

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1335

Thursday, October 15, 2026

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LEARNING ABOUT FIRE PREVENTION

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Five-year-old Gavin Muller had a great time learning how to spray the fire hose. He was shown by firefighter Mackenzie Forman, how to hold it correctly and spray the water at a pylon at the St. Marys Fire Department open house Oct. 10. For more photos, see page 10.

Perth County tweaks stewardship program to give new applicants a better shot at funding

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County is making changes to its Stewardship Program for 2027 aimed at spreading available funding among more landowners, though council remains divided over how much taxpayer money should go toward larger trees, contractors and other planting costs.

At its Oct. 1 meeting, county council approved two administrative changes recommended by resiliency and stewardship coordinator Hannah Cann following an earlier council discussion in August. Beginning with the 2027 intake, first-time applicants will receive five points through the program's scoring system, up from one, while landowners

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

Downtown parking survey highlights pressure from employees, patios and bike parking

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Finding a convenient parking spot in downtown St. Marys can be difficult enough without spaces intended for customers being occupied by business owners, employees, patios and bicycle parking.

Results from a downtown parking survey presented to the St. Marys BIA at its Oct. 6 meeting suggest those competing uses are contributing to frustration among businesses, residents and visitors, while the town is taking several steps aimed at freeing up more high-demand spaces.

Of the 41 BIA members who responded to the survey, just 51 per cent said they have adequate onsite parking for staff. Ten respondents said their employees use municipal parking lots, while another 10 have staff parking on the street within the downtown three-hour parking area. Only five respondents reported having surplus parking on their own properties, and just two were willing to explore sharing that parking with neighbouring businesses.

Director of culture, tourism and engagement Amy Cubberley said getting employees and business owners out of those high-demand, short-term spaces is one of the clearest opportunities identified through the survey.

"Where we saw the most opportunity was shifting employee and business owner parking from those high-demand three-hour spaces to the all-day parking," Cubberley said, including municipal lots and all-day street parking outside

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

STK
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COMMUNITY

Downtown parking survey highlights pressure from employees, patios and bike parking

CONTINUED FROM FRONT
the core.

Thirty-nine per cent of respondents said they hear parking complaints from residents daily. The most common concern was inadequate nearby parking, followed by business owners and tenants parking where they shouldn't. Patios and bicycle parking were also identified as concerns.

The town is already working on several changes.

A review of the downtown patio policy that was set to be presented to council at its Oct. 13 regular meeting includes proposed fees for businesses using public parking spaces for patios, reducing the

percentage of downtown parking that can be occupied by patios from five per cent to 2.5 per cent and limiting how many patios can be located on a single block.

The town has also replaced signage at the bicycle-parking area in front of Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters and the Flower Shop and More after survey responses suggested some people believed the racks were reserved for those businesses. Cubberley clarified the bicycle parking is available to anyone visiting downtown.

Meanwhile, the town has purchased property at 30 Church St. N to create additional parking primarily for town hall

and library employees. While the report identified 12 spaces, Cubberley told the board there are actually 13, which could help move municipal employees out of all-day street spaces and free those spaces for other downtown users. The town is also considering evening and weekend use of the lot by community groups like St. Marys Community Players.

"As a person who does the tickets for the community players, I get a lot of complaints about there being no parking for the theatre," BIA board treasurer Dan Troyer said. "There's no place for the actors and stuff, so they park on Church Street. ... There are a lot of people who go in there and that's a lot of vehicles.

I don't have an answer to it, but I just know that I field a lot of questions on that."

Cubberley responded that the new 30 Church Street North lot could potentially be used by community players actors and volunteers during evenings and weekends when town staff aren't using it.

Further improvements are planned for the Jones Street lot and Eric Taylor Trail parking area, while the town is developing a more consistent approach to parking enforcement based on data from the town's first summer of proactive enforcement. A broader downtown parking study is scheduled for 2027.

Perth County tweaks stewardship program

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

will be limited to one approved application per year across all program streams. Previously, there was no annual limit on the number of applications an individual landowner could submit.

"The report before you outlines the proposed 2027 stewardship program adjustments, which focus on making the program more accessible and distributing funding more broadly," Cann told council.

She said increasing the first-time applicant weighting gives new applicants "a stronger opportunity while keeping the ecological value of projects as the main consideration."

The changes respond to concerns raised in August after council heard the program had been oversubscribed in two of its first three years. Councillors questioned whether repeat applicants were receiving too much of the available funding while new applicants had grants reduced through prorating.

While council approved the changes, the Oct. 1 discussion showed broader concerns with the program remain.

Coun. Bob Wilhelm said he continues to have a problem with the county funding trees costing hundreds of dollars each.

"We have a variation from \$100 to \$400 per tree and I think we have to have some kind of control on that," Wilhelm

said. "That's ridiculous."

Deputy Warden Sue Orr suggested oversized stock be removed from the program, while Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz argued the program has strayed too far from its original purpose of getting trees into the ground.

"The intent was to plant trees," Ehgoetz said. "And yet now we're paying for them to be delivered. We're paying for them to be planted. We're paying for the site plan, the site to get ready."

Staff, however, recommended against setting a fixed per-tree grant or banning oversized stock. Of 67 completed projects in the landowner and living snow fence streams, only five used oversized trees. Staff argued projects should instead continue to be reviewed individually based on site conditions and environmental objectives.

Coun. Walter McKenzie supported keeping planting labour eligible, saying landowners he has spoken with would not participate if they had to find time to plant the trees themselves.

"If we didn't pay for planting or planting wasn't part of it, they wouldn't do it because they don't have time to do it," McKenzie said.

The county's own figures support that concern. Applications fell to 12 when labour was ineligible in 2025 before rebounding to 21 projects after labour costs were restored for 2026.

Coun. Todd Kasenberg also cautioned against a flat per-tree cap if it pushes landowners toward cheaper species that may be less suited to a particular property. Cann said species prices can vary substantially and limiting support to a set amount per tree could discourage the most appropriate planting choice.

The county is proposing another \$100,000 for the Stewardship Program in its draft 2027 budget, the same funding level as 2026, though final approval will rest with the next council during

budget deliberations.

Staff told council the spring intake is expected to close Jan. 22, with applications coming back to the next council for consideration in early February. As of Oct. 9, application submission dates for the 2027 spring intake had not yet been posted online.

More information on the Perth County Stewardship Program is available at www.perthcounty.ca/living-here/stewardship-program/#2026ProgramGuide-andFinalReporting.



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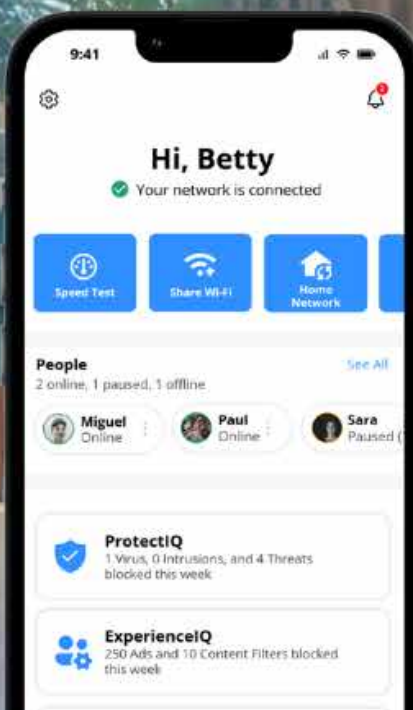
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EDITORIAL

A close call on the tracks: A cautionary tale for St. Marys

DUNCAN MACDONALD

St. Marys Station Gallery

One ordinary Saturday could have ended in tragedy. This article serves as a reminder that railway tracks are no place for children to play.

It was a typical Saturday in St. Marys, with a hockey tournament bringing young players, coaches and families to our wonderful town.

I was teaching my usual afternoon art class for children when we noticed a group of boys walking along the railway tracks here at the VIA Rail station. Knowing the dangers, I stepped outside to tell them to get off the tracks.

As I approached, I noticed several boys wandering close to the railway bridge, apparently curious about the area. Nearby, a number of parents and the team's coach were watching. I alerted the closest gentleman to the danger, and the coach, who was visiting from Kitchener, loudly

instructed the boys to leave the tracks and move away from the bridge.

Fortunately, they listened.

Less than two minutes later, a freight train heading towards London crossed the bridge. The conductor sounded the horn loudly, warning everyone nearby to get out of the way and stay back. In that moment, the seriousness of the situation became painfully clear.

What was an ordinary afternoon could easily have turned into a tragedy.

Had the boys remained on the tracks or continued exploring near the bridge, the consequences could have been devastating. Thankfully, someone intervened, the coach reinforced the warning and the boys moved to safety. We were fortunate that the outcome was a close call rather than a community tragedy.

I share this story not to embarrass the children, criticize a visiting hockey team or point fingers at parents. Children are naturally curious. Trains are fascinating

and railway bridges may look like exciting places to explore. But children do not always recognize danger, which is why adults must help them understand it.

Railway tracks are not playgrounds, walking paths or places to explore. Trains are heavy, powerful machines that cannot stop quickly. They may approach more quietly than people expect, and there may be very little time to react. Railway bridges are especially dangerous because there may be little or no room to escape when a train approaches.

Even when no train is visible, the tracks are not safe. Another train may be coming from either direction. We cannot rely on luck to keep our children safe.

As parents, grandparents, coaches, teachers and neighbours, we all have a responsibility to teach young people about railway safety. If you see children playing on the tracks, speak up if you can do so safely, and contact the appropriate authorities when necessary. Most importantly,

talk to your children before something happens. Make sure they understand that railway property is off-limits and that no adventure or moment of curiosity is worth risking their lives.

St. Marys is a wonderful community, and looking out for one another is part of what makes it special. We want our children to grow up safe, healthy and free to enjoy everything our town has to offer.

But some places are simply too dangerous to explore.

Please remind your children that railway tracks are never a place to play, and railway bridges are never a place to explore. Share this warning with your family, friends and neighbours.

That Saturday, the boys got away safely. The train passed and life in St. Marys continued as usual. Next time, we might not be so fortunate. Let's make sure our children understand the danger before they find themselves in its path. Their lives may depend on it.

Bravo

We have 5 Bravos this week

1) Bravo to Kelly and Trevor, who assisted me after I face-planted on the asphalt while walking my dog. I so appreciate your kindness and compassion. Another reason to love living in St. Marys.

2) Bravo to the many friendly dog walkers I meet on the "loop" trails. I always ask if I can say hi to and can I pet their dog and most do happily and their dogs respond in kind. Some do indicate their dog is nervous or old and cranky (that I get - I'm that way too someday) which is ok too. The trails are so great in St. Marys, but what makes them wonderful is the friendly people, and their dogs, you meet along the way.

3) Bravo to the kind lady who paid for my grandson's groceries at Foodland on the weekend. That was totally unexpected and very much appreciated. I've encouraged him to play it forward.

4) Bravo to the young lady who was pumping gas at Dowler Karn (McDougall Energy) on Saturday afternoon who was in conversation with an older lady who ran out of gas. She scrounged up \$4 to give the young lady for gas. You are delightful. Thanks for showing that St. Marys is a "town worth living in."

5) Bravo to an outstanding man and neighbour Marty Swan who came down in a flash when I called for help when my cat was stuck up in a tree. Not only did he hold the ladder for me, he caught me when I slipped and fell a good distance with the cat in my arms.

Boo

We have 1 Boo this week

1) Boo to the person who left a empty Taco Bell drink cup at the first window of McDonalds on Tues. Sept. 6. The first window is often not staffed, but if it was, I'm sure whoever did this would find another place to do their cowardly littering. It's so disappointing that, in this day and age, we still have people so lazy and inconsiderate that they cannot take their garbage to a proper container. And what's even sadder, McDonalds graciously supplies two garbage cans just past the second window that can be reached from your car's window. Do better Taco Bell trash person.

*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

"We can't achieve any of this if we're divided. You can't build big things on fault lines. Generations of Albertans helped build this country. It's yours, it's ours, and it's worth fighting for."

- Prime Minister Mark Carney on building homes in Alberta ahead of the polls on Oct. 19 for a 10 question referendum with the final question referencing whether Alberta should remain a Canadian province.

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St. Marys Independent

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pants this past
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round of Halloween
candy already.

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

Hospital auxiliary hosts bake-sale fundraiser at Troyer's Spices



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary was busy on Saturday raising money with a bake sale at Troyer's Spices. The bake sale went from 9 a.m. until noon and had many items for sale like brownies, dessert bars, cookies, cupcakes, knitted and crocheted pumpkins and so many more goodies. The ladies had to close the bake sale early because they sold out thanks to the amazing support of those who came in to visit. The funds raised go to the auxiliary to be put towards various projects that the group supports like the newly renovated gazebo at the hospital. From left to right are auxiliary members Joyce Mulholland, Joanne Pickering, Nan Skirten and Arlene Callender.



St. Marys Giving Tuesday 2026

Won't You Be My Neighbour?

Need Help Planning Your Giving Tuesday Initiative?

For the next few weeks we will share information about charities and organizations that would be so grateful to receive help from a Giving Tuesday initiative:

The St. Marys Library Community Pantry – provides much needed assistance to members of our community who find themselves hungry and in need of help to purchase staple items to meet their basic needs. If you are able to support the Library Pantry please consider donating pantry staples, snack foods like granola/protein bars and apple sauce, toiletries or gift cards in the amount of \$20 for local stores like Tim Hortons, Foodland, McDonald's, the Independent Grocer or Dollarama. For more information reach out to webb@stmaryspubliclibrary.ca

Feline Friends Network – Feline Friends Network was founded in 2006 to humanely reduce the problems of cat overpopulation and homelessness in our community which cannot be solved by adoption alone. Their focus is on spay & neuter programs, which are the only effective and humane solution. Catchment area covers Perth County and the Town of Tavistock. If you are able to support Feline Friends Network please consider donating gift cards for use when purchasing food/litter for their fosters, become a foster home and cash donations are always appreciated (tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00). Donations made on Giving Tuesday will be matched! For more information email info@felinefriends.com

If you know of a charity or community organization that could benefit from being the recipient of a Giving Tuesday initiative please let us know. We are happy to share the information.

When you have your Giving Tuesday 2026 initiative planned please let us know so we can share the good! We want to "Catch You Giving!"

Thank you for participating, it matters!
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Committee

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For more info contact jdockerrjohnson@gmail.com
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STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news
from the Town of St. Marys



ELECTION DAY

October 26 | 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM | Pyramid
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Whether you're voting for the first time or have voted before, now is the perfect time to make sure you're ready. Check your voter information, learn what you need to bring, and find answers to common election questions.

Visit townofstmarys.com/Election

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October 5 -30

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townofstmarys.com/flushing



COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

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

townofstmarys.com/grants

YOUTH CENTRE OPEN HOUSE

October 16 | Pyramid Recreation Centre | 3:45-6:00PM

Join us for a FREE Youth Centre Open House on Friday, October 16 from 3:45 to 6 p.m. Youth in Grades 3-8 can drop in to explore the space, make crafts, build forts, play games, and more. Parents and guardians are welcome to stop by, ask questions, and join in the fun.

townofstmarys.com/youthcentre



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Senior of the Week



We welcome your submissions for our weekly Senior of the Week. Please send a photo and a brief description to info@stmarysindependent.com and we will feature them in an upcoming issue.

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

St. Marys Lions welcome six new members at induction ceremony

ST. MARYS LIONS CLUB

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Lions Club welcomed six new members at its Oct. 6 meeting with president Lion Evelyn Albers presiding over the induction ceremony.

Lions Michelle Billson, Joscelyne Phillips, Kaylee McEvoy and Scott McEvoy were sponsored by Lion Dawn Reynen. Lion Ron Hodgins was sponsored by Lion Rob Stuart, and Lion Rob Benninger was sponsored by Lion Gerry Haliburton.

Adding a special touch to the evening, Kaylee and Scott McEvoy's children presented the new members with their Lions name tags and Lions International lapel pins.

The new members were warmly welcomed by their fellow Lions, and the ceremony concluded with the traditional Lions Roar.

The St. Marys Lions are delighted to welcome these six new members as they join in friendship, fellowship and service to the community.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured following a recent new member induction ceremony hosted by the St. Marys Lions Club are, in the front row from left, new Lions Michelle Billson, Kaylee McEvoy, Scott McEvoy, Lion president Evelyn Albers, new Lion Rob Benninger and Lion Rob Stuart (sponsor). In the back row, from left to right, are new Lion Joscelyne Phillips, Lion Dawn Reynen (sponsor), new Lion Ron Hodgins and Lion Gerry Haliburton (sponsor).

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What is the only U.S. state that can be typed in using only one row of a standard keyboard?
2. In human anatomy, what does the "hallux" refer to?
3. What is the only planet in our solar system to rotate clockwise on its axis?
4. Which freezes faster: hot or cold water?
5. What is James Bond's code name?
6. Weighing around eight pounds, this is the human body's largest organ?
7. What do you call a group of flamingos?
8. What is the distance from earth to the sun?
9. Which country is the largest in the world?
10. According to Guinness World Records, what's the best-selling book of all time?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

St. Marys Community Players Presents

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Oct 22 to Nov 7 | Town Hall

Breaking ground on a new pavilion at Milt Dunnell Field



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Change is coming as construction has started in Milt Dunnell Field on the town's new pavilion project. The old pavilion, which has been part of the flats for years, has seen better days and is ready to come down and make way for bigger and better ways to serve the needs of the community. Mayor Al Strathdee gets to see the view from the excavator on demo day.



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Rannoch ceremony to mark 80 years since six Second World War names added to cenotaph



At a ceremony last year, locals learned about the life and military service behind one of the names commemorated on the Rannoch Cenotaph.

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Eighty years after six Blanshard Township men who never returned home from the Second World War were formally added to the Rannoch Cenotaph, the community will gather once again to remember not only their names, but the people behind them.

The Township of Perth South and community partners will host a special commemorative ceremony at the Rannoch Cenotaph at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 25, marking the 80th anniversary of a welcome-home and memorial service held there July 7, 1946.

During that original ceremony, the names of six local men killed during the Second World War – Gordon W. Barnett, Norman Evans, Alvin Heard, Albert Martin, Gordon McKay and Clarence Stevens – were added to the cenotaph, joining those from the First World War and Boer War already memorialized there.

According to an original order of service, the parents of the six fallen men were presented with plaques from the township, while returning servicemen and women were presented with rings.

The Oct. 25 ceremony will include a piper, prayer and other elements inspired by a traditional remembrance ceremony, though organizer Gordon Barnett said it is intended specifically to mark the anniversary of the 1946 dedication rather than replace the community’s Remembrance Day observances. Perth-Wellington MP John Nater will serve as the main speaker and share some of the history of the cenotaph.

For Barnett, a member of the organizing committee, the effort to tell the stories behind the names engraved in stone is deeply personal.

His uncle and namesake, Gordon W. Barnett, was a member of the First Canadian Parachute Battalion who was killed in combat in Germany on March 24, 1945, shortly after his 20th birthday. He



A photo of Gordon W. Barnett, a member of the First Canadian Parachute Battalion who was killed in combat in Germany on March 24, 1945, and the plaque his family received afterward.

was later buried with other Canadian war dead in the Netherlands.

Barnett’s uncle was the first person whose story was shared during one of the committee’s late-October ceremonies two years ago, an initiative inspired by similar efforts elsewhere to put faces, families and lives to the names on cenotaphs.

“They were fathers, sons and so on, where they went to school, playing sports and that sort of thing,” Barnett said of the details that can easily disappear with time.

His own research began through Faces to Graves, an organization in the Netherlands working to document the lives of Canadian soldiers buried there. Barnett gathered letters, newspaper clippings and family artifacts connected to his uncle, allowing him to learn about the young man beyond his military service.

“Getting to read the letters, you got to appreciate him as a person,” Barnett said, describing correspondence about girls his uncle met, time spent with friends and

other pieces of an ordinary young life interrupted by war.

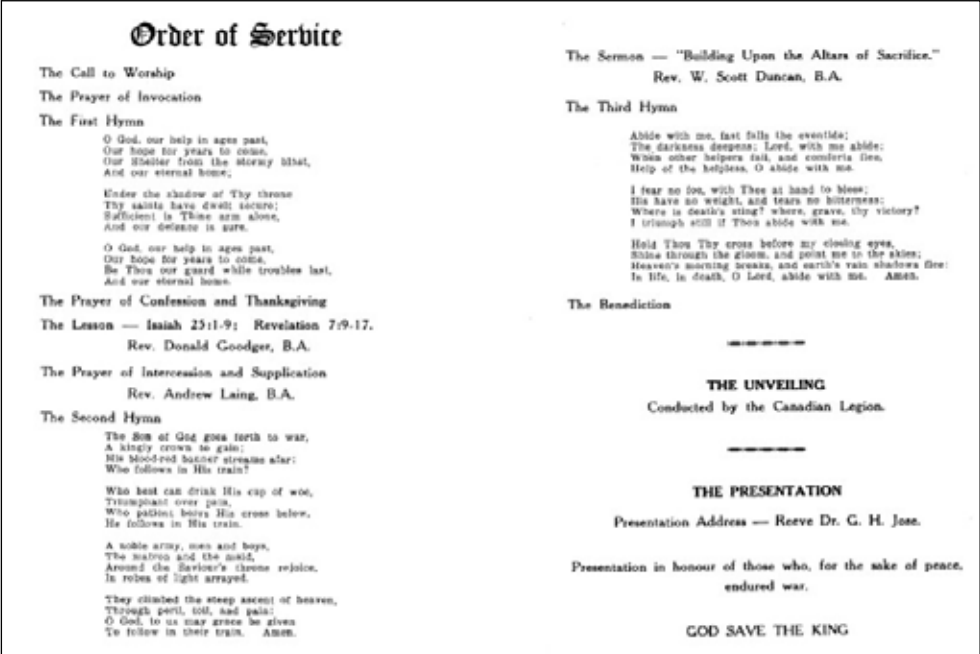
That connection is becoming increasingly important as generations pass and families move away, Barnett said.

“Some of those families are starting to move away now,” he said. “There’s not the connections like there was. So, I think this will help a lot of people realize they may be, you know, one or two degrees of separation from some of these names.”

Perth South Mayor Sue Orr, who first brought forward the idea of marking the anniversary, said keeping those connections alive is the heart of the ceremony.

“I feel it’s important to keep this history alive and share the family connections,” Orr said. “We owe a great debt to those who served in all the wars and it’s the least we can do to honour the names on the cenotaph.”

The St. Marys Museum will also take part in the ceremony, bringing artifacts connected to the 1946 commemoration and the people it honoured.



The original program from the July 7, 1946 ceremony when the names of six soldiers from Blanshard Township who were killed during the Second World War were added to the Rannoch Cenotaph.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Perth County economic development, tourism team caps busy summer with provincial agriculture forum

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

From promoting local tourism and supporting business expansions to hosting government officials and bringing economic-development professionals from across Ontario to Perth County, the county's economic development and tourism division had a busy summer.

Economic development officer Justin Dias provided county council with a recap of the department's work from June through September at council's Oct. 1 meeting, highlighting business retention and expansion efforts, tourism marketing, the development of new visitor experiences and the county's ongoing tourism wayfinding project.

Among the summer's economic-development activities were visits to local manufacturers interested in provincial expansion funding, support for Listowel Technology Inc.'s \$13.2-million expansion – backed by \$1.5 million through the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund – and continued discussions with provincial and federal officials surrounding a potential new manufacturing facility in Perth County.

The county also supported a business tour and roundtable in August with then-agriculture minister Trevor Jones and rural affairs minister Lisa Thompson involving 15 local business representatives. Five Perth County businesses were also nominated for Ontario Excellence in Agriculture Awards.

On the tourism side, the county supported the launch of Farmhouse Fires at The Perth Farmhouse as a new Signature Experience in June, while its summer mar-

keting campaign included print, digital and social-media promotion.

More than 76,000 tourism brochures were distributed through Canada Post and tourism destinations, while county tourism social-media channels gained more than 1,700 followers since May and generated more than 18,000 interactions. Three summer students featured more than 85 Perth County businesses through reels, stories and other content.

Work also continued on the FRAME + Find Tourism Wayfinding Signage Strategy. Two stakeholder workshops and a county road tour were held in July to identify signage gaps, preferred aesthetics and priority locations, with the project now moving from its discovery phase into strategy development and design.

The summer culminated with Perth County and investStratford hosting the Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum Sept. 28-29.

The first day included an agricultural and business discovery bus tour across Perth County, with stops including Gray Ridge Egg Farms, Anna Mae's Restaurant and Bakery, Lynn River Farm and the Stratford Perth Centre for Business. The county's report says the tour showcased nine Perth County businesses to 56 participants.

The second day brought 122 participants to the Tom Patterson Theatre in Stratford for sessions focused on rural economic development, on-farm diversification, development-ready communities and agricultural by-laws.

Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz praised staff for the event and said she was struck by how far some participants had

travelled.

"It was really impressive to see that they came from everywhere," Ehgoetz said. "It was a bang-up job. You did an awesome job and it was great to see the businesses again."

Warden Dean Trentowsky echoed those comments, saying participants were impressed by the work that went into the two-day format.

"People were impressed with the effort that was made to put together the two-day format," Trentowsky said, also recognizing investStratford and its staff for co-hosting the forum. "It shows teamwork and partnership – the great results that can happen there."

A full report on the Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum will be presented to council at a future meeting.



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St. Marys Fire Department concludes Fire Prevention Week with open house

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

The St. Marys Fire Department finished Fire Prevention Week off with its annual open house.

The popular event was held on Saturday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is always a free event for the community and it's a great way to learn about fire

safety while having some fun with the whole family.

There was lots to take in, including a station tours, meeting the firefighters, fire truck demonstrations, food trucks, an inflatable fire house, participation by the Stratford Police Service along with Dusty the police dog, and Sparky the Fire Dog was there too.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Capt. Greg St. Clair and firefighter Ethan Brine were on hand to answer questions and are seen with some cutters and spreaders used in rescue.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

James Barber had a lot of fun at the open house and got to sit up in Old Betsy wearing his fire hat.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Cameron and Anderson Elsdon tried out the life raft on Saturday at the open house.

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South Perth Centennial School ready to host third annual Pumpkin Walk

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Oct. 29, students from South Perth Centennial School will once again showcase their creative talents by inviting the public to their third annual Pumpkin Walk.

The event was started by the parent council after seeing what a great job the students did with their pumpkin carvings. They wanted to share them with the public. Last year, there were well over 200 pumpkins carved and voted on.

There are several categories like painted and carved pumpkins, and one being a home carving so kids of all ages and com-

munity members can partake in the event. The pumpkins will line the arboretum and visitors can stroll through and look at all the creative submissions. Prizes will be awarded for the top three in each class and there will also be a door prize available for the taking.

The event will go from 6-8 p.m. and is open to the public for a small admission fee. This event is a fundraiser for student field trip support. As in past years, there will also be a snack booth and some outdoor games. The students are excited to share their artistic flair and also their love for this time of year, so come check out their hard work and vote on a favourite.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Perth South Centennial School's second annual Pumpkin Walk in 2025. Creatively carved and painted pumpkins lined the arboretum as it will this year on Oct. 29.

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater gets a pie in the face for a good cause



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater received a cream pie in the face during Saturday's Stratford Thanksgiving Farmers' Market, making good on a promise he made during a fundraising pie auction at this year's Stratford Fall Fair. The annual auction raises money for the Stratford and District Agricultural Society, with locally baked pies sold to the highest bidders. Nater, who donates a homemade pie each year, promised that if his pie didn't fetch the highest price, agricultural society board members could throw a pie in his face. Although his pie sold for an impressive \$175, it wasn't the top seller. On Saturday, agricultural society president Laurie Neubrand, joined by Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma, delivered on that promise with a cream pie Neubrand had baked earlier. Nater's young daughter was also on hand for the fun and happily helped her father eat some of the pie left on his face before the cleanup began.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Pursuant to Section 34 of the *Planning Act*

Municipally Initiated Housekeeping Amendment to the Municipality of Thames Centre Comprehensive Zoning By-law

TAKE NOTICE that the Municipality of Thames Centre has initiated a Housekeeping Amendment to Bylaw No. 75-2006 (Comprehensive Zoning By-law) to update certain provisions and regulations related to Temporary Use Provisions. A Public Meeting of Council is being held to discuss the proposed amendment to the General Provisions (Section 4) to add provisions to permit two dwellings to be located temporarily on a lot while a replacement dwelling is being constructed, provided that the existing dwelling is removed once construction of the replacement dwelling is complete. The proposed Amendment would be in conformity with the Municipality of Thames Centre Official Plan and the County of Middlesex Official Plan as well as being consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. As the proposed Amendment would apply to all lands in the Municipality, a key map is not provided. You can view the proposed amendment and more information through the following link: <https://www.thamescentre.on.ca/TempUseByLaw>

Public Participation Meeting

The Council of the Municipality of Thames Centre will hold a Public Participation Meeting to consider the subject application, which will be held in a hybrid format, being conducted electronically and in-person.

Date: Monday, November 9
Time: 5pm
Place: This will be a hybrid meeting.
Thames Centre Municipal Office Council Chambers- 4305 Hamilton Rd., Dorchester and broadcasted live on the Municipality's YouTube Channel:
www.youtube.com/municipalityofthamescentre

The public is advised that the Council meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m., although the exact time of item is unknown. To participate electronically via phone or by video using Zoom, registration is required. Please visit the website www.thamescentre.on.ca/registration and complete the registration process before **12 Noon on Monday, November 9th, 2026**. Notwithstanding the deadline above, members of the public are asked to register as soon as possible to provide an orderly registration process and meeting. Send any **written comments or concerns** for Council's consideration via email to comments@thamescentre.on.ca or by mail to the municipal office before **12 Noon on Wednesday, November 4th, 2026**. The public is advised that comments expressed and written material presented are a matter of public record for full disclosure.

Other Information:

Should the by-law not be adopted, as per section 340(20) of the Planning Act, no further notice or public meeting will be required. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Municipality of Thames Centre before the Zoning By-law Amendment is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of the Municipality of Thames Centre to the Ontario Land Tribunal. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submissions to the Municipality of Thames Centre before the Zoning By-law Amendment is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so. If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Municipality of Thames Centre with respect to the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment, you must submit a written request to the Municipality of Thames Centre, Clerk, 4305 Hamilton Road, Dorchester, ON, N0L 1G3 or at comments@thamescentre.on.ca. If you have any questions regarding the application, please contact Lindsay Nooren, Senior Planner, at 519.268.7334 x223 or at lnooren@thamescentre.on.ca

DATED at the Municipality of Thames Centre, this 1st day of October 2026.

Municipality of Thames Centre, 4305 Hamilton Rd, Dorchester, ON, N0L 1G3



VOTES www.thamescentre.on.ca/election

Voter Information Letters

- Voters are being mailed a letter with:
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Voting Period: October 19 to 26

Residents can vote online or by telephone.

Voting opens at 9:00 am on Monday, October 19, and ends at 8:00 pm on Monday, October 26, 2026.



Voter Help Centres

Get help voting at the following locations:

- **Municipal Office**
 - 4305 Hamilton Road, Dorchester
- **Thorndale Lions Community Centre**
 - 265 Upper Queen Street, Thorndale
- **Lions Active Living Centre**
 - 2066 Dorchester Road, Dorchester



Annual car show at Windmill Family Campground raises money for the Salvation Army

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Windmill Family Campground hosted its 29th annual Classic and Antique Car Show on Sept. 6. Originally scheduled for Aug. 2, the event was postponed due to inclement weather.

The number of cars were down from last year, however the campground was able to generously donate \$2,000 to the Salvation Army Food Bank in St. Marys.

The car show had dash plaques for early arrival vehicles, door prizes, 50/50 draws, raffles and food vendors, and cost only \$10 to enter a vehicle and \$10 for spectators.

The foodbank in St. Marys is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The next food drive will take place before Christmas on Dec. 5 at both grocery stores in town.

Right now, the most needed items at the food bank are shampoo, conditioner, canned pasta, school snacks, baked beans and rice.

Jim Fedyk, who has been organizer of the car show for over 15 years, said it was too bad the weekend had to change because of the weather, however there were still more than 100 cars there and \$2,000 is a great donation. He said he was very happy with another successful event.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Car show organizer Jim Fedyk presents \$2,000 to Raelyn Marshall, family services worker at the Salvation Army. The donation was from the 29th annual car show hosted by Windmill Family Campground.

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Rotary Youth Exchange student Lianne Bambo shares her story

ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS

Contributed Article

Members of the Rotary Club of St. Marys had an opportunity to get to know our Rotary Youth Exchange student, Lianne Bambo of the Philippines, a little better when she shared her story with the Club at our Oct. 5 meeting.

Bambo, 14, is spending the 2026-2027 Rotary year in Canada and is attending Grade 10 at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford. Since arriving in August, she has already experienced plenty of Canadian life with her host families, including visits to the Stratford Festival, the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and the St. Marys Quarry.

During her presentation, Bambo took members on a tour of her home country and introduced us to her family, her school and community, and some of the activities that have kept her very busy at home. An enthusiastic student and leader, she has been involved in student government, school organizations, tutoring and community activities. Her interests range from dance, piano and singing to volleyball, swimming, photography, fashion and travel.

Rotary Youth Exchange also has a

special place in Bambo's family. Her mother was a Rotary Exchange student in British Columbia in 1997-1998, and the family still has her Rotary Youth Exchange blazer, identification cards and even her original airline ticket. Seeing the lasting friendships her mother made through Rotary helped inspire Bambo to pursue an exchange of her own.

For Bambo, the year in Canada is an opportunity to experience another culture, become more independent and adaptable, make lifelong friendships and serve as an ambassador for the Philippines.

She also has ambitious plans for the future. After returning home and completing high school, Bambo hopes to attend the University of the Philippines, study accountancy and eventually pursue a career as a CPA lawyer.

Although she has only been in Canada for a couple of months, Bambo has already embraced opportunities to explore her new home, meet people and become involved in school and community life.

We look forward to sharing many more experiences with Bambo during her year in Canada, and to learning just as much from her as she learns from us.

Welcome to St. Marys!



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS)

Rotary Youth Exchange student Lianne Bambo of the Philippines recently gave a presentation about her life back home to the Rotary Club of St. Marys.



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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

Lincs extend win streak to seven games



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Owen Bruining scores his first of three goals during the St. Marys Lincolns' 6-2 win over the Elmira Sugar Kings Oct. 9. Bruining played his first game since Sept. 27 on Oct. 7 against the LaSalle Vipers, a 5-0 win for the Lincolns in which Bruining had a goal.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincolns remain the hottest team in the Western Conference after wins over LaSalle and Elmira pushed the team's unbeaten stretch to seven straight games.

Kobe Nadalin made 22 saves for his first Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL) shutout Oct. 7 in the Lincolns' 5-0 victory over the LaSalle Vipers, with head coach Jeff Bradley noting the team had a positive start to the game but built on it as the game went along.

"We kept with our plan of having a good first period," said Bradley. "At times in the first period, we got lost on the bigger ice a little bit, and our support wasn't quite there, but that was adjusted in the second. There was some disappointment in the room after the first period, but we just went in there and said, 'That's the longest bus trip of the year, we have a 1-0 lead and we badly outshot them, so that was positive.'"

Blake Elzinga opened the scoring for the Lincolns with the only goal of the first 20 minutes, the 40th of his GOHL career. The goal also snapped a four-game goal drought for the Walkerton native, who

also came into LaSalle with just one goal in his previous seven outings.

A great three-way passing play while killing a penalty in the second period involving Luke McMillan, Ryan Hodgkinson and the returning Owen Bruining resulted in Bruining finishing it off for his fourth of the year. It was Bruining's first game since Sept. 27 after the native of Innisfil was out with injury. Defenceman Christopher Mabey also returned from injury against the Vipers.

Callum McAuley snapped a four-game pointless streak with a goal later in the second, while Hodgkinson and Mikey Pope each scored in the third.

The only blemish on the otherwise strong game for the Lincolns was their powerplay, which went scoreless on six tries, including a disastrous powerplay that saw two shorthanded breakaways from LaSalle, one of which ended up being a penalty shot that Nadalin turned aside.

While the powerplay was far below the team's standard, Bradley was thrilled with what his team did at even strength.

"The powerplay is something we struggle with at times against LaSalle with how aggressive they are," Bradley said. "It's difficult to plan when you're play-



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

St. Marys Lincolns' forward Campbell Lehto fights former Lincoln Ryan Cornfield during a heated clash against the Elmira Sugar Kings Oct. 9, which the Lincs won 6-2.

ing against four guys chasing one puck, so it was a little difficult for our guys. Had we spent the entire game five-on-five, it could have been quite a bit more lopsided than it was. There wasn't anything I disliked about our five-on-five play. We managed the puck well and we were physical."

Lincs steamroll Sugar Kings in 6-2 drubbing

Just 48 hours later, the Lincolns took on a struggling Elmira Sugar Kings squad that entered the night with four straight losses.

The Lincolns made it five in convincing fashion.

"Top to bottom, I thought we were fantastic," said Bradley. "That was one of our more complete games this season. We put a lot of stress on our control breakouts, our trap forecheck, our pressure forecheck and all those little details, and we came up with a plan and our guys followed it to a tee. Anything we put in front of them they went out and executed."

"We knew Elmira was reeling a little bit and they'd lost a few in a row, and we wanted to make sure that we were making things a little bit worse and trying to put it in their minds early in the game, and I thought our first period was out-

standing. I thought the physicality could have picked up, and that was the challenge going into the second."

McAuley made it two straight games with a goal, scoring the opener six minutes into the first period, kicking off what the Bradley described as the overage forward's best showing so far this season.

"Callum (McAuley) had his best game of the year. That was one that really stood out to me. Obviously, Owen (Bruining) getting a hat-trick was a big deal, but that's on course with how he has been playing. But it's a different year for Callum. Last year, he came here just to play hockey. This year, he's doing school and he's got a whole bunch of other things he has to deal with," Bradley said.

"On both sides of the puck, he was very good for us. There was a focus on the defensive side and you look at the first goal he scored; that's from him getting in and being good on the forecheck, and that's important for us. I believe it's a staple of how we play. He just cared about both sides of the puck and I thought that was really important for us because he's such a key part of our team."

Ethan Weir finished off some of the best puck movement performed by the

CONTINUED TO PAGE 15

FOR SPORTS TIPS CONTACT SPENCER SEYMOUR
CALL OR TEXT 519.859.1049 OR EMAIL SPENCER.SEYMOUR88@GMAIL.COM

Lincs extend win streak to seven games

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Lincs' powerplay unit quarterbacked by Hodgkinson and Elzinga to make it 2-0 later in the first. The Lincolns ended the opening stanza leading 15-2 in shots.

The Lincolns doubled their lead in the second frame, with goals by Bruining and Camden Kean sending St. Marys into the third up 4-0. Bruining added two more goals, one of which was an empty netter, in the third.

Two goals just a minute and 39 seconds apart by Eli Humphrey and Brendan Gerber for Elmira early in the third had some worrying about a third-period comeback reminiscent of the Stoney Creek Generals coming back from being down 6-0 to make it 6-5, but much better play by the team before and after the Sugar Kings' two goals of the night left the bench boss unfazed.

"I think there was a recognition that it wasn't about our play," said Bradley. "On the penalty kill, there was a breakdown that doesn't typically happen, and then just a bad shift caused a second goal. I didn't think that bled into how we played or reflected how we played prior to that, so it didn't bother me one bit. I knew we'd go out and we'd just continue to play well, and the results would be the results."

The Lincolns held the Sugar Kings to just 21 shots in the game, marking the ninth time in 10 games this season the Lincolns held their opponent under 30 shots. Bradley explained how the team has been executing their defensive structure masterfully to start the year.

"You've got what your defencemen do, what your centre does and what your wingers do, and if they are in sync, then we're not going to get touched. Our defencemen are doing a great job. In even-man situations, we want to make sure we attack and close, and our defencemen are doing a great job at that. We've got great support from our centres, and our wingers are doing a great job with our slot coverage."

Hostilities picked up in the second period with Owen Miniotas being ejected for a check to the head, which continued well into the third, culminating with a fight between former Lincoln Ryan Cornfield and Campbell Lehto with under three minutes left on the clock. Bradley praised his group for sticking up for themselves and one another but emphasized the need to give their penalty kill less work as the Sugar Kings had eight powerplay opportunities.

"It's a fine line between being the aggressors and staying disciplined," Bradley said. "We spent a lot more time on the penalty kill than I would like, but our guys aren't going to back down, and I think that's a really good trait to have when your ambitions are as high as ours. Our guys don't want to get pushed around. They

want to stick up for each other."

From those instances, both Lehto and Miniotas were suspended with Lehto receiving one game, making him eligible to return Oct. 17 against the Komoka Kings, while Miniotas received a two-game ban, meaning he will miss both the game in Komoka and the Lincolns' home game Oct. 16 against the Welland Canadians.

"We're going to be shorthanded, so we're going to have to take care of ourselves this weekend and play smart," said Bradley. "We're certainly going to have to be disciplined this weekend as we're a little short on bodies. I love us fighting back and us being hard to play against, but we want to make sure we're staying out of the box and keeping this five-on-five because we're an incredible five-on-five team."

 STATS AND STANDINGS									
GOHL Western Conference Standings (as of Oct. 13, 2026)									
Team	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	GF	GA	PP	PK
St. Marys Lincolns	9	1	0	0	18	57	24	33.3%	91.3%
St. Thomas Stars	8	1	0	0	16	38	17	16.7%	86.0%
Chatham Maroons	8	2	0	0	16	49	26	27.8%	86.1%
Listowel Cyclones	4	2	3	0	11	42	30	36.8%	83.3%
Stratford Warriors	5	3	0	0	10	30	30	21.1%	70.6%
Elmira Sugar Kings	4	6	1	0	9	37	46	12.5%	85.4%
London Nationals	4	6	1	0	9	38	48	15.7%	76.2%
LaSalle Vipers	4	5	0	0	8	24	40	11.5%	84.2%
Woodstock Navy Vets	4	7	0	0	8	36	49	11.3%	71.4%
Komoka Kings	4	8	0	0	8	36	49	10.9%	75.0%
Strathroy Rockets	3	6	0	1	7	35	46	17.1%	82.5%
Samia Legionnaires	0	7	0	0	0	15	39	15.8%	84.6%

St. Marys Lincolns Player Stats (as of Oct. 13, 2026)					
Player	Pos	GP	G	A	PTS
Ryan Hodgkinson	F	10	6	18	24
Blake Elzinga	F	10	4	13	17
Owen Bruining	F	8	7	7	14
Callum McAuley	F	10	6	7	13
Camden Kean	D	10	4	7	11
Ethan Weir	F	10	4	6	10
Mikey Pope	F	10	3	6	9
Devun Colebrook	F	10	5	3	8
Ronen MacFarlane	D	10	0	8	8
Oliver Lacko	F	9	3	3	6
James MacGregor	D	10	3	3	6
Luke McMillan	D	10	0	6	6
Owen Miniotas	F	4	1	4	5
Jack Taylor	F	5	2	2	4
Cullen Kerslake	D	10	0	3	3
Chase McDougall	F	10	2	0	2
Campbell Lehto	F	6	1	0	0
Christopher Mabey	D	3	0	0	0
Goalies		Record		GAA	SV-%
Brogan Colquhoun		4-1-0-0		2.80	0.891
Kobe Nadalin		5-0-0-0		1.80	0.907

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DCVI junior boys volleyball team earns first win of season

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys Volleyball team scored their first victory of the Huron-Perth season Oct. 8, defeating Listowel in three sets in their home opener.

Head coach Rachel Hendriksen was pleased with the squad's effort.

"It was a pretty good start for our first home game," Hendriksen told the Independent. "I think we were a bit slow to get started, but once we remembered our spots and got some confidence, I think we really played well. That third set, I think, was a good testament to what we can do."

Though the team got off to a bit of a shaky start, Hendriksen saw the group settle into their game midway through the first set, which they ended up winning 25-22.

"I started noticing the improvement about halfway through that first set. That was when we calmed down the nerves. These boys have a lot to learn. It's a brand-new rotation and they are thrown into the season so quickly, so their ability to get that rotation and get confident with the new positions that I've put them in was great."

"I think they just started calming down as a team," continued Hendriksen. "They started talking more. I saw some of our plays work out well. We're getting off on free balls. We're starting to get some hits in. We're closing the block. I think we're doing the things that look like real volleyball."

St. Marys came up a bit short in the second set, dropping it by a score of 25-18, setting up a third and deciding set, during which the Salukis stormed back to take control of the contest and win 25-16, giving them their first win of the year.

According to Hendriksen, the win provides the young team a jolt of confidence to carry through the rest of the season.

"It shows them what they're capable of. Now, they



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left is Jake Carpenter leaping up to hit the ball back over the net during the St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys Volleyball team's Oct. 8 victory over Listowel. On the right, Bryce Blight kneels to bump the ball up into the air.

know they can win, they can be one of the top teams and they can play together as a team. We put all these guys together and they've only been in school for a month, and all of a sudden now they're playing like a team and

moving on the court as one. They've got each other's backs out there, and they're calling help, and they're actually working together, so I think they know now they have it in them, which is going to help us all season."

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DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team wins pair of home games

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team picked up back-to-back straight-set victories over Listowel and Central Huron Oct. 8.

In their first match of the day against a less experienced squad from Listowel, the Salukis cruised to 25-11 and 25-5 wins in two straight sets to win their first game of the day.

Against a more competitive Central Huron squad in their second game of the day, St. Marys won the opening set 25-17 despite a slightly sluggish start. Head coach Steve Chateauvert told the Independent he saw great improvement in the team's play after the first set.

"The first set was maybe a bit closer than it should have been," Chateauvert said. "But, in the second set, I thought they cleaned up a lot of their unforced errors, hitting the ball a little bit better, passing the ball a little bit better and just being a little bit more into it, so that was nice to see."

According to Chateauvert, they played with more focus in the second set, which the Salukis won 25-11.

"Right about the beginning of the second set, they looked better," said Chateauvert. "I spoke to them after the first set and just told them that we can do a lot better than what we saw and how they did in the first set, and they responded, which was good to see. It waned a little bit in the third, but we tried a little bit of a different line-up, and I wasn't too disappointed with that."

With the two wins improving DCVI's record to 3-1 to start the season, tying them for third in the Huron-Perth standings as of the Independent's press time, Chateauvert stated playing more consistently can further cement the Salukis as a top contender.

"They are already a competitive team in our Hu-



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left is Donovan McGregor setting the ball during one of the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team's two wins Oct. 8. On the right, Peyton Wynands steps into a serve for the Salukis.

ron-Perth league, and I think we just need to develop more consistency all-around, top to bottom, from serving, passing and attacking the ball," Chateauvert said.

"We just need to be more consistent and we'll hold our own for sure, and that just comes down to practice, practice, practice."

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DCVI field hockey team defeats SDSS for second time



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)

Amelia Weber, left, and McKenna Ross, right, each fired home goals during the St. Marys DCVI field hockey team's 2-0 win over Stratford District Secondary Oct. 5.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI field hockey team earned their second victory of the season over Stratford District Secondary (SDSS) Oct. 5, downing the visiting Golden Bears 2-0.

Coach Bob Ellison told the Independent he was thrilled with every facet of the team's play.

"Individual players have improved their play in terms of both their skills and their positional play," said Ellison. "On top of that, the team is improving their understanding of the dynamics of support on the field in both defensive and attack-

ing situations. What more could a coach ask for? Ultimately, those things result in a growing confidence in themselves and in their teammates, and that is why we won."

Amelia Weber opened the scoring for the Salukis with a low-post goal set up by a sharp pass from Tealya Thistle. Just a few minutes later, McKenna Ross fired home a goal of her own to give DCVI the 2-0 lead, the eventual final score.

In addition to great games from the team's leaders, Thistle and Cora Weber, Ellison highlighted several other strong individual performances in a field of strong efforts from the Salukis.

"Defensively, our goalkeeper, Nikki

Wilson, was unflappable, and our chasers, Luci Hodgins and Lily Hollestelle-Black, shut down attacks before they could begin," Ellison said. "Offensively, Amelia Weber was everywhere she needed to be, and McKenna Ross played with a focus and determination that resulted in a goal for her against Stratford."

The win marked the second time this season the Salukis have defeated the rivals from the bigger school in Stratford, which Ellison said came down to the strong will of DCVI's girls.

"As the saying goes, it's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog that counts," said Ellison. "This is true, both literally and figurative-

ly in this case. For Lori Black, my partner in coaching, and I, the win is certainly a wonderful reward for their hard work and dedication. For the team, yes, it builds confidence in themselves, in each other and in the program."

Ellison added he saw the team show even higher levels of resilience and mental fortitude.

"All season long, we've slowly been developing our ability to get to the ball first, making passes with purpose and chasing down attackers," Ellison said. "These don't require skill so much as mental toughness. This was a game in which they showed just how tough they could be."

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St. Marys bowlers compete at zone qualifiers



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Local Youth Bowl Canada (YBC) bantam, junior, and senior bowlers competed in a five-game scratch tournament Oct. 11 at the St. Marys Bowling Lanes to see who would be going to the zone competition Nov. 15. The winners of the bantam competition were Brendan King and Athena Boyd, pictured on the left from left to right. Leia Slaney and James Van de Gevel, pictured in the middle, will represent the junior bowlers at the zone competition. In the senior division, Landon Ball and Natalie McKeen, pictured on the right, along with Nathan McKeen qualified for the zone competition.

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McKeen places fifth at Teen Tour #1



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

St. Marys YBC bowler Nathan McKeen, pictured, placed fifth out of 41 bowlers at Teen Tour #1 Oct. 10-11. McKeen's points over average was 173 over 10 games. McKeen also won bur-sary money for his excellent performance.

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(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Layton St. Louis makes a save during the Downie Optimist Club U9 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Callum Palmer blasts a shot from the point during this past Monday's Core Fuels U11 A Boys St. Marys Rock game



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)
Leo Furtney puts home a goal during the McKinley Hatchery U13 A Boys St. Marys Rock game last Wednesday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Maverick Akins rockets the puck up the ice during this past Sunday's McKinley Hatchery U13 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Chelsea Clark passes the puck through centre ice during the No Snow U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)
Mira Broughton releases a long-range shot during last Wednesday's U18 C Girls St. Marys Rock game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: Confessions of a Halloween skeptic



How the author learned to embrace the bright side of Halloween while leaving the scary stuff behind.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

I realize this might be a hot take, but Halloween has never really clicked for me. That said, I completely get the charm. It's wonderful to see kids trick-or-treating, adults having fun in costumes and the whole town getting creative with decorations.

But part of me struggles to find fun in it because in my homeland, real horror is not a seasonal theme – it has been a daily reality for over four years of war. When real houses are destroyed and real lives are in danger, it's hard for me to view depictions of fear, ghosts, or grim decor as harmless fun. What feels like a play-

ful scare to others hits too close to a very painful reality for me.

I don't say this to make anyone feel guilty. Canadians deserve their moments of joy and celebration. I'm simply sharing how a different life experience changes your perspective on things that used to seem simple and innocent.

That said, I really appreciate how St. Marys handles daytime celebrations, like the annual Trick-or-Treat downtown for young kids. It is so heartwarming to see whole families dressing up in matching themes. This wholesome, bright side of Halloween is something I can genuinely enjoy.

What's harder for me is taking older kids trick-or-treating after dark, when it's

usually cold and rainy. First of all, nobody can see your costume under a heavy coat and umbrella. It is also probably the first holiday where, as a parent, you are expected to buy a full costume for your kids just for a couple of hours in the dark. Second, kids end up with way too much sugar. Though I will say I really admire how many local families donate most of their candy to charity.

During our first few years in Canada, my son, Alex, was begging me to decorate our house and front yard. We bought a few small things because I understood how much he wanted to fit into our new home and embrace local traditions.

But every time I came home and saw those decorations, it made me feel almost depressed. It felt like doing something just because everyone else was doing it, even though I didn't feel comfortable with it inside.

Eventually, Alex and I had a nice, hon-

est talk. I explained my feelings to him – how a big part of my discomfort came from war trauma back in Ukraine. He understood completely, and we made a deal: he gets to have all the fun with his friends, and I have his full permission not to worry about any Halloween decorations.

Maybe part of the reason is also simple: I didn't grow up with this tradition. For most Canadians, Halloween comes with fond childhood memories. But when you experience it for the first time as an adult, it's hard to feel that same automatic connection. Back in Ukraine, I didn't even know there was a difference between pumpkins grown specifically for carving and sweet ones meant for baking or soups!

What I do enjoy, though, is carving pumpkins. I am a bit sad I didn't have this tradition in my childhood, but turning a simple pumpkin into something bright and cozy brings me real joy now.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Join Megan Feeney (Branch Manager of Meridian Bank in St. Marys) for an informative conversation about growing your savings, planning your future, and creating effective budgets with "Financial 101," a free program held upstairs at the Library on October 22 from 6-8 p.m. This session is perfect for those interested in learning how to maximize their money in smart and stable ways. Register here: tinyurl.com/Financial-101-at-SMPL

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HISTORIC ST. MARYS: British home children

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

On Saturday October 17, 2026, at 2 p.m., the St. Marys Museum will host a special presentation in its Speaker Series at the Community Centre, 317 James Street South. Lori Oschefski, president of Home Children Canada, will tell some of the stories of the 100,000 children of all ages who, between 1869 and 1948, were brought from the United Kingdom to Canada. While some of these children were placed in kind, supportive homes, the majority became labourers on Canadian farms and domestics in Canadian households where many suffered abuse and neglect. Ms. Oschefski's organization, Home Children Canada, is a registered charity established in 2012, "dedicated to elevating the profile of the Home Children and preserving their memory." Its website explains its purpose: "By honoring their memory, the charity seeks to ensure that the Home Children's contributions and struggles are never forgotten and that their rightful place in history is acknowledged with dignity and compassion."

Although most of the presentations in the Speaker Series are held in the Museum's reference room, response to this presentation has been so enthusiastic that it has been moved to the much larger venue. There are still spaces available on Saturday afternoon for those who want to learn more about Home Children. As well as attending Ms. Oschefski's presentation, it is worthwhile to pay a visit to the complementary exhibit at the St. Marys Museum, "Far From Home." Created by Curator Emily Taylor, Curatorial Assistant Abigail Parsons, and volunteer researcher extraordinaire, Katharine Papoff, the exhibit explains that a surprising number of British Home Children eventually found new homes in the St. Marys area.

Why were these children sent to Canada from Britain? The exhibit's first section explains that economic and social conditions in the mid-1800s following the Industrial Revolution brought many poor British families in over-populated cities to the brink. If they couldn't find work, desperate parents might surrender their children to a Children's Home. Run by various benevolent societies, these Homes provided shelter, food, basic schooling and work skills training. But as the number of these impoverished children continued to rise, the Homes were overflowing. English social reformer, Maria Susan Rye, believed she had the solution: removing these children from poorhouses in London and Liverpool and bringing them to Canada. In 1869, she travelled with the first group of British Home Children across the Atlantic,



(PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY SMITH WITH PERMISSION OF THE ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

A glimpse of the Home Child exhibit at the St. Marys Museum.

followed in the same year, by another group travelling with Annie Macpherson. These two philanthropists set up reception centres to receive these children in several different locations, including one at 51 Avon Street, Stratford. There the children were given some training to prepare them for life in Canada before they were sent to their placements.

The work of these two women was followed by similar child migration initiatives by other charitable organizations – Dr. Barnardo's was the most famous – bringing thousands of these young immigrants to Canada. The governments of Great Britain and Canada were enthusiastic about these schemes. The problem children were removed from Britain and Canada received a source of cheap labour, apparently a win-win situation. But, as the Museum exhibit explains, the experience for the boys and girls was not always a happy one. While some children were accepted as part of their new families, many others were over-worked, underfed, and badly mistreated. "The experience of the Home Children varied but the most common story is that of a childhood lost to indentured servitude."

A fascinating part of the Museum's Home Child exhibit is a large binder, containing brief histories of the British Home Children who were sent to placements in St. Marys and area. There are stories of more than 100 children – some whose descendants are still part of this community today. When the Museum

announced its intention of creating the exhibit several months ago, the staff were delighted with the response. People were eager to contribute information about their British Home Child ancestors. Many of the stories in the binder have been augmented by family photographs and personal anecdotes. These stories are the heart of the exhibit.

One example is Charles Lewis, born in Clapham, Surrey, England, on December 29, 1878, the second of Charles Henry and Emily Amelia Lewis's three sons. His mother, Emily, died in 1884. The little boys' father could not manage to care for them, and they were admitted into Children's Homes. Charles was just 11 years old when, under the auspices of the Annie Macpherson organization, he was chosen to be sent to Canada. He sailed from Liverpool on March 14, 1889, with a large party of children on the Allen Line Steamer, RMS Parisian, arriving in Halifax ten days later. From there, the children went to receiving centres – in Charles's case, the Annie Macpherson Home in Stratford.

Charles Lewis was sent to the David Bonis farm in the Thames Concession, southwest of St. Marys. It was not a good experience. The treatment was harsh, the work heavy and the way of life on an Ontario farm completely different from what the little Londoner was used to. After his period of indenture, Charles left the farm and found other work in the town of St. Marys. By the 1901 census,

Charles, now 22 years of age, was living in a boarding house and working as a blacksmith. In 1904, he married Agnes Lucas, the youngest in a large family. The young couple eventually took over the Lucas family home on Salina Street. They had two children, Charles and Erma.

Throughout the years, Charles held several different jobs to support his family. As well as a blacksmith, he worked as a baker, a machinist at Maxwell's and at the St. Marys Milling Company. As he grew older and his health required lighter employment, he was a messenger and custodian for the Bank of Montreal. The Lewis family attended the Presbyterian Church where Charles was an elder and a much-loved Sunday School teacher. He had a wonderful singing voice and was a great addition to the church choir. When he died, age 72, on March 3, 1951, the names of church members and of many other friends in the community filled two books of condolences.

Rachel Tyler, born in April 1898 in West London, England, was also placed on the Bonis farm. Like Charles Lewis, she came from an impoverished family that could not provide for her adequately. She was placed in a Children's Home at the age of six and, as a British Home Child, was sent to Canada when she was 12. She sailed from Liverpool on May 5, 1910, on the Tunisian, another Allan Line Royal Mail Steamer, and disembarked at Quebec City on May 15. She came to the Bonis farm as domestic help for the two unmarried Bonis sisters, Mary and Annie, who managed the farm household.

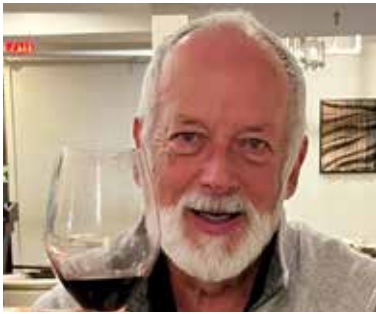
Unlike Charles Lewis, Rachel had a happy placement in the Bonis household. Mary and Annie were fond of her and concerned for her well-being. In April 1929, she married Samuel Bennett who was also employed by the Bonis family. The couple had one child, Arthur, born in 1933. The Bonis sisters continued to be very supportive of Rachel and their support was returned. When the older sister, Mary, died in 1943, Annie was left alone. She lived in the hilltop farmhouse in the Thames Concession. The Bennetts lived with her and, as she grew older, they cared for her. Annie died, age 91, in 1957. While her prosperous brothers are buried in Sections L and C, the oldest parts of the St. Marys Cemetery, Mary and Annie Bonis are buried in Section M in the same plot as their friends, Rachel, Samuel and Arthur Bennett.

Spaces are available for the British Home Child presentation this Saturday afternoon at the Community Centre. Pre-registration is encouraged. Contact the St. Marys Museum 519-284-3556 for more information.

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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Time-travelling in Tarragona



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

"In Tarragona, you can't move soil or you will find Roman remains." If I thought this was an exaggeration by our guide, I soon realized I was wrong. This Spanish city is absolutely chock-a-block with 2,000-year-old evidence of Roman civilization.

If you are anything like me – and I sincerely hope you do not bear such a curse – you find ancient ruins to be absolutely fascinating. I think it's because we live in a land that, from the perspective of architectural ruins, is a "new world." A building 200 years old in Canada is astonishing; it's a recent renovation in Spain.

But still, walking around a city where large bits of Roman buildings still stand next door to modern shops and homes is an amazing experience. And it doesn't come much more amazing than in Tarragona, this city on the Mediterranean coast an hour and a bit from Barcelona.

Like many – probably most – European cities, Tarragona has a history going back before accurate records. The Phoenicians were probably here in the seventh century B.C. The Romans

were certainly here from the first century B.C. until the fall of the Roman Empire in the mid-fifth century. Roman Catholic popes were here – or at least, a would-be pope, crowned as such at the time of the "Great Schism" when there were actually three popes claiming the title – one in Rome, one in Avignon and one in Tarragona.

Supporters of one of the other popes attempted to limit the field by poisoning the Tarragona prelate, but he survived and lived to be over 90.

The so-called pope was not the only public figure to claim heavenly status in Tarragona. Centuries earlier, the Roman Emperor Octavius Caesar chose this site for his declaration of personal divinity.

We were in Tarragona as guests of Viking on a terrific Mediterranean Cruise, and I found the visit to Tarragona to be one of the most interesting excursions on the voyage that took us from Rome to Barcelona.

Today, Tarragona is a city in the region of Catalonia, home to seven million inhabitants and still a very busy fishing port. Our guide told us that Tarragona fishers are responsible for half of all the fishing in Catalonia.

But frankly, while the modern city is interesting, it was all of the evidence of Roman life here that grabbed my attention. I'm not alone in this perspective; Tarragona's ruins are so important that they have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Roman evidence continues to have so much impact on

the city that the entire central city plan continues to follow what our guide called "the Roman urbanistic plan." Even the impressive Roman Catholic Cathedral, built starting in the 14th century, sits squarely on the site of a Roman temple.

And right in the heart of the city is an amazingly well-preserved Roman circus – a first-century chariot-racing arena.

The circus, once the site of two-horse chariot and four-horse chariot races, is one of the best preserved of such treasures in the world. We visited part of the track and, perhaps even more interesting, saw extensive spectator seating facilities sitting directly below much more modern houses.

Through the city centre, you will find large section of still-standing walls, begging for both historical research and selfie moments. We did both.

Equally impressive is the Roman Amphitheatre, sitting near the seashore and still a splendid sight from the roadside high above the theatre.

While Tarragona is filled with large, significant Roman ruins, there are also less obvious bits of evidence of that crucial period in western civilization. The walls of houses and shops have bits and pieces of Roman buildings in them, re-used as construction materials.

In fact, our guide told us one of the biggest problems facing today's heritage conservators is that the amphitheatre, the circus, the walls and other Roman buildings were used as quarries for readily available construc-



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Roman chariot races once took place in the heart of Tarragona and, today, much of the "circus," the site of those competitions, still stands.

tion materials in more recent centuries. This practice is entirely illegal today, of course.

We visited a lot of historical Roman sites during our time in Tarragona but still managed only to see about half of the significant ruins. Also found in and around the city are a Pretorium tower, two fora (provincial and colonial government meeting places), a necropolis (burial place), the palace of Augustus, and several other towers, arches and roadways. Rome certainly left its mark on this Spanish city.

There are plenty of legends around Tarragona, as well. One suggests the city's origins date back more than 2,000 years B.C. Another says St. Paul came to

Tarragona, and thus, "Tarragona became the gate of Christianity," to quote our guide.

What is known for sure is that Caesar Augustus, who reigned over the burgeoning Empire from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D., spent his winters in Tarragona, thus establishing a tourism tradition that continues to this day. The emperor enjoyed his visits to the place; so will modern-day travelers looking to get up close and personal with ancient history.

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



The remarkable site of 2,000-year-old spectator seating areas directly adjacent to modern-day homes.



The Tarragona amphitheatre sits near the Mediterranean seashore.



Remnants of a Roman wall.

FROM THE GARDEN: We are not done with planting just yet



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist

With Autumn comes a flurry of emotions for gardeners. It is a complex, bittersweet transition every gardener faces as the season shifts. There is a natural sadness as we witness summer's passing of vibrant blooms and lush greenery fade away with the first major frost. At the same

time with gardeners who grow vegetables, there is a profound sense of achievement as we harvest the final fruits, squash, and root vegetables. And for some gardeners, the harvest of special blooms to save their seeds for planting next spring.

As perennial plants prepare for dormancy, the roots remain active beneath the surface, exploring surrounding soil and gathering in nutrients. Even when daytime temperatures become cool, the soil continues to hold the sun's warmth. That residual heat creates ideal conditions for root growth. In fact, roots can continue growing until the soil becomes very cold or freezes.

Autumn is the perfect time to plant and is not limited to just spring bulbs. Without the

demands of producing leaves, flowers or fruit, newly planted trees and shrubs direct much of their energy into developing strong root systems. These roots anchor the plant securely and prepare it to draw water and nutrients efficiently. Many horticulturists consider this root establishment period a great advantage of fall planting as roots continue to grow for weeks after their top growth above the surface has stopped.

Fall planting of trees and shrubs goes beyond that, as many garden centres and nurseries are featuring plant sales and clearing out their stock of perennials. This is the perfect time to take advantage of these sales.

As these new plants spend the autumn establishing their roots,

fall-planted specimens begin spring with a significant head start. Perennials planted in the spring divide their energy between creating new roots and producing top growth. But planted in the fall, these plants have established their root system and, in the spring, immediately focus on producing leaves, flowers and vigorous growth. This time of the year is also perfect for dividing some of your perennials such as peonies and irises. Most often, fall-planted specimens result in stronger, healthier plants that are better able to withstand summer and dry conditions. Autumn's gentle rains often do the watering for us, providing ideal conditions for the roots to settle and spread. The consistent moisture helps keep newly planted

roots hydrated in order to grow.

There are the seeds of a few hardy annuals that can be directly sown in our gardens. Seeds of larkspur, sweet peas and poppies, to name a few, need the cold to germinate in the spring. Sown in the late fall, often in November just as the ground is freezing, these seeds will lie dormant throughout the winter and as the soil warms will germinate in early spring.

As autumn leaves drift to the ground, our gardens appear to be settling in for the winter. But don't be fooled. Beneath the soil surface, roots are quietly growing, anchoring themselves for the seasons ahead. Perhaps that is why October is one of nature's finest planting times.

UNDERSTANDING GEN Z: Train tracks



MEREDITH A. STOKES

Independent Columnist

There's nothing better than being a metal mouth. Of course, I mean that with the highest level of sarcasm achievable by a human being.

In the past, braces were one of the worst things that could happen to a teenager's reputation. They were ugly, annoying

and made you look like an idiot. That much hasn't changed, yet the experience of getting them certainly has.

I don't know exactly when it happened, but in the last few decades, braces became an accessory that most people ended up with, rather than a minority. This probably had something to do with how we're suddenly obsessed with how we look, but I'll stay out of that for now. The point is that now, if you put 10 kids between the ages of 12 and 18 in a room, I bet at least eight of them have braces, and another one has had them at some point.

This matters. Not just for your wallets – we all know braces aren't exactly an impulse buy – but for us. It's so much easier to accept three years hooked up with

wire when everyone else is suffering too, and only the worst of hypocrites are going to make fun of you for being a metal mouth when they're no different.

It's funny how society works; braces are the very same yet, because more people wear them, the stigma disappears. Think about that.

Because of these things, getting braces has become much less scary an ordeal. It can be spoken openly and you can ask your peers for advice. Here was my experience, just this spring.

I found out around the new year that I would be getting an expander for six months, braces for two years and separators to go in two weeks before the other hardware. We booked my appointment for March Break, and

so the countdown began.

There were at least two people I knew that had the exact same treatment as me. Several more had no expander but still offered advice about the braces experience in general. They were honest, as I will be with you; for the first two weeks, it sucks. You're starving all the time because you can't eat much of real sustenance, and it's just plain annoying. However, because I was told this ahead of time, I knew the two most valuable pieces of orthodontics wisdom you can get before the dreaded day.

Buy applesauce.

Make mashed potatoes.

It was because of these things that I survived my first week with braces. It's honestly true that you don't even notice them after

about a month. Having braces is less of a curse and more, as my father puts it, like "entering an exclusive club" and unlocking a whole new area of drama and small talk. Perhaps, like I did, you'll find yourself passing on the wisdom you received to someone else getting braces less than a month later. I like to think my experience helped them.

So, to anybody out there who's dreading the trip to the orthodontist, it's not so bad. In this day and age, it's probably more normal to do that than get a cavity filled. There are so many others out there just like you, willing to lend a hand if you're willing to lend an ear. Besides, once you tough it out, you'll have a beautiful smile to show for it.

I just hope you own a blender.



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Riddles

- What has four legs and a back but can't walk?
A chair!
- I'm a mammal with a long trunk. What am I?
An elephant!
- What is black and white and read all over?
A newspaper!
- I'm tall when I'm young, and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?
A candle!
- I can sizzle like bacon, I am made with an egg, and I have plenty of backbone but lack a good leg. What am I?
A snake!
- I fly without wings, I cry without eyes. Whenever I go, darkness flies. What am I?
A cloud!
- I have stripes, but I'm not a barber. I run fast, but I'm not a car. What am I?
A zebra!
- I am an odd number. Take away a letter, and I become even. What number am I?
Seven (remove the 's')!
- I can live in water or on land. I have a shell, but I am not a car; I move very slowly, but I carry my home on my back. What am I?
A turtle!

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KITCHENER-WATERLOO OKTOBERFEST

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Y Y U M X I N H S Z N B H E E R O X J D P F J S C N T Z
S P H L N E I S T A W V N Q Z E S B P I E V X H K H Y T
O D Q V B V C Y I P W X E P C Y J Z X W N E D A R A P Z
W F V S L W D S S Z K E N A T S O R E T L A W D K H Y F
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K F H S P P Y W P B P M Y C E U U N U E X U J A V Y M V
P U W N I M R Z N C A E E Z D N Y O N T O Y G W N M Q Y
R P J Z T D D Z I T C V F N S E I L A I Z O D Z W H E Z
G E J H C F X K E O G A A G F Q Q A X V H C B I N P H O
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T W Z B E I U Q L P J W U S R W Y F Y U U V E D I Z N Z
S N S F D X M N S O O U I K Z I G G Y Z A G G E S V E R
I J L M F K E G T A P P I N G C O L D B E E R W Z Y Z D
R P G U V B S O U P C T B I I V O Y C J Z R D F S U S P

- Ziggy zagge
Keg tapping
Cold beer
Accordian music
Ein prosit
Bavarian food
Polka
Wunderwagon
Entertainers
Parade
Onkel Hans food drive
Silent auction
Damenfest
Gemutlichkeit
Walter Ostanek



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Hunter Hodgson (8)

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



Colder weather doesn't mean your pet's exercise routine has to stop! Regular walks, indoor play, and enrichment activities help keep pets healthy, happy, and mentally stimulated.
Bundle up, get moving, and enjoy the season together!



TOFU

Our pet of the week is Tofu. Tofu is a three-year-old St. Bernard that was rescued by new parents, Neil and Elaine Primeau. Tofu loves car rides, likes to bark alot but is very gentle and just wants lots of pets.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent

German agri-tour group stops in Thorndale

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Beginning Sept. 24, two busloads of agriculture-focused seniors from Germany, mostly women along with a few men, were on an 11-day agri-tour through rural communities and farms in Quebec and Ontario.

On Friday, Oct. 2, one bus stopped at Brown's United Church, northeast of Thorndale, while the other visited Thorndale United Church for a mid-day Canadian meal of ham, scalloped potatoes, salads and homemade fruit pie. Carol Miller of Brown's Women's Institute said the church could not accommodate both buses, so they asked the women of Thorndale United Church to host and feed the second group.

The women in this agri-tour are members of the Landfrauenverein in Wesel, a city in western

Germany. This group of women has strong ties to agriculture as they farm themselves or belong to families that operate livestock or cash-crop farms. The Landfrauenverein is comparable to the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario and serves as a cornerstone of community building, education and advocacy for rural women in Germany.

"We had such a good time, everyone was so welcoming," tour guide and interpreter Ursula Barda said. "Many of the men had two pieces of pie and enjoyed having it served with ice cream. It is not how we eat pie or cake in Germany."

"It was fun and a difference experience talking to them through a translator," said Yvonne Elliott from the Thorndale United Church Women. "We could tell they enjoyed themselves with the amount of chatter and laughter during their stay with us. They were such a great group."



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

An agri-tour group from Germany gathered around the Thorndale United Church sign before they filed into the church for their lunch during their time in Thorndale.

Canada Rocket Company hosts public meetings in Thorndale

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Recently, the Canada Rocket Company held an official ribbon cutting for the Jeremy Hansen Test Facility at the southwest corner of Nissouri Road and Evelyn Drive, southwest of Thorndale.

To inform local residents about what they plan to do at this site, they have

scheduled two public meetings, one on Oct. 15th from 4-5 p.m. and one on Nov. 23 6-7 p.m. at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre.

At these meetings there will be a short presentation followed by an open-house format where people can view the display boards covering noise and vibration, including measures they are designing; testing frequency and hours with advance no-

tice to neighbours before testing; impact to the air, water and nearby farmland as well as what will be stored on site and how spills and water will be managed; and updates on federal and airport approvals and where they are in that process.

Many people from the community will also be interested in why the company chose this site and why they chose London International Airport. Members from

the Canada Rocket Company leadership team will be on hand to answer questions. Comment cards will be available and the company representatives will follow up on questions they can't answer on the spot.

Anyone who is unable to attend these meetings can reach out to Carrie Barr, director of external affairs and partnerships, at carrie@canadarocketcompany.com for more information.

MacEwen Petroleum & Quickie Store donates to Thorndale Lions Club



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Carl Janzen, chief sales officer for MacEwen Petroleum, pictured in the back row with members of the Thorndale Lions Club, and Sangeeta Batra, territory manager for Quickie Convenience Stores, pictured in front, presented the Thorndale Lions with a donation of \$5,000 at the grand opening of the gas station and store on Saturday, Oct. 3.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

At the official grand opening of the MacEwen gas station in Thorndale on Saturday, Oct. 3, Carl Janzen, chief sales officer for MacEwen Petroleum, and Sangeeta Batra, territory manager for Quickie Convenience Stores, presented a cheque for \$5,000 to the Thorndale Lions Club.

As a major part of MacEwen Petroleum marketing and identity, the company actively funds local community

programs, youth initiatives and regional food banks to maintain good visibility as an active part of their local, small-town communities.

Thorndale Lions member Ray Chowen remarked the MacEwen gas station and Quickie store is a bright and beautiful addition to the growing community of Thorndale.

"We greatly appreciate this donation to the Thorndale Lions and this will be used in community projects that we have on the go," he said.

Thorndale Agricultural Society
Dinner Theatre presents

RUN FOR YOUR WIFE

A Comedy by Ray Cooney

Auditions
October 15, 2026, 7 p.m.
October 20, 2026, 7 p.m.
St. Georges Church, Thorndale

Have you acted or always want to try the stage?
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Come on out to auditions, we are seeking eight cast members this year of various ages and genders to fill this comedic play, written by Ray Cooney.

PLAY DATES
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OBITUARY

Wall



It is with great sadness that we are announcing the sudden passing of Thomas Keith Wall of St Marys, on Wednesday, September 23rd.

Tom will be deeply missed by his best friend and soulmate Linda (Hamel) for 61 years. Loving father of Lynn del Alderson (Rob); Sherry Shepley (Ralph)

and Tom Wall (Dawn). He leaves behind 14 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren as well as many nieces and nephews.

Tom wore many hats during his career: carney, ranch hand, Calgary stampede, truck driver etc. He ran his own fabricating business and drove school bus in the Lakeside area while his children were younger. After that, he became a Millwright at St Marys Cement until he retired 19 years later. Not one to sit around, he decided to buy and run the St Marys Central Cab Company which he ran for another 20 years.

Tom was also known for his great love for all animals. He was a registered breeder of Bichon Frise for many years. He really missed his dogs.

He loved to take drives, shop in every surplus store, take many pictures and travel whenever he could. But then after life made Tom slow down, he took up woodworking. He said that he never would draw up plans, instead he would build from the vision in his head. Most times, there were imperfections in his work, but that is what made everything he did perfect in our eyes.

Cremation has already taken place. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Stratford Humane Society.

OBITUARY

Mishchenko



Mishchenko, Anatoly "Tony" - Born May 1, 1939, met his Saviour face to face on October 7, 2026. Loved by his wife Maria "Mary" for 62 years. Father and Pop to Mark, Kathy Lambkin (Jeff), Danny (Nicole); Grandfather to Mikhayla and Daniel (Kristen), Jack (Christina) and Annie, Sam (Hilary), Isaac

(Mercedez), Grace (Ryan), Caleb, Domonique, Callie, John, Teagan, Mercy and Katrina; and Great-grandfather to Nina, Addy and Anna, and Jasper. Son of Anton and Anna, and brother to Valentine (deceased) and Ivan.

Tony was a lover of life, nature, art, hunting, fishing, and family – who will miss him dearly.

Enough can't be said about the care and love provided by Kingsway Lodge over the last few years. His family will be forever grateful.

Tony's life was celebrated at Northview Funeral Home and Cremation Centre, London on Tuesday, October 13, 2026. The interment was held at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, London.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Kingsway Life Care (through Kingsway Lodge in St. Marys) or to the Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners would be greatly appreciated by the family.

For online condolences or donations, please visit www.northviewfuneralchapel.com

OBITUARY

DeWys



Peacefully, at Stratford General Hospital on October 3, 2026, Adrianus Johannes "Joe" DeWys passed away.

Born in Hilvarenbeek, Netherlands, Joe immigrated to Canada with his family at a young age. Beloved husband of Audrey DeWys and cherished father of Joe (Donna) DeWys

and Rosanne DeWys. Proud grandfather of Mark, Kelsey (Alec Rodak), and Katie-Mae.

Joe will be lovingly remembered by his brothers John DeWys of New Zealand, George (Sandra) DeWys, and John (Sharon) DeWys; his brothers-in-law Henry Sterkenburg, Charlie Cardiff and Murray Cardiff and his sisters-in-law Corry DeWys, Dianne DeWys, Agnes (Gord) Brindley and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his parents, George and Marie (Nouwens) DeWys; Johanna DeWys his siblings Anne Eenkoren, Harry DeWys, Mary Sterkenburg, and Peter DeWys; his brothers-in-law Duke Eenkoren, Ken Cardiff, George Cardiff, Tom Cardiff and Donald Cardiff; and his sisters-in-law Rita DeWys, Mary Cardiff and Georgia Reynolds (Cardiff).

Joe had a lifelong passion for farming and trucking livestock. He took great pride in working with his livestock. In his later years, he found happiness in the simple pleasures of farm life, tending to a few animals, watching the birds, and enjoying the outdoors.

He also treasured time spent with family and friends, especially around the card table, where laughter, stories, and friendly competition created many lasting memories.

A private family service will be held.

As expressions of sympathy, donations in Joe's memory may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation through W. G. Young Funeral Home www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

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White

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RICHARD (DICK) WHITE

February 8, 1948 - September 29, 2023

and

a dear son and brother,

DAVID WHITE (WHITEY)

June 25, 1986 - October 19, 2013

Together in life, and together in memory
Though the silence is heavy, your love still
echoes in our lives.

May you walk hand-in-hand in the light,
Never to be forgotten.

Loving you always, missing you forever

Your loving family

IN MEMORIAM

Sterkenburg

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

Four years have passed,
but your love still surrounds us.
Wife, mother, and our precious Omie.
Forever loved, forever missed.

Love always,

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

THANK YOU

Quinn

A sincere Thank You to our family and friends for the awesome party celebrating Janet's 90th Birthday and our 70th Wedding Anniversary on Oct 3rd. We are so grateful for your generous contributions of food and money to the Food Bank.

George and Janet Quinn

IN MEMORIAM

White

**In loving memory of our nephew and cousin
David White who passed away Oct. 19, 2013.**

How do we write on paper,
The feeling we have inside
Of emptiness and heartache,
We have felt since you have died.
To us you were so special,
What more is there to say
Except to wish with all our hearts
That you were here today.
Our thoughts are always with you,
Your place no one can fill
In life we loved you dearly
In death we love you still.

**Fondly remembered and forever loved
The Hughes Family**

HELP WANTED



**St. Marys and Area
MOBILITY SERVICE**

We're Growing Again

Accessible Transportation Driver

Part-time / Casual position

ROLE OVERVIEW

St. Marys & Area Mobility Service is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing accessible and volunteer, door-to-door transportation for residents in our community. We support older adults (55+) and persons with varying abilities (18+), helping them maintain independence and stay connected.

POSITION SUMMARY

We are seeking a caring, reliable, and safety-focused Accessible Transportation Driver to join our team. In this role, you will operate agency-owned accessible vehicles, ensuring clients are transported safely and comfortably to their destinations. This position is physically active and requires assisting clients with boarding, securing mobility devices, and operating vehicle accessibility equipment.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide courteous, door-to-door transportation for clients using agency vehicles
- Assist passengers with boarding, exiting, and securing mobility aids safely
- Operate lift and ramp systems according to established safety procedures
- Maintain accurate trip and client records using a mobile app
- Perform routine vehicle safety checks and report any maintenance concerns
- Represent St. Marys & Area Mobility Service with professionalism and compassion

QUALIFICATIONS

Education & Experience

- Secondary school diploma or equivalent
- Minimum 3 years of professional driving experience
- Experience working with older adults, seniors, or persons with disabilities is an asset
- Strong customer service background preferred

Skills & Requirements

- Valid G and F driver's licence (or equivalent) with a clean driving record
- Current First Aid and CPR certification (or willingness to obtain)
- Comfortable using mobile devices and transportation software
- Able to work flexible shifts, including split shifts, weekdays, and some evenings
- Physically able to lift, bend, and crouch as part of assisting clients
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a team setting
- Willingness to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as required

Compensation

- Hourly wage: \$20.84, commensurate with experience and qualifications
- Supportive team environment with meaningful community impact

HOW TO APPLY

If you are a compassionate driver who enjoys helping others and making a difference, we'd love to hear from you! Please submit your cover letter and resume to apply. We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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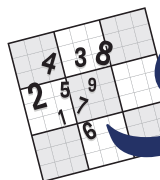
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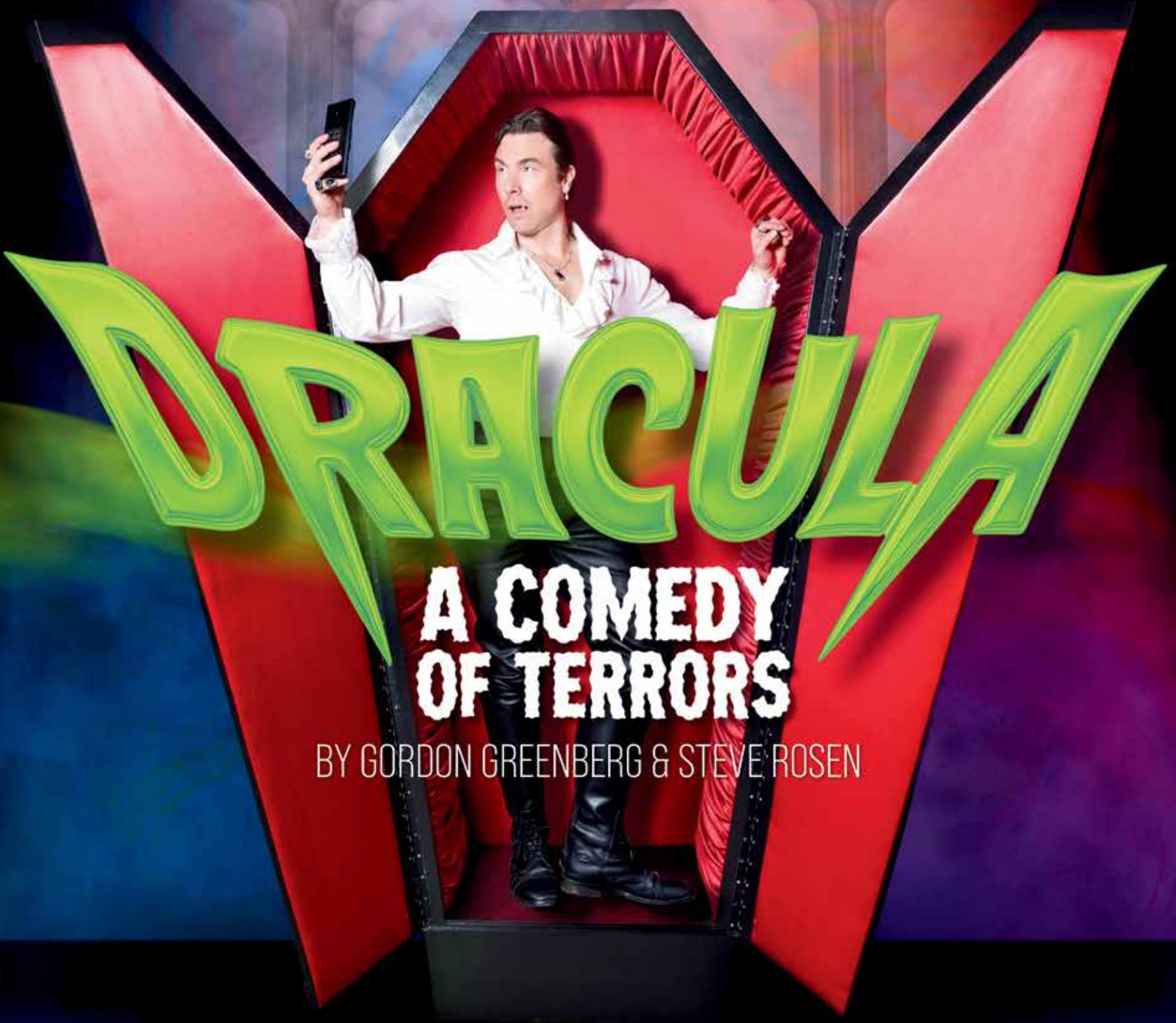
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