perth County Warden Sue Orr celebrates her new position with her family – son Greg Orr, daughter Nicole Orr and husband Jeff Orr.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Newly elected Perth County Warden Sue Orr ushers in the first year of a new term for county council following the annual warden's election Nov. 19.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Outgoing county Warden Dean Trentowsky bestows the chain of office and gavel to new Warden Sue Orr.



New St. Marys council sworn in as Mayor Brogan Aylward promises to build on town's strengths

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

how they voted.

"To those who voted for me, thank you for believing in what we can accomplish together. And to those who didn't, I want you to know something equally important. I am your mayor too," Aylward said, "because when we walk into this council chamber, the election is behind us. What matters now is the community in front of us."

Aylward also spoke about the importance of protecting the community's character while making responsible decisions about infrastructure, housing, economic opportunities and the town's future.

"Throughout my campaign, I spoke about protecting what we love and building what we need. I believe in those words today more than ever," he said. "And I want future generations to experience that same feeling. I want the young people growing up here today to see a future for themselves in St. Marys."

Following Aylward's address, each councillor had an opportunity to share a few words.

Craigmile, who has served on council since 2014, congratulated Aylward and welcomed the three newly elected councillors. He also shared advice from his grandson, written when the boy was six years old during Craigmile's first term.

"Grandpa, be good listener, say nice words," he wrote.

The moment was especially meaningful, Craigmile explained, because that same grandson was old enough to vote in this year's municipal election.

Macko, new to council, emphasized the importance of relationships and listening to different perspectives, even when members of council disagree.

"I believe that so much of serving on council is about relationships with everyone around you so that you can listen to them and hear their point of view and understand where they're coming from," Macko said.

"It's a small town, but a mighty town."

Fellow newcomer Pickering, who moved to St. Marys with his wife in 2019, said giving back to the community is what motivated him to seek office.

"Whatever that might mean, I'm committed to giving back to this community and I promise to stick to that expectation myself, and I ask that you hold me accountable to what I just committed to," Pickering said.

Returning councillors Luna and Pridham and newcomer Leaman also expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to serve and their enthusiasm for the next four years.

CAO Brent Kittmer introduced members of the town's senior management team and spoke about the importance of a strong working relationship between council and staff.

"To me, one of the hallmarks of our success over the last number of years has been the strong working relationship between council and staff," Kittmer said. "It will always be our goal to take the issues you give to us, provide you thoughtful and creative advice, oftentimes advice you may not want to hear, and then when you make a decision, we can certainly assure you that we will faithfully implement that."

While the evening was largely ceremonial, council also conducted its first official business, approving the 2027 council meeting calendar and appointing Craigmile as deputy mayor from Nov. 17, 2026, to Dec. 14, 2027.

The new council's first regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 24 at 6 p.m. in council chambers at town hall.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Newly elected Mayor Brogan Aylward delivers his inaugural address.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

St. Marys' new and returning councillors make their declarations of office during the town's inaugural council meeting of the 2026-2030 term Nov. 17. Pictured from left to right are deputy mayor Jim Craigmile, Coun. Ryan Leaman, Coun. Marg Luna, Mayor Brogan Aylward, Coun. Andrea Macko, Coun. Bill Pickering and Coun. Fern Pridham.





(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

New councillor Andrea Macko signs her declaration of office during St. Marys inaugural council meeting Nov. 17.

Mayor Brogan Aylward: 'The future of St. Marys is something we build together'

Editor's note: On Nov. 17, Brogan Aylward was officially sworn in as the new mayor of St. Marys during the inaugural meeting of the 2026-2030 council term. Following the ceremony, Aylward delivered an inaugural address reflecting on his upbringing in St. Marys, his commitment to public service and his hopes for the community over the next four years. The following is his address, published in its entirety and lightly edited for clarity.

Good evening, everyone.

Members of council, town staff, distinguished guests, friends, family and, most importantly, the people of St. Marys; thank you for being here tonight.

I've spent a lot of time thinking about what I want to say this evening, and the truth is, it's difficult to find the words to describe what this moment means to me.

I grew up here. This is the town where I went to school, where I made lifelong friends, where I learned so many lessons that have shaped the person that I am today. It's the place I've always called home.

And if you had told me when I was younger that one day I'd be standing here as the mayor of St. Marys, I'm not sure I'd have believed you.

But here I am.

And I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am to the people of St. Marys.

Thank you. Thank you for your confidence, for your encouragement and for placing your trust in me.

I understand what that trust represents. It isn't simply a vote or a title. It's a responsibility to the families who live here, to the people who built this community and to the generations who will inherit it.

It's a responsibility I take very seriously.

To those who voted for me, thank you for believing in what we can accomplish together. And to those who didn't, I want you to know something equally important.

I am your mayor too.

I will work just as hard for you, listen just as carefully to your concerns and represent you with the same dedication.

Because when we walk into this council chamber, the election is behind us. What matters now is the community in front of us.

I want to thank my family and friends who have been there for me through every step of this journey.

You have celebrated the good days with me, encouraged me through the difficult ones and reminded me why this work matters.

I know that public service doesn't just ask something of the person whose name is on the ballot. It asks something of the people who love and support them too.

I wouldn't be standing here without you.

To everyone who volunteered, knocked on doors, put up signs, shared a kind word or took the time to talk with me over the past several months, thank you.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Newly elected St. Marys Mayor Brogan Aylward is bestowed with the town's chain of office and gavel by clerk Jenna McCartney during St. Marys council's inaugural meeting Nov. 17.

You gave me something I'll carry with me for the rest of my life.

And to my colleagues on council, congratulations.

We each arrive here with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

There will be times when we disagree. There will be difficult conversations and decisions that don't come easily.

But I hope that we always remember why we're here.

Not for ourselves, not for recognition, not to win arguments.

We're here to serve the people who have placed their confidence in us.

And I believe that if we approach our work with respect, humility and a genuine willingness to listen, we can accomplish some incredible things together.

To our town staff, I want to express my sincere appreciation.

Over the past four years, I've had the privilege of working with so many dedicated people who care deeply about this community.

You are the people who turn decisions into action, who keep our services running and who often do the most important work without ever receiving public recognition.

Thank you for everything that you do.

Four years ago, when I was first elected to council, I knew that I loved St. Marys.

What I didn't fully understand yet was just how much there was to love.

Over the course of that term, I had the opportunity to meet people from every corner of our community – people who lived here their entire lives, people who only recently arrived, business owners, volunteers, parents, seniors and young people thinking about what their futures might look like.

I heard their stories. Stories of pride in this town, stories of challenges and uncertainty, stories of people helping their neighbours, giving back to their community and working hard to build a good life here.

Those conversations changed the way I understood public service because they reminded me that behind every decision we make around this table, there are real people.

A road isn't just a line on a capital budget. It's the road somebody takes to work every morning.

A park isn't just a piece of municipal property. It's where a child learns to ride a bike, where families make memories and where neighbours become friends.

A business isn't just another storefront. It's someone's dream, someone's livelihood and part of what gives our town its character.

And a home isn't simply another unit of housing. It's a place where someone hopes to build a future.

These things matter.

They matter because the decisions we make as a council shape people's everyday lives, and that's an extraordinary responsibility.

Throughout my campaign, I spoke about protecting what we love and building what we need.

I believe in those words today more than ever because St. Marys is a remarkable community.

We're fortunate to have a beautiful historic downtown, incredible natural spaces, thriving community organizations and a history that we can all take pride in.

But I've always believed that what makes St. Marys special isn't something you can capture in a photograph or describe in a brochure.

It's a feeling.

It's the comfort of walking down the street and recognizing a familiar face.

It's knowing that when someone is going through a difficult time, there are people willing to lend a hand.

It's the volunteers who show up year after year, not because anybody asks them to, but because they care.

It's a sense that this isn't simply a place where we live. It's a place where we belong.

And I want future generations to experience that same feeling.

I want the young people growing up here today to see a future for themselves in St. Marys.

I want them to believe they can build a career here, raise a family here, open a business here and make a difference here.

I want our seniors to know that the community they've helped build continues to value and support them.

I want our local businesses to have every opportunity to succeed.

And I want everyone, regardless of their circumstances, to feel that they have a place in this town.

That future won't happen by accident.

It will require thoughtful decisions, responsible financial management, investment in our infrastructure and a willingness to confront difficult challenges.

There will be times when we get things right, and there will undoubtedly be times when we could have done better.

When that happens, I believe we have a responsibility to acknowledge it, learn from it and keep moving forward because leadership isn't about pretending to have all the answers.

It's about having the courage to make decisions, the humility to listen and the determination to keep working even when the path forward isn't easy.

I know that my election represents something different for St. Marys.

I'm aware that at 27 years old, I may not be what everyone pictured when they imagined their next mayor.

But I hope that over the next four years, what people remember about my time in this office won't be how old I was when I started.

I hope they'll remember that I listened, that I worked hard, that I treated people with respect even when we disagreed and that I never forgot who I was here to serve.

I don't believe that any one person can define the future of a community; not a mayor, not a council.

That future belongs to all of us.

It belongs to people who volunteer their time, who open their businesses each morning, who raise their families here and who make the choice every single day to contribute to the place we call home.

Our job as elected leaders is to honour that commitment and help create the conditions for our community to succeed.

Tonight marks the beginning of a new chapter, but it's also part of a much longer story, a story written by generations of people who came before us, who built our streets, established our institutions, started our businesses and created the community we are so fortunate to inherit.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11

‘The future of St. Marys is something we build together’

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

We have a responsibility to honour their work and we have an opportunity to build upon it.

One day, long after our time around this council table, another generation will take our place.

And when that day comes, I hope they inherit a St. Marys that is stronger, more welcoming, more resilient and filled with even greater opportunity than we know today.

That is the responsibility before us and it’s one I am proud to share with every person in this room, every resident in our town.

I want to finish tonight with something personal.

I didn’t get involved because I wanted the title.

I got involved because I love this town, because I believe in its people, because I want to give something back to the community that has given me so much.

Four years ago, I was given the opportunity to begin that work as a member of council.

Tonight, you’ve given me the opportunity to continue it as your mayor, and while that title may have changed, the reason I’m here hasn’t.

I’m still the same person who grew up in St. Marys, who believes in this community and who wants to see it succeed.

I know I won’t be perfect.

I know there will be difficult days ahead, but I can promise you that I will give this responsibility everything I have.

I’ll show up, I’ll listen, I’ll work hard and I’ll never stop believing in what this community can accomplish because the future of St. Marys isn’t something that happens to us.

It’s something that we build together.

So, let’s protect what we love, let’s build what we need and let’s make sure that when the next generation looks back at this moment, they can say that we left this town better than we found it.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve as your mayor.

Downtown merchants welcome shoppers for festive open house



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Downtown merchants welcomed shoppers Nov. 20-22 for their annual Christmas open house, featuring seasonal food and drinks, horse-drawn carriage rides, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and special offers, giveaways and discounts at participating businesses. Pictured, Gavin Carroll and his big sister, Brooke Carroll, have fun with one of the Christmas displays downtown.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Two-year-old Briar Nesbit and her mother, Tanya Colbert, took advantage of the pleasant November weather, sporting sunglasses as they enjoyed some Christmas shopping downtown during the merchants’ annual open house.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

No downtown Christmas open house would be complete without a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, who helped spread holiday cheer among shoppers and families during the festive weekend.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Shoppers enjoyed horse-drawn carriage rides through downtown during the merchants’ annual Christmas open house Nov. 20-22. Carriage rides were offered Saturday and Sunday as part of the festive weekend.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Forest Hill Orchard offered a wide variety of locally grown apples and fresh apple cider at its inviting booth in front of town hall during the downtown merchants’ Christmas open house.

Harold Douglas receives prestigious Masonic award for community service



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Harold Douglas receives the William Mercer Wilson Medal during a special ceremony at St. James-Tecumseh Lodge No. 73 in St. Marys Nov. 16, surrounded by family and fellow Masons. Grand Master Arthur DiCecco and Deputy Grand Master James Wark of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario attended the ceremony to present the prestigious honour. Douglas is the first member of the St. Marys lodge to receive the award in its 168-year history.

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

A recipient of the William Mercer Wilson Medal is someone who works quietly behind the scenes, seeking no reward or recognition, but who goes above and beyond in service to his lodge and community.

The prestigious award recognizes a Mason who has not aspired to serve as worshipful master but continues to lead by example through dedication, generosity and a willingness to help others.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Right Worshipful Bro. Barry Cookson, Huron District deputy grand master, congratulates Harold Douglas on receiving the prestigious William Mercer Wilson Medal in recognition of his dedication to his Masonic lodge and years of volunteer service to the community. The award was presented Nov. 16 at St. James-Tecumseh Lodge No. 73 in St. Marys.

Harold Douglas, who received the medal during a special ceremony at St. James-Tecumseh Lodge No. 73 in St. Marys on Nov. 16, is the embodiment of those qualities.

The award is presented following a nomination and selection process, with Douglas' years of volunteer work and community service playing a significant role in his selection.

Not only is the recognition a tremendous honour for Douglas, but it also marks an important milestone for St. James-Tecumseh Lodge No. 73, as he is the first member to receive the award in the lodge's 168-year history.

Right Worshipful Bro. Barry Cookson, Huron District deputy grand master, spoke highly of Douglas and his contributions to the community.

"Harold has volunteered in the community for many years preparing meals for the less fortunate and his church. I cannot think of a more deserving person to represent the legacy of William Mercer Wilson," Cookson said.

The medal, which features a bust of Wilson, was first awarded in 1945 and is considered one of the highest honours bestowed upon a Mason in Ontario.

The award was established to recognize those whose quiet leadership and dedication to service might otherwise go unnoticed. It serves as a reminder that true leadership is not about recognition or personal achievement, but about the difference one makes in the lives of others.

Grand Master Arthur DiCecco and Deputy Grand Master James Wark of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario were in attendance to present Douglas with the medal in front of his family and fellow lodge members.

Following the ceremony, those in attendance gathered in the lodge hall for cake and fellowship, where Douglas once again demonstrated the very qualities that earned him the recognition.

DiCecco remarked to Douglas' family that he was confident the award had gone to the right person after watching Douglas spend his own celebration serving cake and making sure everyone was comfortable and enjoying themselves.

Rather than seeking the spotlight on a night meant to honour his accomplishments, Douglas continued doing what he has always done, quietly looking after others.

It was a fitting reflection of the humble and generous spirit that earned him the William Mercer Wilson Medal.

Editor's note: The author of this article is Harold Douglas's daughter.

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Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade brings holiday magic to St. Marys



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Santa Claus made his annual visit to St. Marys on a beautiful Friday evening, Nov. 20, as more than 50 businesses, organizations and families took part in the Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade. Excited children and families lined the streets to enjoy the festive floats and eagerly await Santa's arrival, kicking off the Christmas season in style.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Children enjoy a festive ride aboard the Optimist Club of Downie float during the annual Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade in St. Marys Nov. 20.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Even the Grinch got into the Christmas spirit, handing out candy canes to spectators along the route of the Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade Nov. 20.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, beloved characters from the classic 1964 Christmas television special Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, delighted spectators during the Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade in St. Marys Nov. 20.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

A cheerful gingerbread man makes his way along the parade route, spreading Christmas spirit during the annual Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade Nov. 20.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Members of the St. Marys Lincolns walked in Friday's parade waving and shaking hands with young fans.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Quadro Communications brought some colourful holiday cheer to the annual Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade in St. Marys Nov. 20 with a festive float featuring inflatable Minions.

The Local host's first Holiday Market in support of Giving Tuesday

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

The Local Community Food Centre at 612 Erie St, Stratford is inviting the community to its first Holiday Market on Nov. 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., giving visitors an opportunity to get a head start on their holiday shopping while supporting a local organization.

Entry to the market is by donation. The market will feature a variety of local vendors, including Shop Lot 8, Reflexology by Ruth, Kuddly Kreaturz, All Typed Up fleece blankets and NuNu2u, an upcycled clothing brand.

"We have such amazing volunteers at The Local and they're all so talented, and we've always wanted to showcase that," said Julie Docker Johnson, community connections manager. "We started thinking of ways to be able to do something for our volunteers, and then also showcase our renovated Your Market and also incorporate Giving Tuesday. We thought this was the perfect time to make a Holiday Market."

The Local's Green Team will also offer a selection of products, including herbs, oils, soup mixes and decorative door swags. Volunteer bakers from Ready To Bake will be selling frozen Christmas cookie logs.

"Our volunteer baking team is making Christmas cookie logs and those are sold frozen, so you just cut off what you want throughout the season, and you have freshly baked cookies whenever you want them," said Docker Johnson.

Special guest author Barb Howard will also be attending with her collection of children's books. Howard has designed a new holiday book, *Emma's Christmas Adventure: A Colouring Book Fairytale,* with proceeds from the special edition colouring book being donated to The Local.

Visitors will also have the opportunity to shop at Your Market, the newly expanded grocery market located inside The Local.

Though Giving Tuesday typically takes place over one day, an anonymous local donor is offering to match proceeds raised during the week of Nov. 26 to Dec. 3, up to $10,000. This includes proceeds from the Holiday Market, meaning donations and funds raised during the week could have double the impact.

"People may think Giving Tuesday is about money, but that's not all it's about," said Docker Johnson. "It's about showing up and being there for your community; it's about being part of something bigger. The more people who walk through our door, the better. We want to show everyone what The Local is all about."

The event aims to welcome the wider community, showcase the talents of The Local's volunteers and introduce visitors to the organization, Your Market and the services they offer.

Several other holiday markets will also be taking place throughout Stratford and Perth County that same weekend. The Local has put together a list of markets happening that day, giving shoppers an opportunity to get their holiday shopping started, or even completed, in one weekend.

For more information about the Holiday Market or ways to support The Local, visit www.thelocalcfc.org.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Local Community Food Centre will host its first Holiday Market on Nov. 28, featuring local vendors, volunteer-made products, baked goods and more, with proceeds supporting the organization.

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Salvation Army toy drive spreads Christmas cheer in St. Marys



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Young Hughie Thynne lends a helping hand to Salvation Army community service worker Raelynn Marshall during the organization's annual toy drive at Canadian Tire in St. Marys Nov. 21. Generous shoppers donated plenty of toys to help make Christmas brighter for local children in need. The popular Stuff the Cruiser event, held with the support of Stratford police, was once again a success thanks to the generosity of the community.

St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary has holiday gifts covered

ST. MARYS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary's hospital Boutique gift shop has lots of interesting gift giving ideas for everyone on your list!

We have hand-knit slippers, scarves and whimsical toys, colourful pashminas, ladies' handbags, book sleeves, crocheted little bowls to fill with all kinds of goodies, interesting jewellery, framed mosaic hearts, fleece-lined leggings, cozy women's sweaters and gloves, handy wheelchair and walker totes and, of course, our embellished jean jackets! Tax-free shopping at its best.

We sold out of our sticky toffee puddings, but we're making more just in time for Christmas! Follow our Facebook page and watch for an ad in this paper for the date and location of our next Sticky Toffee Pudding with Rum Sauce sale.

Thank you for your support and best wishes for a very Merry Christmas from the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

The Boutique is open Monday to Friday, noon to 4 p.m.

Follow the Auxiliary on Facebook at The Boutique at St. Marys Memorial Hospital or email smmhauxiliary@gmail.com.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY)

There are plenty of great ideas for holiday gifts at the St. Marys Hospital Boutique. Stop in and have a look around!

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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Stonetown Arts celebrates creativity at 15th annual show and sale



(STONETOWN ARTS PHOTO)

Stonetown Arts hosted the opening weekend of its 15th Anniversary Annual Art Show & Sale. The show, featuring the works of 25 local artists, continues this weekend at Riverwalk Commons, 84 Water St. S., Friday, Nov. 27, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Kathy Blake displays her hand-carved and painted basswood artwork depicting a fantasy fish during the Stonetown Arts 15th annual show and sale, held at Riverwalk Commons in St. Marys this past weekend. The unique piece was inspired by Blake's many trips to Newfoundland.

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St. Marys Craft Show showcases local and regional artisans



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

The St. Marys Craft Show welcomed shoppers Saturday, Nov. 21, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., featuring more than 60 local and regional artisans offering a wide variety of handmade treasures. Pictured, Kim Cornwall displays her colourful collection of hand-painted rocks, with plenty of unique designs for shoppers to choose from.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Cynthia Giasson of C R Garden Shop displays her handcrafted wire and stained-glass art, decorative rock creations and greeting cards at the St. Marys Craft Show Nov. 21. Giasson shares the creative business with her husband, Rick, who makes wooden bases for her artwork and displays, along with other handcrafted wooden items.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Anne Paxton and Monika Herten showcase their handmade crocheted afghans and acrylic paintings at the St. Marys Craft Show Nov. 21. Herten, who paints as a hobby, also creates greeting cards sold at the St. Marys Public Library, with proceeds supporting the library's food pantry. The cards remain available for purchase at the library.

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NOTICE OF APPLICATION & PUBLIC MEETING CONCERNING A PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the County of Perth will hold a Public Meeting on **December 17, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.** to consider an Amendment to the County of Perth Official Plan.

The proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA 002) application has been initiated by the County of Perth to include text changes to provide clarification, policy alignment and updates to wording within policies to comply with new legislation. These proposed changes will affect various sections within the Perth County Official Plan, including:

- Section 1.3: Perth County Profile
- Section 2.3: General Growth Management Policies
- Section 2.5: Settlement Area Categories
- Section 3.1: Serviced Urban Areas
- Section 3.5: Agriculture
- Section 3.7: Natural Heritage and Water Resources
- Section 4.2: Housing
- Section 4.5 Natural and Human-Made Hazards
- Section 5.1: Consents
- Section 6.6: Interpretation Policies
- Section 7: Definitions
- Schedules B for Dublin, Mitchell and Listowel

LEARN MORE – For more information about this matter please see the website at www.perthcounty.ca/currentplanningapplications

Andrea Hächler, Director of Planning Services
Email: ahachler@perthcounty.ca • Telephone: (519) 271-0531 (ext. 412)
1 Huron St. Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Protecting local health care, one roof at a time

BERNICE DE DECKER

Contributed Article

The Tradition Mutual Centre for Wellness plays an important role in keeping health care and wellness services close to home.

From family physicians and LifeLabs to the YMCA gym, physiotherapy and other health-care professionals, the wellness centre brings together services that residents across St. Marys and the surrounding area rely on every day.

Like any well-used community facility, however, the building requires ongoing care and investment.

The wellness centre has now reached a point where significant maintenance is needed. Its roof has surpassed its expected lifespan and requires replacement to help ensure the building can continue operating safely and reliably for years to come.

The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation is focused on raising the funds needed for this important project. A new roof may not be the most visible health-care investment, but it is an essential one. Protecting the building means protecting the services, health-care professionals and community programs that operate within it.

The wellness centre was built through community support, and once again, the foundation is asking our community to come together to help protect its future. A large fundraising goal can feel overwhelming, but when we think about what can be accomplished collectively, the goal becomes much more achievable. There are approximately 4,670 dwellings in St. Marys. Imagine the impact if households across our community each contributed what they could.



Every gift, regardless of size, moves us closer to replacing the roof and ensuring the wellness centre continues to serve our community for years to come.

This is more than an investment in a building. It is an investment in local health care, wellness and the future of our community.

When we break a large goal down across our community, individual contributions can add up quickly. Whether it is $25, $50, $100 or more, every household that participates brings us one step closer. Together, we can protect a facility our community helped build and ensure it continues to be here when our families, friends and neighbours need it.

A banner year for the TriCounty Foodgrains Group

TRICOUNTY FOODGRAINS GROUP

Contributed Article

The TriCounty Foodgrains Group had another successful year of working together to end global hunger.

Thanks to the generosity of our three counties, and with the federal government matching program, we were able to raise almost $40,000 this summer and fall.

The TriCounty Foodgrains Group is a joint project involving East Nissouri Union Church, First Baptist St. Marys and St. Marys Presbyterian churches. Volunteers plan, plant, grow and sell vegetables and host an annual Music Night to raise funds for the cause.

As a part of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, funds raised by the group are matched by the federal government at a rate of four to one, which means that your purchases, donations and support go a very long way toward helping others.

We would not be this successful without the dedicated support of our community members and we are so thankful! The Hitching Post has generously donated seed for many years. Petals and Foliage has also donated plants for many years and they have also shared land and cultivated crops for us in recent times. Several other community members have donated their land and culinary talents to the cause. We sold some wonderful squash soup at the market this year!

For the first time this year, we added a silent auction to our music night and many local businesses generously and thoughtfully donated. It was a huge success, and we cannot thank you enough for your contributions. More people will go to bed with food in their stomachs as a result of your kindness.

We look forward to partnering with you all again next year! If you have any questions about the Tricounty Foodgrains Group or the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, please do not hesitate to contact Bob Pickel at 519-461-1400. We always welcome volunteers!



St. Marys Independent SPORTS

Lorentz, Sheldon capture world-championship gold

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Sensei Jalyne Lorentz and Lisa Sheldon combined to win eight medals, including three golds, at the World Karate Commission (WKC) World Championship Oct. 24-30 in Chiclana, Cádiz, Spain.

Sheldon described the high level of talent she and Lorentz faced in Spain.

"Competing at the world championships is always an incredible experience," said Sheldon. "Being surrounded by talented athletes from around the world pushes you to bring your best. What stands out most is seeing the hard work and preparation come together on the world stage."

Lorentz elaborated on the strong field of competitors, noting the importance of recognizing who they were up against on the global stage and adapting as needed.

"Competing in Europe always challenges your adaptability and strategy," Lorentz said. "From elimination day to the finals, it's important to be able to analyze the competition and change if needed. Each country brings different styles, techniques and approaches. My training allowed me to make those changes, and that's what stood out and brought me to the podium."

Sheldon added what the success at the world championship meant to her.

"This was my fifth world championship where I earned my fifth world title," Sheldon said. "That means a great deal to me and reflects years of dedication. I'm proud of what I've accomplished and grateful for the support along the way."

Lorentz echoed Sheldon's sentiments, while also emphasizing the value of the support from her local karate community.

"It feels amazing to know I stayed on top of my category for another year and that my training just keeps elevating me," said Lorentz. "Making the Night Show for another year felt amazing and just being surrounded by so many friends from all around the world and spending time as a STK team."

Sensei Jeremy Lorentz said the Stonetown Karate (STK) community was incredibly thrilled for their world champions.

"Sensei Jalyne and Lisa continue to demonstrate their excellence at the world event, adding to their accomplishments as multi-year world-champion gold medalists. Their success reflects years of dedicated training, experience, determination and the ability to adapt and perform under pressure against some of the best competitors in the world.

"Sensei Jalyne also earned a place in the Night Show once again, a special recognition of her performance at the championships," Jeremy Lorentz continued. "We are incredibly proud of both women, whose commitment to continually growing, learning and pushing their limits inspires our entire dojo."

Jalyne Lorentz won gold in the 18+ women's division's traditional weapons and kenpo forms events, while also adding a silver in classic forms and bronze medals in hardstyle forms and creative weapons. Sheldon earned the gold in the 42+ women's light contact continuous fighting, along with a silver in the 35+ women's light contact continuous fighting and a bronze in 42+ women's point fighting.

Sheldon described what went into her Worlds success.

"Consistent training, preparation and experience played a big role in my success," Sheldon said. "I trusted my abilities and stayed focused in both sparring and continuous fighting. Being able to manage the pressure helped me perform at my best."

Jalyne Lorentz noted the experience of competing at the world championship helps her pass along more knowledge to her STK students.

"I constantly learn for my students and myself," said Jalyne Lorentz. "Getting my exposure through as many competitions as possible builds that level of confidence, knowledge and understanding to know what I need to do when I step on the mat. All of this as a whole led me to take home the titles."

As Sheldon reflected on the world championship, she recounted the moments following the competition as being particularly memorable.

"The moments right after a match, when the intensity settles and you realize what you've accomplished," Sheldon said. "Sharing the excitement with fellow competitors makes the experience even more meaningful. Knowing we all show up for each other, to cheer, to support, no matter what we are facing in our personal lives, is a sense of community that I'll carry on long after the competition."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured are Lisa Sheldon and Sensei Jalyne Lorentz who combined for eight medals, including three golds, at the WKC World Championship Oct. 24-30 in Chiclana, Cádiz, Spain.





Polar opposite performances by Lincs both end in defeat

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Very little could have occurred that would have made the St. Marys Lincolns back-to-back games Nov. 21 and 22 any more different.

Except for the end result.

Just 24 hours after their most deserved loss of the season against the Stratford Warriors, the Lincolns had arguably their least deserved loss, bouncing back with a great effort that went unrewarded against the Elmira Sugar Kings.

In the Highway 7 Series' second game, the Lincolns turned in arguably their worst 60-minute showing this year, falling 5-3 to the speedy Warriors. Ethan Weir had a hat-trick, while Kobe Nadalin single-handedly gave the Lincolns a chance to win in between the pipes.

Head coach Jeff Bradley didn't sugarcoat his disappointment in his team's performance.

"I thought we were outplayed and outclassed," Bradley told the Independent. "There was not a single good thing about the way we played on Saturday. I don't want to take anything away from Stratford, but I thought it was a mix of us not executing and Stratford playing a really good game."

After the two teams traded goals in the first 40 minutes, Colin Slattery blasted home the eventual game-winner on a five-on-three powerplay. First, Cullen Kerslake shot the puck out of play for a delay-of-game charge before, just 45 seconds later, Chris Mabey slashed a Warrior's stick out of his hands.

Bradley detailed how the loss was a combination of lacklustre play by St. Marys and a strong effort by Stratford.

"Sometimes, you can get away with not playing your best and outscoring an opponent, but when you play a team like Stratford, that will never be the case. They won any battle that they got into. They caused us to make turnovers. They were more physical than us. They just flat-out wanted to win the hockey game more than we did," Bradley said.

"We had a lack of focus. We played selfish. We really disrespected Stratford with the way we showed up, and for us not to show up in a game of that magnitude, it was disrespectful to the fans. I know they came in with the hopes of having a great game, and if there was a game we didn't deserve to win this year, that would be it."

Lincs' better effort goes unrewarded in Elmira

The Lincs' bench boss had a very different assessment of his team's performance in Elmira.

"We played more as a team," said Bradley. "The turnovers were limited. Our focus was there. Our special teams were good. We were really good on the forecheck. We were much better in the defensive zone. We did a really good job in the neutral zone. It's unfortunate we didn't get the result, but we want to make sure we're getting better. As much as we want to get the points for the standings, we want to make sure we are improving throughout the season, and I thought that was a good step for us. Sometimes the process is more important than the results."

Almost inexplicably, the Sugar Kings found a way to go up 3-0 approximately 27 minutes into the game, with a pair of tallies by Wyatt Marks and a powerplay goal by Sam Ratcliffe, all despite the fact the Lincolns heavily outplayed Elmira, especially in the first period in which St. Marys doubled the Sugar Kings in shots at 14-7.

Blake Elzinga finally scored for St. Marys a minute and 45 seconds after Ratcliffe's goal, followed 20 seconds later by Owen Bruining tapping home a set-up pass from Oliver Lacko, who returned to the lineup from injury for his first game since Oct. 30, and just his second since Oct. 18.

Campbell Lehto finished off a gritty shift in front of the net to bang home a rebound and the game-tying goal midway through the third, with Bradley crediting Lehto and his linemates, Chase McDougall and Jack Taylor, for their dogged efforts all game, as well as Lacko, who brought a stabilizing, high-IQ presence to the middle of the lineup.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Declan Ready, pictured, made his return to the St. Marys Lincolns Nov 21 against the Stratford Warriors. Ready was reacquired by the Lincolns from the Lindsay Muskies of the OJHL, where he had nine goals and 21 points in 19 games. Ready was part of the Lincolns' Western Conference Championship-winning team last season.

"For Oliver Lacko to get back in the game and do as well as he did was great. We've missed him a lot. It was really good for us to claw back, and for the line of Campbell, Chase and Jack to get the tying goal. I think it just shows that line is an incredibly important line for us. It can give us a spark and can score some big goals.

"They are three honest players who are low-maintenance and simply want to help the team win at all costs," Bradley continued. "For them to get rewarded with some production, it just makes everybody happy for those three. They're unsung heroes for our team."

Alex Rossi managed to cut to the net and jam the puck past goaltender Brogan Colquhoun, who had a better showing than his previous start against the Chatham Maroons. Ultimately, the Lincolns couldn't find another tying goal in the third, losing 4-3.

Despite the loss, Bradley saw a much better effort from his squad against the Sugar Kings.

"It was important for our team (to perform better), and it was important for players as individuals. It's a critical part of the season where we are evaluating, and we want to make sure we've got our team in place for a deep playoff run. We're five games away from the middle of the season. It's an important time and we want to make sure we're on the right track and guys are progressing."

The Lincolns have three upcoming games against teams lower in the standings, and Bradley stated he wants to see a renewed physical push from his team.

"I think we've been doing a really good job at limiting shots and limiting scoring chances, and obviously, we want to continue doing that," Bradley said. "I think getting back to being a physical presence is important for our team, and I would like to see us take that step there."

The Lincolns bolstered their lineup recently with Declan Ready being reacquired from the Ontario Junior Hockey League's (OJHL) Lindsay Muskies. Ready, who had 14 goals and 30 points in 47 games last year with the Lincolns, had nine goals and 21 points in 19 games with the Muskies. Ready's reacquisition was announced Nov. 17, and Lincs' general manager Pat Powers was thrilled to bring the 2024 10th-round pick of the Flint Firebirds back to St. Marys.

"Declan gives us another top-end player with a proven level of success in our system," Powers said. "He knows what we are about and chose to return to finish chasing a title. I expect he becomes a leader both defensively and offensively, and that he continues to be hard to play against and just gives us another scoring option up front."

Ready said he was ecstatic to be back in a Lincolns' uniform.

"Just the culture," Ready said when asked why he wanted to return. "The culture I missed, the way everyone buys in for each other. There's no guy who thinks he's better than the next guy. It's just a great team environment and, obviously, this team's record shows for itself, but also even more than that, I wanted to play for Jeff (Bradley). The attention to detail he has, game-in, game-out, the way he coaches, he gets the best out of guys, and that's why I want to be here."

Pat Payton's Notebook:

• Owen Miniotas played two games with the Ontario Hockey League's (OHL) London Knights Nov. 20 and 22, filling in for former Lincoln Cohen Bidgood, who was serving a suspension.

• With two powerplay goals against Stratford, Ethan Weir now has 24 career powerplay goals, five away from tying the all-time franchise record for most career powerplay goals, 29, held by Mike McLaughlin; The Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL) era record is 28, held by Brenton Kemp.

• Prior to his suspension, Bidgood was a point-per-game player with the Knights, scoring 10 goals and 20 points in 20 games; Former Lincolns' defenders Grayden Strohack and Hayden Barch continue to be solid stay-at-home defenders for Peterborough and North Bay; Lincoln Moore has two goals and seven points in 13 games with the SPHL's Fayetteville Marksmen.

• The London Nationals have made another coaching change, installing Jason Hart, formerly an assistant coach with the Nats, as the new bench boss. Hart is the third coach in London this season, replacing Don Martin, who had taken over from Keli Corpse after just three games this season.

• Since making a coaching change Nov. 2, the Elmira Sugar Kings are 7-1-0-0 as of the Independent's press time.

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DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team takes silver at WOSSAA

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team brought home the silver medal at WOSSAA, held Nov. 19 in Woodstock.

The Salukis qualified for the WOSSAA final with a semi-final victory over the host École Secondaire Catholique Notre-Dame in three straight sets, including a dominant second set in which Notre-Dame scored just three points.

St. Marys won by scores of 25-9, 25-3 and 25-7 in the semis.

Head coach Steve Chateauvert spoke about his team's semi-final effort in glowing terms.

"We already have a really short bench and were down another player due to a prior commitment, so everyone was on the floor and they kept their composure throughout the whole game," said Chateauvert. "We missed a few serves in the first set but played well defensively, so we didn't let a lot of balls hit the floor. They stayed aggressive on free balls and were able to get some big transitional attacks. We kept the ball in play and let the other team make the mistakes."

Chateauvert further described the team's impressive second set, highlighting several key individual performances.

"In the second set, Donovan McGregor served 12 points in a row, followed closely by Zach Larmer, who also served 12 in a row, which was quite an impressive feat. We only managed to go through three rotations in the second set, which was a testament to our focus and readiness. We kept our intensity high going into the third set where we were able to complete the sweep," Chateauvert said.

"Donovan McGregor has been a steady presence all season and he set the ball really well again at WOSSAA. We passed really well in the first match, which made his job a lot easier, but he's always willing to chase down tough passes and do the best with what's given to him. Henry Switzer has been our most prolific hitter this season, and he had another good day, so that was nice to see."

Though the Salukis came up short in the WOSSAA final against École Secondaire Catholique Monseigneur-Bruyère from London, Chateauvert called it a successful season and noted how the team's improved technical skills and compete level were on display until the last point.

"I've seen a lot of improvement this season," Chateauvert said. "Our serving has gotten tougher and more accurate, our communication has been a lot better and the team has been much more engaged through entire matches. We faced a really strong team from Monseigneur Bruyere in the gold-medal match, and even though we were down, the team fought hard to the end and didn't give up."

Chateauvert added their improvement has come from the entire team's strong commitment.

"I would say the biggest thing about this group has been their commitment. We only have eight players on the team, and everyone was at every single practice all season long. We practice at 7 a.m. two to three times a week, and for teenagers to show up consistently, regardless of whatever else they've got going on in their lives, and work hard at each practice, was really nice to see."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team, pictured, came away with the WOSSAA silver medals Nov. 19 in Woodstock. Pictured from left to right are Harper Murrell, Graeme Froud, Zach Larmer, Peyton Wynands, Parker Levy, Henry Switzer, Seth Zub, Donovan McGregor and head coach Steve Chateauvert.

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DCVI Senior Girls Basketball team claims WOSSAA silver

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Girls Basketball team took the silver medal at the Nov. 19 WOSSAA final, held at École Secondaire Catholique Monseigneur-Bruyère in London.

Though there was disappointment in losing their final two games of the season, head coach Monica Ryan called the season a big success.

"Overall, this season was just so successful, and we had lots of growth," Ryan told the Independent. "It was unfortunate to end our season getting beat by St. Mike's in the Huron-Perth final and then losing a tough one at WOSSAA, but we had an incredibly strong season where, in many games, we had balanced scoring."

Ryan described how the team's commitment to their early-morning practices grew over the course of the season which, in turn, led to improved cohesion amongst the players.

"We're all getting up at seven in the morning, and it was the responsibility of each person to bring energy to practices, especially when they're really busy. They learned how to compartmentalize their daily responsibilities and show up for each other with energy and effort to improve despite their busy lives.

"It improves communication and problem-solving," Ryan continued. "It got to be at the end of the year where they were able to problem-solve themselves with many situations on the court and listen to each other."

The end of the season marked the end of the high school basketball careers for Charlotte Richardson, Alanna Savile, Regan Jones and Holly Black, who Ryan credited with being pillars of leadership on and off the court.

"They're leaders who lead by example," said Ryan. "They're some of the hardest-working players out there, and their communication is excellent. Alanna's communication, Charlotte's drive to excel, Holly's enthusiasm and Regan's exceptional attention to defence; it really set the bar for the rest of the players."



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Girls Basketball team, pictured, took the silver medal at WOSSAA in London Nov. 19. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Morgan Reid, Lena Thompson, Lily Hollestelle-Black and coach Rachelle Keys. In the back row, from left, are Aryn Sheldon, Alanna Savile, Charlotte Richardson, Melody Weber, Raegan Stacey, Maeve Wheeler, Emma Hodkinson, Regan Jones, Holly Black and coach Monica Ryan.

Ryan added getting as close to Huron-Perth and WOSSAA titles as they did creates a standard for the core eligible to return next year to shoot for.

"I think it sets the bar for them, especially with the expectation of supporting each other and working hard for each other to develop their skills. I think it gives us a foundation to move forward in a really optimistic way. They have limitless potential coming into next year. Our future Grade 12s have lots of speed and lots of energy."

St. Marys Bowling Lanes joins Santa Claus Parade





(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The St. Marys Bowling Lanes was well-represented in the Santa Claus Parade, with a float that included some life-size bowling pins helping to ring in the holiday season.

FOR SPORTS TIPS CONTACT SPENCER SEYMOUR

CALL OR TEXT 519.859.1049 OR EMAIL SPENCER.SEYMOUR88@GMAIL.COM



Fisher, McKeen earn spots for provincial qualifier



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

St. Marys Youth Bowl Canada (YBC) bowlers Aisla Fisher and Nathan McKeen, pictured from left to right, participated in the Teen Challenge Tournament Nov. 22 at Sunset Family Fun Centre in Port Elgin. The tournament had Ladies' and Men's divisions, and the format was a five-game scratch tournament. Competitors must have an average over 150 to compete. The top seven bowlers in each division move on to Echo Bowl in Brantford on Jan. 10, a tournament that determines who represents the province of Ontario at the National Championship in Regina on March 11-17. Fisher maintained an average of 184 over the five games to place third in the Ladies division and earn a spot on the Grand River Zone Ladies team to compete for a spot on the Ontario team. McKeen placed sixth in the men's division with a 198 average and took the first-place spot on the mixed team. As a result, McKeen will also go to Echo Bowl in January to represent the Grand River Zone in Brantford.



MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Emmy McIntosh fires a shot on target during the Downie Optimist Club U9 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Zac Bes launches the puck from the blueline during this past Monday's Core Fuels U11 A Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Drew Showers releases a shot from the point during the Core Fuels U11 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



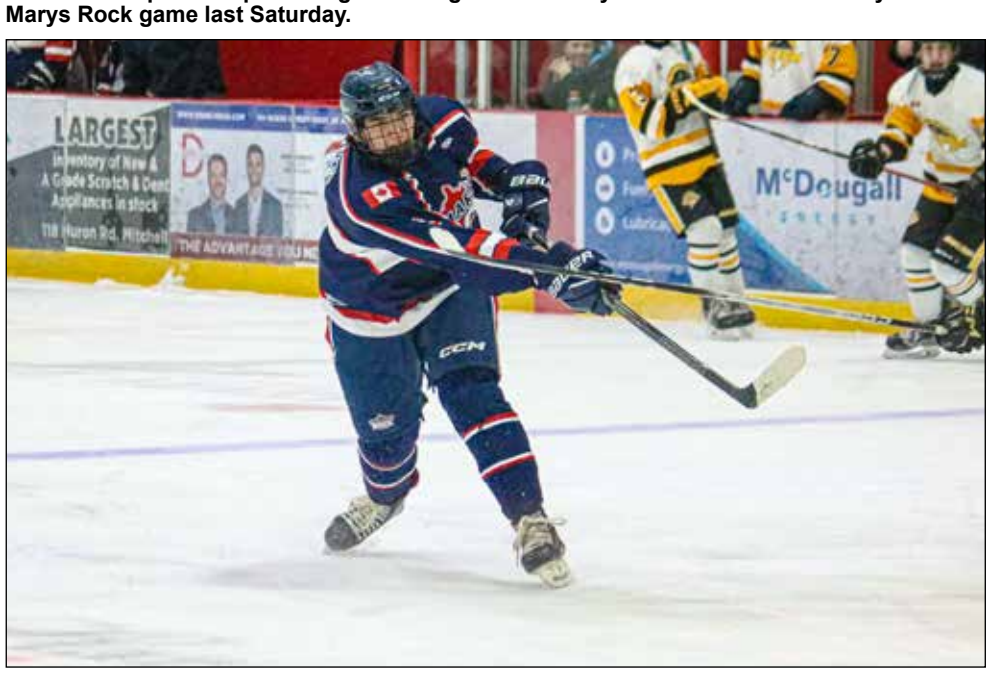
(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Andre White puts the puck on goal during last Saturday's Core Fuels U11 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Adelyn Laidlaw rips a heavy shot during the McKinley Hatchery U13 B Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Graedon Smith steps into a shot in the high slot during last Thursday's U18 A Boys St. Marys Rock game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The faces behind the inbox

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Last week, I was so excited to join the Grant Haven Media team for their Christmas lunch as a freelance contributor.

It was such a warm, lovely gathering and a wonderful chance to finally put faces to the names I usually only see in my email inbox. Ever since COVID reshaped the modern workplace around the world, remote work has become the new normal, and people everywhere are often hired entirely online.

Because of that, any in-person get-together has become more than just a celebration – it is a vital reminder of what your colleagues actually look like in real life, and a chance to see who has joined the team. Being invited to sit around the same table and share in the holiday cheer made me feel genuinely included and part of the group.

I'll admit, when I first walked in and saw a room full of people – many of whom didn't really know each other yet – I felt a brief second of hesitation. That initial awkwardness is completely natural. I honestly don't know how Canadians do it, but they have a magic way of smoothing over those stiff moments effortlessly. Within five minutes, the ice was completely broken and I found myself happily sharing stories about my childhood with someone I had literally just met.

We met at Perthstone Kitchen, and I have to make a confession: I always thought I wasn't a "burger person." Well, I stand corrected. Between the appetizers and that burger, I enjoyed every single bite.

More than anything, though, it just felt like a real privilege to be part of this team.

As I sat there taking in the cozy atmosphere, good food and relaxed chatter, my mind wandered back home. I suddenly realized just how wildly different office holiday parties are in Ukraine.



(ALONA VASYLIEVA PHOTO)

Alona Vasylieva reflects on holiday traditions and Canadian workplace culture.

First of all, in Ukraine, a company party would never, ever happen at lunchtime. In fact, it doesn't even start until the evening – and it is practically a full-scale stage production. Back when I worked at a TV channel in Ukraine, our holiday parties felt a bit too official and, honestly, quite nerve-wracking for me.

You couldn't just sit quietly and enjoy your meal. There was always a loud, energetic host – what we call a tamada – armed with a microphone and a strict schedule, whose sole mission in life was to make sure nobody was simply relaxing. You had to survive endless, overly formal speeches from management, followed by mandatory team-building games that usually involved dancing with balloons or passing an orange under your chin to someone from the accounting department.

By the time the dancing started at midnight, your jaw was tired from polite smiling, your ears were ringing from the music and you needed a whole weekend just to recover from all the "fun."

Looking around the table at Perthstone Kitchen, I realized that this relaxed lunch isn't just a holiday quirk – it reflects something much bigger. Maybe I've simply been lucky, or maybe it's the broader culture here, but the general workplace atmosphere in Canada feels profoundly different from what we are used to in Ukraine. Both from my own experience and from talking with my Ukrainian friends who now work across Ontario, the contrast is striking.

Back home, I used to think the whole philosophy of "team building" came to Ukraine from North America, and I will be honest, I was pretty skeptical about it. From watching Hollywood movies and TV shows, it always looked a little forced, overly corporate and artificial to me. I assumed it was just buzzwords and awkward trust falls.

Now that I actually live and work here, I am happy to admit I was wrong. What I see in real life isn't fake at all; it is a genuine respect for people as human beings first and employees second. I see that workers' mental health and personal boundaries are actually valued, not pushed to the very bottom of the priority list. Nobody expects you to burn out just to prove your loyalty, and kindness in the office isn't treated as a weakness – it's the standard.

Watching how warmly everyone interacted at lunch, I felt deeply grateful to be part of a work culture where people truly care about each other's wellbeing.

I also really love the approach here when companies host a Christmas celebration for kids at work. It is such a wonderful way to entertain children and include families in the holiday spirit. Thinking about that takes me back to my own childhood in Ukraine. I always looked forward to getting a holiday present from my parents' workplace, yet I was never actually invited to a Christmas party for kids at their offices. Seeing children enjoy a festive event made specifically for them here feels extra special.

Maybe the secret is simply that nobody tries too hard to entertain everyone on command. You don't need a microphone, a stage script, or a three-day recovery plan afterward to have a memorable time – just good food, easy laughs and people who make you feel right at home before you head back into the rest of your day.

Thank you to everyone at Grant Haven Media for the wonderful afternoon, the great company and for making me feel so welcome.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Interested in having fun with friends all while building up brain power? Then Mahjong may be the perfect game for you. Join us every Monday morning from 10:30 to noon for "Beginners Mahjong," where you'll learn the ins and outs of this tile-based game of pattern, strategy, and even a little sabotage! Take your time getting comfortable with the game in our relaxed and supportive space, and you'll be having a blast before you know it. "Beginners Mahjong" is free to attend, no registration is required and is for patrons 16 and older.

Up This Week

Fri., Nov. 27: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 28: Dungeons & Dragons (10 a.m.), Edith's Storytime Adventures (10 a.m.), Open House for the Community Commons^ (1 p.m.)

Mon., Nov. 30: Beginners Mahjong (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Tues., Dec. 1: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Wed., Dec. 2: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.), Chocolate Bar BINGO* (6-7 p.m.)

Thurs., Dec. 3: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

***Registration Required**

^Held at the Community Commons (14 Church St. N)



HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The Forceful Whelihans

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

Patrick Whelihan was born in Tipperary, Ireland, in 1833, and died in St. Marys, Ontario, in 1903. By almost any measure, his life was a successful one. He built a beautiful house on a prosperous farm, located within the northwest boundaries of St. Marys. As well as a farmer, he had been a successful businessman. He had also served three decades as registrar of land titles for the Riding of South Perth. He was a man of strong faith, supporting the Roman Catholic Church, and had been a respected leader in the parish. He and his wife, Anna, had raised a large family to be hard-working men and women. The Whelihans had a significant place in the community. Patrick died in 1903, probably believing he had established a dynasty. But today, in St. Marys, the Whelihan name is almost forgotten.

In 1880, the Canadian Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self-Made Men included a profile of Patrick Whelihan. At that time, he was 48 years old and had already lived a remarkable life. He was the tenth in a family of 11 children in Ireland. His father had died when Patrick was only two years old, but his older siblings had made sure that he was able to go to school and receive an education that stood him in good stead all his life. When he was 16, Patrick, with his mother, an older brother and a younger sister, emigrated to North America. They landed in New Orleans and began to travel north to Canada. They had gotten as far as Cincinnati when both his mother and brother died of yellow fever. Patrick, now in charge of his young sister, managed to escort her to the Lucan area where another brother, John, was living.

Patrick left his sister in care of this brother and returned to the States where he found work in charge of a supply store for a railway company. He saved enough money to buy a farm in Biddulph Township, near his brother's home. Leaving his brother in charge of his Biddulph property, in 1851 Patrick went to Kingston and spent two years learning the dry goods business. In the spring of 1853, he moved to London and spent a year in a grocery store there. By 1854, he was ready to start his own business and established a general store on the south side of Queen Street in St. Marys. That year, at the age of 22, he married Anna Amelia Wells, the daughter of a London real estate broker.



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

Members of the Whelihan family at the entrance to their home at Thornhill Place, ca 1910.

It didn't take long for Patrick to become involved in the affairs of his community. His young wife, Anna, may have been surprised by the breadth of her young husband's energy and ambition. As well as establishing his business, he was soon appointed a justice of the peace. He served as commissioner of licenses for South Perth, returning officer, magistrate, school trustee, and for several years, represented the south ward on town council. Within a year of their marriage, he had built a limestone house for his family in the west ward. In 1870, he began his three-decade tenure as Registrar for South Perth. That same year, having sold his farm in Biddulph, he built a beautiful, two-storey, brick house on his new 120-acre farm at the north end of Ingersoll Street, Thornhill Place.

The Whelihans' first son, James, had been born in 1856 and their first daughter, Mary Jane, in 1857. To the family's sorrow, little James died at the age of two. In 1879, Patrick and Anna lost a second little boy, Lawrence, who lived only 13 days. But when the entry in the Canadian Biographical Dictionary was written, their other 12 children were thriving. According to the 1881 census, all the Whelihan children, ranging in age from 22 to 4 years of age, still lived at home. Charles, the oldest son, age 20, worked with his father as Deputy Registrar. Seven of the others were going to local schools.

Patrick had clear ideas how his children should be educated. He was the prime mover in establishing the Separate School in the 1860s. The first classes were held about the same time that the oldest Whelihan children were ready to start school. When the St. Marys Collegiate Institute was established in 1874, Patrick Whelihan represented the Separate School on the new Collegiate Institute Board. He also had firm ideas about his children's leisure activities. The Canadian Biographical Dictionary explains: His specialty was "stock raising, principally cattle and sheep. On that first-class farm, his smaller boys are learning habits of industry and seeking their amusement. One boy has his pony, another his poultry, a third his goats, a fourth his rabbits, and so on, the several children playing among themselves, and thus being kept free from the vicious influences of the rougher class of town children. They can also enjoy boating in summer on the classic Thames River, which passes along the northern boundary of said farm… Mr. Whelihan is giving all his children a good mental drill, and rearing them in the ways of temperance, virtue and industry."

Were Patrick's ambitions for his family realized? His two oldest daughters married and moved away, Mary Jane to Wisconsin and Charlotte to Sault Ste. Marie. Both had children who made their lives away from St. Marys. Anna Amelia, born in 1864 and named after her mother, did not marry. She died in Toronto in 1915. Patrick's fourth and fifth daughters entered religious orders. Clara, born in 1865, was a lay member of a religious order when she died in Mexico in 1908. Gertrude Margaret, born in 1869, joined the order of the Sacred Heart as a young woman. She died in 1947 and is buried with other members of her order in Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Lilly Whelihan, the sixth daughter, born in 1871, stayed in St. Marys, listing herself as a housekeeper in the census. By 1921, she was living independently in a two-storey, brick house on St. Andrew Street. Although she had her own household, she seemed to be the capable sister, the one who went to the assistance of other family members in times of sickness or trouble. She died in 1942. Patrick's youngest daughter, Adelaide, born in 1876, married John J. Sweeney and moved to Toronto. She maintained close contact with her family in St. Marys, visiting regularly. Her son, J. Austin Sweeney, was a favourite among the Whelihan siblings. He became a priest serving in the Niagara area. But he came to St. Marys and celebrated mass in Holy Name of Mary Church on family occasions. John J. and Adelaide Sweeney and their son, Father J. Austin Sweeney, are buried in the Whelihan family plot in the St. Marys Cemetery.

Of Patrick Whelihan's five sons, the two oldest, Charles and Joseph, stayed in St. Marys. The other three moved far away. Francis (Frank) went to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he was a pharmacist. Vincent worked on the railway and ended up near Houston, Texas. Austin went to Saskatchewan. These facts can be established by looking at censuses, marriage and death registrations and cemetery records. But facts don't show what Patrick was like as a father. As he raised his children "in the ways of temperance, virtue and industry" was he kind and patient or strict and demanding? Did his children love him as much as they respected him? Local historian L. W. (Curly) Wilson (1889-1986) whose life overlapped that of the Whelihans in St. Marys, described them as "forceful people." It is easy to believe that Patrick was forceful. Did he pass that characteristic on to his sons? If so, how did that affect their father-son relationships? The story of the Whelihans will be continued.

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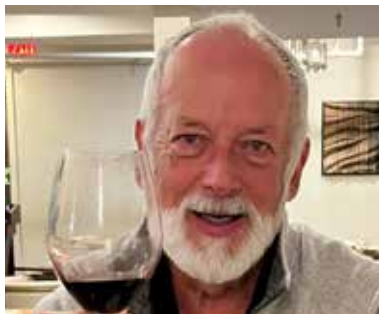
OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The amazing food of Italy's Calabria



PAUL KNOWLES
Independent Columnist

The first hint we had that this trip was going to be something special came on our first full day in Calabria. Calabria is the "toe of the boot" region of Italy. We had checked into the Grand Hotel President in Siderno, our home for the duration of our visit to this unique destination. All the elements of our stay, from guided tours to food to anything else we might possibly need, was provided by a local, family-owned company, "La Diano Viaggi," under contract to Senior Discovery Tours.

That first day, one of the principals of the local company, Massimo Diano, was leading us on an orientation tour of our temporary hometown. We walked the streets, visited the waterfront (Siderno is located on the Ionian Sea) and then were invited into a waterfront restaurant where a long table, laden with all kinds of food, awaited us.

This was neither lunch nor dinner, by the way, simply a gigantic, mid-day snack, or antipasto. I learned that in Italy, antipasto means just such a spread – meats, cheeses, pastries, olives, bruschetta, roasted veggies and more. Canadian antipasto is entirely different – a blended spread that goes on crackers. The Italians know nothing of this.

The groaning table of tasty treats was our introduction to the incredible culinary experiences we were going to enjoy over the next two weeks.

If you don't like food and wine, don't go to Calabria because amazing, unique tastes are unavoidable here.

For instance, our hosts took us to a restaurant called Vincenzo Fotia, L'Artigiano della Pizza – the pizza artisan. Vincenzo was there to greet us even though he spends a lot of time away from his restaurant because this is the man who teaches other Italian chefs how to make pizza! He's also the leader of a national pizza team.

But on that evening he was our host along with his son, Matteo, who performed a neat pizza spinning act prior to our dinner of pizza. That would be pizza, plural; we were presented with five different, unique pizzas following an initial pizza appetizer. The absolutely delicious pizzas included one described as "roasted aubergine cream base, mozzarella, grilled vegetables (aubergines and courgettes), basil," and another you can only find in Calabria – "margherita base with Callipo tuna and Tropea onions." You run into Tropea onions on every menu in Calabria; these super-sweet onions are grown only in Tropea, on the west coast of Calabria.

So not surprisingly, when we visited Tropea and its neighbouring town of Pizzo, we were again served an utterly delicious pizza laden with Tropea onions and ham. But of course, this being Calabria, it didn't stop there. We were again provided with five different pizzas – this was only lunch, by the way – starting with margherita pizza, then ham and mushroom, then the Tropea specialty, then onions, zucchini and eggplant, and finally 'nduja. 'Nduja is a spicy, spreadable pork sausage that you can find only in Calabria – yet another of the unique tastes here.

Before we left Pizzo, we ascended the stairs at a small eatery to be served tartuffo, a dessert originating in Pizzo. It's a gelato with a chocolate or fruit centre, covered in an outer coating of chocolate or cocoa powder and other fixings. Yum!

One of our day trips took us on a farm tour. Barone G.R. Macri is an ambitious enterprise that started as an olive farm, but the owners added a dairy operation (cattle, sheep and goats), developed a cheese-making operation and then opened an inn.

The highlight of our visit was watching cheesemaker Mimmo Condelli make a unique cheese called caciocavallio. We then tasted that cheese along with honey, orange marmalade, bread and, of course, local wine. Always local wine. Love and dedication are key ingredients of everything we tasted in Calabria. At the farm, we learned that Mimmo Condelli has been making caciocavallio cheese since he was four years old, taught in the unique art by his mother.

The taste adventure continued day by day. We visited Mount Etna, where we were served an enormous buffet of local foods in a restaurant that has been built on the lava flow that covered the previous restaurant!

As we spent time in the towns of Sicily and western Calabria – separated only by the narrow Straits of Messina – we had the opportunity to sample one of the local delicacies, swordfish. We were served swordfish in two forms – as swordfish ravioli and as stuffed swordfish. This was fish fresh-caught by the unique fishing boats that ply the straits.

These culinary experiences are just the tip of the tartuffo. We dined in a butcher shop/restaurant, "La cantina del Macellaio," where the entire meal was meat. We were invited into the kitchen of our hotel, the Grand Hotel President, where, supervised by the genial executive chef, we made our own dinner – eggplant wrapped in chicken. It was a rowdy and ultimately delicious event. We had pasta that was made by hand moments before we ate it.

There are a lot of words I could use to describe Calabria. One of them is "delicious."

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.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)
La cantina del Macellaio is a combination butcher shop and restaurant.



Vincenzo (left) and Matteo Fotia – pizza chefs supreme!



A light afternoon snack: antipasto in Siderno, Calabria.



Handmade fresh pasta, produced minutes before serving.



The tasting table at the farm, Barone G.R. Macri.

FROM THE GARDEN: From beanstalks to supper tables



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist

Here we are, near the end of November, and instead of pulling frozen vines from my garden, I am picking my scarlet runner beans. While area farmers race to finish their harvests before winter weather arrives, my bean trellis continues to offer one last reminder that some plants are not ready to surrender.

As I pick my beans, I marvel that I am harvesting one of humanity's oldest foods. Long before our great-grandparents were gardening and long before beans appeared in seed catalogues, they were feeding families and enriching soils around the world.

The fava bean (Vicia faba), or broad bean, is the oldest known domesticated bean in the world, with evidence dating back 10,000 years. Archaeological digs in northern Israel uncovered domesticated fava beans from the Neolithic era, showing that early farmers cultivated them even before grains in some areas.

As for the Americas, the common bean (Phaseolus vulgaris), which includes varieties such as kidney, pinto, navy, and black beans, is the oldest cultivated bean, domesticated around 8,000 years ago in Mesoamerica (Mexico and Central America) and the southern Andes. Climbing Phaseolus beans became a staple part of the "Three Sisters" agricultural system, alongside maize and squash, used by Indigenous peoples across North America. The beans' role in this companion planting system enriches the soil with nitrogen and stabilizes tall corn stalks as they grow and climb. They also provide essential protein and amino acids that complement corn and squash in the Indigenous diet.

As beans are a staple of our kitchen gardens, we all have a favourite variety to grow. Green beans, or "snap" beans, come in a variety of flavours, pod shapes, sizes, and colours, including shades of green, purple, yellow, and speckled bicolour. My favourite is Royal Burgundy, a heritage variety that is easy to grow and easy to pick because the beans are purple. When you cook them, they miraculously turn bright green, much to the delight of curious minds. Bush beans are the workhorses of the garden and a mainstay for the table. They are compact and fit well into both small garden patches and patio containers.

And then there is the versatility of pole beans with their vining habit. This type of bean perhaps inspired the English folktale Jack and the Beanstalk and the wonderment of what might be found at the top if it grew tall enough. In some European traditions, beans were symbols of fertility and prosperity.

Pole beans can grow up poles, trellises, netting, or other supportive structures. With proper support, pole beans can also be grown in containers, creating beautiful living screens on a patio. They produce over a longer season and in summer, are eaten fresh like snap beans or left to mature and dry for seed for next year's garden or for use during the winter months. Mature bean seeds contain lectins and must be thoroughly soaked and cooked before eaten. Their flowers and young tender leaves are also edible.

Over the years, I have grown a few varieties of pole beans, but



I always come back to the Scarlet Runner bean. This heritage variety is such an amazing producer. Its spectacular red flowers throughout the summer invite hummingbirds and bees to visit the blooms.

The reason I am so fond of beans is the bounty of fresh beans they provide for the supper table or the freezer for winter use. But it is also a miracle that dried beans are both this year's harvest and next year's garden, all wrapped up in a single seed.

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Riddles

What is the richest nut?
A cash-ew!

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

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

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

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

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

What kind of apples do computers prefer?
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?
Corn!

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

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

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

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

- Word Search -

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PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

J	Y	W	B	N	S	G	Z	K	M	M	K	M	O	Z	Q	Z	W	H	M	S	J	E	Y	T	D	X	I	X	H
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Set a budget
Make gift list
Mail cards
Shopping
Test lights
Decorate tree
Hang a wreath
Schedule events
Send invites
Plan menu
Bake goodies
Wrap gifts
Enjoy

The SUNSET DINER

The Riddle Kid Presents OF THE WEEK


What has a head and a tail but no body?
A coin!

Bexley Hayes (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

Regular bloodwork helps your veterinary team detect changes in your pet's health before problems become serious. Wellness testing provides valuable insight into organ function and overall health, especially as pets age.

A healthy pet starts with prevention and regular checkups!

TEDDY

Our Pet of the Week is Teddy, a one-year-old cockapoo. Teddy loves to greet all the kids at Little Falls Public School who are waiting for pick up. He is lovable and full of energy. Teddy's owners are Arianna, Gwenivere and Talia.



Thorndale News

A section within the St. Marys Independent

Inaugural meeting of Thames Centre council begins a new term

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Municipality of Thames Centre held its inaugural meeting of the 2026-2030 term of council on Nov. 16 at the municipal office in Dorchester.

The Dorchester Choirsters opened the meeting by singing the national anthem. Clerk Jana Nethercott then administered the declaration of office to each council member, as required by the Municipal Act.

After the five members of the 2026-2030 council read their oaths and signed their declarations, CAO J. Bellchamber-Glazier welcomed the new council. Outgoing Mayor Sharron McMillian then presented Mayor Michelle Smibert with the chain of office and gavel.

In her inaugural address, Smibert thanked her family and supporters.

"The best municipal government is built on strong relationships, open communication, mutual respect and shared commitment to the community," sha said.

Her vision for the term, she said, "is simple."

"Four years of positive leadership, meaningful relationships and teamwork. I look forward to the conversations, the meetings, the collaborations and challenges to make the next four years a great chapter in the story of Thames Centre."

Smibert then introduced the council members, who each briefly thanked the community for its trust and support and said they look forward to working together.

After a motion to adopt the proceedings of the inaugural meeting was carried, the meeting adjourned. Friends and families stayed for refreshments and offered their congratulations to the 2026-2030 Thames Centre council.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are members of Thames Centre's 2026-2030 council: Ward 1 Coun. Brad Andrews, Ward 2 Coun. Danielle Lockie, Mayor Michelle Smibert, deputy mayor Ed Lee and Ward 3 Coun. Chantel Crockett.

Thorndale Horticultural Society hosts annual general meeting

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

At their November annual general meeting (AGM), the Thorndale and Area Horticultural Society took a look back at the previous year.

Under the direction of president Jennifer Prgesa, the 2025 AGM minutes were approved. Carolyn Noble presented the 2026 treasurer's report, which was also approved. Prgesa then read her report, followed by reports from committee chairs highlighting the society's activities and accomplishments over the past year.

The Thorndale and Area Horticultural Society celebrated its 30th anniversary in April, hosted their annual plant sale in May, the Green Thumb Garden Tour in June and took an active role in the Thorndale Fall Fair.

Throughout the year, society members plant and maintain six gardens and 17 planters throughout the community. In October, they hosted the Ontario Horticultural Association Thames Valley District 10 Fall Workshop with 17 horticultural societies represented by 52 members who attended this day-long event with a guest speaker, exercises for team building and networking, plus a hands-on creative activity, awards and draws.

As with any active community organization, members generously volunteered their time and energy, contributing approximately 1,450 volunteer hours in 2026.

Following the AGM, guest speaker Nancy Abra delivered a presentation entitled "Remembering Them ..." exploring the horticultural aspect of the Commonwealth War Graves. The evening concluded with light refreshments and door prizes.

Thorndale Dinner Theatre plans for 2027 production

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Thorndale Dinner Theatre has finalized its 2027 production, Ray Cooney's *Run for Your Wife*.

Supporting responsibilities have been assigned, and a cast of eight local actors chosen.

Run for Your Wife is a British comedy about a London cabbie leading a double life with two wives. Juggling both has not been a problem until he is mugged and lands in the hospital, where he must explain everything to both wives and the police at the same time.

The 2027 production opens Saturday, Feb. 20, with dinner and a play, followed by brunch and a play on Sunday, Feb. 21. The next week includes a mid-week performance on Wednesday, Feb. 24; a dessert and play on Friday evening, Feb. 26; and a final dinner and performance on Saturday, Feb. 27.

With Christmas coming, 2027 Thorndale Dinner Theatre tickets make wonderful gifts. Advance tickets go on sale Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Thorndale Library. Cash, cheque and e-transfer are accepted. For details on dates and performances, call Jackie at 519-461-0218.





OBITUARY

Witteveen



With great sadness, the family announces the peaceful passing of Elsie Ann Witteveen (née Budzinski) at Wildwood Care Centre in St. Marys on November 20, 2026, just five days shy of her 96th birthday.

Beloved mother of Sharon Leslie (Daryl), Brian Witteveen (Barbara), and Jack Rundle (Betty Lavoie). Cherished Grandma of Lucas Leslie, Curtis Gricken (Jessica), Mitchell Witteveen (Sarah), Laura De Luca (Anthony), Mitchell Joiner (Tatan Perez), and Kristin Rundle (Randi). Proud Great-Grandma of Calla Rae Witteveen, Claire Elise De Luca, Cooper Gricken, and Mila Gricken. Elsie was also a special aunt to many nieces and nephews. Elsie was the last surviving member of her family. She was predeceased by her parents, her brother Bill (Mary), and her sisters Mary, Kay, and Nettie.

A woman who believed in giving back, Elsie was a 60-year member of Beta Sigma Phi sorority and a long-time employee of Campbell Soup. She was a dedicated volunteer in the St. Marys community, including with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, where she became known as the best ticket seller in town!

In her younger years, she also coached women's baseball. Her generosity extended well beyond her community involvement, as she lovingly knitted thousands of baby hats for Brantford General Hospital, leaving a little piece of herself with countless newborns and their families.

Elsie will be remembered for her dedication, generosity, community spirit, and, above all, the love she shared with her family and friends. Her family wishes to express their sincere gratitude to the staff at Wildwood Care Centre and the wider community for the kindness, care, and support shown to Elsie and her family over the years.

A Graveside Service will be held at St. Marys Cemetery, 150 Cain Street, St. Marys, on Friday, November 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. An Open House to celebrate Elsie's life will follow at the St. Marys Legion, 66 Church Street South, St. Marys, until 4:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

THANK YOU

Wood Family

Thank you with great appreciation. We wish to express our Thanks to all those that stopped in and brought flowers, food, gifts, and sent and gave cards of sympathy and comfort, at the sudden passing of Kimberly Shurgold - my daughter, a sister, an aunt and a cousin.

Thank you so very much for all of your kind generosity and wishes.

Love Marie, Kent, Caleb Wood and Andrew Richardson

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OBITUARY

O'Brien



We are sad to announce the peaceful passing of our dearest Owen Charles O'Brien on Thursday November 19th 2026 at the age of 78, surrounded by love and friendship.

Born on November 27th 1947. Only child to the late Harold O'Brien and Ethel Viola O'Brien (Barnett) known as Vi. Owen was born and raised in the 'country' Perth South on the family farm where he spent his younger years and then his later years. He was a retired teacher from Ear Falls Public School 1966-2000, a profession he was very proud of and where he created some of his most treasured memories.

In 2001 he set up Blanshard B&B, which was his pride and joy. Having visitors from all over the world come to stay and many would comment on how Owen provided exceptional stays and the most friendliest of atmospheres.

Owen was proud to support the St Marys community. He was apart of the St Marys, Curling, card groups in both Kirkton and St Marys, Coffee groups at Tim Hortons and McDonalds and attended various Friendship Centre events. Owen was the kindest gentleman known. Whilst very independent, he would often go out of his way to help others, always offering a listening ear.

He had a love for cars, meals out, shows, holidays and music and lived a very full, wholesome life. We would like to give thanks to the wonderful staff at London University Hospital who offered exceptional care to Owen in his final days.

Family and friends are invited to the St. Marys United Church, 85 Church St. S. St. Marys, on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2026 for visitation from 10 am until the time of the Funeral Service at 11 am. A reception to follow in the Parish Hall at the St. Marys United Church. Cremation will take place with interment in St. Marys Cemetery at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to St Mary Healthcare Foundation or the St. Marys Friendship Centre.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

THANK YOU

Mills Family

The family of the late Nelson Mills wishes to express sincere thanks and appreciation for the many acts of kindness, flowers, food, cards and donations received during our recent bereavement. Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered. Also, thanks to the wonderful care Nelson received at LHSC & SMMH, guidance from Andrew Hodges Funeral Home and compassionate message from Gary Mallalieu.

Hazel Mills and Family

OBITUARY

Kittmer



KITTMER, Terry Charles

1953-2026

Terry passed away peacefully on September 16, 2026, at St. Martha's Regional Hospital in Antigonish, surrounded by his children.

Predeceased by his parents, Burns and Connie, Terry will be lovingly remembered by his brother Larry (Cecelia); children April (Ryan), Kristin (Jeff), Andy (Becky); 8 grandchildren; and his partner, Francine, and her family.

A master Red Seal carpenter, talented drummer, and lifelong adventurer, Terry loved building, music, scuba diving, and sailing. He fulfilled his dream of building a home by the ocean in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia with Francine, where they shared many happy years. He leaves behind countless stories and memories and will be deeply missed.

Cremation has taken place. A celebration of life will be held from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM on Sunday, May 16, 2027 at St. Marys Legion, 66 Church St. N.

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THANK YOU



The family of the late George Pickel would like to express gratitude for the outpouring of love, comfort, and care following his passing. Thank you to our extended family, neighbours and friends for the many thoughtful cards, phone calls, messages, food and generous donations.

A special thank you to Bill Pickel, Ron Pickel, Don Richardson, Bernie Payton, Taylor Smith and Jason Elliott, who honoured Geordie by carrying him to his final rest. Much appreciation to the staff at Kingsway Lodge in St. Marys, the palliative care team at St. Marys Memorial Hospital and Andrew Hodges.

We are grateful to everyone who attended Geordie's celebration of life to share condolences, fond memories, and stories. Seeing so many familiar faces and hearing how Geordie touched your lives brought us joy and comfort. Reminiscing about his passion for farming, IH tractors, and history, his commitment to family, and his steady and quiet presence in the community emphasized a truly well-lived life.

As a lifelong farmer, George understood that every season has its purpose – a time to plant, a time to harvest, and a time to rest. Now, George has entered a new and eternal season in the presence of his Creator and Lord.

Sincerely - Dorothy, Bruce and Jane, Joan and Tom, Victoria and Taylor, Larissa

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Solutions on pg. 35

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THE WEEK AHEAD

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PRC & Friendship Centre events – See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 26

FRIDAY, NOV 27
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Komoka Kings at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOV 28
- St. James Anglican Church Christmas bazaar – 9 a.m. to Noon
- Country craft show at 7101 Cobble Hills Road – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Community Food Centre holiday market at 612 Erie St, Stratford – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. dart league – 12:45 p.m.
- London Pro Musica Choir performance at St. Marys United Church – 2 p.m., $30, children / students free
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.
- Sawyer Preservation Woodlot Association Owl Prowl at 6100 Line 12, West Perth (just north of Kirkton) – Start times 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOV 29
- Donald Barwick 100th birthday open house at Stratford Army & Navy – 2-4 p.m.
- Thames Centre Community Choir perform at Dorchester United Church – 2 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Woodstock Lakers at Reeves Community Complex – 7:45 p.m.

MONDAY, NOV 30
- Community Dinner at St. Marys United Church – 5 p.m., Sponsored by Community Living

TUESDAY, DEC 1
- Giving Tuesday
- St. Marys Legion Buddy Check coffee at the Legion – 10 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Legion cribbage – 7 p.m. sharp

THURSDAY, DEC 3
- A.N.A.F. sausage on a bun – 12-1:30 p.m.
- Nourish Market at St. Marys United Church – 2-4 p.m.
- Downtown St. Marys BIA late night shopping – 5-7 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. dart league – 6:45 p.m.



Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY
Independent Columnist

Frozen Ferd

25 years ago (2001)

Construction of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital's Wellness Centre could begin by early next year. Foundation member Brendan Ginty told the Journal Argus last week that the Hospital Board has approved a recommendation from the Hospital Foundation to call for tenders on the almost $5 million project.

St. Marys O.P.P., with assistance from two canine units, carried out a drug sweep at St. Marys DCVI last week. As a result of the police action, one 19-year-old male was charged with possession of a narcotic and will appear in court later this month.

50 years ago (1976)

Ralph Ainslie hopes to erect that bright Christmas star on the family barn across from the golf course again this year. The frame of the star is 22 feet across, and this will be the 25th year for it to be shining.

The Town Board of Works had an unusual task in preparation for the Saturday Santa Claus parade. Considerable sand had been placed on roadways due to the early onslaught of winter, so the big yellow sweeper made an unusual winter appearance to clean up the streets on Friday following the return of milder weather last week.

75 years ago (1951)

Ferd Ready, who commutes back and forth to his home in London in one of those neat and economical little British cars, found the weekend snowfall rather fatiguing. He left the car parked overnight on the street and in the night the city snowplow built a wall around his vehicle which froze solid in the morning. Ferd was digging for a good hour before he became mobile for St. Marys on Monday morning.

Stonetowner Maurice Sgariglia, who was recently transferred from the Bank of Toronto here to a branch of the bank in the west end of Toronto, had his first experience of bank robbers on Tuesday. Five bandits held up the staff and looted the bank of some $4,000 in cash.

100 years ago (1926)

A party of Blanshard hunters got home on Saturday from two weeks' hunting in the South River district, this side of North Bay. Deer were plentiful in the region they visited, in from South River, but on the Algonquin Park side there was not such good hunting, owing to the prevalence of wolves. Partridges were noticeably scarce and the foxes appeared to be getting them. There was eighteen inches of snow when they arrived. The men had a great time and brought home four good-sized bucks as trophies of the chase.

Counting the number of days to Christmas is now a popular mathematical exercise with many juveniles.

QUIZ ANSWERS
1. A hen
2. The Hunt for Red October
3. Staff (stave)
4. Tetanus
5. Green
6. Sean Connery
7. Blue
8. 1981
9. Ra
10. Gregor Mendel

SUDOKU ANSWERS

3	1	5	8	9	7	4	2	6
4	2	6	1	5	3	7	8	9
7	8	9	2	6	4	3	1	5
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St. Marys Giving Tuesday 10th Anniversary

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

GIVING TUESDAY IS ON DECEMBER 1, 2026

The following are the Giving Tuesday events that have been shared with us (as of November 22nd at 11:30 am). We encourage you to support these amazing initiatives. To find out more information about a particular one, please reach out directly to the business/organization. We will continue to update St. Marys Giving Tuesday on Facebook and Instagram, please follow us to be sure not to miss the "good". Please also check the window at Meridian Credit Union and see who you can "Catch Giving" and join in!

AllRoads Dodge Chrysler Jeep Limited – "Fill the Showroom" gift drive for youth aged 12-17 for the Salvation Army

Anonymous – Donated to the Make a Wish Foundation and St. Marys Library Pantry for Giving Tuesday

Anonymous – Matching donor up to $500 for the Salvation Army kettle donations on Giving Tuesday

Andrew L Hodges Funeral Home – Matching donor up to $500 for the Salvation Army kettle donations on Giving Tuesday

Barista's – Collecting mitts, scarves and socks for the Community Closet

Bruce & Nancy White – Cooking with the Whites, proceeds to go to the Salvation Army Food Bank

Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum – Purchase a Hall of Fame annual membership on Giving Tuesday and receive benefits that help preserve the accomplishments of everyone involved in Canadian baseball, now and in the future.

Cascade Cleaners – Collecting Christmas gifts for tweens and teens for the Salvation Army

Cascades Containerboard Packaging – Donated boxes, and volunteers are assisting in packing boxes for the Salvation Army Christmas hampers

Community Living St. Marys and Area – Food drive for the Salvation Army Food Bank at Community Living, 300 Elgin St. East

Country Roots Fresh Market – Preparing "Santa for Seniors" for Meals on Wheels. Requesting donations of small treats, baked goods, hand lotions, etc. to fill gift bags.

Delmar Foods/Delmar Foods Food Factory Outlet – Donation to the Community Commons and 100% of the proceeds from the sale of Christmas cakes, shortbread and truffles donated to the Shriners' Hospital

Friends of St. Marys Public Library – Free swim and free skate on December 30

Green Haven Garden Designs – Portion of poinsettia sales donated to the Ronald McDonald House in London

Holy Name of Mary Catholic School – Donations to the Salvation Army Giving Tree

Holy Name of Mary Church Social Committee – Mug meals, with donations going to the Salvation Army Food Bank and Library Pantry

Joanne Walden – Independent Pampered Chef Consultant – 25% of all orders received in November 2026 donated to St. Marys Community Outreach Program

Joe's Diner – November 21 at the Lincolns' game, collected non-perishable food items for a chance to win breakfast once a month for a year

Kerry Vergeer Photography – Santa photos at the Hitching Post December 5, 8am to noon. All proceeds to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth

Larry Bickell – Supporting the "Caught You Giving" campaign with card deliveries

Logan & Finley – Bring your receipt for donations to the Coyote Nature School to the store (Water St. South) for a chance to win prizes

McDougall Energy (Dowler Karn) – Collecting mitts and hats

McKinley Hatchery – Employee food drive for the Salvation Army Food Bank

Meridian Credit Union – Central hub and collection point for local charities, plus assisting in the "Caught You Giving" campaign by posting cards in their Queen St. window

Ontario St. North & Widder St. West Neighbours – Collecting donations for the Library Pantry

Peak Select Realty Inc. Brokerage – Collecting items for the Library Pantry

Perth County Ingredients Inc. – Donated $2,500 to the Humane Society and $2,500 to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth

Perthstone Kitchen – $2 from the sale of each Optimus Prime Burger sold in November donated to the United Way

Petals and Foliage – Sales from the roadside stand donated to the Imagination Library

Pita Pit – Supporting the mental health group homes in St. Marys through an angel tree initiative

Reflexology by Ruth – Proceeds of festive Christmas sweater sales donated to the Salvation Army

Renee's Photography – November 22 from 10am to 12 noon, photos with Santa at the ViaRail station with proceeds to the Library Pantry

Rotary Club of St. Marys – Assisting in packing Salvation Army Christmas hampers

Salina Street Neighbours – Collecting personal hygiene and non-perishable food items for the Library Pantry

Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters – December 1, a portion of sales from turtle-themed menu items will be donated to SOARR, a local reptile rescue and rehab. Also collecting items for hospitality and hygiene kits for neighbours in need

South Perth Centennial School – Food drive for the Salvation Army Food Bank and the Library Pantry

St. Marys Bowling Lanes – Collecting food items for the Library Pantry

St. Marys Buick GMC – Collecting toys for the Salvation Army at the dealership. Donations accepted until December 7

St. Marys Building Centre – Proceeds from windshield washer fluid sales donated to the St. Marys Volunteer Firefighters

St. Marys DCVI Salukis – Youth volunteers for the Santa Claus parade

St. Marys Dentistry – Collecting non-perishable food items and hygiene products for the Salvation Army Food Bank and Library Pantry

St. Marys Ford – Collecting non-perishable food at the dealership until December 7 and during the Santa Claus parade route

St. Marys Friendship Centre – Giving Tuesday "Come and Go" lunch on December 8 and accepting non-perishable food for the Salvation Army Food Bank. Volunteers helping to make Smile Cookies on Giving Tuesday.

St. Marys Giving Tuesday Committee – Hosting the Salvation Army Kettle at Scotiabank on Giving Tuesday

St. Marys Healthcare Foundation – All donations on Giving Tuesday will be matched up to $10,000 for the new roof

St. Marys Independent Newspaper – Giving Tuesday promotion

St. Marys Lions Club – Collecting "Koats for Kids"

St. Marys Museum – Employees will donate a non-perishable food item for every museum visitor on Giving Tuesday

St. Marys Optometry – Donating $5 for every eye exam on December 1 and $2 for every frame sold from December 1 until the end of February 2027 to the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY)

St. Marys Presbyterian Church – Collecting items for hospitality and hygiene kits for neighbours in need

St. Marys United Women – Donated to the Canadian Foodgrains Project 2026 and Salvation Army Food Bank

St. Marys United Church – Hosting the Giving Tuesday community dinner on November 30

St. Marys Veterinary Clinic – Donations to the Farley Foundation

St. Marys Kinettes – Feminine hygiene donations to Optimism Place and volunteers assisting with the Smile Cookie campaign on Giving Tuesday

Stonetown Physiotherapy & Sports Injuries Clinic – A portion of their proceeds on December 1 will be donated to the Salvation Army Food Bank

Stratford Police Services – Collecting for the Salvation Army Food Bank at Foodland on Giving Tuesday

Sue Orr – Making a donation to the Community Commons

Sun Rayz – Supporting the mental health group homes in St. Marys through an angel tree initiative

The Flower Shop and More – Collecting needed items for the Library Pantry

The Hitching Post (2019) Ltd – Photos with Santa on December 5, 8am to noon, with all proceeds to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth

The Local Community Food Centre – Donor to match all Giving Tuesday donations up to $10,000

The Widder Street NOISE Makers – Purchasing Nourish Market gift certificates for the Community Outreach Program

Town of St. Marys – Town staff are collecting socks, hats, scarves and mittens for a giving tree

Towne & Country Cheese Shoppe & Deli – Collected clothing, coats, socks, needed items and cash for the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Donating hot chocolate sales proceeds during the Santa Claus parade to the CMHA.

Troyer's Spices – Donating spices to The Local Community Food Centre

Veterinary Purchasing Company Ltd – Employee food drive to be donated to the Salvation Army Food Bank

Vitality Health and Fitness – Donating feminine hygiene products to the St. Marys Community Outreach Program

Zenfire Pottery & Mercantile – Proceeds of bowl sales donated to the Stratford House of Blessing

It is not too late to be part of this world-wide movement! Plan something for Tuesday, December 1st or support an event listed above! Be sure to follow and tag St. Marys Giving Tuesday and we will share share share!

Thank you for participating, it matters!

Better Together,

The St. Marys Giving Tuesday Committee

GIVING TUESDAY DEC 1 2026

ST. MARYS GivingTuesday GIVES

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