

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1275

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Town of St. Marys unveils designs for 14 Church St. N during Doors Open

Former Mercury Theatre building to become a multi-generational community hub



OPENING DOORS ON TOWN PLANS

St. Marys residents Scott and Samantha Crawford chat with town CAO Brent Kittmer during their Doors Open tour of the former Mercury Theatre building at 14 Church St. N.

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Doors Open St. Marys features new and returning opportunities to explore history

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Residents and out-of-town visitors explored St. Marys during the Doors Open event over the weekend and learned more about the community and its heritage.

During Doors Open on Aug. 9, there were 15 buildings open to visitors during the event including town hall, the St. Marys

Museum, Broken Rail Brewing Company and Riverside B&B.

Each place had a unique way of showcasing what St. Marys had to offer. The museum provided an opportunity to explore exhibits such as "Service Above Self: 100 Years of Rotary Club St. Marys," "Animalia" and "Medical Maladies." The Flour Mill owner Tracey Pritchard, new to Doors Open, gave

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GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Residents of and visitors to St. Marys had their first opportunity during Doors Open St. Marys Aug. 9 to explore first-hand the town's plans for the former Mercury Theatre building at 14 Church St. N. now that initial renovations are complete.

Along with other historic buildings in town, 14 Church St. N., which the Town of St. Marys purchased in 2021, was opened to the public on Saturday after the completion of initial renovations, which were started in November 2023 and finished earlier this year.

As part of the Doors open event, residents and visitors had the opportunity to tour the building, look through designs and concept drawings for the building's interior created by a+LiNK architecture inc. and the town's downtown service location review committee, none of which have been approved by council at this point, and imagine the future uses of spaces within the building with the help of floorplans mapped out in tape on the building's first and second floors, as well as in the basement.

"Today's been fantastic; it's been fantastic watching people come through the door and their faces just light up in seeing the vision for the space," said Angela Brayham, a consultant working with the town on its downtown service location review, during the Doors Open event. "People are just excited. They're just like, 'Wow,' 'Exciting,' 'Lovely.' It's been a great day."

"It's a long ways from being done but if they hadn't fixed it, it would have fell," St. Marys resident Larry McLellan said after touring the

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

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Perth South to hire deputy treasurer/asset management coordinator amid department capacity issues

Position expected to cost taxpayers between \$87,000 and \$109,000 annually

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Unable to meet provincially legislated compliance requirements and missing out on the potential for much-needed infrastructure grants, the Township of Perth South will hire a deputy treasurer/asset management coordinator to help lighten the load in its financial services department later this year.

At the Aug. 5 Perth South council meeting, councillors voted unanimously to create the position and hire someone to fill it at an estimated cost of between \$87,392 and \$109,179 annually. According to the staff report to council, the Township of Perth South is experiencing growing pressure on its financial services because of expanding municipal responsibilities, increasingly complex regulatory requirements and the rising intricacy of financial reporting.

Currently, all financial functions are managed solely by the treasurer. They include budgeting, long-term financial planning, reporting, payroll, taxation, municipal drains and grants, tile loans, audit preparation, asset management, procurement, and oversight of two communal water systems. The treasurer is also the deputy CAO, contributing to the day-to-day management of both the financial services department and broader organizational initiatives.

“When Tracy (Johnson) came onboard (as treasurer), we certainly evaluated the capacity of the treasury to do all the

things that are assigned to the treasury and all of the expectations of council,” Perth South CAO Fred Tranquilli said. “At the moment, the treasury has very limited capacity to do any forward planning, to do any evaluations of the systems that might be on the horizon. ... I think Tracy has done a good job getting her arms around all the work in the treasury, but certainly the demands of the water systems and the financial plans for them, as well as asset management and procurement, are all new expectations laid out in legislation over the last four years and there’s been no additional capacity added to the treasury to respond to those requirements.”

“The FIR (financial information return) is actually due (to the province) by May 31 and I don’t think that’s ever been done here,” Johnson said. “I mean, we’re doing year-end in December, so with that kind of stuff, they’re going to cut off your (Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund) funding if we don’t start. ... We’ve been working on stuff that hasn’t been done; the gas tax. To get the gas tax (funding), you have to do a report on it, and the (Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund), it has to be reported on. It’s all stuff that gets put on the backburner because you’re trying to do the budget, you’re trying to do the payroll, you’re trying to do the taxes. It’s a lot for one person.”

According to Tranquilli, this single-person model for the financial services department is and has been

unsustainable for a long time. It has contributed to challenges in managing grant reporting and recovering eligible expenditures, and the current workload leaves no room for proactive initiatives such as policy development, strategic financial planning, or internal process improvements. Without additional support, the township risks falling behind in regulatory compliance, operational efficiency and the delivery of essential services.

In addition, Tranquilli pointed out there is no one to take over should Johnson find herself unable to work and, as is the case in many of the township's municipal departments, there isn't adequate succession planning for the role of treasurer currently, should Johnson leave the position or retire.

While Coun. Jaime Martin asked whether the position could be part-time or contracted to save taxpayers the full cost, Tranquilli said it would be difficult to find a part-timer who would have the right skillset and solve the township's succession-planning issues, while hiring a deputy treasurer on contract would do nothing to address succession planning and may be more expensive than hiring a full-time employee.

Coun. Jim Van Nes asked why this request for a new staff position didn't come to council at budget time, to which Tranquilli said Johnson had only just

been hired and she was still getting to know her new role and department.

Van Nes also expressed frustration with the province over how much more it has started requiring from municipalities from a financial compliance standpoint, suggesting the township meet with Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae to discuss its concerns.

"If a new person comes in and it frees up time for trying to get more grants to help us out, it won't pay for itself (but) at some point, it helps pay for it," Coun. Sam Carriveau said. "If we're not submitting for grants, I see a big problem there and, if this will help, I'm for it for sure."

“It worries me that for this position we’re saying, ‘This person is going to ensure compliance,’ ” Coun. Jeff Bell added. “It’s becoming obvious just through this discussion that we do need some support and when we’re talking compliance, that’s a big deal. And I think grant funding is really going to help us as well.”

As Tranquilli said the township likely won't have anyone hired for the new position before October, the cost for that position for the remainder of the year can be paid for through this year's budget. For 2026, staff will include the full cost of the position as part of the operating budget.

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EDITORIAL

It’s been almost two years since Frank left us

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

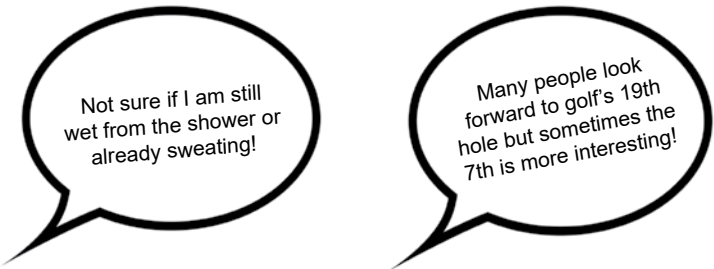
I miss Frank Doyle.
There, I said it. We are coming up to the second anniversary of his death and when you say time flies, it is very true because it seems just like yesterday that he was still coming into the office every day whether he should have been or not.
The paper was his life. He loved coming in to find out what was new in and around town and there was no place he would rather be. We are lucky enough in this business to meet all kinds of people and he was one of a kind.
To some, he came across as strong-headed, gruff and inapproachable. Also, to many, he came across as a tell-it-like-it-is, no-holds-barred, kind, family man. To me, he was funny, dedicated to the paper, his family

and his strong Irish roots.
There are many times, still, when we feel his presence in the office, just checking in on us. Papers will fall off the shelf and sometimes the door will open, and I think, there he is. I find I am using his phrases more frequently like, “The world is nuts,” “It’s a free paper,” and, “You have reached the newspaper, not the grocery store.” It is amazing how someone you never thought would, can affect how you view the world and your everyday job.
We all work hard to share with the town the latest news and events and because we are human, we do make mistakes. However, I would like to think that Frank would be proud of the legacy he left and how we are continuously trying to carry it on with the same strong determination, commitment and humour that has kept the Independent going for so long.

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Bravo	Boo
We have 3 Bravos this week. 1) Bravo to town staff and the dozens of volunteers who worked so hard to make Doors Open St. Marys a successful event last Saturday. A special Bravo to the homeowners who opened their private residences to Doors Open participants. In spite of the heat and dusty conditions, many out-of-town visitors commented on how much they were enjoying our lovely town. 2) Bravo to Kirkton for having a beautiful outdoor pool. Three generations of my family went swimming there on Sunday and they all had a great time. What a treat to swim in an outdoor pool. As well, bravo to the Kirkton Woodham Optimist Club for sponsoring a free swim at the Kirkton pool on Sunday, Aug. 10. What a great community. 3) Bravo to the town for its efforts to rid the Grand Trunk Trail of the highly invasive phragmites and Japanese knotweed. These aggressive, non-native species destroy habitat for native plants, insects, birds, and animals. They are among the most aggressive and destructive invasive species in Ontario.	We have 1 Boo this week. 1) Boo to the teenagers and adults on electric scooters not wearing helmets. They seem to be going really fast driving on sidewalks, walkways, parking lots, etc. The other day I saw an adult with a young girl riding on a electric scooter at McDonald's. Are we waiting for someone to get hurt badly?
*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

"It's been an incredible week here in Montreal. I want to thank everyone that came to support me throughout this whole week and I couldn't be more grateful. I never would have believed that I was going to do something like this and I feel super blessed."

- 18-year-old Canadian Tennis champ Victoria Mboko after winning the National Bank Open in Montreal

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The St. Marys Independent

THOUGHTS OF THE WEEK

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A boat doesn't go forward if each one is rowing their own way.

It's better to be alone than in bad company.

You've got to let go of who you were to become who you will be.

It's not about the cards you were dealt, but how you play the hand.

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Junction Station Dog Park: Where dogs and people mingle



(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

A proud pup, Blue, stands amongst its friends at the Junction Station Dog Park in St. Marys.

JUNE GRANT

Contributed Article

I was looking for candidates for our Pet of the Week segment and what better place to go than the local dog park which is located on Glass Street beside Broken Rail Brewing.

This park covers most of a town block and is a great place to bring a canine companion so it can run and intermingle with other dogs. This socialization aspect is very important.

When we moved to St. Marys, our dog was five years old and being raised in the country, she had no experience with other dogs. When she was out for a walk on her leash, she was very aggressive when she met other dogs on the street. She loved people but wasn't sure about other dogs.

For anyone with a dog, bring them to the dog park at an early age so they become used to seeing other four-legged friends.

When we were there, a number of vehicles arrived with one or two dogs in tow. A lady from Staffa drives to St. Marys most days to exercise her dogs. We met another lady from Stratford with two dogs. This was her first visit but she is determined to come again and take advantage of this facility. There were also patrons from St. Marys that make regular visits. During our one-hour stop, there were probably a dozen vehicles coming and going.

Not only do the dogs interact but these people have made new friends and enjoy regular visits.

So to all dog owners, be sure to visit the Junction Station Dog Park.

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Help plan for the future!

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townofstmarys.com/librarystratplan



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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the Week is John Duizer. John was born in Clinton and grew up on a farm near there. He has been married to Wilma for 54 years. They have lived in St. Marys for 51 years. They have two children and three grandchildren. John worked with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for 38 years. He volunteers for Tri-County Foodgrains and St. Marys Presbyterian Church. He also likes to garden and spend time with his grandkids.

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

Weekend Quiz

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- 1) What is the Michelin man made of?
- 2) How strong is an ant compared to its body weight?
- 3) What was Prince's first album called?
- 4) What are the zodiac signs for August?
- 5) What is the capital of Alberta?
- 6) Cindy Lou Hoo is from what story?
- 7) When was the "Summer of Love"?
- 8) Which U.S. state is known as the "Sunflower State"?
- 9) What is the largest species of shark?
- 10) Who sang the 1970s rock anthem "School's Out"?

By Jake Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

Open-air fire ban declared in St. Marys, Stratford and across Perth County

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Staff Contribution

As of midnight on Aug. 6, all open-air fires are prohibited in Perth County, the Town of St. Marys and the City of Stratford.

Open air fires are defined as any fire outside of a building and include any fires that are not in a contained campfire pit, or any other fires set in open air.

Recreational campfires are permitted within the parameters of each town / municipality's open air burn bylaw. Residents must ensure that they are fully extinguished after use. Visit local fire department websites to review the applicable bylaw.

This fire ban is being imposed due to the extreme dryness of all vegetation in the area. This ban will remain in effect until further notice.

For the rural areas with seasonal crops being harvest-

ed, farmers are encouraged to exercise extreme caution when operating equipment, as field fires can quickly overtake equipment and neighbouring crops, and these fires can spread quickly into adjacent woodlands.

Anyone who discovers an open-air fire should report it immediately by calling 911. Do not delay reporting while attempting to control or extinguish the fire.

All burn permits in these municipalities have been suspended as of midnight Aug. 6. No burn permits will be issued until the ban is lifted.

Questions regarding this order can be directed to local fire departments:

- Perth East: 519-595-2800
- St. Marys: 519-284-1752
- Biddulph Blanshard (Granton): 519-801-0812
- North Perth: 519-291-2950
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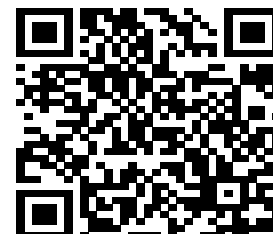


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Town of St. Marys unveils designs for 14 Church St. N during Doors Open

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

building. “I’ve never been upstairs here, so this is cool. They planned the space well, I think. I’d love to come back when it’s done and see what it looks like.”

Scott and Samantha Crawford, also St. Marys residents who toured the former Mercury Theatre building on Saturday, said they were excited to see how many uses the town has planned for the space.

“I think it’s great to see all the uses it can have, right? Different floors and a lot of different uses on each floor,” Scott Crawford said. “I think it’s one of those things the town needs and when it’s done, it’s going to be a good addition.”

“You can just see a vast improvement from when they did their last open house. Just seeing that they’ve put a lot of thought in where they want things to go and the flow of it seems good,” Samantha Crawford added.

While the exact timing for when the interior of the building is finished is dependent on government grants and could still be a few years down the road even if council approves the designs later this month, it was obvious those who toured 14 Church St. N. on Saturday could see the building’s potential as a multi-generational hub, the concept and details for which were developed with extensive engagement with the public, town staff



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

A shot of the recently renovated second floor at 14 Church St. N. In the background, St. Marys resident Larry McLellan checks out the town’s proposed designs for the floor.

and local community groups.

“Even for the short list of uses that we prepared (with the downtown service location review committee), there just wasn’t enough space at 14 Church St. for everything (the community wanted),” town CAO Brent Kittmer said. “So,

a+LiNK helped us go through a process of finding a way to make as many of those space common and flexible spaces so that no space is necessarily purpose-built and if you had a space, you could put one or two or more uses in it. So, through that process, we were actu-

ally able to accommodate many of the things we thought were important and slowly but surely, a really concrete vision for the building started to emerge.

“What we have today and what the public (saw during Doors Open) was what the committee blessed on June 23 to go forward. Really, it’s a vision for what we’re now describing as a multi-generational community hub.”

According to the designs, the building’s ground floor has been imagined as a welcoming community space where residents can congregate and participate in programming. In the designs, the space includes a lobby and reception area, a computer nook, a St. Marys Public Library Maker’s Space, two sound studios available for use by the community, a large multipurpose room for meetings and events, and several washrooms.

“The first floor is more focused on creative and active types of uses,” Kittmer said. “So, if you can envision yourself walking through the door, there is going to be a large, multi-purpose space that can be used for programming by our Early ON department, by our senior services department to help them build some of their programs where they’re facing challenges with space, but that

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9

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Town of St. Marys unveils designs for 14 Church St. N during Doors Open



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

The proposed floor plan for the ground floor at 14 Church St. N.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

space will also double as a space where if you just want to come in during the day and there is nothing else going on and you're just a member of the public looking for a place to read or looking for some vibrancy, then there will be seating areas for that.

"The library's Maker's Space will be located on the first floor as well as their public-access computers. The Maker's Space is a really interesting space because they're fairly limited in their space at the library, so this will give them a chance to expand it, but in their future vision, now they can host classes there, they can host more purposely designed types of programs or workshops where people can learn how to use a 3D printer or robotics or any number of other things."

On the second floor, the building design includes a lobby, several small office/study spaces, an office and large meeting room/classroom for adult-learning programs, another large multi-purpose room that can be divided into smaller spaces, and two washrooms.

"One of the things we realized is that we have a number of agencies coming to our community like the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Works, Service Canada, and they're hosting periodic workshops that serve our community, so we wanted to make sure there's space for them in the building as well," Kittmer said.

"If you look at the upper level, it will be more of a community space where you can go and get service. ... There is still a large, multipurpose room up in that area that we see as being used for programming by senior services, by Early ON, by things like that as well."

According to Kittmer, the office/study spaces will likely be transitioned into offices for town staff at some point in the future when space for additional staff is needed.

"In the immediate term, we can see (these spaces) used by people who need to get out of their house and need a quiet study space – they can drop in, they can book it. They could be used by community groups, service clubs; groups like the poetry circle and the art group that need a small community space to come and meet.

"... That and we purposely designed them in looking at the town's needs in the future because we know, ... despite the perception we have too many staff, as our community grows, as our population is increasing, naturally, our service profile will also change and probably increase. That will mean we will need to have more staff at some point in the future. I'm not saying today; I'm saying five to 10 years in the future. We, as an organization, are running out of staff space, so we can see ourselves naturally growing into 14 Church St."

Kittmer said he expects the committee-approved designs to go before coun-



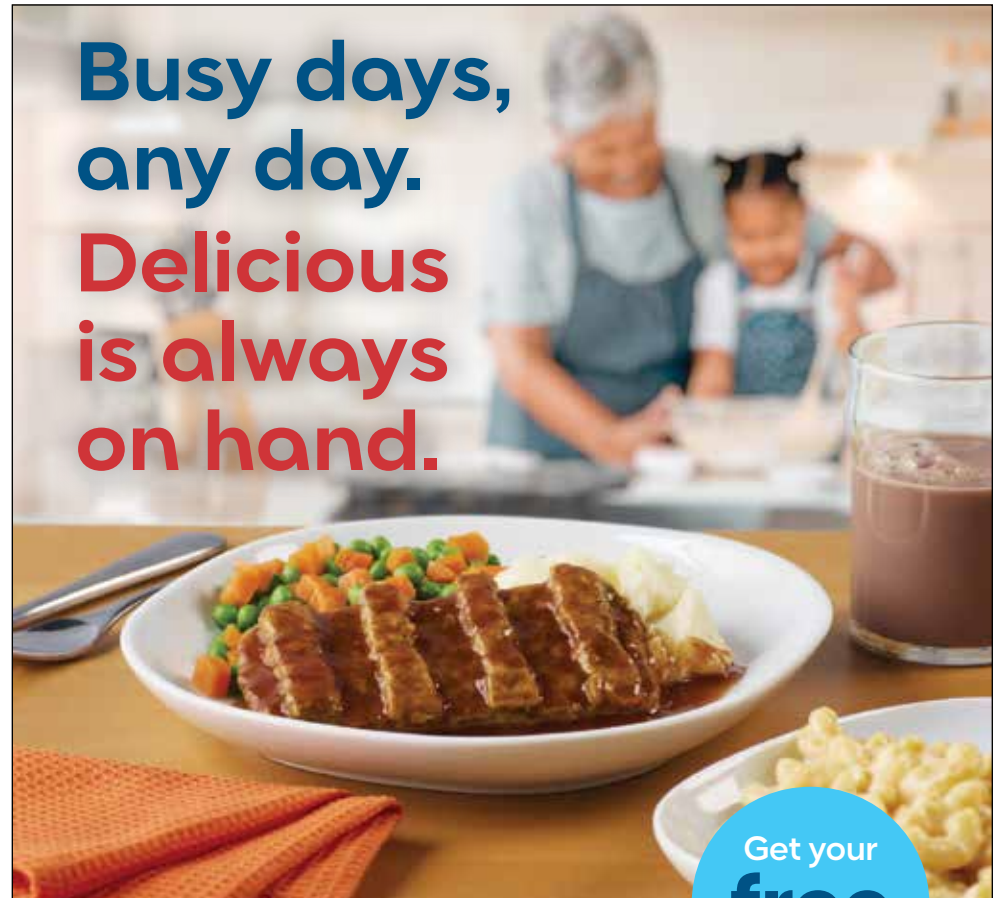
(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

The proposed floor plan for the second floor at 14 Church St. N.

cil at some point later this month. Until that point, he is encouraging locals to have a look at the designs and concept

drawings and send any feedback to him directly at bkittmer@town.stmarys.on.ca.

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Doors Open St. Marys features new and returning opportunities to explore history



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Tracey Pritchard, owner of The Flour Mill, was thrilled to showcase the rental suites as part of Doors Open, including her apartment.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

an opportunity for visitors to explore historic rental suites with limestone walls. Built in the late 1800s, the space was previously used for retail, meetings and as a flour mill.

Pritchard said it took years of construction to get the building ready for a Doors Open showcase.

“People have been asking me since I bought the building if they could look upstairs. Now’s their chance. Today is

their chance and I hope they take advantage of it,” she said. “I’m pretty proud of how it’s turned out up there. I live up there and it’s a really glorious building.”

Riverside B&B had a variety of creatives including visual artists, musicians and authors showcasing their work throughout the day.

“We wanted to have more than the house,” said owner John Stevens. “Being the house of Nora Clench, who was an artist, we wanted to make sure that



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

St. Marys artist Peter Allan Rice works on a memorial piece in honour of late ice skater Sean Rice, also featuring wife Jodeyne Higgins and daughter Signey, at Riverside B&B.

we didn’t just celebrate the house, but that we celebrate some of the artwork and artists in St. Marys.”

Larry Pfaff, congregation member of St. Marys United Church, spoke of the church’s changing architecture. For example, the Casavant organ, one of the largest in Ontario, was placed in 1907 to fill up the space where a wall used to be. The church also has a unique building orientation.

“The church is one of the finest inte-

rior spaces in St. Marys and many people don’t see it. It’s open on Sunday and other occasions, but this is an opportunity for people both inside St. Marys and outside to come and see it and hear the organ,” Pfaff said.

Visitors to St. Marys town hall could either check out council chambers or the town hall theatre. Members of St. Marys Community Players were in the auditorium to promote their fall produc-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Larry Pfaff playing St. Marys United Church’s Casavant organ.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Don Van Galen, Edie Pedersen and Greg George of the St. Marys Community Players.

Doors Open St. Marys features new and returning opportunities to explore history



The beautiful gardens at the Central School Manor.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

tion, *Hilda's Yard*, the Laugh and Learn improv program and a script reading of Agatha Christie's *The Mouse Trap*. Greg George, board of directors member, said

the community theatre group is always looking to expand its outreach within the town and beyond. "We draw a lot of people from outside of St. Marys who come and spend time in



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Sherri Gropp and Peter McAsh welcomed many people at Central School Manor on Saturday for Doors Open. There were three condos open for viewing as well as the common room, the parking garage (the old gymnasium) and the beautiful gardens.

the town, have lunch, have dinner, have a walk-around before they come to the show," George said. "That's an important part of what St. Marys is all about and, as a community, not only offering a

beautiful town, a great social experiences like the (Canadian Baseball) Hall of Fame and restaurants and stuff, there's also a great theatre community here as well."

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Huron County Local Immigration Partnership shares results of newcomer housing study for Huron-Perth

Access to housing information and affordability identified as key impediments to local newcomer settlement

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Among the findings from a recent study conducted by the Huron County Local Immigration Partnership entitled, "Newcomer Experiences of Housing in Huron & Perth," the cost of renting and access to housing information were identified as barriers to permanent newcomer settlement in small, rural communities.

At the Aug. 7 Perth County council meeting, Mark Nonkes, manager of the Huron County Local Immigration Partnership, presented all 10 of the study's findings. The study, he explained, was conducted after finding an affordable place to live was identified as a top challenge for immigrants in the 2023 Huron-Perth Immigrant Survey. As there is little information available about rural immigrant experiences of housing across Canada and housing is known to have a significant impact on overall settlement outcomes for newcomers, the study is intended to begin a conversation around how to improve access to appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing for newcomers.

"Our partners, who work across both



Huron and Perth, often ask us to do more work in Perth as there's no immigration partnership there," Nonkes said. "So, this research study spanned the two

geographies.

"... Why is it important to study newcomer experiences of housing? ... There's no fall-back; they don't have

family or friends to go back to or rely on. There's no credit or rental history in Canada which may be a barrier. Understanding the experiences of diverse groups allows decision-makers to keep things in mind like development and infill planning. Representation from different groups is important to break down barriers to enhance people settling in our community. A lack of knowledge of local rental markets or housing support available is often experienced by newcomers. Rural areas often rely on social-connection referrals to rentals; newcomers may not have those networks. And finally, one of the big challenges that newcomers face is racism and xenophobia that other groups may not."

The study comprised four hour-and-a-half-long focus groups held in Goderich, Exeter, Listowel and St. Marys with a total of 40 newcomers who arrived in Canada since 2018 and live in communities of 10,000 people or less participating. Sixty-two per cent of participants were female while 38 per cent were male.

As for their countries of origin, 15 were from Ukraine, five from Philip-pines, five each from Mexico and Syria, three each from India and Ghana, two

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Huron County Local Immigration Partnership shares results of newcomer housing study for Huron-Perth

Access to housing information and affordability identified as key impediments to local newcomer settlement

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

from Guatemala, and one each from Iran, Russia and Ivory Coast. All of the participants rented – 23 lived in houses and 17 in apartment buildings – and 31 live with children in their homes.

The following are the study's findings:

- Housing is only one part of settlement experiences: It is entwined with employment and transportation. Other factors impacting housing for newcomers include English language classes, education for children, access to health care, programming for newcomers at community libraries and proximity to grocery stores.

- Newcomers face multiple barriers to housing: Nearly half of the participants pay more than 30 per cent of their income on housing with those fleeing war paying as high as 40-80 per cent of their incomes. Other barriers include a lack of credit history in Canada, which limits rental options; lengthy wait times after submitted rental applications; and difficulties finding suitable rental housing for larger families. Living with roommates allowed eight participants to allocate only 20-30 per cent of their monthly income to housing, while some partic-

ipants were assisted in finding housing by their employers.

- Multiple moves: Of the participants, 10 remained in the place where they arrived; 16 moved to new homes once; and six moved twice or more.

- Suitable housing determinants: According to participants, the factors that make housing suitable include having enough bedrooms, having enough bathrooms, having a place where everyone in the home can find privacy and that those living in the home can express themselves freely.

- Housing conditions vary: Seven participants lived in houses that were in good condition and renovated while four participants highlighted challenges with older buildings. Participants reported their repair requests were often delayed and shared laundry could be difficult to access with equipment in various states of repair.

- Landlord-tenant relationships: While participants said the hallmark of a good landlord was their responsiveness to requests, some voiced concerns about their landlords' views about immigrants.

- Housing information: Of the 40 participants, 15 found housing through family or friends, 12 through Facebook,

two using a search engine like Google and two with the help of a real estate agent. Participants also noted they had no access to official housing information sources, they are not familiar with government supports for affordable housing and they lack knowledge around tenant rights. Twenty-two participants said there is not enough information on housing for newcomers in Huron-Perth.

- Newcomers appreciate small communities: Of the 40 participants, 33 felt accepted in their communities and they appreciate the slower pace, connection to nature and feeling safe and appreciated.

- Newcomers find local residents friendly and helpful: Of the participants, 17 said they have good and helpful neighbours, five have troubling neighbours, five do not know their neighbours, one does not have neighbours, and two did not answer the question. Overall, the participants described locals as welcoming, generous, empathetic and willing to help by sharing information, and they praised volunteers and neighbours who supported their adjustment to their new surroundings.

- Newcomers unsure if they will stay where they are: Of the participants, 11

said they plan to remain where they are for the next five years, three said they would move elsewhere, nine said they were unsure and 17 did not answer. The participants said housing affordability and proximity to essential services is a key deciding factor. Many who wished to stay hoped to purchase their own home but recognized the need for permanent residency to do so. They also pointed to limited job options as a factor in whether or not they would stay.

"Now that we have all this information, what we're doing with it is we're rolling it out to the people who participated and we've organized meetings with immigrant-service providers, community organizations and housing-focused organizations. We've been doing consultations with newcomers to share the findings and identify additional solutions, and we're working towards developing a second publication to highlight ways newcomer experiences with housing can be strengthened locally," Nonkes said.

Community conversations have already been held in Goderich, Listowel and St. Marys, while the final conversation was scheduled in Exeter for Aug. 13, after this paper went to press.



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Tri-County Food Grains hosts first pancake breakfast fundraiser



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

From left to right, Judy Newman, Judy Hamilton and John Duizer at the Canadian Food Grains pancake breakfast fundraiser.

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

St. Marys residents enjoyed a pancake breakfast for a good cause while visiting the farmers' market this past weekend.

Tri-County Food Grains served pancakes, breakfast sandwiches and other goodies at a pancake breakfast fundraiser at Milt Dunnell Field on Aug. 9. Proceeds from the fundraiser went to-

wards Canadian Food Grains, which is a Christian-based charity involving 15 churches and church-based agencies partnering up to end world hunger.

"I think it's doing very well. This is the first time of doing it, so it's like we really had no idea how much to make or how many people to expect but I think we're doing fine," said executive member Judy Newman.

Tri-County Food Grains also held a



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

St. Marys Farmers' Market shoppers could enjoy pancakes, sausages and more at a pancake breakfast fundraiser for Canadian Food Grains on Aug. 9.

music night fundraiser in the past. The organization is at the St. Marys Farmers' Market each week selling potatoes, onions, beets and squash, when in season, until later in the fall. Any funds raised go to Canadian Food Grains and the national organization disperses the funds as needed.

"The money buys food to go wherever it needs to go," Newman said.

Bob Pickel, another member of

Tri-County Food Grains, said putting the breakfast together was a team effort.

"Everybody really pulled together. Special shoutout to Delmar (Food Outlet), too. They pulled through for us on the sausage at the last minute," Pickel said.

More information about the Canadian Foodgrains Bank can be found online by visiting foodgrainsbank.ca.

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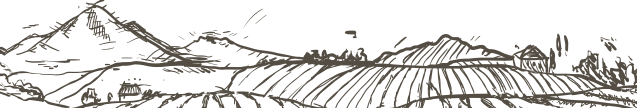
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Annual Teddy Bear Reunion set for Milt Dunnell Field



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTOS)

The Teddy Bear Picnic is back this Sunday at a new location. This year, all activities like pony rides, games, face painting and train rides are down at Milt Dunnell Field at the Lions Park. The parade will start at 1 p.m. and the teddy bear judging will take place at 2:30 p.m. Prizes will be awarded in the following categories: Best Dressed Teddy, Best Teddy lookalike, Sportsman Teddy, Largest Teddy and Teddy with the Most Friends.

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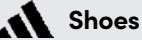
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Happy Hills Resort celebrates Halloween in August



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTOS)

On Saturday, Aug. 9, Happy Hills Resort celebrated its annual Halloween Day. This included many different activities, one of which involved campers decorating their campsites. There were also other things going on in the park like a Halloween dance, decorated golf carts that were entered in a parade and dressing up for Halloween and going trick or treating at the campsites. Above left, pictured is a family dressed up as Minions. Above right, is one of the campsites at Happy Hills Resort decorated for Halloween Day. Every year, the residents of this campsite add an animated character to their decorations.

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Melodies at the Museum returns for another season



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTOS)

On Wednesday, Aug. 6, Melodies at the Museum held its first performance of the summer. Pictured above left, entertainment for the evening was provided by Jess and Andrew Damen. They came into songwriting a little later in life and now are confident and really enjoy singing and playing together as husband and wife. This was the first of four Wednesday performances in August held at Cadzow Park at 7 p.m.

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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

Lincolns led by rare trio of four-year veterans



(TURNER ROTH AND SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left is Chase MacQueen-Spence. Pictured in the middle is Jacob Montesi. Pictured on the right is Owen Voortman. The three overage skaters comprise a rare trio of four-year St. Marys Lincolns as they prepare for their fourth and final season with the local junior hockey club.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

In a time when it is becoming exceedingly rare for players, especially those of high calibre, to spend four years of their junior careers with one team, the St. Marys Lincolns take the ice for the 2025-2026 season with three on their roster.

Chase MacQueen-Spence, Jacob Montesi and Owen Voortman, three of the Lincolns' five 20-year-old players this coming year, are suiting up for their fourth campaign in a green, red and white jersey.

Montesi, who has established himself as one of the league's premier stay-at-home defencemen, described the significance of entering his fourth season with the team he has played all but five of his 143 career games with.

"Being a four-year Lincoln means a lot," said Montesi. "I think every year means a little more as I've gotten to meet more people here, know what this organization is all about and understand how special this place and this team are. Not every organization is run this way."

In the Lincolns' 2024 run to the Sutherland Cup Final, MacQueen-Spence won Western Conference Playoff MVP. The Lambeth native has spent all 143 games in his career with the Lincolns, and is a point-per-game producer with 62 goals and 143 points entering the 2025-2026 season.

"It's been unreal in St. Marys," MacQueen-Spence said. "I've loved every

single year and to be here for four years, that's not something many players can say they have done in junior hockey. I'm honoured to be able to be back in St. Marys, and hopefully we can go on another deep run."

Voortman, a product of Thunder Bay, had his best season in a Lincolns' jersey last year, scoring 26 goals and 59 points. According to Voortman, the Lincolns' place in the community makes it a team he loves to suit up for.

"Obviously, it's a great place to play," said Voortman. "I love the small-town feel and it's a cool feeling to go out and everyone knows you. I wasn't originally planning on staying here for four years, but ever since my first year, I've just loved it in St. Marys and I just didn't ever want to leave."

All three of the players mentioned community support being at the top of the list for what makes the Stonetown a special place to play.

"It's the atmosphere of the town and the community," MacQueen-Spence said. "Everyone gets together around us. You go to some bigger cities where they have other stuff they are focused on, and there isn't the same passion, whereas in St. Marys, the focus is the Lincolns and I love that aspect of it. I consider St. Marys to be a second home."

"The people involved, from the equipment managers to the coaches to the general manager," Montesi added. "It's pretty evident that in big playoff games, having a big crowd behind you can be a game-changer. But it's when

you're playing a game in the regular season that may not be deemed quite as important, and yet, there are still 800 people there. It makes every game feel important and it's fun playing in front of those rowdy crowds at the PRC (Pyramid Recreation Centre)."

With MacQueen-Spence, Montesi and Voortman all in a position to take on even larger leadership roles, the three overage skaters recognized the culture and standard set by previous leaders who wore the Lincolns' crest and the importance of carrying that on.

"I've been here when there were a lot of really good players in this league who have taught me a ton and who set

the culture for this team that we have to carry forward," said Voortman. "They set the example for giving it your all while also making sure you're having fun."

"I think a big reason for the success we've had in St. Marys is how close our groups were and having a pretty good environment in the dressing room," Montesi added. "That starts from the top down and comes from the leaders and guys who have been there, so that's something that we're going to have to pass on to the new guys this year, who will be the ones to carry it forward after we're done."

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SMGCC hosts midwestern Junior Optimists district golf championship

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

A whopping 70 young golfers came to the St. Marys Golf and Country Club (SMGCC) on Aug. 5 for the annual Midwestern Ontario District Junior Optimists Championship tournament.

Rachel Skillen, the Midwestern District golf chair for the Optimist Club, expressed gratitude to everyone who helped make the tournament run smoothly.

"I want to share my thanks to the staff at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club for being wonderful hosts; to the Optimist members for their help in planning and executing the day; and to our starter, rules officials and marshals for assisting our golfers throughout the day," Skillen said. "A big shout-out to the parents of our younger golfers who were kind enough to assist with the scoring. I'm not sure it was worth the free cart ride, but it was very much appreciated to keep them moving along. Thank you also to the parents and grandparents who provided transportation or came to be spectators during the round."

Skillen also noted a significant increase in both the number of competitors at the tournament and the number who advanced to next year's world final in Florida.

"We had 72 golfers this year, which is an increase of 30 golfers from last year. Our district had four golfers play at the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships in Florida this past July, and 12 have qualified to play next year. We had a new qualifier in London this year, which added to the numbers, as well as increased numbers at some of our existing qualifiers in Seaforth, Walkerton and Exeter.

"We also have many kids qualifying for the tournament and coming back each year with the goal of qualifying for Florida again," Skillen continued. "We are doing more to support the families going to Florida, including hosting a virtual information session where past participants can share their experiences and give advice to golfers going for the first time."

In the 10-11-year-old boys' division, Jace Dietrich of Exeter finished as the Midwestern District Champion for his age group, shooting a score of 88. Dietrich, along with fellow Exeter native Ty Mason, who shot 93, and Luke McIlwain of Egmondville, who scored 96, all qualified for next year's international championship.

The 12-13 boys' bracket also saw three competitors qualify for the 2026 international championship, including Kincardine native Hendrik McDougall, who



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Avalina Flick chips onto the green during the Midwestern District Junior Optimists Championship golf tournament at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club on Aug. 5. Flick won the 10-14 girls' division championship and qualified for the 2026 International Junior Optimists Championship in Florida with a score of 75, the best score out of the 72 young golfers who competed across six divisions.

finished first in the division with a score of 83. Rory Magee from Listowel and Egmondville's Jake McIlwain both posted 84 to qualify to go to Florida next year.

A 77 scorecard for Kallen Grant made the Exeter native the champion in the 14-15 boys' group and qualified Grant for next year's internationals. Atwood's Knox Harrison also qualified to go to Florida with a score 81.

Michael Locky of London narrowly missed qualify-



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Hendrik McDougall makes a putt during the Midwestern District Junior Optimists Championship golf tournament at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club on Aug. 5. McDougall, who scored 83, was the champion of the 12-13 boys' division and one of three golfers in the division to qualify for next year's International Junior Optimists Championships.

ing to go to Florida but did leave the St. Marys-hosted tournament as the 16-18 boys' district champion after scoring 79.

In the 10-14 girls' bracket, Avalina Flick, a London native, ended the afternoon with the best score out of all golfers in attendance, shooting a stellar 75 to win her division's district title and qualify for next year's international championship.

Mackenzie Coleman from Tara scored 92 in the 15-18 girls' division to win the district's top prize, but did not qualify to go to Florida in 2026.

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Dean Sharp, Amie Shackleton each repeat as Science Hill Club champs



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Dean Sharp, 2025 Science Hill Club Champion.

STEWART GRANT
Publisher

Seven shots off the lead going into Sunday’s final round of the Science Hill Club Championship, defending champion Dean Sharp knew that he was “going to have to just take it one shot at a time and one hole at a time.”

Much to his surprise, he was able to take the tournament lead before the end of Sunday’s front nine, then held on for a two-shot victory and his second-consecutive club championship honour.

Scott McLaughlin, a two-handicap, held the 18-hole lead after a strong opening round of 71 that included six birdies. Lee Wiseman, a long-driving 10-handicapper, recovered from a pedestrian front nine 41 to post 34 on the back and sit in second place after Saturday’s play. Three-handicapper Sharp,

with a 78, was in third place overnight, good enough to make it into the final threesome on Sunday.

McLaughlin’s lead on Sunday began to evaporate in the steamy hot conditions with some bad luck mixed in. He accidentally hit the wrong ball on his approach to the Par-4 second hole leading to a double-bogey; while an errant drive right of number eight was never located, causing another unfortunate double for the round-one leader.

Meanwhile, Sharp’s steady play saw him gradually climb the leaderboard. “Minimizing errors and keeping bad holes to just a bogey is my goal,” Sharp told the Independent. “Two years in a row, I haven’t made a double bogey during my four rounds.”

After a birdie on the final hole, Sharp completed the club championship with a two-day total of 78-72-150, which was



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Amie Shackleton, 2025 Science Hill Club Champion.

two shots ahead of McLaughlin (71-81-152). Colin Muirhead (82-74-156), Jason Skipper (79-80-159) and Wiseman (75-84-159) rounded out the top five.

When asked about his ability to dig deep in these types of tournaments two years in a row, Sharp said, “A little self belief goes a long way in competing in tournaments; I’ve always loved to compete no matter the sport or game.”

Shackleton defends ladies’ title

On the ladies’ portion of the club championship, Amie Shackleton was able to repeat as winner, posting rounds of 81 and 80 for a 161 total. With just a two-stroke lead after day one, Shackleton was able to distance herself from the field on Sunday for a nine-shot victory. Her weekend included birdies on hole 16 in both rounds.

Pat Hearn, who finished second with rounds of 83-87-170, won low net at 150,

edging Rhonda Tucker and Ang Marriott who each had net scores of 152.

Other tournament notes

- Men’s A-flight low gross winner was Scott McLaughlin (71-81-152). Low net was Jason Skipper at 149.
- Men’s B-flight low gross was Colin Muirhead (82-74-156), who finished three strokes ahead of Lee Wiseman (75-84-159). Wiseman won low net for the flight with 139.
- Men’s C-flight low gross was Bob Stroh (82-84-166), who finished five strokes ahead of Henry Larsen (84-87-171). Low net winner was Pat Henderson at 144.
- Men’s D-flight low gross was Aaron Munz (86-90-176), who finished eight strokes ahead of Dan Hunter (91-93-184). Low net winner was Rob Edwards at 130.

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Frayne, Masselis competing at Eastern Canada softball championship

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

St. Marys residents Nora Frayne and Lauren Masselis, along with the rest of the U13 Stratford Flames, will travel to Stratford, P.E.I., Aug. 20-24 for the Eastern Canadian Softball Championships.

The Flames captured the silver medal at the provincial championship in Stratford, Ont., Aug. 1-3, which qualified the team for the Eastern Canadian Championship in P.E.I. This followed the team winning the top prize at the provincial qualifier July 25-27 in Saugeen Shores. The team has won two additional gold medals and a bronze in three other tournaments earlier this year.

Both Frayne and Masselis described their enthusiasm heading into the largest tournament they have competed in this year.

"Heading into the Eastern Canada Championship tournament, I feel excited to travel out of province to play ball," Frayne told the Independent. "This team is special because everyone is super nice, everyone is confident in each other and everyone is skilled."

"I am very excited to be able to go to Prince Edward Island with my team," added Masselis. "We have been working all winter and summer to reach our goal of going to Eastern Canadians, and our new goal is to come home with the gold medal."

Frayne mentioned the team's heavy amount of practice time, going back to the colder months, as being key to the team reaching the calibre they have.

"We put in a lot of time with this team, so I think myself and the team have improved in every part of the game," said Frayne. "We have played 60 games so far this year, and lots of practice as we started practicing last fall and practiced indoors all winter two times per week."

Masselis further described the closeness of the group that has helped lead to success and individual improvement.

"I have developed great friendships and created memories with this team that I will remember forever," Masselis said. "I have become more confident as a ball player to step up when needed for my team. We have had a strong team from the beginning of the season, and we just keep getting better."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Lauren Masselis and Nora Frayne. Frayne and Masselis are part of the U13 Stratford Flames who captured the silver medal at the provincial championship Aug. 1-3 and, in doing so, qualified for the Eastern Canadian Softball Championship Aug. 20-24.

St. Marys pickleball players compete at Sudbury provincials



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left, from left to right, are Angela Martin and Merlin Leis. Leis, a member of the St. Marys Pickleball Club, teamed up with Martin to win the gold medal in the mixed 3.5 skill level doubles competition at the Sudbury Senior Provincial Pickleball Championship on Aug. 5-7. Pictured on the right, from left, are Karen Hill and Heather Henke. Hill, also a St. Marys Pickleball Club member, captured a silver medal in the women's 4.0 doubles event alongside Henke. St. Marys Pickleball Club members Dwayne Henderson, Jody Henderson, Barb Klomp, and Marty Klomp also competed at the event.

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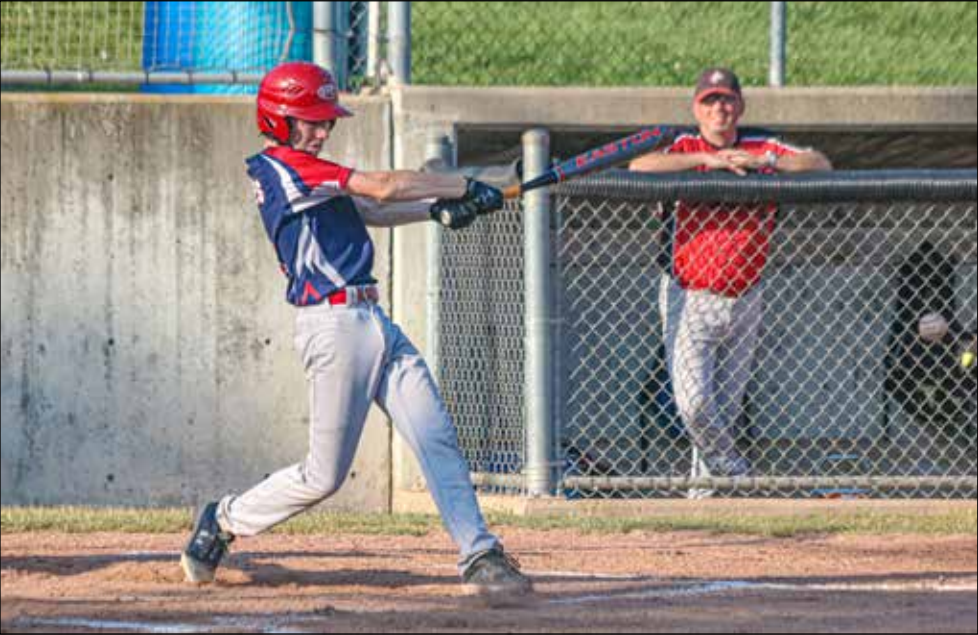
(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Nick Ehgoetz gets a hit during the Hubbard Pharmacy Limited U9 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game last Tuesday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Cooper Sass makes contact with the ball while on the field for the Happy Valley Family Health Team U11 EB St. Marys Rockies.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Sawyer Hayes swings at an incoming pitch during the Forman Electric U13 OBA St. Marys Rockies game last Thursday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Will Jacobs launches the ball into the air during this past Monday's Veterinary Purchasing Ltd. U15 WOBA St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Isaac Cousineau throws the ball from third to first base during last Wednesday's Social Thirty-One U18 OBA St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Rowan Marchand steps into a heavy shot from outside the box during this past Sunday's U10 Boys Tier Two St. Marys Storm game.

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COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: My Canadian driving saga – from bribes to blizzards

ALONA VASYLIEVA
Independent Columnist

Let me tell you, I’m an anxious parallel parker. It’s not that it’s rocket science; I know the theory. But the moment I see a space, my brain starts a terrifying internal monologue: “What if I keep people waiting? Will they judge my five-point turn?” I can practically hear the collective sigh of a dozen people behind me.

This parking-induced anxiety brings up a stark contrast between my Ukrainian driving experience and my new life on Canadian roads. In Ukraine, we have a secret weapon against road rage and public humiliation – the emergency lights. You know, that red triangle button on your dashboard that’s supposed to be for, you know, emergencies? In Ukraine, it’s a multi-purpose tool of social etiquette. It’s the universal sign for “thank you,” “sorry,” and, most importantly, “I am about to attempt a parallel parking maneuver and you should probably just give up and go around me.” No one bats an eye. It’s an unwritten rule; a beautiful, chaotic dance of understanding.

Speaking of unwritten rules, my journey to getting a driver’s license in Ukraine was less of a scenic drive and more of a high-stakes game. Before 2023, you had a limited number of attempts to pass your road test. The pressure was immense. My driving instructor, sensing my fear, would lean over and offer me an “option.”

This option, of course, was a wad of cash exchanged for a guaranteed pass. It was a humiliating system that made you feel like you had to be not only smart, but also rich enough to succeed. I’m proud to say I passed on my second try, without



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The biggest mistake newcomers make is assuming their past driving experience is enough. Even if you’re an experienced driver from Ukraine, taking at least one lesson with a Canadian instructor is essential.

a bribe, but the emotional scars remain. Fast forward to my new home in Canada and the journey has been long but thankfully bribe-free. As a newcomer from Ukraine who arrived under CUAET measures, I was allowed to try for my full G license right away. My husband and I got our G1s together, but I didn’t have the confidence to try for the big one. My anxiety, combined with my still-developing English, made the prospect of a road test even more terrifying. But I had to remind myself to be kind to myself. In a new country, even the smallest things are victories. Explaining my symptoms to a doctor without needing a diagram? A win. Having a phone conversation in English without a panic attack? A huge

win. I was so focused on these victories that my G1 almost expired before I finally felt ready to get behind the wheel. And that’s when I found my driving guardian angels, Heidi and Harold Van Galen. They didn’t need to teach me how to drive but they taught me how to drive with confidence in Canada. They gave me the permission to believe in myself, to accept that it was okay to be a newcomer and, most importantly, to not panic when attempting to park. The differences don’t stop there. The cost of car insurance in Canada is astronomical. What we paid annually in Ukraine is what I now pay monthly in Canada. It’s a shocking reality check. But the biggest difference is the attitude. Driving in a small Canadian town

is like a spa day for your soul. Everyone smiles, waves and nobody seems to be in a rush. It’s serene, but hit the highway during rush hour and you’re thrown back into the aggressive, dog-eat-dog world I was used to in Ukraine. It’s a melting pot of driving styles and you have to be ready for anything.

In Ukraine, the average driving style is “prove yourself or be cut off,” but at least there’s always the option of a quick flash of the emergency lights to say, “My bad, buddy!” Here in Canada, I’m still learning the art of the apologetic wave and the silent prayer that the person behind me isn’t having a terrible day. And I’m still avoiding parallel parking at all costs.

Look, let’s be real. In Canada, having a driver’s license isn’t a “nice-to-have” — it’s basically a life-or-death survival skill. You’re not truly an independent adult until you can pilot a giant metal box through a blizzard.

Even in the so-called “big cities,” public transit is more of a suggestion than an actual system. You’ll spend an hour and a half on a bus only to realize your favorite grocery store is a mile and a half from the nearest stop and your kid’s soccer practice is somehow located in a different time zone.

Now, about winter driving. It’s a whole other level of Canadian madness. A lot of people try to avoid it, and honestly, I don’t blame them. I’d rather brave a frosty, windswept apocalypse on foot than deal with the pre-driving ritual of a Canadian winter. You have to shovel your driveway, then your car, then perform a bizarre sacrificial pre-start ceremony to coax your vehicle into a semi-functional state. It’s less of a commute and more of an epic quest.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH
St. Marys Public Library

Make your way to Cadzow Park tomorrow evening for an outdoor screening of the live action “Lilo and Stitch” movie! The movie is free to attend and the popcorn (freshly prepared by the Friends of the Library) is free as well. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for maximum comfort and consider packing some bug spray because the mosquitos may want to watch the movie too! The movie starts at dusk (roughly 8:30 p.m.). Our next Makerspace Open House is this Saturday, August 16. Drop in to the Library between 10:30 a.m. and noon to decorate an acrylic bookmark with coloured vinyl! This program is free to attend and is recommended for patrons 16+. While you’re here, feel free to pick up some free menstrual products, available during open hours.

Up This Week

Fri., Aug. 15: Creatures of Whimsey Show by Drew Ripley*^ (1 p.m.), Movie in the Park – Lilo and Stitch” (Dusk)

Sat., Aug. 16: Menstrual Product Pick Up Day (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.), Makerspace Open House (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Mon., Aug. 18: Euchre Mondays (10:30 a.m.)

Tues., Aug. 19: Reading Help* (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Discovery Den (1:30-3 p.m.)

Wed., Aug. 20: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Summer Book Club* (10:30-11:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Reading Help* (1:30-3 p.m.)

Thurs., Aug. 21: Reading in the Park~ (10-11 a.m.)

*Registration Required

^Town Hall Auditorium (175 Queen Street)

~Cadzow Park (217 Park Street)

~Kin Park (109 James Street North)

Ask the Arborist

By Joel Hackett | 519 272 5742 | jtsquote@gmail.com

Dear Arborist,

I am concerned about my tree; it's so dry and it looks kind of worn out. What should I do? It's a big tree, very big.

Thanks, Marie

Dear Marie,

The weather has been very dry, lately. Official records say 43% of Ontario is currently experiencing a drought. Trees require a lot of water, and when they go through a drought even if they survive, it can affect them for even a decade or two later. If you think your tree

needs water put a sprinkler on it for 2 hours once or twice a week. This advice is for a large tree, a smaller tree would be less. Also, before you do this make sure you are not breaking any bylaws or water bans regarding water use.

Sincerely,

The Arborist

Joel Hackett is a certified Arborist residing in the St. Marys area. Currently, he spends most of the year running Joel's Tree Service. For contact call 519 272 5742 or email jtsquote@gmail.com

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Swinging bridges of St. Marys

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

Preparations are underway for the St. Marys Museum's Speakers Series fall presentations. On September 18, 2025, the first topic will be the history of St. Marys' bridges. The geography of the town gives our bridges prominence. The Thames River divides the east part of the town from the west while Trout Creek divides the north from the south. Bridges are essential connecting links. St. Marys residents are very passionate about the older bridges. Municipal elections have been won and lost on whether to replace, repair or restore these historic structures. With many excellent photographs for a slide presentation, our bridges will be an interesting topic to explore.

The presentation will include a small sub-group that also contributes to local lore – the footbridges. The best-known footbridge was at Park Street crossing the Thames River. It was in place from 1950 until 1971 when the current Park Street Bridge was built. But east of the railway trestle crossing Trout Creek, there were two other footbridges that pre-dated the one at Park Street. One was at the base of Huron Street. The other was at St. George Street and is shown in this week's photograph, taken in the 1920s. No official records have been found to indicate when these footbridges were first built. The earliest ones may have been unofficially constructed by the people who had to cross the creek to get to work. The Huron Street footbridge was washed away in a flood in the 1960s. There is still a footbridge at St. George Street, but it is very different from the one in the old photograph.

These bridges were central to their immediate neighbourhoods and were always referred to as swinging bridges. According to the dictionary definition, "a swinging bridge, also known as a swing bridge, is a type of movable bridge that rotates horizontally around a vertical axis, typically at or near its center, to allow for the passage of watercraft." This is not what St. Marys folks mean when they remember our swinging bridges. Technically, ours were suspension bridges with plank platforms, or decks, suspended from strong cables by vertical steel rods. The cables were attached to anchor posts at each end. The posts could be heavy fence posts but in St. Marys, they were made of reinforced concrete. Several steps led from the footpath up to the bridge's deck.

These suspension bridges earned their "swinging bridge" nickname. The entire bridges did swing back and forth in strong crosswinds. They also swung when groups of children bounced at one end making the structure sway not only back and forth but also up and down. This was a source of great delight especially if an unsuspecting pedestrian was caught in the middle, clinging fearfully to the cables. All three of the town's suspension bridges could be made to bounce and sway. But the footbridge at Park Street was the longest and therefore the most fun, or the most terrifying, depending on your point of view. Regularly missing planks in the decks of the Trout Creek footbridges presented an additional challenge, especially when the water below was high from flooding and rushing past just inches below your feet.

In the 1800s, for many years the Queen Street Bridge was the only safe and dry way for pedestrians and vehicles to cross over the Thames River. But as the town's population increased so did the demand for a second way of crossing the river – especially by people in the west ward who walked to work in the stone quarries or at Maxwells, or who had children attending Central School. Town council was finally persuaded, and a three-span, wooden structure was opened in the fall of 1889. By 1903, the stone abutments at each end of the bridge and the two piers built on the riverbed were still in excellent condition. The



(PHOTO DIGITIZED AT THE ST. MARYS MUSEUM, COURTESY OF NICOLE TAYLOR)

A young couple poses for a photograph on the St. George Street swinging bridge in the 1920s. The path up the hill to Widder Street East is in the background.

wooden superstructure had not fared so well. In 1903, town council called for tenders for a replacement steel superstructure. For \$3,450, the Stratford Bridge and Iron Works Company constructed a steel, three-span, pony truss bridge.

This bridge served the community well, surviving the historic 1937 Thames River flood. But in the spring of 1947 during another disastrous flood, logs jammed against the bridge, backing up the flood water and increasing the pressure on the structure. As residents watched from the shore, two spans of the bridge broke away from the piers and were swept downstream. West ward residents were right back to where they had been before 1889. In 1948, Helen Wilson, a west ward resident, became the first woman elected to St. Marys town council. She ran on the bridge issue, insisting that west ward taxpayers deserved a new bridge. It was considered too costly at that time to rebuild the Park Street Bridge, but as a compromise, in 1950 a suspension footbridge was erected across the Thames at Park Street. It was meant as a temporary measure but for the next 20 years, the swinging bridge was used by west ward residents going shopping downtown, on their way to work in one of the industries in the south ward, and by students making their way to the new St. Marys Collegiate Institute on Elizabeth Street. After Wildwood Dam was completed in 1965 reducing the risk of flooding, a modern, reinforced-concrete bridge at Park Street was officially opened in 1971.

The two swinging bridges over Trout Creek had less dramatic histories but both meant a great deal to the neighbourhood east of the trestle. A photograph of the Huron Street footbridge, taken in 1916, shows that at first this bridge was not a suspension bridge but simply a rather ramshackle wooden structure, spans of

planks resting on a log pier halfway across the creek. It may have been built in the 1870s when the lime kilns on Widder Street East were in full production so that lime workers from the town's east ward had a shortcut to and from work. The bridge is featured in Rilla, Bill and Gerry Wright's family memoir, *Trout Creek Tales* (2007.) The book includes a photograph from the 1930s showing the Huron Street footbridge, by then a proper suspension bridge. The plank deck and the concrete posts are clearly shown. This bridge was never as well-maintained as its neighbour to the west at St. George Street. In his autobiographical novel, *Skunk's Hollow* (2004,) Bob Gregory explains that the Huron Street footbridge was swept away in a flood in the early 1960s. It was not replaced.

Bob Gregory used a picture of the St. George Street swinging bridge on the cover of his book about growing up in *Skunks Hollow*. The valley below the trestle was a much different place in the 1960s. It was a wilderness of hawthorns and dense vegetation, including abundant skunk cabbage in the many marshy areas. Close to home but out of parents' sight, it was filled with secret hideouts – a wonderful place for Skunks Hollow youngsters to play. This all changed in the early 1970s when, as part of a municipal beautification project, all the scrub growth was cleared away. The creek flats were landscaped and seeded to create the parkland under the railway trestle enjoyed by many today. As part of the new, improved look for the Hollow, the suspension bridge was taken down and replaced by a much heavier, single-span, steel footbridge. Pedestrians and cyclists use this footbridge regularly and can still look through the railing and watch the water flowing under its deck. It is a safer and more flood-resistant bridge – clearly an upgrade. But it is a bridge that can never bounce or sway!

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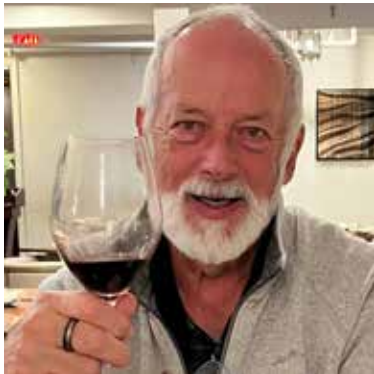
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: A superb destination a few minutes from home



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

There are literally dozens of reasons to visit Stratford, Ontario. Those of us who live within an easy drive of Canada's premier theatre destination are very lucky, indeed.

Now, let's be honest – the things you can enjoy in Stratford range from the free-of-charge to the “pretty pricey.” But I am here to argue that activities on both ends of that financial spectrum are worth the price of admission.

Top of mind in Stratford, of course, is the Festival. The plays at the sundry Stratford stages certainly can fall into the “pretty pricey” categories, but there are some more economical options for locals who can visit Stratford on shorter notice – ticket bargains offered on social media, or to festival members, or as last-minute purchases. All worth exploring.

I was amused to discover that even the Festival folks themselves are aware of the discussion about prices. One of the songs in “*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*,” “Great Big Stuff,” features lyrics adapted

to this particular performance. The character Freddy Benson, played hysterically well by Liam Tobin, sings about what it would mean to strike it rich. One of those perks, he sings, would be to be able to afford tickets to Stratford!

We've attended the two big musicals at Stratford so far this season (with apologies to Mr. Shakespeare), and both were amazing.

And I have to be honest: I went to see “*Annie*” with a certain amount of skepticism. After all, the success of the play hangs on the work of a bunch of children, and how good could young kids really be?

As it turns out, really, really good. To my surprise, I loved every minute of the production. I should not have had any doubts, because “*Annie*” is directed and choreographed by Donna Feore, and everything Donna does turns into gold. She is an amazing talent, and every theatre-goer in southern Ontario should be grateful that she chooses to make magic in Stratford almost every year.

And those kids! Singing, dancing, acting, and doing it all to perfection. Most surprising, perhaps, was that at the show we saw, the girl who stars as Annie was unavailable, and her understudy, Olivia Padfield of Cambridge, played the lead role... superbly.

The adult actors are really fine, as well. The versatile Dan Chameroy (who was so good as the outrageous Dr. Frank-n-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and the also outrageous Nostradamus in

last year's *Something Rotten*), has a lot of fun playing Oliver Warbucks as a buttoned-down businessman who has his life turned upside down by an orphan girl.

Laura Condlin plays Miss Aggie Hannigan with hilarious abandon; her numbers alone are worth the price of admission.

All in all, “*Annie*” was a delightful surprise – to cynical old me, anyway.

“*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*” offered some surprises, too. I have seen the movie on which this musical is based – it starred Michael Caine and Steve Martin, and I remember laughing a lot.

The musical follows the same plot, but as a more modern production, the book and lyrics are far bolder – which you could interpret as far more vulgar – and at times, I was mildly shocked.

But by the end of the play, I was entirely a fan. I enjoyed seeing Jonathan Goad in one of the lead roles, playing sophisticated Lawrence – I have enjoyed his work often in his 18 Stratford season. As mentioned, Liam Tobin is perfect as the over-the-top Freddy. And you will fall in love with Shakura Dickson as Christine Colgate.

There is also a lovely subplot – which also involves some rather scandalous declarations – involving the excellent Derek Kwan as Andre, and Sara-Jeanne Hosie as Muriel Eubanks.

So, yes – the musicals at Stratford this season are certainly worth the price of admission. But if you want to mit-



(PHOTOS BY DAVID HOU)

Members of the company in *Annie*. Stratford Festival 2025.

igate your budget in Stratford, there are also plenty of things to do and see that cost nothing! If you wander around the city, especially the riverfront area, I can almost guarantee you will encounter excellent musicians performing as buskers, or on the jazz boat, or in the park, or in one of the many outdoor music and arts festivals that take place in Stratford in the summer months.

And speaking of art – it's always intriguing to stroll through “Art in the Park” and take in the truly fine work being done by local artists.

One of our favourite things to do is to bring a picnic – and I mean, a real, old-fashioned picnic, served on a table cloth, with napkins, silverware, ele-

gant beverages and sundry edibles. I don't think there is a city anywhere that offers as many picnic tables along a river as you will find in Stratford. Full points to the city leaders.

And I have not even mentioned the fine dining, the interesting shops of the main street, or the astonishing gardens, both public and private. Tell you what – make the quick trip to Stratford, and discover all your personal favourites, yourself.

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@gold-en.net.

From front-left: Jennifer Rider Shaw as Grace Farrell, Harper Rae Asch as Annie and Dan Chameroy as Oliver Warbucks with members of the company in *Annie*. Stratford Festival 2025.Sara-Jeanne Hosie as Muriel Eubanks and Derek Kwan as Andre Thibault in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Stratford Festival 2025.

FROM THE GARDEN: Amaranth - a versatile plant with ancient roots



NANCY ABRA
Independent Columnist

In the world of kale smoothies and quinoa bowls, one ancient grain is having a comeback in our gardens and our kitchen. With its jewel-toned foliage, unique flower heads and nutrient-packed seeds, amaranth is more than an attractive plant, it has a legacy that spans thousands of years and continents. Amaranth has been cultivated for over 8,000 years, originating in Central and South America. It was a staple crop for the Indigenous peoples not only as a food but also used in their religious rituals. The Aztecs considered it sacred, making offerings with the seeds and even crafting deity statues from amaranth dough made from ground seeds, mixed with honey then ceremonially broken and eaten. Many consider amaranth a grain, but technically it belongs to the same botanical family as beets, chard, and spinach. Over thousands of years, amaranth has proven to be resilient, sur-

living in the remote corners of South America and reintroduced globally in the 20th century. The genus, *Amaranthus* comprises of over 70 species. These fall into three main categories – grain types, leafy vegetables, and ornamentals. While only a few are cultivated for food, other species are known as weeds or grown for their ornamental value. Amaranth thrives in full sun, tolerates drought, prefers well-drained soil, and requires little maintenance. It is a warm-season annual that can grow to eight feet tall depending on the variety. Most types flower in 65-75 days with seeds maturing in another 30 days. *Amaranthus cruentus* is a grain variety and originated in Central America from central Mexico through to Guatemala. The seeds are a nutritious grain like quinoa, suitable for cooking or grinding into flour. Young tender deep red leaves can be eaten like spinach, either raw in salads or in stir fries or soups. Both the grain and leaves are highly nutritious, rich in protein, vitamins, and minerals such as iron and calcium. This variety of amaranth also has ornamental value. I have been growing this variety of amaranth for over ten years and love its tall, growing to approximately three metres, vibrant presence in my garden. Its crimson flower spikes and



red foliage makes it popular to grow as a unique cut flower. *Amaranthus caudatus* or commonly known as ‘Loves-lies-bleeding’ is a popular ornamental variety with its long rope-like deep red flower stems. This variety grows to a height of approximately 1.3m and has a striking appearance in the garden landscape and in floral designs. *Amaranthus tricolor*, also known as Joseph’s Coat, is grown for its large multi-coloured ovate leaves and bushy stature. It has a tall exotic and dramatic appearance in the garden. In parts of the world, it is grown as an edible crop, especially in Asia. *Amaranthus viridis*, commonly known as ‘green amaranth’ grows to a metre in height and with its nutritious leaves is used in stir fries and soups popular

across Asia and Africa. Amaranth, depending on the variety, has much to offer – a stunning ornamental for the garden but also a nutritional powerhouse that is rich in protein, fiber, minerals, and antioxidants, making it ideal for diverse diets. Source: <https://www.consumerreports.org/healthy-eating/amaranth-everything-to-know-about-this-ancient-grain>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

TriCounty Foodgrains Group extends heartfelt thanks

On Aug. 9, the TriCounty Foodgrains Group hosted a pancake breakfast at the St. Marys Farmers Market. Members of the group would like to express their deep gratitude to those folks who donated supplies, time and money to the effort. We received generous donations from Sheldon Berries, The Hitching Post, Delmar Foods, Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters, Forest Hill Orchard, Adam and Jasmine Moulton of the Woodstock Home Hardware and Building Centre, and Graham Eggs. The event could not have been a success without the assistance of our valued volunteers who primarily came from St. Marys Presbyterian Church, First Bap-

tist Church and East Nissouri Union Church. Thank you also to all of those in our community who chose to support the cause by enjoying a delicious breakfast. Over \$700 was raised at the event. With the government matching program, this means that \$3,500 will go toward feeding hungry people. We will be selling our produce at the St. Marys Farmers Market as we raise more money for this cause. If you are looking for onions, beets, potatoes or squash, please come and check us out! Sincerely, Nikki Taylor, St. Marys

Sudoku

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Solutions on page 35

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US
CALL 519-284-0041 OR EMAIL INFO@STMARYSINDEPENDENT.COM

Riddles

- What runs but cannot walk, has a mouth but no teeth,
and has a bed but cannot sleep?
A river.
- There is one word spelled wrong in every English
dictionary. What is it?
Wrong.
- What goes in your pocket but keeps it empty?
A hole.
- What has legs but cannot walk?
A chair.
- I sometimes run but cannot walk. You follow me
around. What am I?
Your nose.
- What word begins and ends with the E but only has
one letter?
Envelope.
- What do you find at the end of a rainbow?
The letter W.
- I'm taller when I'm young and shorter when I'm old.
What am I?
A candle.
- What is always right in front of you, yet you cannot
see it?
The future.
- What has a tongue but cannot talk?
A shoe.
- What is easier to get into than out of?
Trouble.

- Word Search -



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- Cancer
- Taurus
- Aquarius
- Aries
- Capricorn
- Libra
- Pisces
- Virgo
- Gemini
- Leo
- Sagittarius
- Scorpio



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Nate Petrie (1)

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



Bringing a new pet home is exciting but requires preparation and patience. Key tips include pet-proofing your home, establishing a routine, and providing a safe, comfortable space for your new companion. Remember to contact your local veterinarian to establish a vet-client relationship.



MILLER

Our Pet of the Week is seven-year-old Miller who lives with his Hodgson family. He is a golden retriever/lab cross. He loves to nap, take walks and play with the kids.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent

Plenty of treasures up for grabs during Thorndale Community Yard Sale



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Thorndale United Church volunteers served up bacon on a bun during the community yard sale.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The streets of Thorndale last Saturday were busy with bargain hunters and vintage-item seekers.

Through the centre of town, King Street was the main activity with the Thames Centre Thorndale fire station's Boot Drive collecting for Muscular Dystrophy Canada, and along the street were tables of hardware items, books, collect-



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

A display of collectables for sale during the community yard sale.

ables and the Thorndale United Church bacon on a bun and bake sale.

The Thorndale community yard sale, held annually for over 30 years, extended beyond the main street. Dotted throughout the town, in the subdivi-

sions, residents took part and there were even a couple of children selling lemonade to thirsty shoppers.

The fall fair is coming this September in Thorndale

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The weeks leading up to September provide an excellent opportunity for children to transition from summer holidays to prepare for their return to school.

Fun activities such as crafts can help alleviate boredom and relieve some anxiousness as school approaches. And the Thorndale Fall Fair provides an excellent venue for displaying children's creative artwork.

The Thorndale Fall Fair takes place on the third weekend in September. The Thorndale Fall Fair has been the highlight of the community for more than 165 years. Granted, some activities over the decades staged at the fair have been adapted for modern times, but one of the main reasons for the longevity of the fair is the community's participation. Whether it is attending to have fun or entering in the various competitions, there is something for everyone.

Anyone looking for some craft ideas to fill children's afternoon hours should check out the School Fair competition. This category is for ages preschool to

Grade 5. What better place for young budding artists, engineers, designers, photographers and horticulturists to showcase their talents? Children love to see what they have made laid out for everyone to view and they beam with pride when there are ribbons attached to their entries.

The School Fair competition rules and entry guidelines are listed in the Thorndale Fair book, which is available free at Sassy's, Thorndale Farm Supplies, Thorndale Hardware, Thorndale Library and the Thorndale Lions Community Centre or go online to www.thorndalefair.com/school-fair/.

When it is time to take the children's work to the fair, the process is easy. Either complete the online entry form at www.assistexpo.ca/thorndalefair or the paper version that will be available at the registration area on Sept. 17 and 18 from 6-8 p.m.

The school fair committee encourages the children to assist in bringing in their own entries. Children can win money to spend at the fair. For ages older than Grade 5, they can exhibit their talents in the youth fair category under the Home-craft Division.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Last year's school fair exhibit at the Thorndale Fall Fair.

OBITUARY

Nesbit



Suddenly yet peacefully on Friday, August 8, 2025, at University Hospital, London, David passed away at the age of 89. Cherished husband of Gladys (Reid) for over 63 years. Loving father of Phyllis Chisholm (Ross) and Russell Nesbit (Lori). Proud Grandpa of Jennifer, Brett (Tanya),

Nicole (Simon), Rachel (Andy), Melissa (Jake), Scott and Evan. Special Great Grandpa of Briar Nesbit. David was born to humble yet loving beginnings as the eldest of six children. He will be greatly missed by his siblings whom he loved dearly, Alice (Robert) Moore, Mary (Ron) Buchanan, John (Ann) Nesbit, Robert (Kim) Nesbit. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his in-laws Evelyn Bradley and Marion Robb. Predeceased by his sister Anne Buchanan. David will be fondly remembered by many nieces and nephews, extended family members and friends.

David was a hard-working man, devoted and dedicated to his family, his work and his faith. He was an electrician by trade and together David and Gladys were the proud owners of Nesbit Electric Ltd, a business he ran with unwavering integrity and skill for many years. Never a stranger to anyone, David's warmth, radiant smile and genuine interest in others left a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of knowing him. The family would like to thank the doctors and staff of the Happy Valley Family Heath Team, St. Marys Memorial Hospital and the University Hospital, London. Special thank you to Dr. Charles Gatfield, Dr. Tania Wilson and Dr. Jon Schiedel as well as the emergency department nurses and the entire coronary care unit at University Hospital. The exceptional care and compassion shown to David and your attention and dedication did not go unnoticed and brought much comfort during a difficult time.

Visitation will be held at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, 47 Wellington St. South, St. Marys, on Wednesday, Aug. 13 from 7 - 9 pm. The Funeral Service will be conducted at the Kirkton-Woodham Community Centre, 70497 Rd 164, Kirkton, on Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025 at 1 pm. Pastor Carlo Rosati officiating. Burial to follow in Kirkton Union Cemetery. Memorial donations can be made to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation or Bethel Church St. Marys. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

IN MEMORIAM

Abel

In loving memory of my sister Sylvia who I lost seven years ago August 15, 2018.

If tears could build a stairway
and memories a lane,
I'd walk right up to heaven
and bring you home again.

Miss you lots, your sister Phyllis

OBITUARY

Noble



Jim Harold Noble passed away peacefully with his family by his side at the age of 93 at Rotary Hospice in Stratford. Jim leaves behind his children Doug (Theresa), Darlene (Jamie) and Dave. Grandchildren Jenn (Kyle), Mike (Erin), Amy (Scott) Jason, (Kim) Dan and Justin and 11

great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother Vic (Helen) Noble. Brother-in-law Harold Dunnington and sisters-in-law Barb Dunnington and Patsy Dunnington. Jim was predeceased by his wife Dorothy, parents Margaret and Victor Noble, siblings Nancy Himburg, Lefty (John), Mary Schmidt, and Norm.

Family was very important to Dad. His joy was to make sure everyone was loved. His workshop was his pride and joy to spread so many memories to so many loved ones. He always left a special message written on whatever he built. Dad loved sharing so many memories about playing baseball and hockey. His time in the Navy was a proud moment for him. When you are thinking of dad, enjoy some chocolate or hard candy. His jar of candy was an endless treat for him. Milk chocolate was his favourite. Dad lived at River Gardens in Stratford, where he was able to relax and be taken care of by the excellent staff there.

Thank you to the many PSWs, nurses and doctors who have looked after dad in Stratford, St. Marys and Hospice. Dad spent his last days at Stratford Hospice in the care of the amazing volunteers and staff. We cannot as a family thank them enough. On August 7, 2025, a graveside service took place at the St. Marys Cemetery to lay to rest Jim and his wife Dorothy. The family would like to sincerely thank Gary Mallalieu for officiating the service, Alan Lounds for playing Last Post on the trumpet, Shane Ward for playing the bagpipes and all those who attended. Thank you also to the staff at Rotary Hospice for their wonderful care. Memorial donations may be made the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

IN MEMORIAM

Taylor

In loving memory of Sue, a loving wife, mother, and grandmother who left us on August 18, 2002.

Memories drift to scenes long past,
Time rolls on, yet memories last.
Sunshine passes, shadows fall,
Love's remembrance out last all.

Forever loved and sadly missed by Ken, Paul and Anne, Jeff and Leslie, and your loving grandchildren Madison, Eric, Kaden, Bodhi, Zaddeck, Trey and Sage

OBITUARY

Daum



Sherry Ann Daum (Stevens) passed away quietly in her sleep at Southbridge Long Term Care Facility in Goderich on July 28, 2025 at the age of 59.

Beloved wife of Dan, married August 3, 1996. Loving mother of Brock and Lily. Sister of Sheila (Mark Cameron).

Sandy (Scott Shackleton). Aunt of Lauren and Julia Cameron, Stacey and Nolan Shackleton. Daughter of the late Leita and Donald Stevens and survived by her grandmother Joyce McKay (Murray), husband Tom (deceased). Sherry is also remembered by many extended family members and by her dog Daisy.

She worked many years as a Scotia bank employee, dedicating her career to her customers. Sherry was always devoted to her kids' athletic involvements, anything hockey.

An Open House Celebration of Life will be held at "The Pond" on August 23rd, from 2 - 6 pm. If a rain date is required, the gathering will be held on August 24th. Please visit www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca for online tributes and the location address of the celebration of life. Memorial donations may be to the Alzheimer Society or the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation.

OBITUARY

Poole



June Poole (nee Haney) passed away at Wildwood Care Centre, St. Marys, on August 10, 2025 at the age of 96.

Predeceased by her beloved husband W. Howard Poole (2014), married on July 1, 1949. Cherished mother of Vicki and Kenneth Westlake

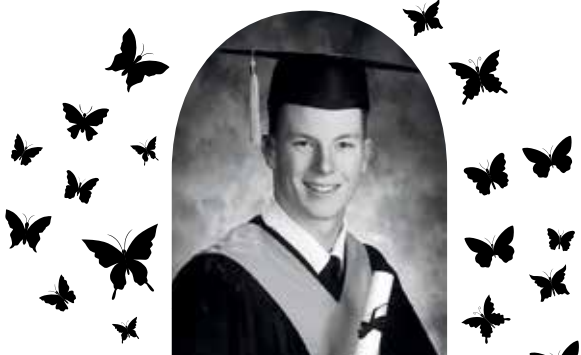
of Sarnia, and Randy and Minda Poole of Port Elgin. Grandmother of Scott and Kelly Westlake of Ilderton, Andrew Westlake and Alaina Clarke of Sarnia, Great-grandma of Ava, Cole, and Leah, and remembered by several extended family members. Predeceased by her parents Vincent and Myrtle Haney, and siblings John and Lorne. June was well-loved by her family and especially enjoyed her times together with her grandchildren.

Family and friends are invited to the ST. MARYS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 147 Widder St. E. St. Marys, on Friday, August 15, 2025 for visitation from 1 pm until the time of the Funeral Service at 2 pm with Rev. Jeff Lackie officiating. Interment in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Cancer Society, St. Marys Presbyterian Church or to a charity of choice. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

IN MEMORIAM

MICHAEL ANTHONY
HENDERSON / WILHELM

Son of Diane Henderson and Kathy and Tony Wilhelm
Born Feb 4, 2000. Died Aug 16, 2018 in Fredericton,
New Brunswick, in a construction accident.

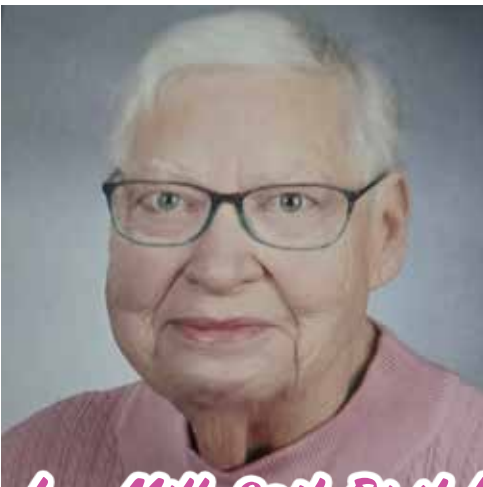


A ray of sunshine came and went,
The son and grandson we loved but could not keep.
When we lose someone we love,
We learn to live with the love they left behind.
There are no tomorrows for us to share,
But yesterday's memories are always there.
Memories are a gift to treasure,
Ours of you will last forever.
Sending you all the love, from the hearts you left behind.

Today as everyday, we fondly remember our handsome
young man, loving son, precious grandson, fun loving cousin.

Gramma Bessie and family

CELEBRATION



Audrey Mills 80th Birthday
OPEN HOUSE

293 Elgin Street, E, St. Marys
August 16, from 1:00pm until 4:00 pm

Please join us for coffee and cake.
Bring a lawn chairs and best wishes only.

CELEBRATION



Come Celebrate with her on
Aug 17, 2025

Thamesview United Church
3178 Perth Rd 163, Fullarton ON

Open House
3:00-5:00 pm

Please no gifts or cards -just your
smiling face & signature in the guest book
Non-perishable food items or gift card
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THANK YOU

Thanks to the following businesses for donating door
prizes to the Windmill Car Show that took place on
Sunday August 3rd

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| Dave Versteegh Auto Repair | Ideal Pipe (ADS) |
| Hitching Post | Napa Auto Parts |
| Home Hardware | Windmill Family |
| Marziali Garage and Auto | Campground |
| Sales | |

THANK YOU

Smith

Many thanks to my family for arranging the Open
House for my 90th Birthday Celebration, and to the
ladies at the United Church for their help with the
lunch. Thanks also for the cards and gifts, and to those
who attended to make this a special occasion.

Ron Smith

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CELEBRATION



Happy 70th Birthday Jill

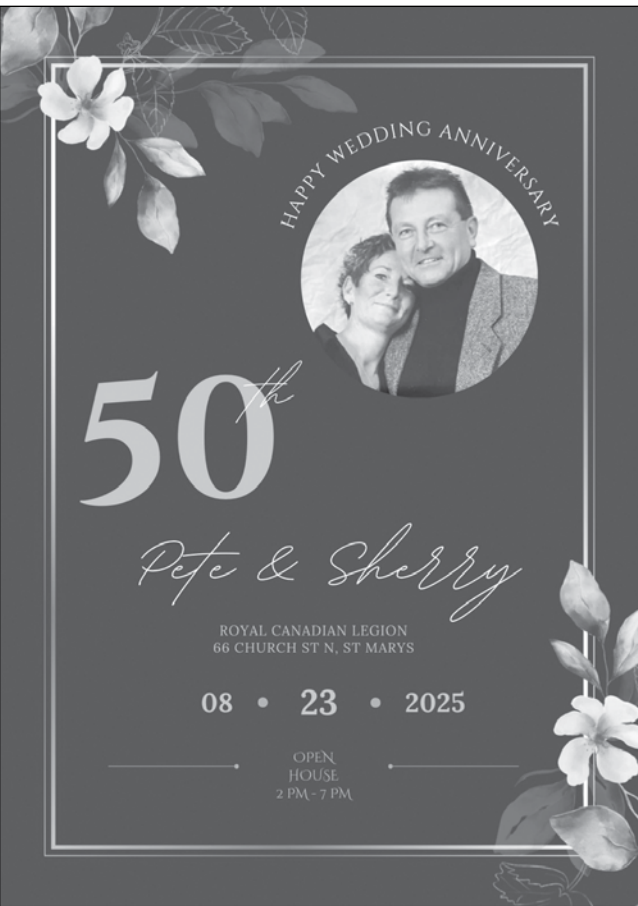
Open House Celebration
August 16, 2025 from 1:00pm - 4:00pm
St. Marys Legion



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Wed. Aug. 06 - Norm & Cindy Bilyea, Granton	\$50.00
Thur. Aug. 07 - Sara Sicilia, London	\$50.00
Fri. August. 08 - Elaine McLaren, Stratford	\$50.00
Sat. Aug. 09 - Adam Rose, Mitchell	\$200.00

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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 - 519-570-6920.

For Sale

Hundreds of shade trees, fruit trees, apples, pears, peaches, plums, sweet and sour cherries, apricots, nectarines, blueberries, haskapp grapes, raspberries, elderberries etc. Lots of spruce, pine, cedars for windbreak and privacy hedges. Sizes 1-8 ft. in containers ready to go. Flowering shrubs and much more. Mon-Sat 7:00am to 6:00pm. Martin’s Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Rd Wroxeter, ON N0G 2X0 (1 Conc. North of Wroexter on Belmore Line)

For Rent

Large 3 bedroom downtown apartment in 3 story walk up above Gilly’s, includes all utilities, wifi, laundry, parking. References required. Available August. Please call 519-697-4985

For Sale

2007 Jayco Jayflight fifth wheel trailer RKS model for sale as is. Asking \$7,000 or closest offer. Call 519-860-8862.

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Wanted

Kakamega Kenya Children’s Home (Ages 5-15) Sponsorship participants. Call Janet at 226-261-3660 for more “no obligation” information

For Rent

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

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 26

Friday, Aug 15

- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- Friends of the Library “Movie in the Park” at Cadzow Park at dusk

Saturday, Aug 16

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Happy 70th birthday Jill open house celebration at St. Marys Legion – 1-4 p.m.
- Audrey Mills 80th birthday open house at 293 Elgin St. E – 1-4 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.

Sunday, Aug 17

- Granton Cemetery decoration day
- Harrington decoration service at Knox Presbyterian Church – 11 a.m.
- Teddy Bear Reunion at Lions Park, Milt Dunnell Field – Parade starts at 1 p.m.
- Nancy Kraemer 90th birthday celebration at Thamesview United Church, Fullarton – 3-5 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug 20

- Melodies at the Museum at Cadzow Park featuring Jazzm@x – 7-8 p.m.

Thursday, Aug 21

- Friends of the Library “Reading in the Park” at Kin Park – 10-11 a.m.

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) White tires
2) 20-50x
3) For you
4) Leo & Virgo
5) Edmonton
- 6) “How the Grinch Stole Christmas”
7) 1967
8) Kansas
9) Whale shark
10) Alice Cooper

LOOKING
BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Twist and shout

25 years ago (2000)

A 10-and-under soccer team of Mexican boys gathered on the steps of Town Hall on Wednesday after being greeted by St. Marys Mayor Jamie Hahn, who was outfitted with a Mexican sombrero and poncho. St. Marys resident Kenneth Irons happened upon the team in an airport in Guadalajara and arranged for them to play in the Stonetown.

Mayoral incumbent Jamie Hahn has not yet announced whether he will run again, but if he does, he will now face an opponent with a long history of public service in the upcoming municipal election. Tony Winter, a 25-year veteran with the town’s Public Utilities Commission, officially kicked off his mayoral campaign by submitting his nomination papers on August 8. Winter recently retired from a 34-year teaching career, most of which was spent in St. Marys elementary schools.

50 years ago (1975)

Numerous comments have been received concerning the need for restroom facilities at the Flats along the Thames River. It is pointed out that more and more passing motorists are using the tables there for picnics, and many local people find it a pleasant place to take a box lunch. The increase in popularity of the Flats is partly due to the improvements made by the Town there over the past few years.

The recent overflow of waters from Wildwood Dam played havoc with the garden of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Treanor which was flooded on Widder Street East. Three acres of cucumbers were the main loss while their half-acre garden is full of rotted potatoes, carrots, beans and squash.

75 years ago (1950)

John W. Brown, who spends most of his time feeding mink and repairing lawn mowers, celebrated his 75th birthday on Saturday by riding his famous old penny farthing bicycle around downtown. Mr. Brown, a native of the Wellburn district, owned one of these unusual pioneer cycles when he was a young man and has retained the present machine down through the years.

When he apparently swerved his car while rounding the curve on No. 7 Highway near the 4-mile bush on Saturday night, Joseph McCarthy of Stratford escaped serious injury, but his wife was thrown 30 feet from the car, receiving a fractured spine and other injuries. According to McCarthy, another car was hogging the road at the curve.

100 years ago (1925)

On Friday evening while throwing in an electric switch at the Cement Plant, Mr. Frank Twist was severely burned about the head, arms, and chest when a short circuit occurred. He was in critical condition for some time but is now making satisfactory progress under medical attention.

Although Canadians pride themselves for their restraint and law-abiding qualities there seems to be some in our country who have not this desirable trait. The trustees of S.S. No 9, Blanshard have found this fact out and now they are going to make it hot for those who molest the property of this school section. They offer a \$25 reward to anyone who can give information leading to the conviction of those who damage this property. The latest crimes committed on this property included fifteen window panes broken and the school library, teacher’s desk, and new seats wrecked.



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