

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1320

Thursday, July 2, 2026

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OPEN FOR THE SEASON!

Many people took advantage of the warm weather on the weekend to enjoy time spent at the St. Marys Quarry and Super Splash Waterpark. The facilities opened on Friday, June 26 for the season.

(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

St. Marys awards contract for Friendship Centre refresh and accessibility improvements

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Visitors and staff at the Friendship Centre can expect a more accessible, functional and modern space after St. Marys council awarded the contract for a long-planned interior refresh of the facility.

At its June 23 regular meeting, council awarded the project to Trigon Construction Management for \$115,700.70 and approved

additional funding from the town's general capital reserve to cover the project cost.

"This project is in regards to doing a lot of accessibility and staffing-ergonomics upgrades to the Friendship Centre," St. Marys recreation operations manager Doug LaPointe told council. "The office area where all the program and support staff work has kind of shrunk in relation to how many staff we have, so the number of staff have

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

St. Marys approves new bylaw governing public use of West Quarry

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

As work to transform the West Quarry into a passive recreational space nears completion, St. Marys council has approved a new bylaw establishing the rules governing how the public can use the site.

Council passed the new quarries bylaw at its June 23 regular meeting, replacing the town's previous quarry bylaw and introducing regulations specific to the newly redeveloped West Quarry while maintaining rules for the East Quarry.

"As we're reaching a point of substantial completion for the West Quarry enhancement, we are looking to provide a housekeeping matter because of the current provisions in the quarries bylaw," said St. Marys clerk Jenna McCartney. "... There is a list of examples of how we are looking to not formally amend (the bylaw) but put forward a brand-new bylaw."

The new bylaw formally permits fishing from the land surrounding the quarry, the use of human-powered watercraft such as canoes, kayaks and paddleboards, and passive recreational activities within the West Quarry between dawn and dusk. It also formally renames the quarries from the Swimming Quarry and Fishing Quarry to the East Quarry and West Quarry respectively.

Unlike the East Quarry, which is designated for supervised swimming and non-motorized watercraft only when municipal lifeguards are on duty, the West Quarry has been designed as a passive recreational space centred on enjoying

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys approves new bylaw governing public use of West Quarry

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

the waterfront and surrounding greenspace.

“Swimming; we are maintaining a prohibition of that in the West Quarry at this present time,” McCartney said. “I have been asked a very realistic question; why? I don’t have a great answer for that right now, other than at one point in time, the town’s insurer suggested that was not a risk-adverse option for the town, so we’re investigating that with our insurer right now and waiting to hear feedback.

“Should we be stopping it and, if we

do, what does that look like?”

The bylaw prohibits overnight use of either quarry and bans access to the West Quarry water surface annually from Dec. 1 through March 30 – a measure that effectively prohibits ice fishing due to the potential risks associated with shifting ice.

It also prohibits members of the public from entering areas that have been posted as restricted or closed.

To help protect both visitors and the newly restored site, the bylaw also prohibits climbing quarry structures, rock

faces, overhangs and fencing, as well as damaging vegetation, fencing or other infrastructure. Visitors are also prohibited from entering areas undergoing repairs or restoration work.

Violations of the bylaw can result in fines under the Provincial Offences Act.

The bylaw comes as the town wraps up the West Quarry enhancements project, a months-long effort to remove industrial hazards left behind from the site’s former quarry operations and prepare it for public use.

Cleanup work included removing

waste concrete, steel and other debris, clearing invasive vegetation and hazardous trees, improving access to the water and creating new greenspace while preserving six historic concrete quarry pillars as a heritage feature.

When the project was announced earlier this year, town officials described the goal as creating a flexible public space where residents and visitors could enjoy activities such as fishing, paddling, picnicking and relaxing along the waterfront while leaving future enhancements open to further public consultation.

St. Marys awards contract for Friendship Centre refresh and accessibility improvements

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

outgrown the area.

“We’re looking to update that with some redesign and also the accessibility upgrades; the entranceway needs to be updated, and we know that there are some traffic-flow problems. We’d like to open up the foyer area a little bit more to allow for people to flow through the centre a little bit better. And also, we felt it was a good time to update the paint scheme of the centre.”

Located inside the Pyramid Recreation Centre, the Friendship Centre has served as a hub for seniors’ programming and services for the past 20 years.

The project is intended to improve both the experience of visitors and the working environment for staff as demand for programming at the centre continues to grow.

Among the planned upgrades is a redesign of the entrance area to create a

larger, more open foyer that can better accommodate visitors, including those using mobility scooters, walkers and other accessibility devices. The work will also include replacing the existing entrance door with an automatic sliding door to further improve accessibility.

Behind the scenes, office spaces will be reconfigured to improve staff ergonomics and provide additional workstations to support the growing number of employees delivering senior services.

The project will also include a new reception area and welcome desk, along with a complete repainting of the public and office spaces. The refreshed colour palette will replace the centre’s original early-2000s finishes with lighter, more contemporary colours intended to brighten the facility and complement updated décor and signage.

“I’ve received a lot of positive comment about this project and I think it’s

absolutely worth doing. I’ll be happy to see what it looks like when it’s done,” deputy mayor Brogan Aylward said before council voted to award the tender.

Council approved transferring an additional \$9,192.06 from the general capital reserve to cover the difference between the approved capital budget and the successful tender price.

An additional \$13,861 was also approved from the reserve after donations originally expected to fund portions of the project fell short of earlier estimates.

The project had originally anticipated donations covering the ergonomic upgrades and painting components, but available donations totalled less than expected.

Six prequalified contractors submitted bids for the project following a competitive procurement process. After reviewing the submissions, staff recommended awarding the contract to Trigon Construction Management as the proposal offering the best overall value to the municipality.



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St. Marys Independent

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Wednesday July-1st	Thursday July-2nd	Friday July-3rd	Saturday July-4th	Sunday July-5th	Monday July-6th	Tuesday July-7th
Potential storms	Potential storms	Potential storms	Potential storms	Potential storms	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny
34 OC	34 OC	31 OC	28 OC	27 OC	28 OC	29 OC
Feels like 46	Feels like 45	Feels like 41	Feels like 37	Feels like 33	Feels like 34	Feels like 35



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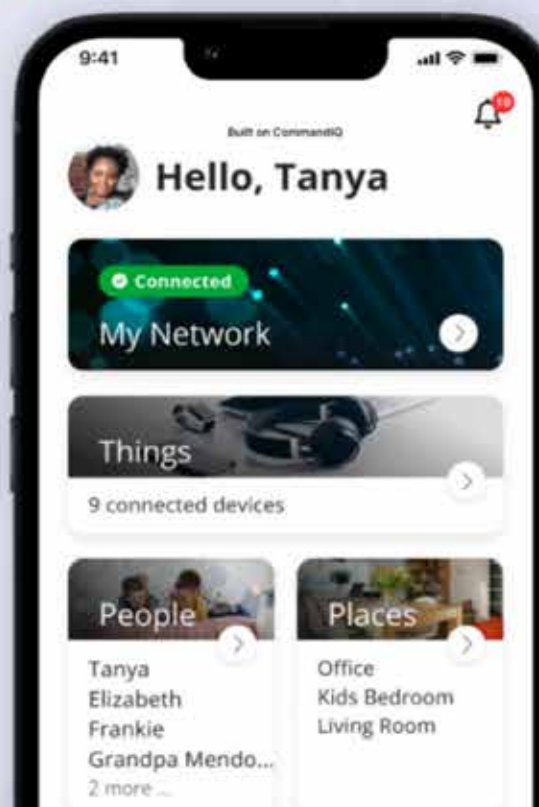
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EDITORIAL

As our summers keep getting hotter, we need to make AC mandatory in Ontario



GALEN SIMMONS
Regional Editor

For the first time since I moved away from home, I have central air conditioning.

Though I definitely took it for granted as a kid, living without it as a renter for more than a de-

cade has given me a deep appreciation of how drastic a person’s quality of life can improve once they have AC in their home.

From high-rise apartment buildings to single-story houses, I’ve lived without AC in nearly every kind of rental. I remember long, sleepless nights covered in sweat with an electric fan on high blowing straight into my face, and days when the heat was so oppressive I couldn’t do anything except sit in my living room in nothing but my underwear with an ice pack on my head, trying to move as little as possible. (Sorry for that mental image).

When I first moved to the Stratford, I rented the cheapest

apartment I could find – the attic of a three-story home. As we all know, heat rises and gets trapped in the top level of a home. It got so hot in my attic apartment, there was no amount of fan power, cold showers or open windows that could help me stay cool.

At the time, I didn’t have enough money saved to buy an air conditioner, so I had to beg friends and family members until someone finally gave me one. A year later, that air conditioner ended up leaking, staining the bricks below my window, so, at my landlord’s insistence, I had to go through the same process all over again until my sister, who was moving back home at

the time, agreed to lend me hers.

It definitely wasn’t enough to keep the whole attic cool, but at least it was on wheels and I could roll it from room to room as I went about my day. Had it not been for those air conditioners, I’m not sure I could have actually lived in my apartment on some of those hotter days.

With this week’s heat warnings and temperatures rising into the 40s, I can’t help but think back to those days and wonder how I would manage this heat without central air. I am truly no good in the heat. It affects my mood, it affects my relationships, it affects my health and, since I work at home, it affects my work.

As our summers continue to

trend hotter, I think it’s important we remember those lower-income renters who either can’t afford to buy an AC or have window-box and portable air conditioners that simply can’t compete with this heat.

I truly believe having a living space that can be kept at a comfortable room temperature should be a human right, not a privilege for those who can afford it. We should make it mandatory in Ontario for landlords to provide AC that can keep their units between 22 and 23 degrees Celsius even when the temperature outside reaches the mid 40s.

It’s not just a comfort thing; it’s a health-and-safety thing.

Bravo	Boo
We have 2 Bravos this week 1) I lost my iPhone and a local couple turned it into the fire hall. It was given to the fire chief who got it back to me all within two hours of losing it. Small town St. Marys at its best. Bravo! 2) Downtown St. Marys looks absolutely stunning with the strings of lights at night. The flowers are very eye-catching with the greens and purples. Cudos to whoever had these brilliant ideas. Very welcoming.	We have 1 Boo this week 1) Boo to the dark coloured SUV driving up Southvale late Sunday night who threw soft drink cups out their window. St. Marys is a nice, clean town and we don't need your trash on our streets. Do better!

*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

"The hard work from these guys, the character of them. They're Canadian heroes. That's what I told them at the end. They're now Canadian heroes. I'm so happy for them."

- Jesse Marsch, Canada's World Cup head coach, after Stephen Eustáquio and the Canadian national team defeated South Africa 1-0 to advance to the round of 16 for the first time ever.

Overheard
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School is out and the Quarry is open. Bring on Summer!

It's so hot, I just saw a bird blow on a worm before he ate it.

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

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

St. Marys Independent

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Make yourself a priority once in a while. It's not selfish, it's necessary.

Legion hot dog lunches take summer break



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

St. Marys Legion Branch 236 recently hosted its final Friday hot dog lunch before taking a break for the summer. The popular weekly lunches are offered by donation, with proceeds supporting the Legion's programs and services. Rev. Pirie Mitchell thanked the volunteers for their hard work throughout the season, while musical entertainment was provided by Gloria Connell, Daisy Anderson and Margaret DeLong, who have performed together for approximately 30 years. The weekly hot dog lunches will resume Sept. 11. In the photo, Connell, Anderson and DeLong entertain diners during the lunch.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news
from the Town of St. Marys



ELECTION NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

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

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

More details: townofstmarys.com/elections

QUARRY OPEN FOR SEASON

Cool off this summer at Canada's largest outdoor freshwater swimming pool. The Quarry is open daily from 11 AM to 7 PM. Splash, climb and slide at the Super Splash St. Marys inflatable park (tickets sold separately).



Learn more: townofstmarys.com/quarry



STONETOWN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

There's fun for everyone at the annual Stonetown Heritage Festival on Saturday, July 25! This free event celebrates the cultures, stories and histories that shape the past and present of St. Marys. The festival features family-friendly activities, heritage tours, art, vendor's and farmers' market, and live music and dance.

Learn more: discoverstmarys.ca

TOWN HALL STAIR RECONSTRUCTION

Town Hall's outdoor staircases are currently undergoing construction. Access to the Town Hall service desk and public washroom will be closed for approximately six weeks. Services usually offered at Town Hall will be provided online, by phone or at other municipal facilities.



SHOWER PROGRAM Pyramid Recreation Centre

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

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FOL Social: At the library

Wednesday, July 8, 2026 - 6:30 - 8 pm

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St. Marys Independent

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Senior of the Week



Our seniors of the week are Ray and Pat Iredale who celebrated their 59th anniversary in June. Ray was born in Stratford and grew up in St. Marys. Pat was born in Burford and met the love of her life while living in rural Thamesford at the age of 14. Together they have one daughter, one granddaughter and one great-grandson whom they are extremely proud of. The pair have raised purebred, registered beagles and German shorthaired pointers. They enjoy camping, canoeing, fishing, hunting, playing cards and visiting craft breweries and wineries. After 10 years of being retired, they are still waiting for the day that they can get out of bed and say "Gee, I have absolutely nothing to do today." That just hasn't happened yet.

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

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What is the birthstone of July?
2. What is the fictional island in Mamma Mia called?
3. What is the capital city of Australia?
4. What do you call a beginner surfer?
5. What is the Italian name for ice cream?
6. What 80s girl band sang "Cruel Summer"?
7. What summer seafood is now a delicacy but was once considered "poor man's protein"?
8. Which Harry Potter character died on the beach?
9. The person in charge of officiating a baseball game is called what?
10. What is the standard distance for Olympic target archery?

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

Multi-day heat event hits Huron-Perth

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

A multi-day heat event started on June 29 and was expected to continue until Friday, July 3.

Maximum temperatures of 30 to 32 degrees Celsius and humidex values of 37 to 42 hit the area on Monday, June 29. Heat and humidity increased further on Tuesday, with maximum temperatures of 31 to 36 degrees Celsius and humidex values of 40 to 45.

Minimum overnight temperatures of 21 to 25 degrees Celsius have provided little relief from the heat. A heat warning was issued for Perth County June 29.

Heat warnings are issued when high temperature or humidity conditions reach criteria established by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and are expected to pose an elevated risk of heat-related illnesses, such as heat stroke or heat exhaustion.

While extreme heat can affect everyone's health, Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) says the risks are greatest for:

- older adults;
- infants and young children;
- people with chronic illnesses, such as breathing difficulties, heart conditions, or psychiatric illnesses;
- people who work in the heat;
- people who exercise in the heat;
- people experiencing homelessness; and
- people with low income (who may not have access to cooler air).

Heat-related illnesses are preventable. HPPH recommends taking measures to avoid over-exposure to extreme heat:

- Drink plenty of cool liquids, especially water, before feeling thirsty to decrease the risk of dehydration. People can be dehydrated before they start feeling thirsty.
- Reschedule or plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made of breathable fabric.
- Take a break from the heat by spending a few hours in a cool place, such as a tree-shaded area or air-conditioned space.
- Contact the municipality, visit the town website, or call 211 for hours and locations of any nearby cooling centres.

- Take cool showers or baths until refreshed.
- Prepare meals that don't need to be cooked in the oven.
- Block sun out by closing curtains or blinds during the day.

- Avoid sun exposure. Wear a wide-brimmed, breathable hat or use an umbrella for shade.

- Never leave people or pets inside a parked vehicle or in direct sunlight.

- Check in on neighbours, friends and older family members, especially those with chronic illnesses, to make sure they are cool and hydrated.

Heat-related illnesses include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat fainting, heat edema (swelling of hands, feet and ankles), heat rash and heat cramps (muscle cramps). These illnesses can affect a person quickly. Watch for symptoms of heat illness, which include:

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or fainting
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Extreme thirst
- Decreased urination with unusually dark-yellow urine
- Changes in behaviour in children (i.e. sleepiness)

Anyone with these systems following exposure to high temperatures should immediately move to a cool place and drink liquids. Water is best.

Symptoms of heat stroke include high body temperature, confusion, being unconscious or stopping sweating. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 or a local emergency number immediately if someone is showing symptoms of heat stroke. While waiting for help, cool the person right away by:

- Moving them to a cool place, if possible
- Applying cold water to large areas of the skin or clothing
- Fanning the person as much as possible.

Pollution levels tend to be higher on hot days. The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) can be used to determine local air quality and help locals make decisions to protect their health. The current and forecast AQHI for Ontario is available at www.airqualityontario.com/aqhi.

Follow Environment Canada's weather forecasts at www.weather.gc.ca to plan ahead and stay safe in hot and humid weather.



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Discover local hidden gems this season with the summer in St. Marys Passport

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Back by popular demand, the St. Marys Museum, in partnership with several local attractions, has announced the return of the Summer in St. Marys Passport for summer 2026.

This initiative invites both locals and tourists to explore the rich heritage and vibrant culture of St. Marys through a series of unique stops.

"The participation in this program over the past few years has been so rewarding," said St. Marys Museum curator and archivist Emily Taylor in a press release. "It's great to see people exploring the distinctive sites that St. Marys has to offer."

From July 1 to Sept. 7, participants are encouraged to collect as many passport stamps as they can. Passports can be picked up from any of the staffed participating sites. The 10 stops on the Summer in St. Marys Passport include:

- Art of Ideas Gallery

- Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

- Downtown St. Marys BIA
- St. Marys Farmers' Market
- St. Marys Museum
- St. Marys Public Library
- St. Marys Quarry
- St. Marys Station Gallery
- Stonetown Heritage Festival Information Tent
- Yak Shack

Any passports with six or more stamps can be returned to the St. Marys Museum by Friday, Sept. 11, at 4 p.m. to be entered into a draw to win \$100 in St. Marys Money.

Participation in this program, including the physical passport and stamps, is free. However, we encourage residents to support local businesses and facilities when visiting.

For more information, contact the St. Marys Museum at 519-284-3556 or museum@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Recreate historic photographs and win big with St. Marys Museum's contest

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Picture St. Marys: Past and Present hosted by the St. Marys Museum and Archives returns this year for Stonetown Heritage Festival.

Starting on July 1, residents of St. Marys and visitors to the town are invited to participate in a photo contest to recreate any photograph in the museum's collection as accurately or creatively as they wish. Simply visit Picture St. Marys (<https://bit.ly/4gN6dNL>), the St. Marys Museum and Archives' online photo collection, to pick from a choice of over 4,000 digitized photographs. Email a re-creation to museum@town.stmarys.on.ca along with the "local identifier" number listed with the original to enter the contest.

Submitted photos will be uploaded to a Facebook album on the museum's Face-

book page, in addition to being displayed around the museum as part of the "Picture St. Marys: Past and Present" exhibit. The creator of the photo with highest combination of virtual (likes/positive reactions on Facebook) and in-person votes will win \$100 in St. Marys Money gift certificates.

Submissions will be accepted between July 1 and July 20, with voting running from July 1 to the end of Stonetown Heritage Festival (July 25). The earlier submissions are received, the larger the opportunity is to earn votes.

A reminder to participants not to trespass on private property or attempt to re-create any of the more daring photos in the collection for this contest. Please try to avoid the use of generative AI for this contest; the town is encouraging people to get creative and have fun.

THIS WEEKEND!

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Hearn says experience in health care governance and business leadership has prepared him for council

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Stephen Hearn says his decades of leadership experience in both the corporate and non-profit sectors have prepared him to help guide St. Marys through the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Hearn has announced he will seek a seat on St. Marys council in the Oct. 26 municipal election, saying he wants to build on the work of the current council while helping the town plan for continued growth and an aging population.

"As a former senior manager for a large corporation, my financial acumen and strategic leadership have provided me with the background necessary to support and hopefully continue the great work completed by the previous councillors and mayor," Hearn said.

Hearn and his wife, Pat, have been married for 44 years. Though the couple has lived in several communities over the years, they returned to Hearn's hometown of St. Marys in 2015.

He said community involvement has long been an important part of his life. While living in Guelph, Hearn served on the St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation. Since returning to St. Marys, he has been a member of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance board of directors, serving as both board chair and chair of governance.

During his time as board chair, the health-care alliance completed the renovations to St. Marys Memorial Hospital and oversaw construction of the new chemotherapy wing at Stratford General Hospital.

Looking ahead, Hearn said managing growth while ensuring the community remains affordable will be among the most important issues facing St. Marys.

He noted Huron and Perth counties have a significantly older population than the provincial average, creating increasing demand for health-care services and supports that allow seniors to remain in their homes longer.

"St. Marys is continuing to grow, and this will present some challenges as we have a number of new residents who are older," Hearn said. "There will be different needs in the future which include a strong health-care system and more in-home support services."

At the same time, Hearn said attracting younger families will be essential to maintaining a vibrant community.

"We need to attract younger families to ensure a vibrant community," he said. "To attract this cohort, it is our responsibility to make sure that the town has the correct resources and is affordable."

If elected, Hearn said he wants council to continue seeking public input as the community evolves.

"We as a community need to ensure that we have a good strategy that continues to evolve to support those needs, with council obtaining the feedback and actioning the requirements," he said.

Outside of his professional and volunteer work, Hearn is an active member of the Masonic Lodge and the Shriners, and he enjoys golfing.

His campaign will officially launch after Labour Day. Hearn said he plans to spend the campaign knocking on doors throughout the community to meet residents, hear their concerns and gather ideas.

"I welcome any feedback on thoughts for improvement," he said, adding residents can contact him by phone at 226-880-0862 or by email at shearn@live.ca throughout the campaign and beyond.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHEN HEARN)

Stephen Hearn is running for a seat on St. Marys council in the Oct. 26 municipal election.

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Find baseballs and explore downtown with Grand Slam Search

EMILY STEWART

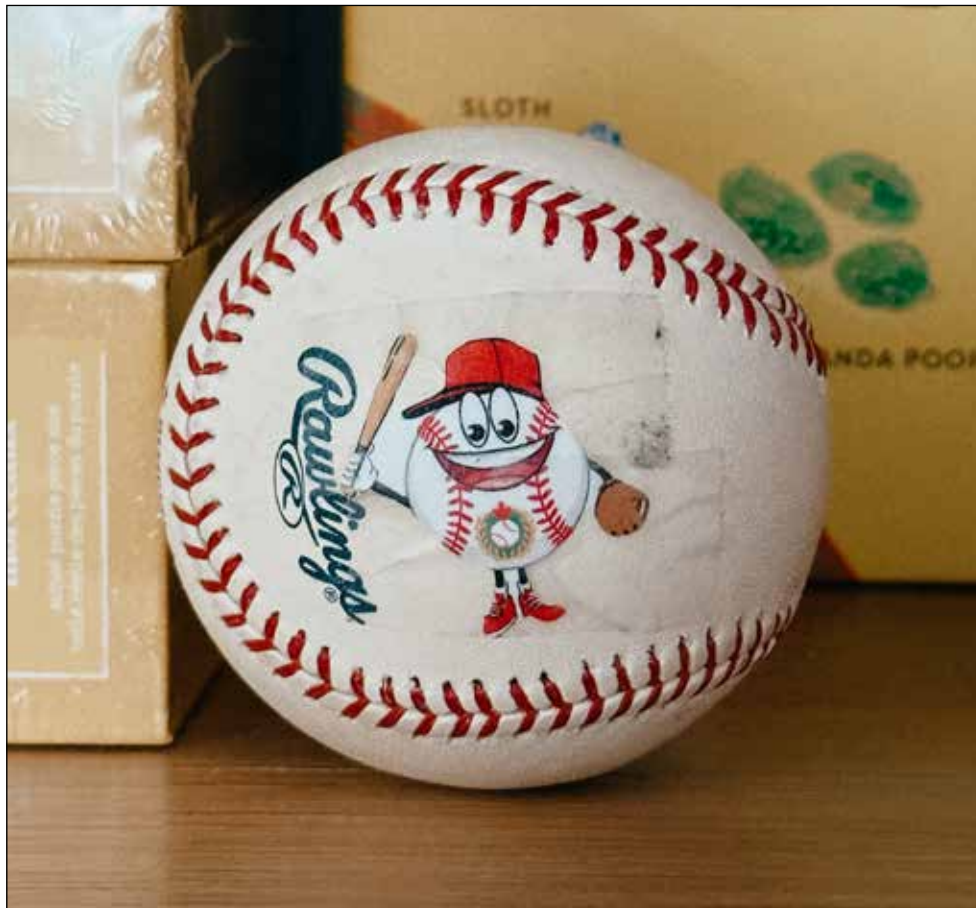
Independent Reporter

St. Marys' love of baseball continues to grow and now youth have a chance to win tickets to big-name baseball games after finding baseballs scattered around downtown.

Throughout the month of July, children and teens up to 17 years old are encouraged to find one of the Grand Slam baseballs hidden amongst 25 businesses in downtown St. Marys. Participants can pick up a Grand Slam Search Card at Betty's Bookshelf and return it after finding at least 17 baseballs or more, with initials from each participating store, to be entered in a draw to win either the grand prize of Toronto Blue Jays tickets or the second and third prize of London Majors tickets.

Jan Scott, the owner of Betty's Bookshelf, told the Independent that following 2024's Where's Waldo? Search, she wanted to do something baseball-related and reached out to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame's Scott Crawford, director of operations, and Lindsay Earle, care of collections and public engagement supervisor. Earle said the hall of fame team also approached the Downtown St. Marys Business Improvement Area (BIA) as there were six scheduled baseball tournaments in St. Marys for 2026.

"We want to foster a welcoming environment for ... not only players but their family members in town and we thought it was an awesome opportunity to get people from the ball diamonds to the downtown businesses in between



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Grand Slam Search encourages youth up to 17-years-old to explore Downtown St. Marys and find these baseballs for a chance to win prizes.

games," Earle said. "It's a great way to engage our ball players and especially the parents and the little siblings in between games."

After the Where's Waldo? Search, Scott received consistently positive feedback

on the free summertime activity for kids, which served to encourage more people to discover downtown St. Marys businesses.

"Events like this provide entertainment for residents, but they also introduce our

businesses in an approachable manner," Scott said.

Scott also wants to provide children with something to do for the summer.

"I think it's really important to have something for the kids to do in town each summer that has no barrier to entry. A three-year-old can do these scavenger hunt events but so can a 15-year-old. They are free and keep kids connected to the community," she said.

Two of the baseball tournaments have already occurred, with four more to go for divisions U9 to U18 up until the end of August. Earle said that the Grand Slam Search also gives those visiting St. Marys for baseball tournaments an opportunity to check out other places like the Quarry, Hearn's Ice Cream and local restaurants.

"It's a really awesome opportunity with all these people in town for baseball to show off our best, and our best is so good," she said.

Scott is also pleased with the enthusiasm for baseball throughout the community.

"Seeing the baseball spirit grow in St. Marys is incredible," she said. "Just this past weekend, the ball diamonds were full of kids in town for a tournament and it was so nice to see so many people outside. If our Grand Slam Search can contribute to the growth of enthusiasm for baseball and St. Marys, I'd be thrilled."

Betty's Bookshelf will be closed on July 1 for Canada Day, but anyone looking to be a part of the Grand Slam Search can pick up a card at 6 Water St. S, Unit 2, on July 2 and beyond to start their journey.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Canada is a free book gifting program devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere.

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St. Marys DCVI celebrates Class of 2026 at commencement

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Graduates of St. Marys DCVI's Class of 2026 celebrated commencement at the Pyramid Recreation Centre on June 25.

The ceremony recognized students for their academic achievement, leadership, community service, athletics, skilled trades, the arts and volunteerism through dozens of scholarships, bursaries and special awards.

The following students received awards during the ceremony:

- **Kaylea Bains:** Joyce Dalglish Parkview United Church Character Scholarship
- **Griffin Ball:** Cooper-Standard Automotive Award; Kai Lahde, C.E.T. Student Award
- **Elizabeth Blackler:** St. Marys Presbyterian Church Legacy Award
- **Payton Blight:** INOAC Interior Systems: Richard Hawkins and Family Memorial Scholarship; Wellburn Agromart Agricultural Bursary
- **Andrew Bradley:** Osborne and Hibbert Mutual Fire Insurance Company: Academic Proficiency Award - College Stream; Brent McRoberts Memorial Award
- **Maryn Breckon:** Joan Bushfield Memorial Award
- **Laicee Brunson:** Festival School of Hairstyling Bursary; Skilled Trades Bursary – AMDSB
- **Andrew Brunton:** Kintore Optimist Scholarship
- **Natalie Burroughs:** St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary Scholarship
- **Marin Chateauvert:** INOAC Interior Systems: Richard Hawkins and Family Memorial Scholarship; Happy Valley Family Health Team Scholarship
- **Cameron Chenier:** St. Marys Optometry Awesome Award
- **Myles Clinton:** St. Marys Rotary Club Math/Science Award; GRIT Engineering Inc. STEM Scholarship
- **Meadow Concannon:** Academic Proficiency Award - Workplace Stream; Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home Scholarship
- **Isaac Cousineau:** St. Marys Cement: Construction Technology Award
- **Naomi deVries:** Crime Stoppers of Huron-Perth Bursary
- **Kaleb Dingman:** David Bonis Memorial Award
- **Owen Dittmer:** Robert Weston Jr. Award
- **Callan Eaton:** Osborne and Hibbert Mutual Fire Insurance Company: Academic Proficiency Award - College Stream; Douglas Waghorn Memorial Award
- **Austin Eidt:** Kinette Award of Merit
- **Haven Fenton:** Kathy McPhail Memorial Co-operative Education Award
- **Marlowe Graham:** Hubbard Pharmacy Scholarship; Osborne and Hibbert Mutual Fire Insurance Company: Academic Proficiency Award - University Stream; St. Marys Lion Larry McClelland Memorial Scholarship
- **Daniel Greig:** Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Service Award; Principal's Award for Leadership; St. Marys DCVI Retiring Student Council Award; St. Marys Insurance Group - Community Spirit Award; St. Marys Rotary Club Service Above Self Award; Friends of the St. Marys Public Library Award; Kinsmen Club of St. Marys Scholarship Award; Sheila Greason Scholarship; St. Marys Kinettes Wendy Richardson Memorial Award for Service
- **Simon Greig:** Bank of Montreal Bursary
- **Ava Greve:** Inner Wheel Club Bursary
- **Mitchell Hainer:** Kinette Award of Merit



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

This year's Ring and Cane Awards were presented to Abby Houston and Rumley Snider. The Ring and Cane Awards are presented to two graduating students who other students look up to. These students set an example in the way they encourage others to get involved and be a part of the school.

- **Ella Hartman:** O.S.S.T.F District 8 Student Bursary
- **Bronwyn Hawkins:** Township of Perth South Agricultural Community Award; Happy Valley Family Health Team Scholarship
- **Charlee Henderson:** Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236 Bursary
- **Brody Higham:** Minister's Recognition for Community Involvement - Bronze Pursuing an Apprenticeship in Plumbing
- **Adrianna Hollestelle-Black:** INOAC Interior Systems: Richard Hawkins and Family Memorial Scholarship
- **Abby Houston:** Hubbard Pharmacy Scholarship; Osborne and Hibbert Mutual Fire Insurance Company: Academic Proficiency Award - University Stream; Cade Family Scholarship; Deep Water Music Scholarship
- **Benjamin Kittmer:** Academic Proficiency Award - Workplace Stream; Finnie Distributing Technical Proficiency Award
- **Emma Kruse:** Skilled Trades Bursary - AMDSB
- **Molly Linklater:** Town of St. Marys Scholarship; St. Marys Insurance Group - Community Spirit Award
- **Cameron Lobb:** O.S.S.T.F District 8 Student Bursary
- **Charolotte Martin:** Hillcrest Rebekah Lodge Award
- **Alex Matheson:** Graduating Class of 1978-79 Legacy Award
- **Cameron McClocklin:** Teahen Construction Limited Plumbing and Design Group Skilled Trades Award
- **Libby McCurdy:** Town of St. Marys Scholarship
- **Chase McDougall:** OnePoint Association of REALTORS - Foundations For The Future Scholarship
- **Draven McLaughlin:** St. Marys Presbyterian Church Legacy Award
- **Katie Namink:** Janice Mitchell Culinary Bursary
- **Andrew Nanephosy:** Charles and Vera Courtage Memorial Scholarship; Joyce Dalglish Parkview United Church Spirit Scholarship
- **Rachael Nelson:** Marion Warder Bain Language Scholarship
- **Oceanne Parady:** St. Marys Optometry Awesome Award
- **Priya Pickel:** St. Marys Community Players Arts

- Award; St. Marys Independent English Award; Stratford Festival Drama Award; Stratford and District Horticultural Society Youth Bursary
- **Avery Reid:** Delmar Foods: Family Studies Award; Community Living St. Marys and Area Scholarship
- **Luke Richardson:** Salukis Merit Award
- **Sofia Romaniuk:** Larry Bannerman Foundation Scholarship
- **Justin Ropp:** McConnell Club of St. Marys Scholarship
- **Turner Roth:** Media, Arts, Communication Award
- **Gracy Schlotzhauer:** Compass Group Scholarship
- **Corynn Sewell:** Dan Rankin Memorial Scholarship; Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236 Bursary
- **Alina Shyshkivska:** Larry Bannerman Foundation Scholarship
- **Julien Skirten:** Cooper-Standard Automotive Award
- **Rumley Snider:** St. James - Tecumseh No. 73 Masonic Lodge Bursary
- **Ethan St. Clair:** St. Marys Volunteer Firefighters Association Scholarship
- **Danny Switzer:** Trouw Nutrition/Shur-Gain: Manufacturing Technology Award
- **James Switzer:** Festival Hydro Award
- **Arik Taylor:** Salukis Merit Award
- **Jonah Thomson:** Kathy McPhail Memorial Co-operative Education Award
- **Marieke van Lierop:** Robert Weston Jr. Award
- **Anastasiia Vecherenko:** Larry Bannerman Foundation Scholarship
- **Nathan Wolfkamp:** Tradition Mutual Insurance Company Cormick Wheeler Award
- **Emily Wright:** Cade Family Scholarship
- **Ring and Cane Awards:** Abby Houston and Rumley Snider

Congratulations to all members of the St. Marys DCVI Class of 2026. The St. Marys Independent wishes each graduate the very best as you begin the next chapter of your education, career and life.

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St. Marys DCVI Class of 2025-2026 Valedictorian's speech

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The following is St. Marys DCVI Valedictorian Abby Houston's commencement address, delivered to her classmates in the Class of 2025-2026 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre June 25.

Hello everyone! I'm so thankful that you guys gave me the privilege of representing us today. It's been an honour to get to watch all of us grow over the past four years. Everyone says high school is different, but you don't truly see that until you've been through it, so I want to thank my friends and family for helping me along the way.

High school has been a fun and interesting time for me as I'm sure it has been for you. Some mornings we would come to school to see Marcou trying to light his desk on fire or Chateauvert blasting music down the hallway at 8:30 in the morning and you just knew it was going to be a good day. I want to thank the staff for making us all feel welcome and helping us in our times of need. We couldn't have made it here without your support. You have truly made an impact on all of us that we will never forget.

We have gone through many changes during our time here. Grade 9 was all about finding your people and learning how to navigate high school.

Grade 10 we solidified friendships and started to think about what we wanted to do with our future. Then Grade 11 came and we had to work our butts off to get what we wanted. And Grade 12, of course, has been quite a ride. We made it through first-semester exams, the hockey boys all having blond hair, and now we made it to our commencement. It is crazy to think back about who we were then and who we are now.

As for me, if I asked myself in Grade 9 if I would be our valedictorian, I would have said absolutely not. Who was I? I didn't know all of you, so how could I represent you? I didn't have the confidence that I have now, and I only gained that confidence through my experiences with all of you. I found my confidence through the support of you and our wonderful staff. Whether it was Ms. Mitchell giving me opportunities to perform and show my creative side, Seebach, Marcou and Good giving me chances to learn in the lab, or Shaddick giving me the opportunity to write some super awesome, fun calculus tests, I always came out of those experiences feeling more confident in myself, confident that I had the skills to succeed in life academically, socially



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Valedictorian Abby Houston delivers her address to the Class of 2025-2026 at the St. Marys DCVI commencement ceremony June 25.

and personally. Having confidence that if I was having a bad day, I knew I had someone to go to, or if I needed help figuring something out, that someone would always be there.

I learned that being confident doesn't mean you're the loudest person in the room. It means that you are yourself in every room you enter. So, as we move on to the next chapter in our lives, I want you to take time to participate in opportunities and continue to seek them out so that we can grow to be confident, independent adults who have the skills to lead meaningful lives because, as Billy Joel said, "You can get what you want or you can just get old."

I know we've all learned important life lessons through our four years here. A few weeks ago, I asked some of you what was the most important thing you learned about life from high school. Some answers I got were learning how to manage your time effectively, not caring what other people think about you, that change is necessary for personal growth and that people will only change if they want to. As we go through life, there will always be chances to learn, and I advise you to always take them. Some of the biggest

lessons we are going to learn is through failure.

Transitioning to the next step in our lives might be hard for some of us. We're going to have to learn to live away from home, manage difficult courses, learn how to navigate the workforce and so much more. We are going to have failures during this time. Unfortunately for me, I choose to make my academic life this difficult. I quickly fell into the mindset that just because it's difficult doesn't mean I'm not going to do it. But that can't fight off the fact that we all have hard times every once in a while. There were times when I questioned why I took my courses and if I was good enough to do them. But then I started to learn about the balance of life. You have to give yourself a break. You need time to relax and get yourself

back to a good place. When you don't give yourself this time, then your failures feel just like failure, even though every one is actually an opportunity to learn, even when it doesn't feel like it. One of my favourite Aerosmith lyrics is, "If you do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got," so don't be afraid to try new things because your failures will just let you grow.

One of the major things I noticed as I went through high school was how much our differences melted away. I learned to appreciate that we are all a part of each other's story. I became friends with all different kinds of people. From my wild boys to my crazy girls, you know who you are, we all found ourselves learning to care for and appreciate each other. We all have our differences but ultimately, we're in this together. Take the time to learn about the people around you because "Life moves pretty fast; if you don't stop and look around you, you could miss it," as Ferris Bueller said. Cherish the people around you because they can help you become your best self. Allow people to know you. Let yourself be vulnerable. These next few years are going to be pretty great, but they are also going to be difficult. Allow yourself to lean on people when you need to.

Remember the importance of mental health and make sure you keep an eye on yourself and the people around you.

The final thing I want to leave you with tonight is that you should always continue to be yourselves once we leave here. I am a musical nerd and I love it. I am totally going to tell you everything about my favourite movie the second you mention it and I will explain all of my biology notes to you out of pure enjoyment for myself.

Some of us may love to dance, or fix cars, or randomly shave our heads and dye it blue. Do what makes you happy and you will always thrive in life. Of course, I'm going to bring up my favorite movie, as Back To The Future so wisely put it, "Your future hasn't been written yet. No one's has. Your future is whatever you make it. So, make it a good one."

Thank you, everyone, and enjoy the rest of the night.

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Jacobs Liquidation holds second annual Vendfest



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Sandra McCurdy of the Sausage Stop gives happy customer Joey Campbell her lunch during Vendfest at Jacob's Liquidation on Friday, June 26.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On June 26 and 27, Jacobs Liquidation held its second Vendfest, which showcased local vendors with unique finds to sell to the community.

Jacob's owner Craig Jacobs said they wanted to keep each day to around eight or nine vendors in case the weather turned and they were still able to be under the

covered area. The event went from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. There were homemade creations, jewelry, Tupperware, Avon, the Telescope Guy, a registered psychotherapist, author Shalyn Dussiaume and many other options with something available for everyone.

An exciting addition to Vendfest and to Jacob's Liquidation is the Sausage Stop, a division of Jack's Fries. Owner Sandra



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Marie Struthers, founder of Leyla's Legacy, showcases the jewelry she sells, raising money and hope for Moroccan children.

McCurdy will be cooking up sausages and footlongs at Jacob's Liquidation location, 1911 James St. S St., from Tuesdays to Saturdays this summer, minus a few days where she will be at local events like the Kirkton Fair. They are currently looking at hours but hope to be cooking from 11 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

"We just want to thank all the wonderful local vendors and customers who came out and made this event a success!

The feedback was great and the customers loved the diversity of products," Jacobs shared.

The business is looking at opening four to six vendor spots in front of the store on a regular basis in the summer. Any local vendors interested can email jacobsvendfest@gmail.com or call Jacobs at the store at 226-661-4000.

Join the email newsletter at jacobsliquidation.com.

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Sharing our parks: Understanding reservations and public use

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

As summer arrives and residents begin planning birthday parties, graduation celebrations, family reunions and other outdoor gatherings, the Town of St. Marys would like to provide some clarification on how park bookings work.

In a press release, the town said it offers residents and visitors the opportunity to reserve designated outdoor spaces and park amenities for special events. These free bookings help individuals and groups plan gatherings with greater confidence, while ensuring that community spaces remain accessible to all.

It is important to note that St. Marys parks and amenities are public spaces. The town does not physically close off reserved areas, post reservation signs, or proactively enforce bookings onsite. As a result, the success of the bookings system relies heavily on cooperation and courtesy among park users.

If reserved space is occupied when a reservation holder arrives, the town encourages both parties to engage respectfully. Booking holders should kindly advise other users that the space has been reserved, and park visitors are asked to

accommodate those reservations wherever possible.

"We are fortunate to have an abundance of beautiful outdoor spaces throughout St. Marys" said Thomas Redman, public works coordinator, in the press release. "With a little communication and consideration, there is plenty of room for everyone to enjoy the outdoor amenities in our community."

The town would also like to clarify that sponsorship of park amenities does not grant exclusive or priority access. For example, while community organizations and service clubs may sponsor facilities such as pavilions, sponsorship does not create any ownership of interest or reserved-use privileges. Sponsored amenities remain available for public use and can be booked through the town's normal booking process.

The Town of St. Marys is working to create a more streamlined booking system through ActiveNet. In the meantime, residents interested in reserving a pavilion, park space, sports field, or other outdoor amenity are encouraged to review the outdoor event application at www.townofstmarys.com/town-government/applications-permits-licences.



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Pam Ryan SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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Pam has lived either in or in close proximity to the Town of St. Marys her entire life and thru the years has been involved in photography, healthcare, retail, the quick food restaurant industry and for the past 18 years, real estate.

With such a diversified background and a unique blend of experience and community connections, Pam has the resources to assist in many fascists of real estate including residential resale, new homes, commercial leasing and sales, as well as agriculture. Whether you are searching for your dream home, selling a property, or exploring investment opportunities, Pam is committed to making the process seamless and successful.

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St. Marys to provide building-inspection services to Stratford under temporary agreement

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

St. Marys will temporarily lend its building-services expertise to the City of Stratford after council approved an agreement to help its neighbouring municipality address a staffing shortage.

At its June 23 regular meeting, St. Marys council approved a building-services agreement that will see qualified St. Marys building officials assist Stratford with building-permit reviews, inspections and enforcement-related matters on a cost-recovery basis. The agreement comes after Stratford approached St. Marys seeking assistance in maintaining building-services operations while addressing a gap in staffing.

"We're basically looking at shared services for building inspection from the Town of St. Marys to the City of

Stratford," St. Marys director of building and development Grant Brouwer told council. "The backstory is they're having some personnel challenges. ... They asked for support for roughly three months."

Under the arrangement, St. Marys employees will remain employed by the town while carrying out building-related duties within Stratford under the authority of the Ontario Building Code and Stratford's local requirements. Stratford will appoint the St. Marys officials by bylaw so they can perform the required duties within the city.

Town staff said the agreement has been structured to ensure there is no impact on service delivery for St. Marys residents.

Building officials will provide up to eight hours of service per week in Stratford, with scheduling remaining flexible

and coordinated between the two municipalities based on operational needs. If workloads increase in St. Marys, the town's own building services will continue to take priority.

"If we're going to have challenges on our side, we're not getting things done on our side, we have the ability to cancel the contract," Brouwer said. "Even though we think we can help them out ... we do have the ability to withdraw if it's not working out."

The agreement is structured on a full cost-recovery basis, with Stratford responsible for reimbursing St. Marys for staff wages, employment-related costs, mileage, overtime and other eligible expenses associated with providing the service. According to the report, the arrangement will have no financial impact on the Town of St. Marys.

Council approved the agreement as a short-term arrangement intended to help Stratford while allowing both municipalities to evaluate how well the partnership works.

According to Stratford director of building and planning Adam Betteridge, the city's building department has two staff members on parental leave – one short term and the other long term.

"The long-term leave was backfilled

with a contract position, and the individual who took that position found permanent employment with another municipality," Betteridge said. "Refilling through another contract would likely not have been realized given only a few months remain until the employee returns from parental leave, so an arrangement with St. Marys was pursued.

"Their building officials are experienced and knowledgeable, so they can hit the ground running."

The agreement takes effect in June and runs through Dec. 17, with provisions allowing either municipality to terminate it with 30 days' written notice. It also includes an automatic six-month renewal unless either municipality chooses to end the arrangement.

According to the report, the agreement provides an opportunity for St. Marys to support a neighbouring municipality while making efficient use of existing staff expertise without compromising local service levels.

Both Betteridge and Brouwer said the two municipalities are open to a more permanent agreement in the future that would provide backup building-department staff to help fill full-time staff absences resulting from illness or vacations in either municipality.

Learn, connect and stay engaged this summer with the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth is inviting community members to stay connected, informed and supported this summer through a variety of free educational programs and social opportunities designed for people living with dementia, care partners, families and community members.

One featured summer education session, part of the Living Well Series, is "An Introduction to the Ontario Caregiver Organization" on July 7, co-hosted with MacKay Centre for Seniors at 1:30 p.m. This presentation highlights the important role caregivers play and introduces free programs, services and resources available to support them. Whether it's helping with appointments, daily tasks, or regular check-ins, this session offers valuable information and connections for caregivers.

Building on this foundation of support, the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth is also offering "Care Partners: Dealing with the Feelings," a four-week series beginning July 22 at 1:30 p.m. This program expands on the caregiving experience by creating space for participants to explore the emotional side of care, share common experiences and develop coping strategies while connecting with others who understand the caregiving journey.

Additional summer education offerings include:

- **Dementia and Travel** – July 14 at 1:30 p.m. Learn practical tips and considerations for travelling while living with dementia or supporting someone who is.
- **Driving and Dementia** – Aug. 18 at 1:30 p.m. Explore the relationship between driving and dementia, including safety considerations, planning ahead and available supports.

In addition to education programs, the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth will continue its popular "Virtual Ukulele Summer Jams," offering participants a chance to connect through music and brain health. Sessions will take place online on July 28 and Aug. 18 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. The society is also pleased to partner with the Friendship Centre in St. Marys to offer an in-person ukulele jam on July 30 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

All education sessions are free and open to the public. For details and registration for these online programs, visit www.bit.ly/ASHPEducationHour or click the Education Hour banner at www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth. For assistance, contact 1-800-561-5012 or email info@alzhp.ca.

Whether locals are looking for information, support, connection, or simply a chance to try something new, there is something for everyone this summer.

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable summer and looks forward to connecting with community members through upcoming programs and events.

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Optimist Club of Kirkton-Woodham presents Memorial Bursary awards

VAL THOMSON

Optimist Club of Kirkton-Woodham

The Optimist Club of Kirkton-Woodham presented their Memorial Bursary awards this year to Clayton Hern and Ginger Steffler.

The bursary is in memory of club members who have passed away and has been awarded for 16 years to students entering or continuing their post-secondary education at college, trade school or university.

This year, each recipient received \$1,500.

Hern is heading off to Lakeland College in Vermillion, Alta., taking a two-year diploma program in dairy science. He hopes to return home after that and help run the family farm.

Steffler will be attending Huron University in London to begin her bachelor's degree in psychology. She would like to become a pediatric occupational therapist.

Both students are graduates from South Huron District Secondary School.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF OPTIMIST CLUB OF KIRKTON-WOODHAM)

Pictured are Clayton Hern, club president Barry Miller and Ginger Steffler during the annual presentation of the Optimist Club of Kirkton-Woodham's Memorial Bursary awards.

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What's new with the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary?

JANIS FREAD

St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

We did it!

Team Auxiliary raised \$1,875 for Hike for Hospice, which surpasses last year's hike. Every year, Auxiliary members gather pledges and complete a Hike on your Site to support Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. Thank you to everyone who sponsored us.

Our next event is coming soon. We will be at the Stonetown Heritage Festival on Saturday, July 25, offering a blow-out sale of ladies' garments plus we'll have a fun coin-toss experience to help you get rid of all that loose change!

For those who rely on walkers and wheelchairs to get out and about, we'll have walker and wheelchair totes that affix to your device to help carry all the odds and ends you need with you. And we'll have a selection of our popular, uniquely embellished jean jackets for women and children. Make sure to come by and say hello – we'll be located near Meridian.

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

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



(PHOTO COURTESY OF JANIS FREAD)

Members of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary recently raised \$1,875 for Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth through Hike for Hospice.

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St. Marys Independent SPORTS

Brooke Overholt wins national title after foot injury

Named to Canadian Commonwealth Games team headed to Glasgow

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

For Brooke Overholt, her gold medal at the Canadian National Championship was the payoff after a long road back to the podium.

The St. Marys native claimed the top prize in the 400-metre senior hurdles event at the Canadian Nationals, held in Ottawa June 17-21. Overholt described the win's importance to her after a lengthy injury rehabilitation process.

"This one's special for sure," said Overholt. "It's my first senior title and I'm coming off being injured the last two years. So, it's just special to have that win after not racing for a long time. It was a long year of relearning how to walk, run, sprint and hurdle again. So, it's just satisfying to have all of that hard work pay off and know that progress is being made and that I am still able to be the Canadian National Champion."

Overholt noted the injury, a stress fracture in her foot, has been dogging her for the past two years and resulted in her missing out on qualifying for the Canadian Olympic team.

"My injury was diagnosed in April last year, and it was an injury that I was previously dealing with in 2024, which sidelined me from making the Olympic team, and it was re-diagnosed last year. The team doctors decided that getting surgery was the next step. They put screws in one of the bones to help strengthen it and reinforce it to prevent the injury from happening again, but because of it being in the foot, I had to be non-weight bearing, so I couldn't walk for six weeks.

"After that, it slowly progressed to walking in a boot and then walking, and then you work up to being able to jog and then from there progress into running and

then sprinting and then hurdling," Overholt continued. "I started jogging on the ground in July of last year, and you just have to take it day by day. You just have to jog one day, and you see how the body responds. You take one or two days off, and then you try it again and just slowly progress and see how you adapt to things."

With the injury and surgery now in her rear-view mirror, Overholt noted the adversity she has faced in the last two years is driving her to capture what the injury took from her two years ago.

"It's fueling me so much right now," Overholt said of the last two years dealing with and recovering from the foot injury. "The goal is to make the LA 2028 (Olympics). It was heartbreaking having the injury diagnosed right before the trials in 2024. I was still able to make it to Canadian Nationals that year, but I just didn't have enough time to get back into race shape.

"So, when it happened again last year, it was disappointing because I had already gone through that, and there was a world's team last year that was in September in Japan that I was training towards and trying to make, but I wasn't able to make that team again. So, it was just taking all of those teams that I've missed and just using that as motivation to get through all of those hard days."

Soon after winning gold at the Canadian Nationals, Overholt was named to the Canadian national team competing at the Commonwealth Games July 23-Aug. 2 in Glasgow, Scotland.

"That is such an honour," Overholt said. "As I've said, I've missed out on national teams for the last few years, so to be able to represent Canada on the international level again is an honour, and it's just something that I've been working towards for so long now throughout these injuries."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Brooke Overholt won gold at the Canadian National Track and Field Championships June 17-21 in the 400-metre hurdles and was named to Team Canada for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, July 23 to Aug. 2.

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STK celebrates five new black belt students



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left is Samantha Wilson, a student at Stonetown Karate (STK), who recently was celebrated for graduating to the level of black belt by the local dojo. Wilson, aged 12, was the youngest of the new black belts. On the right is Marieke van Lierop, the oldest of the five new black belts at age 18, who also recently earned her black belt. All five were honoured at the STK facility last week for reaching the black belt level.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left is Briland Cunningham, who is 14 years old, and in the middle is Rylee Cunningham, aged 15. The pair were part of the recent STK graduating class who were celebrated for successfully capturing their black belt. Pictured on the right is Joshua Lariviere, a 17-year-old STK student who rounded out the crop of five STK students to recently earn the honour of black belt at the local dojo. The new blackbelts received a special plaque recognizing their achievement which also had their black belt tied to it.



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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)
Maverick Akins scores the game-winning goal on a penalty kick during the U12 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm last Wednesday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Kacey Graham blasts the ball up the field during the U17 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm game this past Monday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Lola Gropp records a hit during the Dunny’s Source For Sports U11 HPFL Red St. Marys Rockies last Thursday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Brinley St. Clair makes a throw to first base during a recent Wildwood Care Centre U15 HPFL Red St. Marys Rockies game.



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(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Blake McIntosh gets a hit during the Red Rock Construction U18 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game this past Sunday.

MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Shane Stark steps into a heavy shot on goal during a recent U10 Boys Tier Three ‘A’ St. Marys Storm game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Samanatha Matheson fires the ball up the field during the U12 Girls Tier Two St. Marys Storm game this past Monday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)
Luke Savile catches an incoming pitch during the Canadian Tire U13 OBA Red St. Marys Rockies last Thursday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Nora Pearn tosses the ball to second base during the Dave Hensel U15 HPFL Blue St. Marys Rockies game this past Sunday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)
Briland Cunningham sends the ball sailing into the air during the Cubberley Plumbing and Heating U15 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies last Thursday.

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U9 and U18 Storm girls teams join forces for food bank drive

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The U9-GT2 and U18-GT1 St. Marys Storm teams have united to host a new initiative in support of the St. Marys Food Bank with a food and personal item drive, the first of what St. Marys Minor Soccer plans to make a yearly event.

During the summer months, the local food bank experiences an increased need for donations.

From now until the week of July 13, coaches of all St. Marys Minor Soccer travel teams will be collecting donations. House league players can also participate by bringing donations to their Fun Day July 16. The team that collects the most donations will win a pizza party.

Andrea Thompson, a coach with both the U9-GT2 and U18-GT1 teams, spearheaded the initiative's creation and explained the motivation behind the food and personal item drive.

"I normally support the food bank here in town, and I noticed that there were particular items that they were lacking, and there is no major food drive this time of year. During the winter, we've got Thanksgiving, we've got Christmas and we've got hockey and other organizations supporting it through the winter. But by the time spring comes around, they're really low on certain items. So, I thought this is a perfect part that soccer can play a role in and provide a summer food drive."

According to Thompson, the top items the food bank could use this time of year include deodorant, oatmeal, canned fruit, snacks and cookies, toilet paper, and personal hygiene products.

"The food bank has a ton of canned vegetables and cereals, and things like that. But if you think about the summertime and the things that we personally need like deodorant, personal hygiene items and maybe some fun snacks, either for the start of summertime or to start the school year off, there are definitely some items to focus on. But of course, any donation is wonderful."

The food and personal item drive also provided an opportunity for the oldest girls' team in the St. Marys Minor Soccer program to exercise their leadership skills as partners with the U9 squad.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Pictured are members of the U9-GT2 and U18-GT2 St. Marys Storm soccer teams, who are hosting St. Marys Minor Soccer's first annual food and personal item drive, running until the week of July 13.

"I just think that it's really important during the summer months that we think about our local food bank and remember we need to support it," Thompson said. "With the older girls, they all have jobs and are making money, and they can contribute to our local food bank and set a good example for our little girls."

Thompson added the collaboration between the two teams adds to the value of the initiative.

"We've been planning on this because we think it's a great collaboration between the two teams, and we want the little girls who are just starting their journey in competitive soccer to be able to see what it looks like and what they can do when they're 16, 17 and 18 years old."

"We've got lots of incredible girls on this team who

have led their own team for the last couple of years," continued Thompson. "A lot of these girls started at the same age as these little girls. They've got a whole career of St. Marys minor soccer underneath them, and they all act as leaders in their own way."

Thompson also stated the plan is to make the food and personal item drive a yearly occurrence for St. Marys Minor Soccer.

"It's absolutely our hope to make this a yearly occurrence," Thompson said. "I think this is our first of many (food and personal item drives) that we're hoping to keep going. Hopefully, a summer food and personal item drive will become a tradition with summer soccer."

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Tender applications must be submitted online, dropped off in person or delivered and received by regular mail to the Watershed Conservation Centre by 3:30 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2026. In fairness to all applicants, late applications will not be opened or considered.

If any questions should arise, please contact Jason Belfry, Land Management Supervisor Jason Belfry at: 519.451.2800 ext. 280 or belfryj@thamesriver.ca.

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COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The art of letting go

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

For a long time, I believed that peace of mind was directly tied to a well-filled planner. As a mom, and historically as someone whose life operated on strict schedules, I felt that if I wasn't controlling the calendar, the kitchen and the bedtime routines, everything would fall apart. When you manage every detail, your brain doesn't rest; it just permanently stays on standby.

But this June, during a three-week trip back to Europe with my family, something shifted.

We had an itinerary, of course, but for the first time, we allowed the small life we were living over there to breathe. We navigated trains we didn't expect, lingered over cozy dinners that went way past traditional bedtimes and forgot about packing school lunches. More than that, because my son had his grandparents around, my husband and I found ourselves blissfully, almost child-free for long stretches. It wasn't just a holiday; it was a psychological reset.

Along the way, Europe shattered a few of my long-held preconceptions. For instance, I always assumed the Italian Riviera, especially the areas glittering close to Portofino, would be impossibly expensive. But you know what? It actually felt almost budget-friendly the moment we crossed the border from Switzerland!

Yet, two days before flying back to Canada, the "internal manager" inside me suddenly woke up from its deep sleep. A tiny wave of anxiety hit out of nowhere. "Wait," my brain shouted, "you haven't planned the rest of the summer! Where are the swim lessons? Which camps is he registered for? Why aren't you managing something?!"

The final shift in my perspective hap-



(ALONA VASYLIEVA PHOTOS)

Returning from a three-week European reset, a St. Marys resident discovers that true summer freedom isn't found in a packed calendar, but in the beautiful gaps in between.

pened on our Air Canada flight back to Toronto. Having spent a decade of my life working in the skies, I am used to planes being a place of complete disconnection from the ground. So, I was incredibly surprised to have seamless Wi-Fi access on board. Texting with my friends while flying high above the Atlantic was an amaz-

ing experience – it made the vast distance between my two worlds feel so beautifully small.

Sitting on that long flight, battling the early onset of a drastic jet lag, I had a lot of hours to think. I realized that my anxiety had it backward. Controlling everything doesn't buy us security; it just costs us our freedom. True stability isn't about having every single week of July and August booked solid; it's about knowing that your family can handle the beautiful, unplanned gaps in between.

I did, however, bring one specific piece of European routine back with me – a new "pet" for our Canadian home. My husband's stepfather kindly cultivated a brand-new type of sourdough starter for me. So now, alongside the lessons of letting go, I have +1 starter sitting in my fridge to keep me busy and healthy. It turns out you can still nurture something living without needing to control the whole world.

Back here in Ontario, there is another wave of energy keeping us firmly engaged. The World Cup is fully underway

and knowing that some of these massive matches are taking place right here in Toronto and Vancouver brings a thrilling sense of presence. You feel the gravity of something globally immense happening so close to home, even if you are watching it unfold from the comfort of your living room rather than a stadium seat. I'm genuinely putting down my planner and just enjoying the game.

Now that I'm back in St. Marys, walking through my quiet house at 3 a.m. because my internal clock still thinks I'm in Europe, I look at the blank summer pages ahead. I feel a gentle pang of sadness that our European vacation is over but knowing that the whole Canadian summer is still ahead definitely gives me a fresh surge of power and inspiration. I already have my favourite spots to revisit in Ontario during these warm months, and yet there is still so much more left to discover. Instead of panic, I feel peace.

Sometimes, the best strategy for a smooth takeoff into a new season is to put down the planner, step away from the cockpit and just enjoy the view.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

The summer's first Funday Friday event is tomorrow! Reptilia London is coming to Kin Park with an exciting collection of live reptiles for a "Reptile Meet and Greet". Participants will be given the chance to see, touch, and learn about these fascinating creatures in this unforgettable, up-close wildlife experience. To register for this free event, please visit tinyurl.com/SM-PL-ActiveNet. Please note that participants under the age of 7 must be accompanied by a caregiver who is at least 12 years old.

UP THIS WEEK

- Fri., July 3: Funday Friday - Reptile Meet and Greet*[^] (11 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
- Sat., July 4: Open 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Mon., July 6: Picnic in the Park*[^] (12-1 p.m.), Discovery Den* (3:15 – 4:30 p.m.)
- Tues., July 7: Reading Help* (10:30 – 11:30 a.m.), Crafty Kids* (1:45 – 3 p.m.)
- Wed., July 8: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.), Picnic in the Park*[^] (12-1 p.m.), Reading Help* (2:30 – 3:30 p.m.), Imagination Station (2-4 p.m.), Teen Program* (6-7 p.m.), FOL Social (6:30 – 8 p.m.)
- Thurs., July 9: Mini Makers* (10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Fluency Fitness*[^] (2-3 p.m.)
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St. Marys Independent

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HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Lakeside summer resort

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

Canada Day celebrations are a wonderful way to start the summer. In St. Marys, the Canada Day parade and the traditional gathering in Cadzow Park are the first events in a season filled with special activities for all to enjoy. According to accounts in old newspapers, available on microfilm at the St. Marys Museum, the town has celebrated July 1 since 1867, some years more exuberantly than others. Many Independent readers will remember that the holiday marking Confederation was once called Dominion Day. July 1 has always been a statutory holiday, but the name was not officially changed from Dominion Day to Canada Day until 1982.

In 1908, St. Marys and area residents had a special reason to celebrate Dominion Day. On July 1, the St. Marys and Western Ontario Railway officially opened for traffic. This railroad building project had been financed by private investors, businessmen from St. Marys and from other communities along the proposed line that would connect with the Canadian Pacific Railway's main through-line at Woodstock. The investors believed this route would offer an alternative to the Grand Trunk Railway's excessive freight rates. The sod was turned to start the project in April 1907. But the first months of construction were difficult. The contractor fell behind and expenses mounted. He failed to pay the workers on time and there were strikes and even riots, causing a great deal of excitement in the villages along the line. The project stalled but it was in everyone's best interest to complete the route. Finally, the St. Marys and Western Ontario Railway company directors reached an agreement to turn the management of the line over to the Canadian Pacific Railway. With this intervention, the tracks over the route were laid and ready for travel by July 1, 1908. Officials from the Montreal-based CPR came to St. Marys to join local dignitaries on the inaugural trip.

According to the report in the St. Marys Journal, following an early morning breakfast at the Royal Edward Hotel, "The regular train left the St. Marys Depot at 7:40 a.m. with the party on board, to connect with points on the CPR, proceeding by way of the Embro Junction to Woodstock." When the train arrived at 9:00 a.m., there was a welcoming committee waiting, offering congratulations



(PHOTO COURTESY OF REG NEAR POSTCARD COLLECTION, R. LORNE EEDY ARCHIVES, ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

A postcard view, ca 1910, of the bathhouse at William Dalrymple's Lakeside Summer Resort.

on the completion of the route. The return train left Woodstock at 11:00 a.m. and got back to St. Marys at 12:20 p.m. A second daily passenger train left at 4:35 p.m., arriving in Woodstock at 6:00 p.m. The later return train left Woodstock at 7:25 p.m. and was back in St. Marys by 8:45 p.m. Along the route, there were station stops at Uniondale, Lakeside, Bennington, and Embro. With these convenient train times, St. Marys people had new ways to do business and to visit friends and relatives in Oxford County.

There were advantages for Oxford County residents too. For instance, cheese from the Farmers Union Cheese Factory, near the Uniondale station, could now be conveniently shipped by rail. One entrepreneur in Lakeside was also ready with a special promotion. This notice appeared in the St. Marys Journal: "A train on the St. Marys and Western Ontario Railway will be run on Dominion Day, July 1, 1908, from St. Marys to Lakeside when the new Lakeside Summer Resort will be open. Come and enjoy a trip around the lake in the sailboat. There will be rowboats on the lake, dancing in the Pavilion and refreshment booths on the Grounds. Five cent tickets admission to any one attraction. William Dalrymple, Proprietor."

In 1907, William Dalrymple, a second-generation farmer on Lot 24, Concession 13, East Nissouri Township, decided to create a summer resort on the southwest corner of his farm. It bordered the body of water that gave the nearby

village of Lakeside its name. At that time, it was called Crystal Lake because of its clear, spring-fed water. Today, it is known as Lake Sunova. The lake was small, about a mile long and half a mile across, but in a beautiful setting. Before Dalrymple created his park, it was already known as a good place for swimming and fishing. In the winter, there was skating on the smooth, frozen surface and even the occasional curling match.

William Dalrymple's plans for his resort were ambitious, and the facilities he offered for picnics, swimming and boating were immediately very popular. On Dominion Day 1908, Dalrymple met the train, his horses and wagon bedecked with ribbons, and drove the visitors to his resort. The St. Marys Journal had a report in the edition following the holiday: "One of the features of the day was a picnic at the new Lakeside Summer Resort, where the proprietor, Mr. William Dalrymple, is getting things into splendid shape. A gasoline launch, a sailboat, and a number of rowboats have been put on the lake. A dancing pavilion has been erected and improvements are to follow. A large number of visitors from St. Marys, Embro, and other places took advantage of the opening of the railroad to spend the holiday at the lake."

According to the 2012 history of East Nissouri Township, Volume One, titled People, Perseverance, Progress: "In the horse and buggy era, literally hundreds of people came from miles around to pic-

nic and enjoy the water. With the arrival of the train, the numbers increased and it was a very busy spot." As well as his dance pavilion, Dalrymple built a stable to accommodate 100 horses while their owners enjoyed the resort's attractions. A boat house sheltered the various watercraft. "A raft was built on barrels and anchored with stones. On many occasions, it was used as a bandstand. Apparently, the sound was better coming across the water."

One of William Dalrymple's most interesting features at his resort was the bathhouse. This week's photograph is a postcard view of the building. It was U-shaped, with the three sides on pilings over the water. To preserve modesty, bathers used cubicles along the sides to change into their swimsuits. They then climbed down the short ladders or stepped over the railing to swim. They could stay in the enclosed, sheltered section, open to the sky, or go through a passageway and out into the lake. In the winter, the water within the walls froze, creating an excellent skating surface.

The Oxford County Archives has an online description of the Lakeside Summer Resort, explaining that up to the early 1920s, visitors came "to enjoy dances, horse races, sporting events, camping, fairs, and family functions." They would also come from far and wide to hear bands such as London's famous Guy Lombardo Orchestra. During the days of the United Farmers of Ontario, on Labour Day, the resort was the site of a large Farmers' Picnic.

William Dalrymple and his wife, Elizabeth, managed the resort with the help of their ten children. Although this must have taken most of his time, in both the 1911 and 1921 census, William Dalrymple still lists his occupation as "farmer." By the time of the 1931 census, he had sold his Lakeside property. He and Elizabeth were living in London in a house on Wellington Street South, along with one of their sons, his wife and two little boys. William, now age 66, was semi-retired, working part-time in a chicken hatchery.

The Lakeside Summer Resort had passed its heyday, and the new owners could not sustain it. In the 1930s, it fell into disuse, and the property was sold off in sections. The buildings were torn down or relocated. Although William Dalrymple's summer resort was no more, this was by no means the end of the Lakeside's attractions. The story continues.

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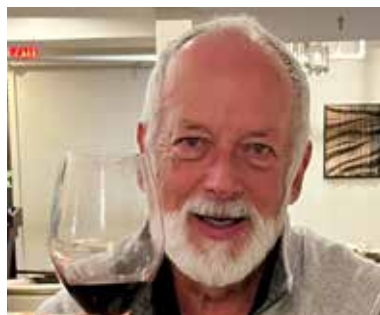
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Learning on the job at a chef's table in Grenada



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

Chef Janice hands me an apron, a large, very sharp knife and a cutting board. "Chop this onion," she says.

Fast forward a few minutes. Chef Janice examines my work, and I fail. "No, chop it much finer than that." Lesson learned.

I was standing behind the chef's table at the Mount Cinnamon Beach and Wellness Resort in St. George's, Grenada. I was invited to Grenada as a member of an eight-person group of Canadian travel journalists.

To tell the truth, I probably should not have been included on the trip because places like Grenada like to introduce new travel media to their destination, and when it comes to this wonderful island in the east Caribbean, I am not new. This was my third visit to Grenada and I hope it won't be my last.

In my job, one should be focused on new, international destinations, I suppose, but there is a short list of amazing places that I would love to return to again and again. Ireland, for example. The southern tip of Italy. South-west England. And Grenada is definitely on that list.

So, when they invite me, I go. But while there, I figure that I should do my best to find new and different experiences to write about.

Being a sous-chef to Chef Janice fits that category perfectly.

Food is an increasingly important element of travel anywhere in the world. More and more people are building travel itineraries around opportunities to enjoy local cuisine. Others may not make food number one but still want to experience local food and drink.

It's the opposite of what may still happen in large, all-inclusive resorts where they offer food they think their guests – especially Americans – are comfortable with. I don't want "comfort," I want "authentic."

When our group arrived for our visit to Mount Cinnamon, the chef's table was set for the eight of us. Our host asked, "Would anyone like to assist the chef?" Two of us immediately raised our hands and were designated sous – or maybe something lower than sous – chefs for the duration.

We stood behind the chef's table, which was spread with an amazing array of ingredients. Some were obvious – large, freshly caught filets of fish (which turned out to be Mahi Mahi), the aforementioned onions, garlic, tomatoes, lettuce. But then there were the many ramekins filled with colourful and aromatic spices.

That made sense. Grenada brands itself as "the spice of the Caribbean." Later in our visit, we toured the Belmont Estate,

known for fantastic chocolate, but where our guide, Kelly, began at a table laden with about three dozen kinds of fruits, nuts and spices, all grown commercially on the estate.

Just as the national symbol for Canada is the maple leaf, Grenada's symbol is nutmeg, the signature spice of the island.

So, while my colleague and I were assigned the more easily identified elements – onions, garlic, tomatoes – Chef Janice added a delicious and mysterious mix of spices to the food we were preparing.

After I was released – we won't say fired – from my culinary duties, and had enjoyed the amazing meal we had prepared, I checked out the menu in the adjacent restaurant. The list of ingredients in the various dishes was mouthwatering: toasted coconut, rosemary, chives, chili oil, ginger, passionfruit, citrus, capers, thyme, cilantro, lemon, turmeric aioli, lime, tamarind chutney, mango, mint, parsley, basil, cinnamon and more, virtually all fresh from the island. And these are just the seasonings that accent the main ingredients!

The meal I – well, mostly not I – eventually served started with a very tasty Callaloo Soup. Callaloo is a leafy plant; the green soup included coconut milk, garlic, onion, chili peppers and pinches of sundry amazing spices from the magic ramekins.

The main course was grilled Mahi Mahi garnished with tomato, onion and pineapple salsa, sauteed local vegetables (including chunks of yellow pumpkin)



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

A spice seller in the St. George's Market.

and twice-baked potatoes. I was involved in all of this but, shall we say, my learning curve was a factor. I was cautioned not to over-stir the vegetables, and when it came time to plate the meal, I forgot to start with the lettuce leaf that was supposed to be under the veggies. So, I got that one. A victim of my own incompetence.

Though as I enjoyed every single bite of an amazing meal featuring fresh, local, Grenadian ingredients and unique tastes, I did not feel at all victimized. Mostly, I felt lucky.

Local spices, fruits, vegetables and seafood are in evidence everywhere in Grenada, from the restaurants and pubs to the

stalls in St. George's Market to the hillsides where what might appear to be forests are actually orchards where foods like nutmeg or papaya grow on trees that shelter the soil beneath them, where other foods and spices grow.

There are lots of reasons to visit Grenada – more about this in coming months – but for any visitor, the amazing local cuisine should be high on your list.

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.

**The author with Chef Janice.****Fresh caught tuna at the St. George's fish market.****Belmont Estate guide Kelly with the array of produce from the estate.**

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Canada Day indulgences



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

Why not celebrate the bounty of our nation with the following inspired recipes which showcase traditional flavours of Canada.

The ice cream and maple brie toasts are perfect to serve during the heat of the summer - indulgent and celebratory!

Cream-cheese-stuffed French toast with strawberries

A sweet breakfast or brunch treat. Perfect for Canada Day.

Prep: 10 minutes; Cook: 15 minutes; Total: 25 minutes;

Serves: 6

Filling ingredients:

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened (I used lactose free)

- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract

French toast ingredients:

- 12 slices Texas toast or brioche (I used day-old sourdough)
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- Optional toppings: strawberries, maple syrup, whipped cream

Method:

- Beat together cream cheese, powdered sugar and vanilla until you have reached a spreadable consistency. I let the cream cheese sit at room temperature unpackaged for a half hour.

- Spread a thick layer of cream-cheese filling on one side of the bread. Top with a second piece of bread forming a sandwich. I also included sliced

strawberries inside for an added wow factor.

- In a small bowl, whisk eggs, milk, sugar and cinnamon together. Dip sandwiches in egg mixture to coat evenly.

- Melt butter over a griddle or skillet. Cook sandwiches until golden brown on both sides.

- Top with strawberries, syrup and whipped cream (or your selection). You could also try blueberries, sliced banana, cinnamon sugar, chopped walnuts or pecans.

No-churn strawberry ripple ice cream

Prep: 30 minutes plus freezing; Serves: 12

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups strawberries, plus extra for serving
- 1/2 cup fine sugar
- 2 1/2 cups cream
- 1 tsp vanilla paste or 1 vanilla pod
- 1 tin condensed milk
- 50g meringue nests

Method:

- Hull the strawberries and halve. Place in saucepan on medium-low with sugar and 2 tbsp water. Cook for 10-15 minutes until strawberries have reduced to a syrup. Strain and mush through a fine sieve and leave to cool completely. Reserve strawberry pulp to serve over oatmeal or yogurt.

- Place cream in a large bowl with vanilla extract. Whisk until small peaks form, stir in condensed milk. Crush over meringue and fold through.

- Pour cream mixture into a freezer proof container. Drizzle over most of strawberry syrup and gently ripple through, leaving pools of syrup. Freeze for at least 4 hours or until set. It will keep for 3 months.

- Move ice cream from freezer to fridge 30 minutes before serving.

- Scoop into bowls or cones and top with remaining strawberries, crushed meringue and

strawberry syrup.

Maple brie toasts

Delicious, sweet and buttery maple appetizer served warm or room temperature. Perfect for any gathering!

Ingredients:

- 1 loaf crusty baguette, sliced
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- Pinch of sea salt
- Brie or other soft ripened cheese

Method:

- Heat a large skillet over medium heat, add butter, maple syrup and a pinch of salt.

- Cook bread in two batches. Add bread slices and cook until golden and caramelized, flipping once using tongs.

- Add extra butter and maple syrup if needed, ensuring bread is not dry.

- Transfer to a lightly oiled plate and let cool slightly. Spread with brie or soft cheese of choice.

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO OUTDOORS:

New exhibit highlights the history and art of decoy making



JEFF HELSDON

Independent Columnist

A hand-carved duck decoy is part utility and part art, with a mix of history thrown in on some occasions.

The opening of the Davidson Decoy Gallery Collection offers an insight into the world of hand-carved decoys and gives visitors a chance to see some of Ontario's finest examples of decoy carving. Situated in the Backus Education Centre outside of Port Rowan, the gallery is situated in an area steeped in waterfowling history. Carvers of the area are known by collectors across the continent.

The use of decoys to lure waterfowl into range for harvesting dates back to ancient Egypt. In North America, Indigenous peoples used decoys to bring ducks into bow-and-arrow range. Research has found reeds were a common base for Indigenous decoys. Decoy-making advanced

in the 1800s when market hunters carved wooden decoys, examples of which are highly prized by collectors today.

Wooden decoys continued to be used by the average hunter into the mid-20th century, when cheaper plastic displaced them from common use. Some of the Long Point hunt clubs still use wooden decoys to this day. As the use of rougher hunting blocks declined, decoy carving grew as an art form, with the detail of both carving and painting reaching new heights.

The Davidson Decoy Gallery is a modern, well-lit display of decoys not only from the Long Point area but also from other areas across the entire province. The local display includes examples of decoys from the Reeves family, who are renowned across North America. Divided up into sections based on the carvers' home areas, it tells the story of waterfowling through more than 100 decoys. It also includes several examples of modern artistic carvers, including world champions such as Pat Godin, Jeffrey Krete and Paul Burdette.

The tale of how the gallery came into being was revealed at an opening ceremony this spring. Backus curator Chloe Anna gave credit to Long Point Region Conservation Authority – which owns the Backus Con-

servation Area – general manager Judy Maxwell and former curator Sarah Pointer, but said the real credit goes to Bruce Malcolm and Tom Davidson.

“Without their help, this wouldn't be a thing,” she said. “They're super passionate and know so much about waterfowling history.”

The journey to the display began with a phone call from Davidson, a hunter at the Lee Brown Marsh, to the marsh manager, Kim Brown.

“It started with a phone call to Kim, and I asked if there was anywhere we could buy or rent a building. He described this place,” Davidson said at the opening.

Brown was surprised at the call.

“I was in shock,” he said. “I'd seen his collection, and it was unbelievable.”

After Davidson drove to see the facility, the wheels were put in motion.

Davidson also met local Bruce Malcolm, who has been collecting decoys for 55 years. In addition to loaning their own decoys for the display, the two sourced decoys from elsewhere.

Malcolm was behind the Canadian Decoy and Outdoor Collectible Association, of which he is a member, bringing their annual show to Backus last fall.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Visitors at the opening of the Davidson Decoy Gallery look at the many displays depicting the decoys from different areas of Ontario with rich waterfowling heritage, including Toronto and Hamilton.

Some of the members donated decoys at that time, and the show is coming back on Sept. 19.

Davidson, who lives near Caledon, hunted the Long Point area for 45 years, at Lee Brown Marsh for 35 years and was a member of the former Bluff's Hunting Club on Long Point. He has a passion for the area, saying there is nowhere the hunting is better than at Long Point.

“Our objective was to pay tribute to the great carvers of the past and try to entice collectors of the future,” he said of the dis-

play.

The gallery is open until Sept. 6 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday to Sunday. Extended hours are planned for the fall, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays in September and October, to allow waterfowl hunters in the area to see the display.

Jeff Helsdon is an award-winning outdoor writer, a columnist for *Ontario Out of Doors* and writes for several other outdoor publications.

UNDERSTANDING GEN Z: ‘You’re Gen Z, right?’



MEREDITH A. STOKES

Independent Columnist

My name is Meredith Stokes, and I’m Gen Z. I was born and raised in an amazing little town where the CAO is the guy we have over for campfires and there are more pizza places than you can count on one hand. Yup, you guessed it. I grew up in St. Marys, Ont., and I wouldn’t

have it any other way.

There’s a high chance that you already know me in some way. After all, I’m not exactly a hermit. I volunteer at the library, play baseball, coach and play ringette, and generally try to be a helpful presence in the world. I have a lot of ideas that are a little too big for “just a kid” and “40-year-old in a teenage body” is a title I carry with pride.

I fell in love with books very young, entranced by the way words on a page could make pictures in your mind and steal you away. By three years old, I decided that I wanted to make that magic for myself, and that hasn’t changed. My dream is to publish a book someday, and I have a novel in progress. Those two sides of me, the visionary

and the writer, came together to make this column.

Let me explain. I have always had a profound desire to understand the world, so I pay attention to a lot of details. It’s part of why I am who I am. One of the things that bothers me the most is when people make assumptions about complete strangers. Humans are unbelievably complicated, so taking one look and thinking you know everything is an ineffective theory. I think that if we all took a little more care to listen before we judge each other, the world would be a much brighter place.

As a Gen Z, now a teenager, most people are honestly shocked when they meet me. They never say it out loud, of course, but it doesn’t take them

too long to realize I’m not social-media obsessed and dumb as bricks, and I think somehow that makes them short circuit. I don’t know who started it, but adults seem to have it drilled into their heads that we’re some copy-and-pasted evil clones that just spout Italian brainrot. It’s both annoying and exhausting.

Do I blame you? Not really. It’s easier to believe what we’re taught than try to actually understand it. It gives us a sense of belonging to all be on the same page in such a vast world. But I think that a bunch of kids trying to make their way in a hard world would rather you turn your complaints on someone else.

This column is to break down the stereotypes that surround my generation. I’m here to tell you

who we actually are, why we do what we do and the way we see the world. You may not agree with everything I write, and I’m not asking you to. I think everyone is entitled to believe anything they wish to. I just ask that you keep an open mind, and maybe, given time, you will start to understand us a little better.

Maybe you’ll even start to respect us.

If you have any specific questions or ideas, feel free to reach out to the St. Marys Independent and I will do my very best to answer. If even one person starts to see the other side of the coin, I will be happy. And to that one person: teenagers everywhere will thank you.

OPINION: AI, data centres and us

LOREENA MCKENNITT

Contributed Article

In the 2025 documentary, *I Live 400 Yards from Mark Zuckerberg’s Massive Data Centre*, by the Emmy-winning investigative newsroom More Perfect Union, the opening sequence reveals the collapse of an American household’s water supply before pulling back to expose META’s two-million-square-foot AI data centre in Mansfield, Ga.

The documentary exposes a shocking array of personal and environmental consequences as a result of the centre’s infrastructure. Sitting on what was once forested land, it consumes massive amounts of water and energy and exudes lighting that illuminates the night sky for miles around. It’s the kind of mammoth infrastructure that may soon be coming to a com-

munity near us – down the road in Hamilton, or in Olds, Alta. We best be prepared.

Their citizens, like the rest of us, are rushing to comprehend the whole AI ecosystem while being asked to get on with our “AI literacy program,” albeit reluctantly. And one of the most consequential pieces of that “program” are these very centres.

So, what is it that data centres actually do? Well, according to Google’s AI, “Data centres are centralized facilities that house thousands of servers, networking hardware and storage systems. They are the physical backbone of the internet and modern IT, used to securely store, process and deliver the digital data behind our daily apps, websites and cloud services.”

But there are different kinds and different scales of data cen-

tres, many of which have been around our cities for years. They’ve been quietly acquiring our information that we’ve knowingly and unknowingly, voluntarily and involuntarily offered to all manner of institutions and organizations. From banks and government offices to social media companies and more, everything about us has been digitized.

What makes AI data centres so different and consequential is their size. A hyperscale data centre, we are told, would cover a significant part of Manhattan and consume twice the energy the City of Ottawa uses. In some cases, the centres are being proposed for what is currently rare, fertile farmland.

AI companies are ramping up their marketing to convince us we’ll all be better off with AI. They’re aggressively competing to have us adopt their particular

version while rushing to establish the necessary data centres ahead of any regulation that informed citizens might demand. Some cities are thinking ahead and banning them outright. Others are calling for a moratorium.

According to a February 2026 report by the World Resources Institute, “Across the country, a surge of new data centers is reshaping local energy grids, water systems and land use. This rapid expansion is often happening with limited public information about the long-term impacts – or benefits – new data centers could bring.”

If Canada already has five hyperscale data centres and 96 more are in development, then citizens across this country will need to respond with a sense of urgency.

For those here in Stratford with fresh memories of the two years of secrecy during which

time our municipal and provincial governments attempted to implement a float-glass factory on fertile farmland just outside the city limits, we best not take anything for granted.

This is a subject for those who are concerned with farmland, the environment, water and energy consumption, air quality, and natural resources. Our democracy demands we have a say.

Whether or not a hyperscale data centre comes to our neighbourhood, we all need to understand the price we pay for the internet and AI. No matter what they tell you, it certainly isn’t free.

Loreena McKennitt is an officer of The Order of Canada, director of The Falstaff Family Centre (Stratford) and founder of The Stolen Child Project and Wise Communities.

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RURAL REFRESH: Sweet summertime



JACLYN TURPIN

Independent Columnist

The '90s seem to be a place in history many of us want to get back to. It's denim on denim, platform shoes and bucket hats. More than that, it's the perceived simplicity; a time before the internet was at our fingertips and phones were kept in the kitchen. Trends were slower moving;

fashion was found in magazines; and streetlights were the timers.

You may have seen the social media posts about only having 18 summers with your kids, or bringing back a '90s summer. These might be good reminders; things to reflect on, no doubt. But we know parents already have enough pressures to prescribe to a certain way of life. The truth is, no matter what type of summer you have, I can almost promise you that if you make it one that is enjoyable for you as a parent, your kid's summer fun and memories will be reflected in that too.

Starting the day with cartoons? Sure! Eating too many ice creams? Yes, please! Staying up late to spend time with the neighbours. Absolutely! Making

new friends at summer camp? Love that! You get the picture. For everyone, it looks different. Summer is a lot. It is a lot of coordinating and balancing. So, although it may be true that there are only a limited number with young kids, or that you'll never have the same summer, this really isn't helpful information when you are coordinating schedules, passing out a million snacks, or packing for a dreaded car ride to a family vacation spot.

Let's face it, the internet will bring us checklists and ideas of what summer should look like, and social media will be the first to let you know if you aren't keeping up with the trends or haven't been to the beach enough, but are those your summer ideals or the ones that are expected of

you?

Storebought ice cream, thrifted outfits and toys from garage sales aren't going to matter most 20 years down the road when your kids are telling the stories of what they were up to in the summer of 2026, just like we hope to remember the fun trip to the beach instead of the meltdowns that happened when big brother threw sand in his sister's eyes.

It's only natural to have moments of overwhelm and feeling overstimulated. You might plan things and then be let down, feel sad for missing out, or wish you had spent more days at home. Just as much as this is summer for your kids, it is summer for you too! Find old-fashioned adventure and imagination in bore-

dom. Repeat the activities that bring contentment. Stick to the familiar routines that work for you year round.

So yes, the '90s were a time that I reflect on too, and I also often say that I want to raise '90s kids. This summer is different, we are different, our kids are different and the world is different. Take what you remember from your childhood summers. Keep it simple and remind yourself that your enjoyment will be reflected in your child's enjoyment too! Summer 2026; it's all of ours to remember!

Jaclyn Turpin is owner and a social worker at Rural Refresh, a counselling agency supporting St. Marys and area.

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Riddles

What does the sun drink out of?
A sun-glass!

Why did the ice cream truck break down?
Because it hit a rocky road!

What do you call a snowman in the summer?
A puddle!

Why don't fish play basketball?
Because they're afraid of the net!

What kind of tree fits in your hand?
A palm tree!

What did one beach say to the other beach?
Long time, no sea!

What do frogs like to drink on a hot day?
Croak-a-Cola!

What did the ocean say to the beach?
Nothing—it just waved!

Why did the banana wear sunscreen?
Because it didn't want to peel!

What do ducks put on at the beach?
Quack-screen!

- Word Search -



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JUNE NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

V E N E Z U E L A E A R T H Q U A K E M
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S L H E Y A T L A D K F P O R F F J E N
V F C X E D J Z D D D D V O O K E Y N G
C M E F C J O N A T H A N D A V I D A I
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F X B B N J T B U X D W Q I A I K I C K
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Screwworm fly
Backrooms movie
SpaceX IPO
Trillionaire Musk
Iran negotiations
NY Knicks
Carolina Hurricanes
Keir Starmer resigns
Gavin McKenna
Venezuela earthquake
World Cup
Jonathan David
Stephen Eustaquio
Lionel Messi



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK

What did the cow
say to the calf?



It's pasture bed
time!

Jeffrey Koot (4)

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

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

PET OF THE WEEK



Canada Day festivities are fun—but loud fireworks and crowds
can stress pets. Keep them indoors in a safe, quiet space, and
make sure ID tags are up to date.
Enjoy the celebrations while keeping tails wagging and purrs
happy!
Safe pets, happy holiday!



DAISY

Our Pet of the Week is Daisy. Daisy is a 10-month-old cat who was adopted from Feline Friends and has quickly become a beloved member of the Cunningham family. She loves spending her days watching the birds and chipmunks outside the window, always curious about the world around her. Friendly and affectionate, Daisy never misses a chance to greet people and make new friends.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



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Wellburn community welcomes AED generously donated by the Elliott family

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

An outdoor automated external defibrillator (AED) has been installed at Wellburn Community Park following a donation from Joe and Judy Elliott and their family.

The initiative was inspired after Joe Elliott attended a Thamesford Lions meeting and heard a presentation about Andrew's Legacy – a campaign to raise funds and awareness for AEDs at schools, parks and public areas. With assistance from Thames Centre parks and facilities manager Devon Brown, the Elliott family funded the purchase of the yearround outdoor unit, now mounted at the Wellburn park building.

Approximately 30 residents gathered at the park last Wednesday evening for an information session led by Thames Centre deputy district chief Robert Kuenzlen and District Chief Wes Fox. The two outlined how AEDs function, why they are critical in emergencies and how bystanders can use them.

Kuenzlen emphasized that cardiac ar-

rest “can happen to anyone, anywhere at any time,” noting that when the heart stops pumping blood and oxygen to the brain, damage can begin within minutes. He explained that survival decreases by seven to 10 per cent for every minute without CPR or defibrillation. While emergency responders arrive as quickly as possible, he said “those first few minutes are critical and bystanders are often the true first responders.”

He reassured residents that AEDs are designed for public use, with voice prompts guiding each step.

“The AED will only deliver a shock if it is needed,” he added.

Kuenzlen thanked the Elliott family on behalf of Thames Centre Fire Department for their contribution to the community and for their help to support this endeavour for community safety.

Local resident Jean McRoberts welcomed the addition.

“I think this is a great idea to have this safety unit available for our community,” she said. “Many thanks to the Elliott family for purchasing this lifesaving device. You never know when we may need it.”



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Pictured in the back row, from left to right, are Thames Centre deputy district chief Robert Kuenzlen, Joe Elliott, Judy Elliott, Kason Elliott, Colin Mcmillan and Thames Centre District Chief Wes Fox. In front is Kelly Elliott with her stepson, Parker Olsen.

Thorndale Library kicks off summer programs

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Last Friday, June 26, the Thorndale Library staff kicked off their summer program with a lively “Touch a Truck” event featuring emergency vehicles.

Young children, joined by parents and grandparents, were able to see a fire engine up close and even help Thames Centre firefighter Chad Leslie from Thorndale Station 2 handle the water hose. The OPP was also on site, with both auxiliary constables and community engagement officer Jeff Hare, available to chat with families. Children were thrilled to sit inside the police car, especially with the lights flashing.

Thorndale Library staff were on hand as well to share details about this year's summer programming, which truly offers something for everyone: young children

and their families, teens and adults.

What's happening at the Thorndale library in July

- **Thorndale Storytime:** Tuesdays, 10:30-11 a.m. Join us for stories, songs, rhymes, and plenty of fun! This event is open to all families, and no registration is required.

- **Early ON Play & Learn Fridays:** 9-11 a.m. A free drop-in program designed for families with children aged zero to six. No registration required.

- **Top-tier VR:** July 7, 10, 14, 17, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For families. Visit faraway places, face your fears, or try a completely new video-gaming experience.

- **Stitch 'n Chat:** First Tuesday of the month, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Next session: July 7, third Wednesday of the month, 6-8 p.m. Next Session: July 15. Bring your current needlecraft project and meet other crafters for some stitching and chatting.

Registration required.

- **Volcano in a Bottle:** Wednesday, July 8, 2:30-3 p.m. Are you ready to unleash your inner chemist? Well, prepare yourself because it is going to get messy. Create your own Volcano in a Bottle in this explosive chemistry experiment! Registration required.

- **Watercolour Zendoodles:** Thursday, July 16, 6-7:30 p.m. Relax and explore your creativity with simple zendoodle patterns and watercolour techniques. No experience needed! For youth 12+ and adults. Registration required.

- **Miniature Magic:** Tuesday, July 21, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For families, make jewelry, miniatures of your favourite animals, or a keychain with Shrinky Dinks. Registration required.

- **Paint Swatch Poetry:** Wednesday, July 22, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Write a colourful poem using inspiration from the names of

shades on paint swatches. For adults, 18+

- **Library Legends:** Learn to Play Dungeons and Dragons: Thursday, July 23, 2-3:30 p.m. Trying to learn a fun and creative hobby filled with goblins and dragons? Look no further! Come to learn the basics and play a one-shot at the library! Bring your own device if possible. Ages 10-17. Registration required.

- **Creepy Clay Crafting:** Wednesday, July 29, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Bring form to a creature that is unhallowed, cursed, abominable, odious out of clay, eyes and teeth. Registration required.

- **Magazine? No! My-zine!:** Thursday, July 30, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Discover how to plan, design, and print your own zine. Registration required. For families, school-aged and youth.

For more information, visit library.middlesex.ca/events or call the Thorndale Library directly at 519-461-1150.

OBITUARY

Barrett



BARRETT, Mary Grace
March 25, 1929 - June 18, 2026
Mary Grace Barrett, 97, passed away peacefully at Mount Hope Long Term Care Centre in London in the early hours of June 18, 2026. Born in Wingham, Ontario on March 25, 1929, Mary was a fair-haired, beloved daughter to Alastair (Scotty) MacIntosh Campbell Forbes and Esther Maud (Chettleburgh) Forbes. Her parents and grandparents came from Perthshire and Norfolk in the U.K. and were among the many hardworking immigrants who, before World War I, left poverty and adversity behind for a new and better life in Canada.

Mary and her older sister Helen attended elementary school in Wingham and later graduated from South Collegiate after Scotty's job with the Royal Canadian Legion required a family move to London from Huron County.

At South Collegiate, Mary Grace Forbes was friends with Josephine Barrett and through Jo, met her older brother Charles. Mary and Charlie became high school sweethearts and married in June 1949 at St. James Westminster Anglican Church, London. Mary excelled in history and was keenly interested in politics. Her first job after high school was at the London Free Press, writing stories for "the women's pages." Mary loved working at the Free Press which sparked her lifelong interest in news and current events.

Charlie's banking career during the 1950s and 1960s involved many transfers to bank branches in Milton, Long Branch, Strathroy, St.Thomas, Kitchener, Windsor, Wallaceburg, Toronto, Exeter and St. Marys. Mary became adept at packing up the entire household on short notice and although she was quiet and reserved, always made new friends through church and community groups.

Mom focused her energies on raising four daughters. Her parenting was strict and involved consistency and regular routines. She encouraged us to participate in school and community activities and enjoyed small town life. Mom was forthright, honest and hard-working. Despite her busy home life, Mom liked reading, playing bridge and watching old movies to relax.

In the 1960s, she returned to the workforce in St. Marys, first at Smith Jewellers, Marshall's Ladies Wear and then, at St. Marys Memorial Hospital. Dad and Mom moved to 168 Thornton Avenue, London in 1974 and Mary began a lengthy career at St. Mary's Hospital on Grosvenor Street. Upon her retirement (1992), she and Dad travelled to the U.K., Europe and U.S.A. Mary attended the Grand Theatre, Stratford Festival and London Pops Concerts well into her eighties. She was an avid newspaper reader throughout her life. Sadly, Mom's health rapidly declined after a hip fracture in 2021 when she lost her mobility and struggled with dementia.

Mary was predeceased by her husband Charles Victor Barrett (2014), daughter Andria (Barrett) Hahn (2014), sister Helen (Forbes) Neely (2017), sisters-in-law Josephine (Barrett) Palmer (1994), Alma (Barrett) Johnston (2013), and brothers-in-law Eric Palmer (1996), Douglas Palmer (2003), and Peter Neely (2014). She is survived by a dear sister-in-law Jean (Barrett) Palmer of Woodstock.

Mary is cherished always by daughters Paula Gregory (Scott), Claudia Barrett (Jan Simonson), Roberta Barrett (Robert McKay) and son-in-law Marcus Hahn (Mary Poulin). Also mourning her death are 11 beloved grandchildren: Andrew Hahn (Katie), Emily Hahn-Trnka (Jeremy), Adam Hahn (Adrienne), Patrick Gregory (Lara), Katherine Gregory (Adam), Kenin McKay (Peter), Morgan McKay, Iain McKay (Veronica), Eslin McKay, Mary Grace Simonson and Laurel Simonson (Ian). Mary was great-grandmother to: Max, Ella, Ben, Alexander, Amelia, Aidan, Wallace, Avery, Alistair and Adelaide. Our family is grateful for the kindness, care and compassion Mom always received at Mount Hope. Cremation has taken place with interment in Dorchester Union Cemetery. If desired, donations in her memory may be made to the St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation or Alzheimer's Society SouthWest Partners.

OBITUARY

Treanor



"Jack" John Paul Treanor passed away peacefully with family at his side at St. Marys Memorial Hospital on June 26, 2026 at the age of 83.

Predeceased by his wife Phyllis Treanor (nee Jones, 2007). Beloved father of Christopher (Laurie), Michael (Angela), and Jillian Lind (Jay). Adored Papa of Matthew (Rejoice), Cassidy (Javan), Chelsea Silcox (Trent), Ashleigh (Jordan), and Great-Grandpa of Amelia and Conway Silcox. Sadly missed by his sister Nancy Miller of Boise Idaho USA. Predeceased by his parents Bud and Lillian Treanor and brother-in-law Bob Miller.

A Celebration of Life Open House will be held at the St. Marys Legion Br. 236, 66 Church St. N. St. Marys, on July 18, 2026 from 1 – 4 pm. Private interment in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the St. Marys Legion Br. 236 or the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.



OBITUARY

Coddington



Surrounded by the love of his family, Robert Barry Coddington passed away peacefully at Georgetown Hospital on Friday, June 26, 2026, after a long and difficult battle with dementia.

Beloved son of the late Joe and Verna Coddington, Robert was the devoted husband and best friend of Carol for over 54 wonderful years. Together they built a life centered on love, laughter, hard work, and unwavering devotion to family. He was a proud father to Rob (Allison) and Cheryl (Marco) and Grandpa to Hailey, Avery and the pups. Robert will be dearly missed by his siblings Donna (Barry), Wayne (Margo), and Bev (Tom), as well as many relatives and dear friends.

Robert entered the funeral profession as a young man and dedicated more than 40 years to a career he loved. He earned the respect of colleagues and families alike through his commitment to excellence, remarkable attention to detail, and genuine compassion for every family he served.

A lifelong hard worker, he was always happiest with a project on the go. Whether meticulously caring for his lawn, building something with his own hands, or lending his skills to help others, Robert's craftsmanship and determination were evident in everything he did.

Family was everything. Some of his happiest memories were made alongside Carol and their children, whether setting off on new adventures or enjoying time together at home. More than anything, Robert will be remembered as a devoted husband, a proud father and grandfather.

Family and friends will be received at Jones Funeral Home in Georgetown on Friday, July 3, 2026 from 1pm with service beginning at 2:00 pm.

As expressions of sympathy, the family requests donations to the Alzheimer's Society of Canada.

www.jonesfuneralhome.co

OBITUARY

Mandigo



After a courageous battle with cancer, surrounded by his loving family, Wayne Norman Mandigo left this world on Monday, June 22, 2026.

He leaves behind his loving and devoted wife Annette (Van Rooy), his children Nicole and Todd (Olivia), and grandchildren Bradley and Blake. His mother Peggy, brother Mark (Teresa), nephews Jordan (Tiffany) and Kyle (Christine), his cousin (little brother) Jeff (Denise). Cherished by his in-laws William and JoAnn Van Rooy, his sisters and brothers-in-law Darlene (Wes), Barbara (Mel), nieces and nephews Eric (Victoria), Ian (Hailee), Charlie (Jimmy), Bailey (Dixon), Shelby (Mitch), Wyatt, and many great-nieces and great-nephews from both sides. He now joins his father Cecil "Bud," brother Dale, grandparents, and his fur buddy Sparky.

The family would like to thank Dr. C. Gatfield, Dr. L. Dodbiba, Care Partners Nursing Team, St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Stratford General Hospital, and the LHSC Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre. Cremation has taken place. Family and friends are invited to the Celebration of Life Open House at the St. Marys Legion, 66 Church St. North, St. Marys, ON, on Saturday, July 4th, 2026, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, LHSF Verspeeten Family Cancer Clinic, Crohn's and Colitis Canada, or charity of one's choice.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

Andrew L. Hodges

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

Solutions on pg. 35

Looking Back

AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist



Bagpipe Fridays

25 years ago (2001)

The summer series of bagpiping will begin at Little Falls this Friday at 8 p.m. and continue each Friday until Labour Day.

Former DCVI Principal Bart Brown (1989-1994) is retiring after a career in education which spanned 33 years. Brown was principal of Stratford North-western Secondary School for the past seven years.

50 years ago (1976)

Town Council, in regular session Tuesday evening, approved the 1976 budget, calling for an increase in the residential public rate of 3.95 mills over the 1975 rate. This represented a 14% tax rate increase.

Over 700 cars visited the beach area at Wildwood Lake this past Sunday, according to Park Supt. Bill Ravensburg. Looks like the popularity of Wildwood is shaping up well.

75 years ago (1951)

Hartwell Brown got a real surprise on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. when he picked up a TV programme from KPRC, Houston, Texas. The program came in with a clarity that was surprising for the distance.

The Ausable River Authority has followed the Upper Thames River Authority's lead in securing tree planers for use in the river basin. The Authority has also decided to ask the Department of Planning and Development to survey the possibility of constructing a dam to store water in the Hay Township swamp, west of Hensall.

100 years ago (1926)

The new Meighen Government was sustained by a majority of 12 on the first vote when a Liberal sub-amendment to the customs report was rejected. The sub-amendment was the Liberals' last effort to avoid the vote of censure involved in the Stevens' main amendment.

A registered Percheron stallion is for service at his owner's stable in Granton. Terms \$10 and \$12 to ensure living sound foul two days old.



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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. We are at the Pinery Market at Grand Bend every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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. Hundrcds 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

BUY AND SELL

Coins, Paper Money, Numismatic collectables. Free Appraisals and information. Saturdays 8am to 12 noon @ Milt Dunnell Field St. Marys On. Other times by appointment only. Call 519-777-0142, email hamilton@quadro.net.

FOR RENT

2 bedroom apartment for rent with balcony, fridge and stove included. Laundry on site. \$1800.00/month plus utilities. Please message Jamie at 519-274-0205

FOR SALE

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Siberian Huskies for sale. Home of Disney "Snow Dog." Over 60 years experience. Colour choices. Vaccinated. Micro-Chipped. Intelligent. Excellent temperament. Loveable companion pets. Boarding for all breeds. Pet supplies. OKIOK KENNEL, 35619 Salem Rd., Parkhill (near Mt. Carmel). 519-294-0494. No Texts.

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3. Canberra
4. A kook
5. Gelato
6. Bananarama
7. Lobster
8. Dobby
9. Umpire
10. 70 meters

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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 24

Thorndale Library July events – See Page 31

FRIDAY, JULY 3

- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 4

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon. St. Marys Scouts are serving breakfast

- East Nissouri Union Church car wash, hotdogs, baking sale & pie auction – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At the Cooper farm on Line 119 north of Uniondale

- Maple Lane Park open house at unit #14 – 1-3 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, JULY 5

- Stonetown Triathlon – 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Starts at the St. Marys Quarry

- Avonbank Community Church Canada Day celebration – 12 p.m., Pot luck lunch to follow

- Maple Lane Park open house at unit #1 – 1-3 p.m.

- Purple Hill Country Opry presents “The Weber Family & Friends” – 2 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8

- Friends of the Library social at the library – 6:30-8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 9

- Browns United Church drive-thru chicken BBQ – 4:30-7 p.m., Advance tickets only, Call Sue 519-868-3335

EAST NISSOURI UNION church

SATURDAY

JULY 4TH

10 AM TO 2 PM

CAR WASH

HOTDOGS for sale

Fresh BAKING for sale

PIE AUCTION

At the COOPER FARM

ON LINE 119 NORTH OF UNIONDALE

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

FARMS FARMS FARMS

CANADA DAY Celebration

SUNDAY, JULY 5TH

AVONBANK COMMUNITY CHURCH AT 12:00PM

Pot luck lunch to follow

Collection from the service to be donated to the church committee towards floor renovations.

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Stonetown Summer Series

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Movies in the Park

📅 Monthly, July - August
📍 Cadzow Park

Free movies presented by
Friends of the Library.

Lions Club Car Show

📅 Sat., July 18
📍 Pyramid Recreation Centre

Food, fun and fabulous
cars.

Kinsmen Summerfest

📅 July 23-26
📍 Milt Dunnell Field

Midway attractions and live
music.

Stonetown Heritage Festival

📅 July 25
📍 Downtown

Family fun, food, art, tours,
live music and more.