DOWNTOWN LATE NIGHT SHOPPING PAGE 5

LINCS ALUMNI HONOUR FIVE TEAMS PAGE 16

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1340 | Thursday, November 19, 2026 | FREE

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IT'S THE SEASON OF GIVING! (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Students from Holy Name of Mary School watch on as St. Marys facilities manager Ray Cousineau and Mayor-elect Brogan Aylward raise the Giving Tuesday flag Nov. 16. For more stories and photos, see page 11.

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Water Street Bridge receives official heritage designation from St. Marys council

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

More than 125 years after it was first constructed, one of St. Marys' most recognizable landmarks has officially received heritage designation, ensuring its historical significance will be preserved for generations to come.

At its final meeting of the term Nov. 10, St. Marys council unanimously approved a by-law designating the Water Street Bridge as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Section 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Built in 1898, the bridge, known locally as the Green Bridge, is a rare surviving example of a steel, seven-panel, pin-connected Pratt through-truss bridge. Its distinctive steel structure, limestone abutments and location in the Trout Creek valley reflect the early transportation, commercial and industrial development of St. Marys.

According to a report presented to council Sept. 22, the bridge had been identified as a

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3

Community pays tribute to outgoing St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee at final council meeting

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

There were heartfelt words of appreciation, a few laughs and even some gifts as members of the St. Marys and area community gathered at town hall Nov. 10 to bid farewell to outgoing Mayor Al Strathdee and thank the rest of council for their service over the past four years.

While the meeting marked the end of the current council's term, much of the evening's public input was dedicated to recognizing Strathdee's 12 years as mayor, during which he helped guide the town through significant infrastructure projects, challenges and opportunities for growth. Among those who attended was Perth South Mayor and Perth County deputy warden Sue Orr, who reflected on the relationship she and Strathdee developed over their eight years serving their respective municipalities.

"We've had some very difficult discussions, and we've also had some let's-go-for-lunch-and-talk-this-over," Orr said.

She emphasized the importance of cooperation between neighbouring municipalities, particularly when it comes to shared services such as policing and social services, before presenting Strathdee with gifts from herself and Perth South.

Former St. Marys CAO and director of public works Bruce Grant also addressed council, thanking its members for their commitment over the past four years and highlighting accomplishments including road reconstruction, renovations to the Friendship Centre, the unplanned

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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COMMUNITY

Community pays tribute to outgoing St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee at final council meeting

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

indoor-pool refurbishment at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, the parks master plan and ongoing work at 14 Church St. N.

"The commitment to council participation takes a toll on family and friendships that is underappreciated," he said.

He also credited Strathdee with fostering consensus around the council table and helping establish stability within the town's senior administration.

Rev. Gwen Ament offered a different perspective on Strathdee's leadership, recalling conversations about inclusion, accessibility, reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and how the community could support refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war.

"I came to know Al as a mayor who looked beyond agendas, budgets and infrastructure," Ament said. "And as a mayor who saw actual people and their challenges."

Coun. Fern Pridham praised Strathdee's passion for preserving the town's heritage while recognizing the importance of adapting historic properties to meet changing community needs.

She also commended his commitment to allowing council as a whole to determine the best path forward, despite the additional authority available to mayors under Ontario's strong mayor powers legislation.

In a message read by clerk Jenna McCarthy, St. Marys Public Library board chair Dr. Cole Atlin recalled how Strathdee helped rebuild the relationship between the library and council after inheriting a strained relationship 12 years ago.

"It has not been without moments of tension or stress. But I always knew that Al always comes from a position of wanting our town and our library to be a success," Atlin wrote.

Former Stratford police services board appointee and St. Marys resident Steve Cousins also submitted a message praising Strathdee's practical approach to municipal government, his ability to build relationships and his commitment to responsible budgeting and long-term planning.

Coun. Marg Luna, who was unable to attend after undergoing emergency surgery, thanked Strathdee for the guidance and friendship he provided during their eight years working together.

"Your loyalty to the Town of St. Marys is unwavering and you have helped change this town for the better," Luna wrote.

When it came time to respond, Strathdee admitted he hadn't prepared a speech, instead offering an emotional and humorous reflection on his years in office.

He thanked his wife, Gloria, his family, fellow councillors, municipal staff and the many community members who supported him throughout his three terms.

"I think that the town has moved ahead because of the cooperation and the support and the belief in the town that people have shown to me," Strathdee said.

"It's been an honour and a privilege to be the mayor for 12 years."



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

Outgoing St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee hands over the gavel and chain of office to mayor-elect Brogan Aylward during the final meeting of this term of council Nov. 10.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

Perth South Mayor Sue Orr wished outgoing St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee well during his last meeting as the head of council.

Strathdee announced earlier this year he would not seek re-election in the Oct. 26 municipal election, bringing his 12 years at the helm of St. Marys council to a close.



7 Day Forecast
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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Nov-18th	Nov-19th	Nov-20th	Nov-21st	Nov-22nd	Nov-23rd	Nov-24th
Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	Light rain	Sun & cloud	Sun & cloud
13°C	12°C	14°C	14°C	13°C	5°C	4°C
Feels like 11	Feels like 10	Feels like 14	Feels like 12	Feels like 11	Feels like 1	Feels like 2

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Water Street Bridge receives official heritage designation from St. Marys council

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

priority heritage asset for maintenance investment earlier this year, despite not having an official heritage designation.

The town's heritage and culture advisory committee subsequently recommended adding the bridge to the municipal register of non-designated heritage properties as a first step toward formal designation.

At the Nov. 10 meeting, director of culture, tourism and engagement Amy Cubberley explained the town had completed the required public notification process without receiving any objections ahead of the Oct. 30 deadline.

"I do think it's great that the Water Street Bridge is coming forward this evening because this is kind of a full-circle moment for Mayor Strathdee," Cubberley said, referring to the outgoing mayor's 12 years in office.

Coun. Jim Craigmile agreed, noting the significance of the designation coming at the end of Strathdee's final term.

"I think this report's perfect. Over 12 years, it's a complete circle," Craigmile said. "Getting the Green Bridge open, getting it historic designation. I think the timing's perfect."

Strathdee reflected on the efforts undertaken during his time as mayor to ensure the bridge could continue serving the community, including work by former town staff member Bruce Grant to develop a long-term maintenance plan.

The mayor recalled the bridge having been closed for nearly two years, and the extensive work required to secure its future.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

St. Marys council has officially designated the Water Street Bridge, known locally as the Green Bridge, under the Ontario Heritage Act.

"We have done some extensive research and ensured that the bridge can be maintained and not be affected by the heritage designation," Strathdee said. "I think it's a great thing that it comes at this time."

The designation recognizes the bridge's architectural, historical and contextual significance while providing formal heritage protection under provincial legislation.

A report presented to council in September identified the bridge's distinctive construction, historical associations and prominent location as contributing to its heritage value.

With the bylaw's approval, the Water Street Bridge joins other designated St. Marys landmarks, including the Church Street Bridge, town hall, historic water tower and Carnegie library, as protected pieces of the town's architectural heritage.



EDITORIAL

Is this what getting older feels like?



GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

I'm not sure if this is a sign of things to come, but exactly one day after I turned 35, I find myself sitting here at my desk, struggling to write my weekly editorial as I endure the worst heartburn of my life.

Maybe it was the burger I had at the casino with Julia over the weekend, or maybe it was the shawarma wrap and fries I had last night, or maybe this is just what getting older feels like now. Whatever the reason, my 36th years on this planet if off to an inauspicious start.

And it's not just the heartburn. While Julia and I were on our honeymoon, I woke up after a relatively decent night's sleep – the bed was comfortable and I didn't toss and turn too much throughout the night – and when I rolled over to get out of bed, I learned I had pulled a muscle in my shoulder at some point in the night.

How I pulled that muscle and why it didn't wake me up when it happened still eludes me, but it took a whole week of massage and muscle relaxants before it started to feel better. While it's not the first time I've pulled a muscle in my sleep, this was, by far, the longest it's taken to feel better.

And speaking of long recovery times, I recently signed on with a personal trainer to help me get back into exercising regularly at the gym. Life had gotten in the way of my regular workout routine – a wedding and a honeymoon will do that – and it had been a while since I had seen a treadmill.

As it always is, the first day back at the gym was intense. My trainer pushed me through the workout, which was relatively mild compared to the workouts I did when I was younger, but by the end of it, my legs were shaking and I could barely get back downstairs to the change room.

What followed was four whole days of muscle pain in my legs, forcing me to take stairs one at a time and utter the least subtle "old-man" groan you've ever heard every time I had to get up from the couch.

Again, this was the longest recovery time I've ever experienced following a return to the gym. Sure, I fully expected a day or two of pain at most, but four days straight was brutal.

Luckily, I've since regained my stamina, and my legs, arms and chest muscles are feeling better after each successive workout, though I have realized I really shouldn't be pushing myself as hard as I did when I was younger.

I guess the lesson here is I need to start paying attention to my own physical limitations, whether it's the food I eat or how hard I push myself at the gym. I've also learned stretching is key, not just before and after exercise, but also before I go to bed at night and when I wake up in the morning.

I might be getting older, but at least I can mitigate my physical decline just a little.

Bravo

We have 3 Bravos this week

1) Bravo to the parents who bring their kids to the arena to enjoy the games and actually supervise them. Letting them run wild, as we sometimes see, is an accident waiting to happen. Have fun but be safe.

2) Bravo to the Town of St. Marys employees and volunteers who work so hard throughout the year to make our town's many special events run smoothly.

3) Bravo to Mrs. Fraser from Little Falls School for a great Remembrance Day service and to all of the teachers as the kids were so well behaved.

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

"While Russia and Belarus are supporting this illegal and unjustified horrific war in Ukraine, as long as that's going on, there will be none of those athletes competing for their countries in Canada."

- Prime Minister Mark Carney on Nov. 4, denying Russian and Belarusian teams a place in the upcoming World Junior Hockey Championships held in Canada.

Overheard AT THE COFFEE SHOP

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At Nvidia, two Huangs don't make a right.

I guess Microsoft will have to change their product to Office 364.

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!

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Thoughts OF THE WEEK

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Being told you're appreciated is one of the most uplifting things you can hear.

The older you get, the more you realize peace is worth more than success.

Your children need your presence more than your presents.

Most of what stresses you today will not matter years from now.

Downtown Late Night Shopping offers more chances to shop local this Christmas

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

All of that holiday shopping can be done in Downtown St. Marys during Late Night Shopping events leading up to Christmas.

The Downtown St. Marys Business Improvement Area (BIA) will host Late Night Shopping events every Thursday beginning Nov. 26 until Dec. 17 from 5-7 p.m. There will be 22 local businesses participating in the initiative.

"Grab your friends, grab a hot chocolate, maybe have dinner downtown and stay out and do some Christmas shopping," said Jennifer Dungo, owner of O'Grady's clothing.

Dungo came up with the idea after several customers said they had to shop out of town for Christmas as they get off work at the same time most downtown businesses close at 5 p.m. The Late Night Shopping events had 19 participating businesses last year.

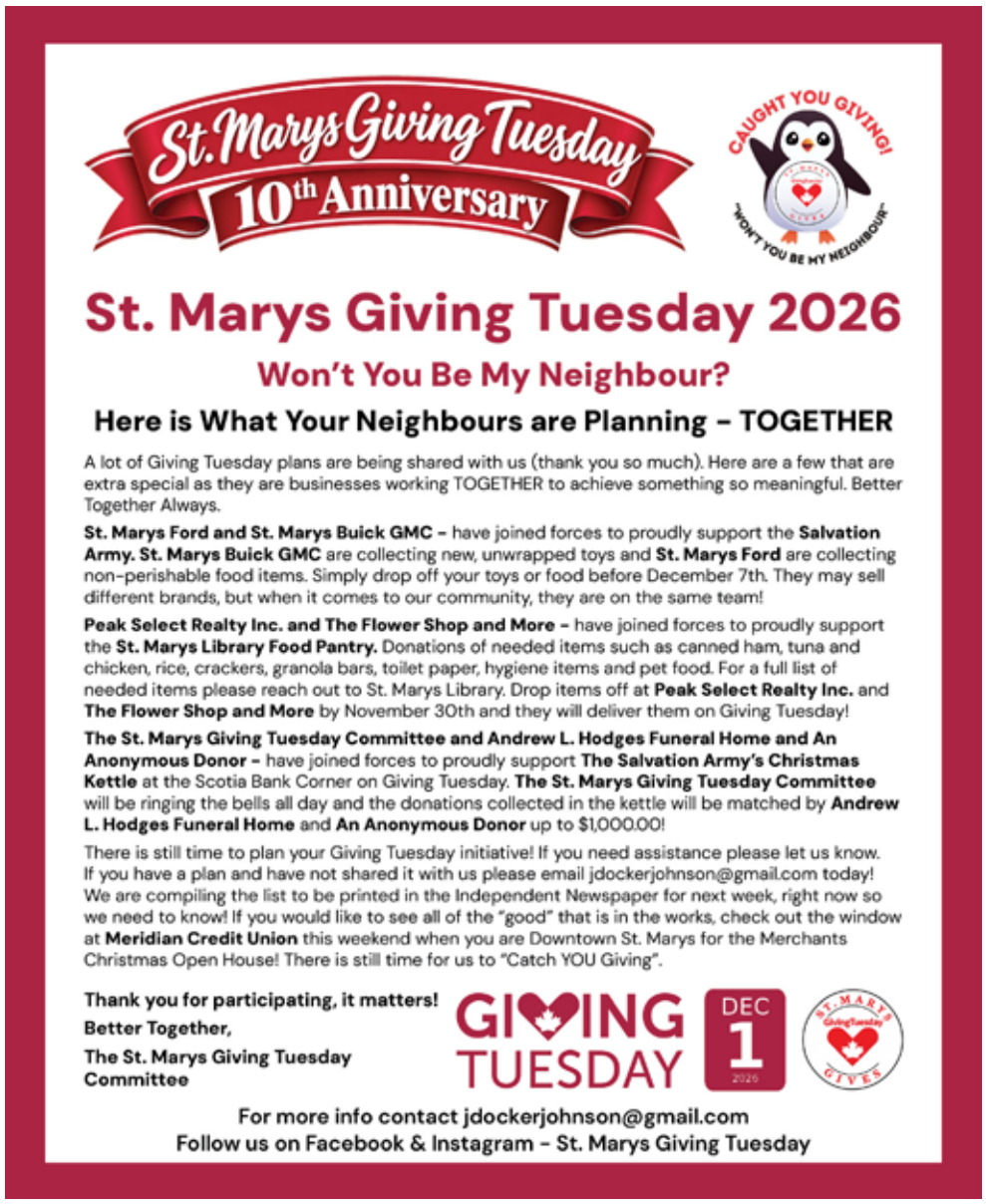
"We had so much snow so there were some nights where it was a little quieter than we hoped for initially, but I think it was just nice to have something over the Christmas season," she said.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses (CFIB) said that for every dollar spent at a local business, 66 cents stays local, compared to 11 cents for every dollar spent at multinational corporations.

"It's so important to shop local, to support our local businesses who work so hard all year long to provide amazing stores and amazing things for our town and for our downtown. There's more than enough that we don't have to leave St. Marys to get all of our Christmas shopping done," Dungo said. "I also think it does really support local because a lot of our businesses that are in downtown are also community organizations and non-profit organizations and there's so many good things that they do over and above just what they offer in their store day-to-day."

The Downtown St. Marys Facebook and Instagram pages are also posting reels featuring participating businesses, so Dungo encourages everyone to check out and interact with the posts online.

"It's just a fun way to check out a new business that you didn't know about," she said.



STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



St. Marys Craft Show

November 21 | 9 AM - 3PM | Pyramid Centre

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

Questions? (519) 284-3272



Housing & Homelessness Education Session

Join community outreach worker Jade Orquin for an information session on housing and homelessness in Perth County. Learn about current trends, barriers to housing, available supports and ways community members can help those experiencing hardship.

Nov 25 | 10:15-11:15 | Friendship Centre



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

Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade: Nov 20
Downtown St. Marys Merchant Open House: Nov 20-22
St. Marys Craft Show: Nov 21
Giving Tuesday: Dec 1
WinterLights Night Market: Dec 4-5
St. Marys Museum Holiday Open House: Dec 6

discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays



Shower Program

Pyramid Recreation Centre

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Senior of the Week



Our seniors of the week are twin sisters Sharon Haynes and Shirley Pite, who celebrated their 75th birthday on Nov. 12. They were the first twins born at St. Marys hospital and grew up here as well. Shirley, who lives in Sarnia, has been married for 54 years. She has two sons and five grandchildren. Sharon was married for 41 years. She has two sons, three grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Shirley is an avid Sarnia Sting Hockey fan.

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

Perthstone Kitchen's Optimus Prime burger supporting United Way outside of Ultimate Burger Battle

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Perthstone Kitchen's Jess Kelly and chef Jason Thorne's burger special for November may not officially be a part of the United Way Perth-Huron Ultimate Burger Battle, but it will still support the community.

Perthstone Kitchen will sell the Optimus Prime burger throughout the rest of November and donate $2 from each burger sold towards United Way Perth-Huron. The burger features locally produced beef, prime rib, pork bacon, mushrooms from Edye Farms, hot banana peppers, horseradish, garlic aioli, Dijon Mustard, lettuce, Delmar barbecue sauce and three kinds of cheese.

So far, the Optimus Prime Burger has been a hit with customers.

"We bring it out and it's a beast," said Thorne. "It looks like it's a big burger, so we bring it out to the table and they're like 'Wow,' and then 'Wow, this is an 11/10.' "

Several United Way chapters in November are participating in the Ultimate Burger Battle, where local restaurants create a special burger to be sold throughout the month as part of a fundraiser for United Way. United Way Perth-Huron has several restaurants in Stratford and area participating for the second annual Ultimate Burger Battle.

Thorne said he tries his best to keep up with the latest fundraisers and other community initiatives, but found out about the Ultimate Burger Battle after the fact. Still wanting to support the United Way Perth-Huron, he created the Optimus Prime burger and is still donating a portion of proceeds towards the organization.

"It's about being a good person, doing a good thing," he said. "My philosophy in life is do good, be good, get good, so if you follow those rules, you're going to have a pretty decent life."

Thorne would like to continue to show his community support by creating a monthly burger special for Perthstone Kitchen and a charity to support with the sale of the burger specials.



(PERTHSTONE KITCHEN FACEBOOK FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Throughout November, Perthstone Kitchen will sell the Optimus Prime burger featuring lots of locally produced ingredients. Although it's not an official Ultimate Burger Battle contender, the Optimus Prime burger will still support the United Way Perth-Huron as $2 will be donated to the organization for every burger sold.

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. Jiminy Cricket first appeared in what book?
2. The apostle Paul was called by Jesus on the road to which city?
3. What items did the Stamp Act levy a tax on?
4. What is the layering process of making pastry called?
5. Who is the villain in "A Nightmare on Elm Street"?
6. The 1976 Summer Olympics were held in which city?
7. What bird can swim but cannot fly?
8. Where do "Yoopers" live?
9. SpongeBob SquarePants lives in a house shaped like what?
10. What is Wales' national dish called?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31



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COMMUNITY CARE – IT'S WHAT WE BELIEVE IN.

Get a head start on holiday shopping at the 2026 St. Marys Craft Show

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Friendship Centre's St. Marys Craft Show annually attracts hundreds of local and area shoppers looking for unique, handmade items while supporting local artists, makers and seniors' programs in the community.

Following the incredible success of last year's event, the Friendship Centre is excited to welcome shoppers back for another creative showcase. This year's Craft Show will take place at the Pyramid Recreation Centre on Saturday, Nov. 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"The Craft Show is a wonderful way to kick off the holiday season while supporting talented local makers," says St. Marys senior services program coordinator Sarah Jones. "With more than 60 vendors and over 100 tables to explore, shoppers can discover unique, handcrafted gifts while supporting creativity right here in our community."

Shoppers will find a wide selection of one-of-a-kind, handcrafted items throughout the show. The Friendship Centre Quilters will also have a beautiful handmade quilt available for sale, offering visitors another opportunity to take home something special while supporting the Friendship Centre.

Admission to the craft show is by donation, and visitors are also encouraged to bring a donation for the local food bank.

Shoppers can make a day of their visit with a light lunch available for purchase on site. Proceeds from lunch sales will directly support St. Marys Senior Services and the programs and opportunities it provides for local older adults.

Questions about the event can be directed to Jones at 519-284-2340 ext. 621 or sjones@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Morely recognized with Kirkton-Woodham Optimist Club's Community Service Award



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Optimist Club of Kirkton-Woodham recently hosted approximately 100 people to honour Rob Morley, of Exeter, as the 33rd recipient of their annual community service award. This award is for lifelong volunteer work and other commitment to community. Morley has helped with the Kirkton-Woodham Community Centre, served on Usborne Township council and the Municipality of South Huron, and took on the role of Huron County warden for a year. He is an Optimist member, served on the South Huron Hospital Board and has been on the Ontario Economic Development Committee. The evening featured speakers on behalf of some of these organizations as well as tributes from family members to congratulate Morley on his years of service.



Raising awareness for men's health this Movember



Participants in the second annual Movember fundraising cornhole tournament, which raised $3,000 for the Movember movement in support of men's health. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

The month of November is known for remembering those who have served for our freedom and honouring our veterans. What the month is also known for is raising awareness of men's health through the Movember movement.

Movember first began in Australia in 2003 but became more internationally known in 2007. What originally started with a focus on prostate cancer has expanded to raise awareness of other men's health issues, including testicular cancer, mental health and suicide prevention. Though we have come a long way, there is still a stigma surrounding men's health that often stems from a fear of vulnerability.

St. Marys resident Jeff Taylor is a strong advocate for raising awareness of men's health and wants to spread the message that it is okay to speak openly about these issues and that early awareness and detection can make a huge difference.

Taylor has proudly grown his moustache every November to raise awareness and funds for the last 17 years. His message is one of great importance; men are more than capable of having those uncomfortable and difficult conversations, and it is okay to ask for help.

Regular screenings and understanding risk factors remain among the main priorities of the Movember movement. Though some of the moustaches work and some don't, it is all about getting the word out.

"It doesn't make you weak, and you should never be afraid to advocate for your health," Taylor said.

He and his good friend, Scott Taylor, have been spreading the message locally, having recently hosted the second annual men's health fundraising cornhole tournament, which raised $3,000 for the Movember movement.

A total of 48 local men, ranging in age from 20 to 78, came together to support the cause. The 24 teams were placed into four divisions with catchy, fitting names: Move More, Talk More, Connect More and Learn More.

Information on mental health, prostate cancer and other men's health topics was available at the tournament. Taylor receives help from his family, friends and local businesses on tournament day and is very grateful to everyone who steps up to support the event and the cause.

Taylor and his closest friends have also started a men's yoga group that meets twice a week. Though the group is not currently looking for new members, the hope is the program can expand one day.

Whether it is to be more social, get people out of their homes or improve flexibility, the group was started to bring men together and encourage those important conversations in a welcoming, comfortable space.

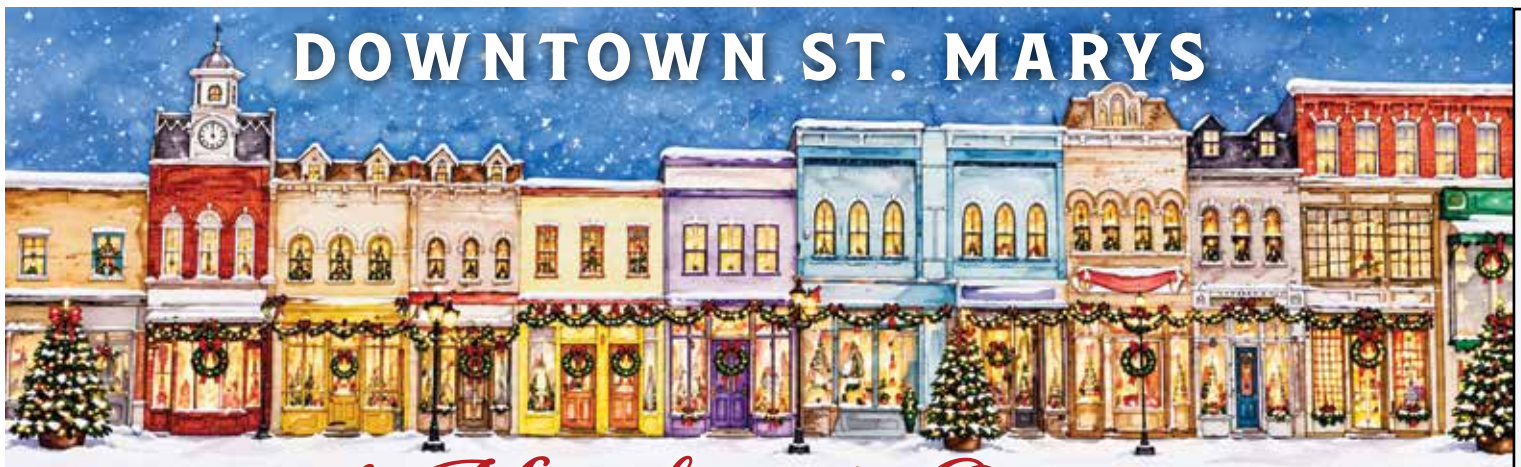
Anyone wishing to donate or learn more about Movember and the impact the movement is making on men's health can visit www.movember.com.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Mike Morning and Max Smith were the winners of this year's Movember fundraising cornhole tournament. From left are tournament host Scott Taylor, Morning, Smith and tournament organizer Jeff Taylor.





Annual Merchants' Open House

NOVEMBER 20, 21 & 22

Enjoy a festive weekend of local shopping, seasonal food and drinks, horse-drawn carriage rides, and visits with Santa & Mrs. Claus! Discover special offers, giveaways, discounts and in-store promotions, including tax-free shopping at select businesses.

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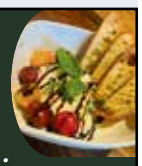
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St. Marys council approves agreement clarifying roles and responsibilities of downtown BIA

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

With a new term of council and a new downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) board on the horizon, the Town of St. Marys has approved a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at clarifying the roles and responsibilities of both organizations.

At its Nov. 10 meeting, council unanimously approved the four-year agreement, which was previously endorsed by the BIA board at its Oct. 5 meeting.

According to director of culture, tourism and engagement Amy Cubberley, work on the MOU began in late 2025 when tourism and events manager Kelly Deeks-Johnson identified an opportunity to better define the working relationship between the town and BIA ahead of the 2027-2030 term.

Drawing on best practices from the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association and discussions with BIA chair Megan Feeney, staff developed an agreement covering everything from governance and financial administration to downtown beautification, seasonal decorations, municipal assets and communications.

"It just outlines everything in the relationship between the Town of St. Marys and the BIA, kind of ranging from governance support to who's responsible for garbage bins to seasonal decorations," Cubberley told council.

Under the agreement, the town will continue providing administrative support, including financial filings, collecting the BIA levy and assisting with meeting agendas and minutes, while the BIA retains responsibility for its budget, promotional activities and downtown events.

The town will also remain responsible for waste receptacles and wayfinding signage, while the BIA will take the lead on seasonal decorations. Responsibilities for maintaining, repairing and replacing downtown streetscape assets will be established collaboratively.

During the BIA's Oct. 5 discussion, board treasurer Dan Troyer emphasized the importance of establishing maintenance and storage arrangements before purchasing new assets.

"That's a conversation that should happen upfront before the item is purchased, is what's the maintenance plan and what's the storage plan?" Troyer said.

Feeney agreed the agreement should strike a balance between ensuring downtown investments are worthwhile and allowing future boards flexibility in their decisions.

"The lifespan of whatever item we're purchasing relative to the cost will also allow the freedom and flexibility of a new BIA to replace them as they see appropriate," Feeney said.

The MOU also designates the tourism and events manager as the primary contact between the BIA and town staff and calls for at least one annual collaborative meeting between council and the board.

Cubberley emphasized the agreement complements the BIA's existing governance bylaw rather than replacing it and does not diminish the board's independence.

She said staff are already seeing benefits from having responsibilities more clearly defined.

Current deputy mayor and mayor-elect Brogan Aylward, who also serves as council's representative on the BIA board, thanked staff for their collaborative efforts.

"I think that setting out these organizational properties will be only beneficial going forward, and I'm happy that we've kind of tidied it up before the end of the term," Aylward said.

Coun. Jim Craigmile agreed, noting the importance of establishing clear expectations before new representatives take their seats on the BIA board.

"I think that's extremely important that the memorandum is already there so that everybody can work off ... exactly what the roles are," Craigmile said.

The agreement carries no immediate financial implications and will take effect once signed by both parties.

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The Town of St. Marys raises the Giving Tuesday flag ahead of Dec. 1

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

St. Marys council declared Tuesday, Dec. 1, as Giving Tuesday.

It is a day that encourages people to do a good deed and to help others. Many businesses, service clubs and individuals have joined in the initiative of giving back.

As of Monday, Nov. 16, there have already been 50 participants signed up to take part in Giving Tuesday. Why? Because it makes us smile and feel good to share with those less fortunate or just to show our generosity.

The Giving Tuesday flag was raised on Monday at the town hall. Watching on was Nancy Wojcik's Grade 3/4 class from Holy Name of Mary School joining Mayor-elect Brogan Aylward and Giving Tuesday committee member Julie Docker-Johnson.

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(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Pictured from left, Giving Tuesday committee members Jackie Cousins and Julie Docker-Johnson, Mayor-elect Brogan Aylward and Giving Tuesday committee member Julie Shackleton posed for a photo on Monday morning at the Giving Tuesday flag raising ceremony.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Mayor-elect Brogan Aylward took the time to explain to Nancy Wojcik's Grade 3/4 class from Holy Name of Mary School the purpose of Giving Tuesday and how important it is to help others and give back to the community.

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St. Marys remembers with annual cenotaph service



There was a great turnout on Wednesday, Nov. 11, at the Ceremony of Remembrance put on by the Town of St. Marys. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, many observe a moment of silence to remember and honour those who have served.

Like the Town of St. Marys, many cities and towns across the country hold Remembrance Day services. Many people from our community met at the cenotaph to remember and pay respects to the fallen veterans who fought for our freedom.

The service was led by outgoing Mayor Al Strathdee with prayers and readings from Rev. Robert Lawson, "In Flanders Fields" read by Perth-Wellington MP John Nater's daughter, Ainsley Nater, and messages given by Perth South Mayor Perth South Sue Orr and St. Marys Mayor-elect Brogan Aylward.

"The Last Post," two minutes of silence, "Lament" and "Rouse" were solemnly observed. Lawson gave the Benediction followed by the laying of wreaths.

The crowd sang "God Save the King" and "O' Canada." Afterwards, the veterans, local dignitaries and members of the public were invited to lay their poppies on the cenotaph out of respect.

The Town of St. Marys thanks the following for participating in the service: Perth Regiment Veterans St. Marys Branch 236 Royal Canadian Legion, Army & Navy Air Force Veterans Club, Perth Regiment Veterans, Rev. Robert Lawson, Mayor of Perth South Sue Orr, Ainsey Nater on behalf of MP John Nater and Jeff Bell on behalf of MPP Matthew Rae.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The Legion Colour Guard marches away after the Remembrance service.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Veterans were invited up to lay poppies at the cenotaph at the end of the service.





HOLIDAY SEASON IN ST. MARYS

Embrace the season's spirit and discover events and festivities hosted by the Town.

WinterLights Display
Nov 20, 2026 - Jan 1, 2027 | Milt Dunnell Field | 5 - 11 PM

St. Marys Craft Show
Nov 21, 2026 | Pyramid Recreation Centre | 9AM - 3PM

Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade
Nov 20, 2026 | Starting at PRC | 7PM

Downtown St. Marys Merchants' Open House
Nov 20 - 22, 2026 | Downtown St. Marys | Various Times

WinterLights Night Market
Dec 4-5, 2026 | Milt Dunnell Field | 5 - 8PM

Holiday Lights Tour
Nov 20, 2026 - Jan 1, 2027 | Various Locations

St. Marys Museum Holiday Open House
Dec 6 | St. Marys Museum | 2 - 4 PM

Free Skates & Swims
Various dates and times | Pyramid Recreation Centre | Facebook.com/pyramid.centre

Community Commons Open House
Nov 28 | 14 Church St. N | 1PM

Holiday Events at the Friendship Centre
Various dates and times | Friendship Centre | 519-284-3272

Holiday Camps at the PRC
Dec 21 - 23 & 28-30, 2026 | Pyramid Recreation Centre | Register via ActiveNet

Holiday Events at the Library
Various dates and times | St. Marys Public Library | Facebook.com/StMarysPublicLibrary

DiscoverStMarys.ca/HappyHolidays

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Rotary introduces a new approach to working with local businesses

ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS

Contributed Article

For generations, St. Marys businesses have supported the Rotary Club through sponsorships, fundraising events and community projects. Now, the Rotary Club of St. Marys is introducing a new approach that brings those relationships together through a year-round Business Partners program.

The new Business Partners program is part of Rotary Partners, an initiative designed to strengthen the relationships between Rotary, local businesses and the community they serve.

Rather than asking businesses to sponsor individual events or activities, Rotary is inviting them to become annual partners, helping support the club's work throughout the year.

It's a change in approach, but not in purpose. Rotary will continue organizing community events, supporting young people, undertaking local projects and responding to needs as they arise. What changes is the way businesses can participate in making that work possible.

Building stronger relationships

For more than 100 years, the Rotary Club of St. Marys has worked alongside local businesses, organizations and community leaders to strengthen the community.

Business support has played an important role in that work, helping Rotary undertake projects and initiatives that create lasting benefits.

The Business Partners program builds on those relationships by offering a more comprehensive way for businesses to become involved.

Instead of connecting their support to a single event, businesses can contribute to Rotary's overall community impact, knowing their involvement helps make a wide range of projects, programs and activities possible.



Events will continue to be an important part of Rotary's work. Under the new model, however, event recognition becomes one component of a broader, year-round relationship with Rotary.

Recognition throughout the year

The Business Partners program offers five annual Partner levels, beginning at $250.

Each level provides recognition opportunities designed to acknowledge the businesses whose support helps make Rotary's work possible.

All Business Partners receive a digital Partner badge and recognition on Rotary's annual Partner recognition display. Depending on their Partner level, additional opportunities include recognition in community impact stories, invitations to selected Rotary events and Speaker Series dinners, and recognition through Rotary's website and community activities.

The program recognizes that businesses differ in size, priorities and the ways they choose to support their community.

Rotary welcomes conversations with businesses about Partner levels and the recognition opportunities that best reflect their involvement.

Importantly, Business Partners are not simply purchasing advertising or sponsoring individual events. They are becoming part of a network of organizations committed to strengthening their community through an ongoing relationship with Rotary.

Become part of the story

Strong communities are built through cooperation. Businesses contribute not only through the products and services they provide, but also through their willingness to invest in the places where their employees, customers and families live.

The Rotary Club of St. Marys invites local businesses and organizations to learn more about the Business Partners program and consider becoming part of this new approach to supporting the community.

Information about Partner levels, recognition opportunities and how to get involved is available at rotarystmarys.ca.

Businesses are also welcome to contact Rotary directly at partners@rotarystmarys.ca to begin a conversation.

Together, we can do more.

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Celebrate the holiday season in St. Marys

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The holiday season is almost here, and St. Marys is ready to celebrate with festive traditions, local shopping, family activities and events throughout November and December.

The festivities kick off Friday, Nov. 20, with the Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade. The parade departs from the Pyramid Recreation Centre (317 James St. S.) at 7 p.m. and follows its traditional route north on James Street, west on Queen Street through downtown, and ends south on Water Street.

The celebration continues during the Downtown Merchants' Open House from Nov. 20-22, when residents and visitors can shop local while enjoying promotions, giveaways and festive activities downtown.

Holiday shoppers can also stop by the St. Marys Craft Show on Saturday, Nov. 21, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC), featuring more than 100 vendors offering unique gifts and handcrafted treasures.

Experience the magic of WinterLights

Beginning Nov. 20, more than 100 WinterLights displays will illuminate Milt Dunnell Field nightly from 5-11 p.m. through Jan. 1, 2027.

The popular WinterLights Night Market returns Dec. 4 and 5 from 5-8 p.m., featuring artisans, food trucks, free horse-and-wagon rides, s'mores by the fire and more. A free shuttle will also connect Milt Dunnell Field with the King Family Christmas House, where children can deliver their letters to Santa and enjoy hot apple cider.

There's more to enjoy all season long

Holiday activities will continue throughout St. Marys in November and December. Residents can look forward to festive Library programs, Friendship Centre celebrations, EarlyON activities, Holiday Camp and sponsored skates and swims.

Highlights include the Community Commons Open House on Nov. 28, the St. Marys Museum Holiday Open House on Dec. 6 and free community-sponsored swimming and skating opportunities throughout the holiday break.

Give local this holiday season

The holidays are also a great time to support the people and places that make St. Marys special. Consider giving St. Marys Money, a local gift certificate or experience, or something special from one of St. Marys' shops, restaurants and attractions.

With events and activities happening throughout the season, there are plenty of reasons to celebrate.

For more information about holiday events, activities and festive experiences, visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays.

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St. Marys Independent SPORTS

Lincolns' Alumni honours five teams from the 1980s

These teams helped turn the franchise around in a big way



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

The St. Marys Lincolns' Alumni Group presented a cheque for $3,000 to the Lincs' hockey club last Friday night at the Legion. The money is earmarked for the new ceiling light in the Lincolns' dressing room. Making the presentation to Lincs' president Brandon Boyd, centre, are Alumni vice-president Brian Hughes, left, and Alumni committee member Rick Fifield. Hughes Electrical Solutions also donated their time and efforts to install the impressive ceiling light.



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

The St. Marys Lincolns' Alumni Group honoured five teams from the 1980s last Friday night at the Royal Canadian Legion and the PRC. These teams (1983 to 1988) significantly turned the Lincs' fortunes around after several losing seasons in the late 1970s and early 1980s. After dinner and a program at the Legion, former members of these Lincoln teams (players, coaches, trainers, executive) were introduced individually on the ice, and then given a tour of the Lincs' dressing room.

PAT PAYTON

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Lincolns' Alumni Group honoured five teams from the 1980s last Friday night at the Royal Canadian Legion and the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC).

These teams (1983-1988) significantly turned the Lincs' fortunes around after several struggling and losing seasons in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Sometimes it doesn't take long for things to start trending in a positive way, and I believe the lion's share of the credit goes to three men in particular – general manager Angie Nigro and coaches Jeff Van Vliet and Scott Graham. The Lincolns had brought in Nigro in the early 1980s to run the hockey club, and he often told the local newspaper that he had a three-year plan to turn the team into a contender. His prediction proved to be right on.

The 1983-1984 season was a pivotal year for the franchise. Lincs posted a solid 28-13-7 record to finish third overall in the Western standings. The team also won a playoff series for the first time in six seasons, sweeping Strathroy in the quarter-finals.

Going from last place to third in just one season, this Lincolns team brought a lot of respectability back to the organization. I also got to witness something very special that 1983-1984 season. Defenceman Paul Kalbfleisch finished third overall in league scoring with 43 goals and 92 points. His points total for a defenceman is a league record that still stands to this very day. He was also named league MVP.

Kalbfleisch's outstanding season also placed him on the NHL radar, and in the fall of 1984, he was invited to the New Jersey Devils' training camp right out of junior B hockey.

Special team, special season

The next season, 1984-1985, was a very special year for the Lincolns' franchise. It was the third year in Nigro's three-year plan, and as he predicted, it produced a league championship – the first in nine seasons for St. Marys.

A couple of 16-year-old rookies that season included centre Tony Crisp and goalie Scott Luce, sons of former Lincoln greats Terry and Don, who went on to play in the NHL. A couple of other big additions to a solid nucleus were goalie Don Grasby and high-scoring freshman Lonnie Loach.

After finishing just two points out of first place with 31 victories, St. Marys knocked off Chatham, Sarnia and London to capture the league title. I will always remember the hockey fever the Lincs brought to the town that spring of 1985, especially when they played the hated London Diamonds in the final. The whole town got behind the team, and the arena was packed every night.

That championship series against London featured some of the most intense, emotional Junior hockey I ever watched between two bitter rivals. I will always fondly remember March 8, 1985, when the Lincolns won Game 6, 4-1, to win the Western title on home ice in front of an estimated 2,400 fans. I remember being out on the ice and taking pictures of the Lincs hoisting the league trophy that night.

When championships are won, there are often individual achievements and honours that go with it. Don Grasby was named league MVP and Jeff Van Vliet was selected the league's coach of the year.

And in 21 playoff games that spring, rookie Lonnie Loach led the team with 23 goals and 43 points. In the major junior A draft in June, Loach was taken in the first round, third overall, by the Guelph Platers.

League champions

Looking back, the 1984-1985 squad was not only one of the best St. Marys teams I ever covered, but they're definitely one of the most-liked group of players that I ever got to be involved with. The town and the Lincolns' fans just fell in love with that team, and everybody knew every player on the team. It was a special group of guys, and a special season, and one I will always remember. I was happy to be a part of it, and over 40 years later, I still feel that way.

The Lincs went on to play St. Catharines in the provincial quarter finals and lost a hard-fought series in seven games. But, to me, it didn't diminish a great year, a season that again brought a lot of respectability back to the organization.

The following year, 1985-1986, the Lincolns struggled early in the season and were sitting in fifth place when a coaching change was made. The man they brought back to lead the hockey club was none other than Scott Graham.

After that season, Nigro told the newspaper he was optimistic going into the following season with as many as 15 players eligible to return. Nigro got busy in the off season and brought in several top-notch prospects to bolster the 1986-1987 team. They included Cory Keenan, Keith Whitmore, Scott Garrow, Gary Wenzel, Jeff McClenaghan and a trio of talented local skaters in Brett Seguin, Owen Lessard and Scott Shackleton.

Another player who joined the team early in the season was big forward Dan Bylsma, from Grand Haven, Mich., and he averaged more than a point a game.

First-place season

The 1986-1987 squad had a terrific season, finishing in first place with a 31-7-4 record (and not losing a home game in the regular schedule).

The team also scored 323 goals – an average of almost eight goals a game. Trent Andison led St. Marys in scoring with 53 goals and 91 points. He was one of four players who had over 70 points that year.

It was also the season that several Lincolns were selected to play for Team Ontario at the Canada Winter Games in Cape Breton. The Ontario squad lost just one game in the tournament but had to settle for the silver medals.

In the league playoffs, the Lincs met St. Thomas and lost a hard-fought semi-final series in six games to the Stars. After a first-place season, it was a bitter defeat for the Lincs as many people thought St. Marys had the best team in the province that year. Many also felt it was the series

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17

Lincolns' Alumni honours five teams from the 1980s

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

that pitted the top two teams in Ontario as the Stars would go on and easily beat Niagara Falls and win the Sutherland Cup that spring.

The fifth and final team the alumni honoured last Friday was the 1987-1988 team, with 14 returnees from the previous season. The Lincolns finished second overall with a 26-12-1-3 record and again advanced to the semi-finals before losing a gruelling seven-game series to Sarnia.

Dan Bylsma and linemate Scott Garrow led the team in scoring, and both players earned NCAA Division 1 scholarships in the U.S.

Lincolns have created opportunities

The St. Marys Lincolns have not only provided a great place to play Junior hockey but the team has provided opportunity as well.

Many players over the years have obtained U.S. scholarships, and many more have gone on to play major junior A hockey. Several have made it all the way to the NHL, after starting with the Lincs. Dan Bylsma and Scott Driscoll are two good examples.

After two seasons with the Lincolns and four years at Bowling Green University in Ohio, Bylsma went on to play several seasons in the NHL. He later became a coach in the NHL and currently has 398 wins – including playoffs – as an NHL head coach.

In his first season as an NHL head coach in 2008-2009, Bylsma guided the Pittsburgh Penguins to the Stanley Cup. Two years later, he was awarded the Jack Adams Trophy as coach of the year.

And Bylsma currently holds an NHL coaching record. He recorded 200 wins in 316 games coached – the fastest in NHL history!

28-year career in NHL

Another man who certainly deserves special accolades is Scott Driscoll.

After four solid seasons with the Lincolns, Driscoll went on to a 28-year career as an NHL linesman. And just three years after playing his last junior B game, Driscoll was already working in the best league in the world.

I think he would likely tell you that his path through St. Marys helped pave his way to a long career in the NHL. And Driscoll was not just a good linesman, but a very respected one as well.

In summing up, the five teams the Lincs' Alumni honoured last Friday won 133 regular-season games, tied 23 and added numerous playoff victories. From 1983-1988, St. Marys teams finished third, second, fifth, first and second, won a league championship, and advanced to the semi-finals three other times during that span.

It just shows how these teams helped turn the franchise around in a very big way, and brought stability and respectability back to the St. Marys Lincolns. The players, coaches, management, trainers, executive members and anyone involved with these teams can be very proud of that fact.

Alumni reunion notebook:

• From the 1983-1988 teams, former players, coaches, management and executive members and their spouses attended Friday's reunion at the Legion. Including the host alumni committee, about 60 sat down to dinner.

• During the program following dinner, the alumni group presented a cheque for $3,000 to Lincs' president Brandon Boyd, earmarked for the new ceiling light in the Lincs' dressing room.

• 519 Sports was at Friday's GOHL game and interviewed several former Lincolns as well as alumni group president Scott Graham.

• Guest speakers at the Legion included former captains Jeff Shipley (1982-1987) and Scott Driscoll (1985-1989). Alumni group president Scott Graham also spoke, as did Lincolns' president Boyd.

• Jeff Shipley, who was captain of the 1986-1987 team, said he was "extremely lucky" to have played for the Lincs and remembers being part of a "wonderful group of guys."

• Scott Driscoll said he was "thrilled" to be part of the Lincolns, and remembers the outpouring of support from former teammates to his family when their late son, Ryan, was ill.

• Scott Graham said he had a "great relationship" with the players he coached 40 years ago. He was on the coaching staff of all five teams honoured Friday night and said it was a "great opportunity" to coach with men such as Jeff Van Vliet and Danny Seguin.

• After on-ice introductions at the PRC, the players, coaches and executive members were given a tour of the Lincs' dressing room.

DCVI Junior Girls Basketball scores win in playoff quarters

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

A year of development was capped off with an exciting two-point victory for the St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls Basketball team's Huron-Perth playoff quarter-final against Mitchell.

The win, according to head coach Tim O'Connor, offered a direct comparison of the team's growth this season as the junior girls lost by double digits to the very same Mitchell squad earlier in the season.

"Mitchell beat us by 15 earlier in the season, and to come and bounce back on the road and get a win against a team that beat you that handily is a pretty good accomplishment for the kids," O'Connor said. "I think it is a tribute to the fact that they did improve steadily through the year, and it was overall a pretty good effort for us."

In their first meeting of the year, Mitchell won by a score of 26-11, with the Salukis taking their playoff quarter-final matchup 27-25. O'Connor noted their tenacity on the ball helped the junior girls produce more offensively while maintaining roughly the same level of defence.

"Defensively, we were pretty similar but we put some full-court pressure on them and created a few turnovers, and we were able to capitalize on that early. They also pressured us and got a few opportunities as well, but we hung on and battled through. Defensively, we were strong in the fourth quarter, and we just didn't give up any easy baskets. We got a good game from Chloe (Phillips). She's one of our Grade 10 girls, and she's played steadily down the stretch and got a few big baskets for us."

Phillips led the Salukis in scoring with 12 points, with Addison Jones adding eight points. Kyla Graham, Maya Brown and Abby Posthumous each scored two, and Akaya Hylton converted on one free throw.

Although the team was unable to advance in their semi-final game against Wingham, O'Connor credited the group with their commitment to getting better as a team of players so new to competitive basketball.

"The kids have been a pretty dedicated group this year," O'Connor said. "They're good at coming to practice, they are eager to learn and they're a young group. We were mostly grade nines this year. I think we had 10 grade nines and four grade 10s who were a bit inexperienced, but they did not get discouraged. A few losses here and there didn't stop us from coming to practice and trying to get better, so I think it's a tribute to their commitment and dedication."

O'Connor added the biggest area of improvement for the group this season, and the biggest aspect they will continue to work on before next season, will be their physical engagement.

"To be successful in a competitive sport, you need a bit of an edge to your game," said O'Connor. "You've got to learn to roll up your sleeves and give yourself permission to battle and to fight for loose balls. We saw improvement in that regard this season, and the kids are still learning to be comfortable competing in that way. Basketball can be a very physical game, and there are kids who came in transitioning from playing basketball to competing in basketball, and I think we've seen some growth there."

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U13 B Girls strike gold at Peterborough tournament

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The McKinley Hatchery U13 B Girls St. Marys Rock won the gold medal at the Peterborough Ice Kats Rep Tournament Nov. 6-8.

Head coach Dave Blake said the tournament win all started with an elite performance by the team's defence corps.

"They say defence wins championships, and that held true in more ways than one last weekend," said Blake. "Our defence is one of our strongest assets, and the girls really kept chances to a minimum, shots to the outside and really didn't allow anyone to get to those tough, high-danger areas of the ice. This let us control the game and let us play to our strengths.

Blake added the team's four defenders made significant contributions on both sides of the puck.

"Addison (Hudson), Emily (Chateauvert), Sam (Matheson) and Addison (Poetker) really played well," Blake told the Independent. "We also had nine of our 24 goals in the tournament scored from our defence, which was a great contribution over the weekend."

The Rock went a perfect four-for-four in the round-robin and didn't allow a single goal through their first four games of the tournament.

Blake said while the team had already secured a spot in the gold-medal game, the fourth round-robin game against a strong team from Smiths Falls gave the group a big confidence boost in their ability to overcome adversity.

"While we were already in the finals, it was a do-or-die game for Smiths Falls, and they came out strong and fast with urgency in their game. We like to play a style of game where we dictate the pace of play, and this game put us on our toes for the first period. The girls dug in, found their footing and really improved as the game went on, and I think it went a long way in showing them they can weather the storm, play that urgent, fast-paced game while still doing the things that make them successful. It was a great game, start to finish."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The McKinley Hatchery U13 B Girls St. Marys Rock won the gold medal at the Peterborough Ice Kats Rep Tournament Nov. 6-8. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Mya Grose, Alex Seivert, Jacklyn Kittmer, Jessica Zwambag, Grace Gallman and Hailey Wilson. In the back row, from left, are assistant coach Marty Rutledge, Addison Poetker, Lexie Sammut, Emily Chateauvert, Kylie Blake, Sam Matheson, Addison Hudson, Harper Hillman, Adelyn Laidlaw, trainer Jessica Chateauvert and head coach Dave Blake.

In the finals, St. Marys battled the Glengarry Highlanders, coming away with a 5-1 win to take the tournament's top prize. Jessica Zwambag scored two goals, while Addison Hudson, Kylie Blake and Grace Gallman each also found the back of the net.

"Glengarry was a much bigger team than us, and the girls started a little nervous in the finals, with a back-and-forth first period ending the first tied 1-1," Blake said. "We made a couple of adjustments after the first period to our attack to give us more time and space, which really paid off and let us take control of the game, scoring three times in the second. With the score in our favour, we switched to a defensive posture for the third period that really trapped Glengarry in their end and didn't give them any opportunities to make a comeback."

According to Blake, the team started showing significant progress in several key areas the group had been working on going into the weekend.

"Puck movement and team play continues to be a work in progress as they develop, but you could start to see glimpses of what we have been working on in practice starting to shine through in their gameplay," Blake said.

"This was also our second tournament of the year, and after coming just shy of a gold medal back in September, you could really see in the final game the girls take some lessons learned and apply them. After the tight first period, they didn't back down; they kept playing their style of play and never let off the gas. It was a determination to finish that really led to the win in a game they were determined to settle for nothing less."

Blake described what he hopes the tournament victory does for the team as they continue their season.

"Hopefully, the win keeps building confidence for the girls, not only as a team, but also in their individual play," said Blake. "When confidence is high, they feel like they can do a lot on the ice, which leads to improved play and development. Having gone through the struggle of losing a final earlier in the year, and now getting over that hump, I'm excited to see what the rest of the season holds as they play with renewed confidence and keep building and developing their game."

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Six DCVI runners compete at OFSAA cross-country meet



(MARK DEWAN PHOTOS)

St. Marys DCVI sent six runners to the OFSAA Cross-Country Championship Nov. 9 in Sudbury, all putting forward very strong efforts. Pictured from left to right are Charlie Bender (#2639), Quintin Steffler (#4049), Will Richardson (#2641), Volker Fraser (#2640), Andrew Seebach (#2642), and Hayden Barker (#2638). Bender had the highest finish of the St. Marys contingent, placing 16th in the senior boys' province-wide event. Steffler finished 40th in the para mixed competition. St. Marys' junior boys ended their race in sixth overall as a team, with Richardson taking the 36th spot, Fraser coming in 45th, Seebach finishing 91st, and Barker placing 161st.

Seven St. Marys bowlers compete at YBC Championship



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

On Nov. 15, seven St. Marys bowlers competed in the Youth Bowl Canada (YBC) Championship Singles Tournaments. The St. Marys Bowling Lanes was the site of the bantam tournament. First-year bantam bowlers Athena Boyd and Brendan King, pictured on the left along with coach Helen Brockman, both bowled over their averages in all five games. Boyd bowled 11 points over her average and placed fifth, while King bowled six points over his average and placed eighth. The junior tournament took place at Victoria Bowl in Kitchener. Pictured in the middle, from left, are Leia Slaney and James Van de Gevel, who were the St. Marys junior competitors. Van de Gevel bowled 15 points over his average over five games, and rolled a game of 214 points and placed fifth. Slaney bowled 10 points over her average and placed fifth. Pictured on the right, from left, are Nathan McKeen, Landon Ball, Natalie McKeen, and coach Michelle McKeen, who represented St. Marys at the senior tournament at the New Hamburg Bowling Lanes. Nathan McKeen finished fourth in a highly competitive field of 12 bowlers. He rolled 207, 218, 262, 228, and 180 for an average of 219, 36 points over his average over five games. Ball finished sixth with an average for the day of 192, 14 points over his average. In a highly competitive field of 16 bowlers in the girls' division, Natalie McKeen placed ninth.



Bottom falls out as Maroons end Lincs win streak

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

This is the way the St. Marys Lincolns' 15-game winning streak ends; not with a bang, but a whimper.

In a rematch from one week earlier, the Chatham Maroons picked up a 4-2 win over the Lincolns Nov. 13, largely due to a lacklustre second period and a downright dismal third.

Put simply by head coach Jeff Bradley, "The team that deserved to win won."

Fans who only watched the first period might have predicted a blowout win for the Lincolns, who led 2-0 at the end of one and totally controlled the first 20 minutes. Campbell Lehto and Devun Colebrook scored for St. Marys.

"In the first period, I thought we were awesome," Bradley said. "Had it not been for Gannon Hunter, that game could have been over after 20 minutes. I liked the way we protected the puck, I liked the way we defended, I liked the decisions we were making with the puck. I didn't think we were overly physical, but I thought we had the puck most of the period, so I can separate that a little bit."

Bradley explained what the team had picked up from their first meeting against the Maroons Nov. 6.

"From the first game against Chatham, we learned that using the middle and using weak sides without low support; it just wasn't going to happen. In that first game (Nov. 6), Chatham did a really good job of taking away the neutral zone, and as that game went on, it became more and more apparent that strong side was open and the simple up-the-board passes were open, and that was the plan going into the game (Nov. 13)."

Things started going wrong for the Lincolns in the second period, but the Lincs' bench boss refused to blame an approximately 14-minute stoppage to fix a pane of glass.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Kobe Nadalin makes a save during the St. Marys Lincolns' 4-2 loss to the Chatham Maroons Nov. 13. Nadalin made his OHL debut with the London Knights Nov. 11, making six saves in 10 minutes and 38 seconds, entering the game in relief of the Knights' starter, Brian Cooke.

"In the first, we did the simple, non-negotiable things right. In the second period, we got away from that almost immediately. The glass coming out had nothing to do with it. Both teams had the same delay," Bradley said.

"Right from the start of the second, our puck management went downhill, but even still, we only gave up six shots in that second period. So, although we didn't have much and didn't play our best, we were still in complete control of the game. Then, we let in a very soft goal that can't go in, and that changes the complete dynamic going into the third, going in up 2-0 versus up 2-1."

A long-range wrist shot by Aiden Edwards sailed through no traffic past goaltender Brogan Colquhoun, before another savable shot by Parker Nyitray got past the 20-year-old netminder 22 seconds into the third and tied the game at two apiece. Colquhoun was pulled after the game-tying goal.

Although entering the game with a record of 7-1-0 so far this season, Colquhoun has struggled to consistently find his game, posting a save percentage of 0.905 or higher in just three of his nine starts.

In his 10 appearances, Colquhoun has had only one stretch of back-to-back save percentages over 0.900, which came Oct. 23 against St. Thomas and Oct. 30 against Elmira; in the latter, Colquhoun played only 11 minutes and 24 seconds, coming in for Kobe Nadalin, who left with an injury.

While coach Bradley acknowledged Colquhoun's struggles, he was adamant that Colquhoun didn't bear all the blame for their second loss of the season.

"We haven't had a single game this year where we have needed our goaltender to steal us a game. We just need our goaltender not to lose us a game. We didn't play great, but we didn't give up high-danger scoring chances against one of the top teams in the league," said Bradley.

"Brogan has a job to do, and he didn't do his job, but he wasn't the only one. Other guys have jobs to do as well, and they didn't do their job either. Bad goaltending is like a disease. It can seep into a room, but this isn't that. Even though Brogan may not have played up to his standard, he's still 8-2. It wasn't Brogan's fault. Brogan was one part of it, but it wasn't Brogan's fault. As a team, we were terrible."

Bradley continued, saying the team delivered no pushback in the third after Chatham tied the game.

"In the third, when we gave up another goal, we expected a response. We expect a response when we switch goaltenders, and we didn't get a response. We weren't physical. We were nothing. We made it so easy on Chatham to win that hockey game. We talked about being hard to play against, being physical and being tough, and we were none of those three."

A turnover by Ryan Hodkinson led to an odd-man rush for the Maroons, and Eric Wood scored the eventual game-winning goal. Owen Miniotas later turned the puck over in the dying moments of the game, setting up Damon Stodola's empty netter.

The Lincolns did have a bright spot earlier in the week when Nadalin made his Ontario Hockey League (OHL) debut with the London Knights, entering the game Nov. 11 against the Guelph Storm in relief for London's starter, Brian Cooke. Nadalin made six stops in 10 minutes and 38 seconds.

Nadalin described suiting up for the Knights as a childhood dream.

"Going to the Knights games when you're younger and watching those guys, and then getting to play for them, it's been a dream and it was unreal," Nadalin told the Independent. "It's kind of hard to think because I remember playing a little tournament there when I was probably eight or nine years old, and I won Player of the Game and got to go out there for "O' Canada" with them, so it was obviously super cool to go out there on the ice and actually play as a Knight."

Record-setting season for St. Marys Tennis



(PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER RICE)

On Friday, Nov. 13, these four brave and somewhat crazy tennis players set the record for the longest season in St. Marys tennis history, playing two sets in sub-zero temperatures to beat the previous record set in 2024 by one day. Pictured from left to right are Andrea Macko, Josh McNeight, Peter Rice and Don Van Galen. The 2026 tennis season has been an exciting one with numerous new players joining the fun, and many exciting and competitive tournaments taking place since the opening of the courts in April. With unseasonably warm temperatures this week, maybe the season will continue.



MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Oliver Abley blasts a shot on net during last Saturday's Downie Optimist Club U9 MD Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Avery Parnham sends a shot on net during the Downie's Optimist Club U9 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Nick Ehogetz releases a wrist shot during last Saturday's Core Fuels U11 LL Boys Blue St. Marys Rock game.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Reiner de Boer fires a quick shot on target during the Core Fuels U11 B Boys St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Peyton Foley passes the ring forward during last Saturday's Cascades-St. Marys Kinsmen U14 B St. Marys Snipers game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Claira Cupskey loads up a shot during the Downie Optimist Club-St. Marys Cement U16 B St. Marys Snipers game this past Sunday.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: Festive hustle season is open; are you ready?

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Christmas isn't here yet, but the pre-holiday hustle season is officially open. Every year, I tell myself to slow down and actually enjoy the moment instead of getting overwhelmed, but rushing around is apparently just a core part of my festive mood.

Our town of St. Marys is already getting ready for the annual Christmas parade, and neighbours are putting up their decorations left and right. Wreaths are appearing on front doors, and fairy lights are turning cozy porches into little winter wonderlands. It is hard not to catch that joyful energy when you drive through downtown and see the community slowly coming together to celebrate.

Last year, a huge part of my holiday magic was packing a parcel full of gifts for my parents back in Ukraine. I remember carefully selecting small items, wrapping each one and writing cards in the hope that a piece of warm holiday atmosphere would make it across the ocean.

Unfortunately, I'm just not sure I can pull that off this year. The situation over there is brutal. My parents' critical infrastructure workplace was hit by a missile yet again. Now, their whole town is completely cut off from electricity and heat. On top of that, relying on the postal service is becoming a nightmare because sorting warehouses keep getting destroyed.

That's why I can't send Christmas presents this year; by the time a package finally would make it through, there might not even be a place left to pick it up. It is a sobering reminder of how differently people in other parts of the world are entering this season.

Speaking of logistics, I've definitely gotten spoiled by quick Amazon deliveries here in Canada, where a click of a button brings anything to your doorstep within a day or two. But out in the real weather, nature has its own delivery schedule.

I have no idea what kind of winter is waiting for us this year, but I'm keeping my snow shovel ready – both at home and at work. To be honest, I usually enjoy shoveling at the very beginning of the season. There's something peaceful and therapeutic about stepping outside after that first fresh snowfall, scraping the driveway and smelling the crisp, cold air before the morning traffic begins.

Even though freezing temperatures and heavy snow are far from my favourite things, I still have no desire to escape to a hot climate for the holidays. I know it sounds tempting to fly off to a sunny beach and skip all the local weather advisories, but back in my cabin-crew days, I learned the hard way that dramatic climate shifts don't make me happy. Flying back and forth between extremes usually meant coming home sick because my body just couldn't handle going from freezing cold to tropical heat in a matter of hours.

Don't get me wrong; I wouldn't mind if Canadian winters were a bit milder, with less of that bone-chilling frost. But given the choice, staying put in the cold is still the better option for me.

Or maybe I've just become more Canadian over time and the cold weather doesn't feel so terrible anymore. You learn to embrace the snow when you know there is a warm house, a hot drink and good neighbours waiting on the other side of it.

Either way, I can't wait to bundle up and take a long walk around town to admire all the holiday lights. Decorating for the season is definitely something Canadians excel at; they truly know how to make even the darkest, coldest nights feel bright, welcoming and full of hope.



(ALONA VASYLIEVA PHOTO)

Ready or not, the holiday countdown has begun in St. Marys, bringing bright lights, cold mornings and a deep appreciation for finding comfort right here.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Have you been wanting to peek inside 14 Church Street, the future home of the Community Commons? Now is your chance! Stop by the building on Saturday, November 28 at 1 p.m. for an open house and tour. While exploring the building, you'll learn about the Community Commons project and discover how the space will be transformed into a hub for connections, services, and opportunities for all residents. Interested in a private tour? Please contact the Library to speak with CEO Sarah Andrews.

Up This Week

Fri., Nov. 20: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 21: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mon., Nov. 23: Beginners Mahjong (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Teen Craft* (6-8 p.m.)

Tues., Nov. 24: Tuesday Book Club* (11 a.m.)

Wed., Nov. 25: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.), Adult Learning Digital Literacy Series* (5-7 p.m.)

Thurs., Nov. 26: Local Author Talk - Aaron Kyte*~ (7 p.m.)

*Registration Required

~Held at the Friendship Centre (317 James St. S)

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^Held at the Legion (66 Church St. N)



HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The first birth, marriage and death in St. Marys

MARY SMITH
Independent Columnist

"Firsts" have significance in history; we are taught about "firsts" in school. Who was the first European explorer to discover Canada? Which provinces were first to join Confederation? Who was the first prime minister? Many local history researchers also seem compelled to look for firsts. But it can be challenging. For the first decade of St. Marys' settlement, written records of births, marriages and deaths are scarce or non-existent. That makes it hard to verify some of the interesting claims of being first in these life events.

A well-known St. Marys resident, William Weir (1844-1921) enjoyed claiming that he was the first settler child born in this community. Weir is one of the eccentric figures that make local history entertaining. He was the youngest son of William and Margaret Weir who came from Scotland to Canada in 1843. He and his older brother, John, were successful drovers, raising cattle on a farm off Emily Street and shipping them to Great Britain. They were also involved in the local flax industry. In 1876, the Weir family moved into the large, limestone house that George Tracy had built two decades years earlier on Church Street South, the house that is now the St. Marys Museum. The Weir family named the surrounding property "Cadzow Park," after an estate they admired near their ancestral home in Scotland.

William Weir was a force in municipal politics. When the strength of the Water Street Bridge was questioned, he enclosed 20 of his fattened steers on its deck to prove that it could withstand heavy loads. He served many years on the Water and Light Board, forerunner of the Public Utilities Commission, and was responsible for installing the drinking fountain at the corner of Queen and Wellington Streets – the Weir fountain. He was mayor of St. Marys in 1916 and 1917, during the tensions of World War I. His strong connection to St. Marys makes him a good candidate for the first person to be born here. However, in 1844, his family were living on their farmstead north of St. Marys, just across the boundary line in Downie Township. Although the Weirs were oriented to St. Marys, conducting business here and attending the Presbyterian Church every Sunday, they did not actually reside within its boundaries until 1876, and by that time, William was 32 years old.

In the early 1840s, women in this area, including Margaret Weir, gave birth in grim conditions, in shanties or log cabins without medical assistance. If they were fortunate, a neighbouring woman might act as midwife. Otherwise, they delivered their babies alone or with whatever help their own family could provide. It is very possible that the first child born within the limits of St. Marys did not survive long enough to claim that distinction. And for their mothers, the real contest was to survive themselves and to keep their newborns healthy.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MUSEUM'S HISTORIC IMAGES COLLECTION, R. LORNE EEDY ARCHIVES)

The earliest known view of St. Marys is this sketch in 1842 by a visiting artist, George R. Dartnell. It may have been at this point where a bridge was being built, that the stone wrapped in the marriage licence was thrown across.

By the mid-1840s, missionaries from the main denominations began to visit isolated families in this area, offering sacraments, including baptism and marriage. As Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations were formed in St. Mary, births, marriages and deaths were properly entered in their registers. By 1857, the local newspapers also began publishing details of these events. But, according to a local story, found in the introduction to the 1879 Belden Historical Atlas of Perth County, the first marriage happened ca 1842 between John Walker and Mary (nicknamed Polly) Dudley. John Walker, a young man from Ireland, acquired Lot 20 in the Thames Concession from the Canada Company. Polly was the sister of John Dudley his neighbour on Lot 19.

A Methodist minister came from London to St. Marys to perform the wedding ceremony. But they also required a civil marriage licence, and so friends of the groom went off to Stratford to get the licence from a Justice of the Peace. The story continues: "While they were away, a violent storm arose and continued till the Thames was so full as to carry away in the flood the tree used as a bridge." When the groom's friends returned with the licence, the stream was so swollen that no one could cross – the bridal party were on the west bank, and the marriage licence was on the other side. Evening was coming and the young couple were determined to be married that day. But the minister would not proceed until he had seen the licence. "What was to be done? Happy thought! They could wrap the licence around a stone of a convenient size to give the whole sufficient weight and throw it across. No sooner thought than executed; and the pair were made happy, though their best man, or men, didn't get across the river in time to dance at the wedding."

The 1851 census (taken in 1852) records John and Polly Dudley on a farm in Blanshard and already the parents of five young children. The subsequent censuses of St. Marys and surrounding area do not provide any more clear details about John Walker and family. They apparently left this area for elsewhere in Ontario. Information from the Ancestry.com suggests that, as well as farming, John Walker became a Methodist Episcopalian circuit rider. He and Polly had six more children, making a total of 11 in their family – a very productive marriage indeed!

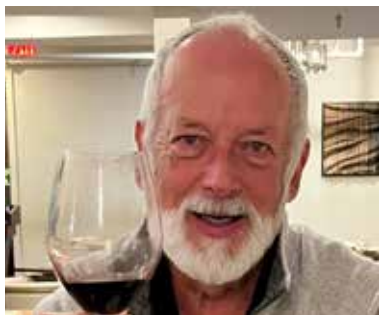
This story is retold by William Johnston in his 1903 History of Perth County but with much more romantic and lavish detail. In the conclusion of the story, Johnston wrote: "Never was such a marriage consummated in St. Marys. There were no pages on that occasion, no orange blossoms, no flower girls, no canopy of ambrosial, aromatic sweets. Aye, but it was not the less loyal, nor less happy that it was celebrated under the wider and more glorious canopy of heaven – God's heaven. What if there were no organ's soft swell in measured tones of the wedding march, was there not a more beautiful cadence in that rolling river, intermingled with birds' sweet songs!"

It is also difficult to determine the first death in St. Marys. The earliest records that have so far been found confirm burials that took place in 1847. But with infant and child mortality rates so high, it seems likely that, before that time, some local families had children die and they buried them, perhaps without markers. James Coleman who had property in the north ward, lost a daughter, Elizabeth, age 12, in 1847. Thomas Ingersoll, perhaps the first person to settle in St. Marys, also died here in 1847. Elizabeth Coleman and Thomas Ingersoll once had gravestones in the old cemetery on Elgin Street. These gravestones have not survived and today the only records are the inscriptions made by random visitors to these old burial sites – written down and preserved before the old cemeteries were "cleaned up" and made into a park. In Thomas Ingersoll's case, there is even an old photograph that shows the inscription on that stone clearly, but the grave marker of this significant man has vanished.

Of course, long before European settlers came to this part of Ontario, First Nations people celebrated the births of their children and mourned the deaths of loved ones. Their strong oral history traditions passed the stories of these events from generation to generation. While settlers brought many family stories to Canada from the "Old Country," they usually stayed within that family group. The newcomers had to rely on written records of vital events to preserve them into the future.

COUNTRY
Craft Show
Saturday, November 28th from 10-5
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☑ Lavender neck warmers, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings among other things!
Come on out and see all of us on
Saturday, November 28th from 10 am - 5 pm!
Light refreshments available in sitting room.
All crafters are able to do custom orders as well... just ask if you want something different than what you see at this show.
Event is downstairs. No wheelchair accessibility.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Trois Rivières - a nice surprise along the St. Lawrence



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

It doesn't require an extensive knowledge of French to figure out that the name "Trois Rivières" means "Three Rivers." That's good linguistics, but bad geography because this historic city's name is based on a 16th-century mistake.

In fact, there are two rivers. Here, the Saint-Maurice flows into the Saint Lawrence, but the mouth of the Saint-Maurice is occupied by several islands, splitting this river into three outlets. The first European visitors mistakenly took those three "mouths" to indicate three rivers.

This was just one of a plethora of facts, anecdotes and stories we heard during one of the finest historical walking tours I have ever experienced. Jean-Phillipe Marcotte of "Personare" was our guide as we strolled through the historic centre of Trois Rivières.

Trois Rivières is the second-oldest French-speaking city in North America, but it is not as well-known as the two larger cities located less than two hours away – Montréal and Québec City. Tourists tend to drive straight past Trois Rivières to get to the more popular destinations, but they are making a mistake.

Trois Rivières has a deep and rich history, reaching back long before written records to the time before Europeans arrived. But it's also a city that offers a lot of modern-day delights to travellers. We were both surprised and impressed.

But back to the history. There are statues and monuments throughout the city honouring the original European visitors to Trois Rivières, names that we remember from history class: Samuel de Champlain, Radisson, Groseilliers, La Vérendrye – all noted explorers with strong connections to Trois Rivières.

But my favourite was the monument to M. Laviolette, apparent founder of Trois Rivières. I say "apparent" because there is scant evidence of the illusive M. Laviolette. Our guide admitted that "we don't have a clue" who M. Laviolette is. In fact, "for a long time, Trois Rivières did not have a founder." But while the city was founded in the early 1600s (there had been French fur traders in the area since 1585), M. Laviolette was not acknowledged as the city founder until centuries later.

In fact, as Jean-Philippe told us with a laugh as we stood before the bust of M. Laviolette, it is generally agreed that even the name is not the real deal. It's probably a nickname; it translates as "The Violin."

But the rest of the story of Trois Rivières is undoubtedly more historically accurate. And that story unfolded as we walked around the surprisingly well-preserved historic parts of the city in spite of a 1908 fire that destroyed hundreds of homes in part of the city centre.

Although the fur trade was the original impetus that created most of Canada's historic cities, Trois Rivières soon had other enterprises on the go, as well. This was the site of what might have been the first forge in North America. Later, Trois Rivières became an important ship-building centre (a historic reality that has an echo in one of today's important economic drivers, the cruise ship port).

Later still, lumber mills dominated the local economy, which was temporarily good for employment and financial gain, but terrible for tourism because of the incessant odors created by the pulp and paper factories.

That business thrived for decades; massive numbers of logs were still being floated down the Saint-Maurice River until the mid-1990s.

Today, that business is almost entirely gone. But here's where Trois Rivières again emerges as an impressive community. On the site of some of the pulp and paper mills stands a state-of-the-art entertainment centre, the Cogeco Amphiteatre. The Amphitheatre has hosted performers ranging from Céline Dion, Bryan Adams and Burton Cummings to Cirque du Soleil. It's an impressive space, but in my historically focused opinion, it's not the most impressive building in town. That one was once home to nuns.

Trois Rivières is still home to dozens of historic buildings, and the city has a program that funds up to 50 per cent (capped at $40,000) of the costs of restoring homes to their original form. Many have taken advantage of this, and walking the streets of Trois Rivières can feel like journeying back in time.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Historic Trois Rivières: the Usuline Convent is shown at the centre of the photo, the former Anglican church in the right foreground.

The most impressive structure is probably the Ursuline Convent. The Ursuline nuns played a prominent role in the history of the city. Today, they no longer occupy the palatial building that once housed the convent, though there is still a small group of Ursulines in Trois Rivières. The order sold their convent, chapel, school and more to the city for $1 on the condition that the building could not be converted into condominiums. Instead, it houses a museum and classrooms for students ranging from kindergarten to university age.

Trois Rivières is a city of stories, ranging from its probably fictional founder to community-minded nuns to Ezekiel Hart (1770-1853), a Jewish entrepreneur elected to represent the city in Québec's legislative assembly, but who was not allowed to serve because he was a Jew. So, the city re-elected him, twice more.

And that's the kind of informed determination that has made this city what it is today – an often-bypassed destination well worth your time.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and Past-President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.



A statue honouring the perhaps fictional founder of Trois Rivières, M. Laviolette.



Quintessential old Québec.

Sudoku

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Solutions on pg. 31

Thorndale News

A section within the St. Marys Independent





Thorndale hosts Remembrance ceremony at cenotaph

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

A large crowd of approximately 100 people gathered at the Thorndale Cenotaph on the morning of Nov. 11 to remember the fallen soldiers of both world wars from the community.

Laura Langford led the service of reflection, prayer and song with the poignant bugle call of the "Last Post," and Rose Duffin providing the music for this service.

As part of this remembrance service, and a tradition since 2016, area resident Jodi McGuffin chooses a couple of names from the Thorndale Cenotaph each year, researches them and writes the story of their lives and service. As she has covered all of these names, this year, she wrote about nursing sister Ada Buckle of Thorndale, who served in World War I. Chris Tipping read her story to the gathering.

Before McGuffin described Buckle's life and service, she noted with the recent death of four young service men killed at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright in Alberta and others seriously injured, our thoughts should be with them and their families.

McGuffin's in-depth research on Buckle told the story of Buckle's education and service behind the lines, which could be just as dangerous as those serving at the battlefront. Buckle returned home but even though she survived the war physically, she suffered emotional trauma of war, as many did.

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Members of the Thames Centre Thorndale Fire Station paid their respects at the Thorndale Cenotaph during last Wednesday's Remembrance Day ceremony.

Bella Vita Aesthetics celebrates 20 years

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

"Twenty years. ... That's hard to believe. And I am very grateful for the continued support of this wonderful community," said Gillian Masse.

Masse owns and operates Bella Vita Aesthetics, a full-service skin health business located at 237 King St. in Thorndale. Over the years, she said there have been many changes in skin-care procedures and products, making it important for her to stay current with her education by attending various courses and workshops annually.

Masse said one noticeable change in the industry has been the marketing and promotion of skin beauty products through videos and advertisements targeting young girls and teens. She noted that many of these products contain harsh chemicals that can be damaging to young, tender skin, something she finds concerning.

As a result, she is seeing more young clients experiencing skin issues. Masse emphasized that education is key and that skin care is a two-way, committed relationship between herself and her client, working together to achieve healthy skin.

"I have grown with my business and become a successful entrepreneur," Masse said. "I love what I do every day, and my passion is just as strong today as it was when I opened Bella Vita. But I don't consider my success to be monetary. Success is helping my clients and seeing them achieve the results of good, healthy skin."

Bella Vita Aesthetics is a proud supporter of the I Love Thorndale business community. Visit www.ilovethorndale.ca for more information.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Gillian Masse, owner and operator of Bella Vita Aesthetics.



Riddles

What has a neck but no head, and wears a cap but has no hair?
A bottle.

What gets wetter the more it dries?
A towel.

What has one eye but cannot see?
A needle.

What can travel around the world while staying in one corner?
A postage stamp.

What has many keys but cannot open a single door?
A piano.

What has hands but cannot clap?
A clock.

What has a face and two hands but no arms or legs?
A clock.

What can you catch but never throw?
A cold.

What has cities but no houses, forests but no trees, and rivers but no water?
A map.

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

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Mrs Claus
Jolly
Sleigh
Red coat
Red hat
Reindeer
White beard
Saint Nick
Letters
North Pole
Naughty
Nice
Gifts
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The Sunset Diner

The **Riddle Kid** Presents
OF THE WEEK



Cyrus Rock (3)

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

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PET OF THE WEEK

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A healthy pet starts with prevention and regular checkups!

BELLA

Our Pet of the Week is Bella Dundas. Bella is a beautiful 11-year-old English Springer Spaniel who is loved by her family immensely. Bella loves people. She has happily settled into a routine where she waits on the couch for the Dundas's grandkids to come over. When the baby seat in the car is not occupied, it is Bella's go to spot, and she can be found proudly sitting in it.



Country Roots Fresh Market celebrates the season with annual Christmas open house



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

From left, Jaime Rodrigues, Alexander Larocque and Sarah Rutledge were among the local vendors selling handmade gifts during Country Roots Fresh Market's annual Christmas open house Nov. 14. Their creations included keychains, coasters, ornaments, sweaters and more.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

The greenhouse at Country Roots Fresh Market was filled with local vendors offering a variety of handmade treasures during the store's annual Christmas open house Nov. 14. Visitors also enjoyed outdoor Christmas arrangements, in-store samples, holiday menu offerings and more.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Kim Albert checks out one of the many items available at Country Roots Fresh Market during its annual Christmas open house Nov. 14. The store was filled with festive decorations, unique gifts and other seasonal offerings to help shoppers get into the Christmas spirit.

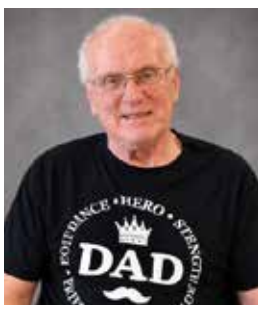






OBITUARY

Hoyles



Baxter A. Hoyles, formerly of St. Marys, passed away at AgeCare in Parkhill on Nov. 10, 2026 at the age of 70.

Beloved partner of Jane Cox. Father of Andy Hoyles, Adam Hoyles (Bee), Kristen Cox, and Kimberly Cox. Grandfather of Sadie Stacey (Matt), Hannah Hoyles, Rachel Hoyles, and Brody Cox. Brother of Bessie Hounsell (Cliff), Alex Hoyles (Marlene), Nettie Hoyles, Mary Kindree (Harold), the late Wilfred Hoyles, the late Nina Peterson (Rob), Drewie Hirst (Al), and Percy Hoyles (Shannon). Predeceased by his parents Albert and Irene Hoyles. Baxter will also be missed by the Clarkson and Cox families.

He worked in many factories during his life but was known for his work as Baxter The Handyman. Cremation has taken place.

A Celebration of Life took place on November 15, 2026 at the St. Marys Royal Canadian Legion. Memorial donations may be made to Chateau Gardens Residential Council (cheques mailed to AgeCare Parkhill, 250 Tain Street, Parkhill Ontario, N0M 2K0 atten: Michelle Bronsord.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

CELEBRATION

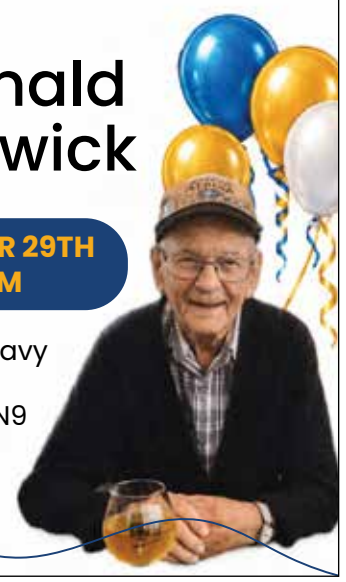


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CELEBRATION



Harold Douglas

is turning 80 on Nov. 21st

On Monday night he was presented the William Mercer Wilson medal from his fellow Masons at St. James Lodge No. #73 in recognition of his selfless service in the Ontario, Canada jurisdiction. Harold is the first winner of this award at the St. James Lodge, and it is a result of his hard work that he goes about in his quiet way.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY & CONGRATULATIONS!

WE LOVE YOU!

Connie, Lori, Lee, Chelsea, Preston, Wendy, Paul, Chloe, Jeff, Deanna, Brennan & Addison.

OBITUARY

Watkinson

Glen Watkinson died peacefully with family by his side on Saturday, November 14th, 2026 at 4:15 pm.

He leaves behind his loved wife Mary Watkinson, son Shawn, step-son Gary with his wife Melissa. Siblings Shirley Jordan and her husband Allan, Madeline Boon, Murry and his wife Pat, Louise Tanner and nieces and nephews. Brother-in-law Zoran and wife Karen, Dragan and niece Bobbi and her husband Jason. Special grandchildren Grace and Brock. Glen is predeceased by his parents John Watkinson and Irene (Milson), brother Gary and his daughter Lauren, Harold and brother-in-law Bob Boon and nephew Russel Jordan.

Glen will be missed by many of his "Fishing Pals." He enjoyed baseball, camping and fishing with his kids when they were small. A visitation was held at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, on Tuesday, Nov 17, 2026 followed by cremation. Memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Becker



Brian Becker passed away on Nov. 10, 2026 at the age of 69. He leaves behind is wife Anne and his two fur babies Lilly and Rosa. Brian will be greatly missed by his sister-in-law Jane Cubberly (Jim) and their children. There will be no funeral service. Cremation has taken place. Memorial donations may be made to a charity of choice.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.



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St. Marys Independent
Call 519-284-0041 or email us at info@stmarysindependent.com
ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS IN OUR DIRECTORY

CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED TO BUY

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

WANTED

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

FOR SALE

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

WANTED

$ Cash Paid $ for your RECORDS and LPs. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, Folk, Soundtracks, and more. Selectively buying CDs, Cassettes, Turntables, and Stereo Equipment. For more information: Diamond Dogs Music 114 Ontario St. Stratford / 226-972-5750

JUNK REMOVAL

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

FOR RENT

Unique mahogany panelled three bedroom apartment. Walk up. Prestigious downtown address in the old post office above Gilly's. Completely renovated new kitchen, bathroom, laundry & storage room (with washer & dryer). All utilities, water, electricity, AC, wifi included, huge rooftop balcony. Up to two parking spaces. Lease, References, first & last required $2000/ month. OBO. Available December, call 519-697-4985

FOR SALE

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

WANTED

Old firearms for $$$, especially Lee Enfield 303's, and older Winchester's, have P.A.L. I am local. Please call 1-867-993-3911 or email thirtypound@hotmail.com

WANTED

Mature woman seeks room to rent. Parking and access to kitchen needed. Will help with household chores. References available. Would also consider small suite or one bedroom apartment. Send email to mhlemails@gmail.com.

Herd Dispersal Live Auction Sale

of 135 Bred Cows/Heifers

Saturday November 21, 11:00am

to be held at 554447 Mono-Amaranth TLine, Mono, ON

Preview on day of sale, or by appointment

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

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

All Cows will be preg checked prior to sale.

Lunch Booth

Washroom Available

Terms & Conditions: Cash or cheque with proper I.D. on day of sale. Owner & Auctioneer will not be responsible for any accidents or loss on day of sale. All announcements on day of sale will take precedence over printed ads.

Auctioneers: Kevin McArthur (519) 942-0264

Scott Bessey (519) 843-5083

Email: mcarthurbessey@gmail.com

www.theauctionadvertiser.com/KMcArthur

- full listing & photos

THE WEEK AHEAD

SPONSORED BY: McDonald's St. Marys
752 Queen St. E., St. Marys
Founding and Forever partner of Ronald McDonald House

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

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 22

FRIDAY, NOV 20

- St. Marys Downtown Merchants' open house – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- WinterLights display begins at Milt Dunnell Field – 5-11 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- Stonetown Arts opening reception at Riverwalk Commons – 6-9 p.m.
- Kinsmen Santa Claus parade – Departs the PRC 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOV 21

- St. Marys Craft Show at the PRC – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Christmas boutique market at Thorndale Community Centre – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- St. Marys Downtown Merchants' open house – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Salvation Army Christmas toy drive at Canadian Tire – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. dart league – 12:45 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Stratford Warriors at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOV 22

- St. Marys Downtown Merchants' open house
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons – 12-5 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Elmira Sugar Kings at Dan Snyder Memorial Arena – 7 p.m.

MONDAY, NOV 23

- Jeremy Hansen Test Facility open house at Thorndale Community Centre – 6-8 p.m.

TUESDAY, NOV 24

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

WEDNESDAY, NOV 25

- St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at Western Fair Sports Centre – 7 p.m.
- Wholistic Health Care session on homeopathy at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre – 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV 26

- A.N.A.F. sausage on a bun – 12-1:30 p.m.
- St. Marys BIA late shopping event – 5-7 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. dart league – 6:45 p.m.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The Adventures of Pinocchio
2. Damascus
3. Paper Products
4. Lamination
5. Freddy Krueger
6. Montreal
7. Penguin
8. Michigan's Upper Peninsula
9. Pineapple
10. Cawl

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

Longest Rush Job

25 years ago (2001)

Cascade Cleaners has been serving St. Marys and area for 55 years. Stan Culbert has been with the business for 53 of those years. Culbert bought the business in 1949. Marlene Forman has 37 years of experience and has been Culbert's business partner since 1981. Culbert told the Journal Argus last week that they have had a pair of pants hanging in the back since 1951 - it was a rush order that someone didn't rush back for.

The Tourism Committee of St. Marys has come up with a bright idea to make the Christmas season in the Stonetown a little more festive. With support from the Town of St. Marys and the BIA, and the work of some hard-working elves, "The Lights of St. Marys" are well on their way to becoming a wonderful addition to the holiday season.

50 years ago (1976)

A suspect has recently been fingerprinted by OPP experts from Mount Forest in a move related to a break-in at Staffen's Food Market which was discovered last Sunday morning. Entry was apparently made through smashing a window right at the front entrance. Change in tills plus the contents of Muscular Dystrophy donation boxes in the store were reportedly stolen with a possible loss of around $60. This is the third time this Queen Street East business has been burglarized. The break-in is possibly linked to a window breaking at M&M Variety near the same time, along with the reported attempt to lift a Jackson Pharmacy outer grate.

Cheryl Ann West of Highway 19, Zorra Township won the 4-H beef trophy presented recently at Tollgate School. Cheryl won the top senior member award in the North Oxford Beef Club, showing a Charolais calf.

75 years ago (1951)

A meeting to organize a St. Marys Badminton Club is being held in the Collegiate Institute next Wednesday evening.

It was a case of "where oh where has my little turkey gone" at Wellburn one day recently. The only trouble was the turkey was a big one all ready to eat, sitting on a big platter on the table. The occupants of the house were out for a while and when they returned all that was left of the turkey was a little gravy that the turkey "liberators" had spilled on the front step in his or her hasty flight.

100 years ago (1926)

The family bliss on the Alfred Sandall farm at Kintore was rudely shattered recently when Alfred assaulted his spouse during a disagreement over carrying water in the dairy pails. Mrs. Sandall received a blow to the face with a pitchfork, and her two sons upon viewing the damage to their mother's features, administered a retaliatory trouncing to their father, resulting in two black eyes. The case was aired in Woodstock police court on Tuesday and the magistrate bound over the whole family to keep the peace.

Now that snow, ice, and wild north winds have come again, George Tustin, Inspector of the Humane Society, is on the warpath for persons who leave cattle and horses out at night in open fields without proper shelter.

ST.MARYS FORD



BRING YOUR FOOD BANK DONATIONS TO THE PARADE

ST. MARYS FORD WILL BE COLLECTING NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS DURING THE SANTA CLAUS PARADE

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20



The ELVES will be IN ACTION AT THE FRONT OF THE PARADE FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! DONATIONS CHANGE LIVES!

COMMUNITY DRIVEN THE SALVATION ARMY www.stmarysford.com