

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1280

Thursday, September 18, 2025

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OPP and Stratford police teaming up for Cops for Cancer event



SHAVING HEADS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Acting deputy chief Mark Taylor of the Stratford police and Sgt. Barry Cookson of the OPP had their heads shaved by Stonetown Barber's Jack Taylor and Scott Jackson. The pair was in St. Marys promoting a fundraising event that is taking place in Mitchell on Sept. 27.

St. Marys council approves three-way stop, other safety improvements at Holy Name of Mary School

A community safety zone and school zone on Egan Avenue are included in the planned improvements

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

To improve safety for staff and students crossing Egan Avenue between Holy Name of Mary School and the school's north field

across the street, St. Marys council has approved the installation of a three-way stop at Egan Avenue and King Street North among other improvements.

At council's Sept. 9 meeting, councillors ap-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Saturday Sept. 27, the Stratford Police Service and Perth County OPP will join forces for a Cops for Cancer event.

The fundraiser is taking place at Keterson Park in Mitchell. Things get under way at 11 a.m. and will continue until 2 p.m.

Stonetown Barbers Scott Jackson and Jack Taylor will be onsite to shave the heads of members of both police services. There will also be a barbecue, raffle table and police vehicles to check out. Ken's French Fry truck will be there.

This will be the third year for this fundraiser. Each year, the event is moved to a new community. As of press time, there will be eight members of the OPP and eight from the Stratford Police Service taking part and having their heads shaved.

All the funds raised from this event will go towards research into childhood cancer and sending 600 kids who have been diagnosed with cancer to Camp Goodtimes.

One of the team leaders, Const. Aaron Mounfield of the Stratford police, understands the importance of this fundraiser.

"As a cancer survivor, I can only imagine what children endure while receiving treatments. With your donations, we can make their cancer journey a little easier for them and their families. No child should have to suffer from cancer, so please come out, enjoy the event and donate if you can to support this great cause," Mounfield said.

On Sept. 9, a kick-off event was held at Stonetown Barber in St. Marys to promote the fundraising event. Acting deputy chief Mark Taylor of the Stratford police and Sgt. Barry Cookson of the OPP fearlessly had their heads shaved by Jackson and Taylor.

Their goal is to raise \$17,500 for this worthy cause. Donations can be made by visiting https://support.cancer.ca/site/TR/CopsforCancer/COPS_NW_even_?px=14194045&pg=personal&fr_id=30360&s_locale=en_CA.

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys council approves three-way stop, other safety improvements at Holy Name of Mary School

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

proved several safety improvements along Egan Avenue, adjacent to Holy Name of Mary School, as agreed on by both town staff and the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board (HPCDSB). The decision came from a discussion between the town and the school over how best to handle issues the town was having in recruiting and retaining crossing guards for the Egan-King intersection to help students travel between the school and the north field at various times during the school day.

“We had a discussion with the school board regarding the cost and the physical options that we could do,” said town director of public works Jed Kelly. “They took it back, they had some meetings, they rolled it around. Ultimately, they’ve decided to internalize the wage; they were paying 100 per cent of the cost of these crossing-guard positions. ... I assume (crossing-guard duties are) going toward yard supervision and that sort of thing. I see, kind of, more stewards out there now; patrollers with high-vis on.

“They have requested the town install a three-way intersection at the intersection of Egan and King. It would have a nominal impact to any on traffic flow.”

This three-way stop, Kelly explained, would establish a continuous stop-and-yield condition for north-south pedestrian crossings, enhancing safety throughout the day and outside normal school hours. As the town has agreements with the school



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

St. Marys council has approved the establishment of a three-way stop at the intersection at Egan Avenue and King Street, adjacent to Holy Name of Mary School.

board for use of the school’s north field outside of school hours, Kelly said the change would also improve safety for other users of the field, including minor sports.

In addition to the three-way stop, town staff also asked council to designate Egan Avenue as a community safety zone and school speed reduction zone.

“We would like to relocate the existing flashers that we have for our speed-reduc-

tion zones and put those inside the school safety zones ... and implement a new school zone on Egan and add the flashers, and then add the flashers on James Street North just for that speed-reduction zone, community safety zone and school zone so the fines are tripled,” Kelly said.

According to the staff report to council, traffic-safety improvements were made in the area around the school based on recommendations made by a traffic-safety consultant hired by the town in 2018 as a part of the Egan Avenue residential development and the associated reconstruction of the street. Though the improvements were effective, crossing-guard staffing requirements and the associated administrative burden to facilitate student movement between the school and the north field remained an issue.

Prior to 2020, the school custodian would use their break periods and serve as a town crossing guard to cover all the crossing-guard shifts during school recess. They retired in 2019 and since then, the town has struggled to find staff willing to cover all recess periods throughout the day. Beyond the recess periods, the school’s north field is also used for Phys-ed, requiring additional staff for supervising the crossing of students during class periods.

Both the town and school are often pulling staff from other roles to provide crossing-guard coverage or supervised crossing throughout the day as absences or the need arises.

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EDITORIAL

Twenty-four years later

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

On Sept. 11, I was sitting at my desk reminiscing about that fateful day 24 years ago.

I am sure everyone can remember where they were that morning when the sad news out of New York started. That morning, I was at a cottage with my friend, Sherri, canoeing around a lake and it was so peaceful. Little did we know what was going on in the world until we started to head for home.

Driving through Toronto with no planes in the air and signs up saying the borders were closed was very surreal. I remember sitting in my apartment the rest of that week watching TV with many tears. One thing that came out of that devastating event is witnessing the bringing together of a nation. At a time when so many were grieving and going through the unimaginable, watching the hugs, the memorials, and the helpers was a shining light in a dark time.

It is good to see so many tributes and services still taking place because I think it is important to never forget. I have always been in awe of the Gander, Nfld., story of how the town stood up and welcomed strangers in with open arms and made the best of a terrible situation.

It was definitely a time in history that showed us the evil side of human nature, but on the flip side, watching the resilience, kindness and caring of human beings helping each other deal with the devastation one day at a time was empowering.

I worry that as time goes on, we are forgetting. We are forgetting how to be nice, forgetting how to be there for each other. We are more desensitized, more selfish, meaner. I can't help but think why? Is it the pandemic, is it social media, is it differences in political opinions? Can we not agree to disagree? I know, lots of hard questions to ponder.

Again, I chose to focus on the good. Even with so much negativity, there are still happy things going on like weddings, births, friendships, promotions, vacations. Let's learn from the past and let's learn how to be nice to each other again because like they say, everyone is fighting a battle you know nothing about.

Be kind!

Bravo	Boo
We have 1 Bravo this week. 1) Bravo to the people of St. Marys for going a week without any Boos.	We have 1 Boo this week. 1) Boo to the people of St. Marys for going a week without any Bravos.
*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 got him."

- Utah Governor Spencer Cox at a Sept. 12 news conference, regarding the arrest of alleged shooter Tyler Robinson for the Sept. 10 assassination of Charlie Kirk.

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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The right side of Trump's face was noticeably drooping this week, but he's saying it's the radical left.

Bring on the beautiful fall colours!

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!

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St. Marys Independent

Thoughts of the Week
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Sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can.

Your perception of me is a reflection of you.

You must find the place inside yourself where nothing is impossible.

You will face many defeats in life but don't let yourself be defeated.

Town hosting St. Marys Recreation Fair on Oct. 17

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

On Friday, Oct. 17, the Town of St. Marys will host its annual Recreation Fair from 5-7 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (317 James St. S).

The event is intended to showcase the different recreation and leisure opportunities available within the town.

"Engaging in community activities supports both physical and mental health," said town recreation manager Joannah Campbell in a press release. "The Recreation Fair is designed to inform residents about recreational options available in St. Marys for people of different ages, interests and abilities."

Attendees will have the opportunity to explore a diverse selection of booths and interactive demonstrations presented by minor-sports organizations, service clubs, private recreation service provid-



ers, exercise and wellness centres, and programs focused on adult and senior recreation.

Everyone is welcome to attend this free drop-in event, and advance registration is not required.

Those interested in signing up as a vendor can fill out an application form at townofstmarys.com/recreationfair by Friday, Oct. 3 at 12 p.m.

Questions about the event can be directed to Campbell at 519-284-2340 ext. 626 or jocampbell@town.stmarys.on.ca.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



ROAD SAFETY MONTH

Safe Roads Don't Happen by Accident: St. Marys Residents Reminded to Put Safety First



Every time you choose to slow down (especially in school zones, residential areas, or near parks) you give yourself more time to react and protect the lives of pedestrians, cyclists, and other drivers. Let's all do our part: Drive slower. Stay alert. Keep St. Marys safe.

townofstmarys.com/roadsafety

BUDGET ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The Town is looking to gather feedback on the 2026 budget, asset management, housing, property taxes and more. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey (closing September 26 at 12 PM) to have your say!



townofstmarys.com/budgetengagementsurvey

COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

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



Apply by November 30: townofstmarys.com/grants

MEET YOUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER

September 23 | 6 - 7:30 PM | Friendship Centre

At this free event, Community Outreach Worker, Jade Orquin, will present experiences from her frontline work and offer perspectives on the difficulties encountered by individuals experiencing homelessness or relying on social assistance.

Register today: townofstmarys.com/activenet



SHOWER PROGRAM

Pyramid Recreation Centre



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

Visit Guest Services or call 519-284-2160

St. Marys Gives 2025

Won't You Be My Neighbour?



This year, Erica Brine and Greg Bettger, co-owners of St. Marys Insurance Group, decided to empower their employees with the choice of where the company's charitable donations would go. Each employee was given an amount of money to direct towards the charity of their choice. The only considerations were, in the spirit of being 'Good Neighbours', to keep the donation as local as possible, and to concentrate on charities that help as large a swath of our St. Marys and Area community.

Employees were able to personally present the donation to the charity and express their appreciation for the valuable services that these organizations provide to our local community. The employees of St. Marys Insurance Group selected Out of the Ashes, St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, and Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth as the worthy recipients of their donations - the spirit of Giving Tuesday and Good Neighbours at work!

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Seniors of the Week



Our seniors of the week are Betty and Bill Van Heeswyk. Betty and Bill were both born in Holland.

Betty is the 2nd oldest of a family of 18. They moved to Canada in the early 50s. They met each other in Galt at a dance. They have been married for 65 years. Betty and Bill have two children, Diana and Bill. They have five grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. They both like to bowl. Betty enjoys doing puzzles and Bill loves to garden.

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

Weekend Quiz

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1. What famous actress married baseball player Joe DiMaggio in 1954?
2. What is the name of Roger's dalmatian in the Disney movie '101 Dalmatians'?
3. Which country is Madrid the capital of?
4. What is the most expensive spice in the world?
5. Who directed the 2018 movie 'A star is born'?
6. What is Prince William the duke of?
7. Who wrote the dystopian novel '1984'?
8. Roughly how long does it take for the sun's light to reach Earth?
9. Animals that eat both vegetables and meats are called what?
10. What was the robot's name from Interstellar?

By Jake Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

St. Marys Healthcare Foundation Launches \$650K campaign for new hospital x-ray machine



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

April Barker, finance coordinator for St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, and Emily Schade, x-ray technician at St. Marys Memorial Hospital, showed their excitement in advancing the quality of care with a new x-ray machine.

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

Peace of mind and quality care close to home. That's what the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation hopes to deliver with its \$650,000 x-ray campaign.

"So far, the Foundation has raised just over \$60,000 through our gala event, community donations and monthly 50/50 draws," said Bernice De Decker, fundraising and communication coordinator at the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation. "Our 'Be an Angel' direct mail campaign and generous community donations have also contributed to our goal."

De Decker says that there is no timeline to acquire the x-ray machine, but the equipment is the foundation's highest priority due to its essential function in diagnosing patients, as well as enhancing the quality of care for the community and beyond.

The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation is a not-for-profit charitable organization aimed at supporting local health care. Its mission is to invest in essential hospital equipment, support staff education and enhance wellness services. Guided by values of compassion and generosity, the foundation's priorities include upgrading St. Marys Memorial Hospital, sustaining the Wellness Centre and other forms of support.

"Every donation matters and supporting local health-care is an investment in the wellbeing of your family,

friends and neighbours," said De Decker. "It means peace of mind knowing quality care is available close to home when it's needed most."

Beyond the x-ray project, De Decker says the foundation will keep its focus on ensuring St. Marys Memorial Hospital and the Wellness Centre have the tools and resources they need. That includes supporting staff education, funding technology upgrades and investing in community programs that promote wellness.

"Our most recent project was a \$3 million capital campaign to completely renovate the east and west wings of the hospital, which included major upgrades to inpatient care areas," said De Decker. "Thanks to incredible community support, we created modern and welcoming spaces for patients, families, staff and volunteers, ensuring the best care is delivered close to home."

Last year alone, the foundation raised a total of \$719,320. This past August, \$25,000 was raised at the annual golf tournament, with the 50/50 draw bringing in just over \$80,000.

Community members can support the campaign by making a secure online donation at stmaryshealthcare.foundation, taking part in the monthly 50/50 lottery with proceeds going directly toward the new x-ray machine, or reaching out to info@stmaryshealthcare.foundation to learn more about becoming a board or event volunteer.

St. Marys Independent

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St. Marys business creates a sacred place in a busy world



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
Love Essential Life Holistic Retreat encourages people to slow down in a world where we live so fast. Pictured, participants in past Love Essential Life retreats practice mindful yoga, a stepping stone in the journey of discovering one's true self.

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

In a world that rarely slows down, a local retreat invites people to pause, breathe and reconnect with themselves. Nestled in the forest, Love's Essential Life offers tools for grounding and healing. On Sept. 27, locals will have the opportunity to discover their true self at a holistic retreat hosted by Love Essential Life, a local St. Marys business that practices the value of being present, mindfulness, reconnecting and other holistic mindset approaches. Those interested are encouraged to check out the event's Facebook page for more details. Jacinthe (Ja-Saint) Monast, founder of Love Essential Life and a holistic mindset coach, says her calling to life is helping others discover their soul buried under the demands of current life mixed with depression and anxiety that she says seems like a pandemic nowadays. "We get ourselves caught in the labels; the thing that we need to remember is that we are not to embody that label that society has put on us," said Monast. "We attach ourselves so much to that identity and we can pivot if that path is not aligned anymore. There's a big need for this; a lot of people are feeling lost and the heaviness of the world. It's about having the tools and community so people can feel that they're supported." The retreat will take place at Monast's private residence within a forest setting at Love's Essential Life Holistic Life Re-

treat Centre, 5846 Cobble Rd., from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monast said she started hosting retreats in 2023 and runs around four of them each year. During the session, participants will be doing activities such as forest walks, yoga, meditation, sharing circles and learning from Indigenous elder and teacher Patsy Day. "Patsy will be sharing the importance of reconnection with nature and use practical examples. We will be having our visitors apply her teachings and learn how to anchor them within their own life as well," said Monast. "The circles that we will be doing are very important and they complement Indigenous teachings as well with the message that nobody is better than the other one when we are in a circle. It is important to have that vulnerability and share that from the forefront so that healing can happen." Monast says she often grounds herself by walking in the forest and connecting with Mother Earth. She has learned when people live in a state of gratitude, challenges begin to transform into possibilities and solutions appear instead of problems. It's a lesson she continues to practice herself and teach others. "I want people to take from this retreat and remember that if they have the tools and they can reach out to people that they are aligned with to continue their journey, they can use these tools that they learned to ground themselves and become aware of the power they have within them," she said.

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Terry Fox Run continues to grow



STEWART GRANT

Publisher

With perfect September weather, the 45th annual Terry Fox Run, held on Sept. 14, was a “fantastic day,” according to co-organizer Anna Doupe.

A successful event requires an incredible number of hours of planning and organizing in the months that lead up, and

St. Marys’ Terry Fox Run team has been able to grow the local event steadily year after year. The 2025 run appeared to have the largest turnout in recent memory.

“I am lucky to have an amazing team of volunteers,” said Doupe. “From our main committee members of Arlene Callender, Kelly Deeks and Andrea Macko that help plan throughout the year to the



other 20 volunteers that help out on the big day, to those who help us post our lawn signs and advertise for us, thank you!”

Nancy Riddell of the St. Marys YMCA, along with two supportive pink unicorns, led the group in a pre-run stretching routine. Mayor Al Stratthdee, who is also a cancer survivor, then spoke in support of Terry Fox’s pursuit which has done so

much for cancer research in this country and around the world.

Doupe reported that, thanks to the amazing community support, the unofficial amount raised in St. Marys is just over \$17,300.

Referencing this year’s slogan for the Terry Fox Run, Doupe said, “Together we can ‘finish it’... for Terry, for ourselves, for our family and friends.”



(GORD BARNETT PHOTOS)





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St. Marys Optometry to host grand opening at new location



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Dr. Carol Venn and staff are looking forward to welcoming the community on Sat. Sept 27 to show their new location at their grand opening.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

“Your best life starts with the quality of your vision. At St. Marys Optometry, your vision is our focus.”

This is the mission statement optometrist Dr. Carol Venn shared with me when I visited their new location at 766 Queen St. E, where they relocated to in April of this year. The bright, clean space and staff were all very welcoming when walking into the practice.

Dr. Venn, who graduated from the University of Waterloo’s School of Optometry in 1998, was looking for a place to call home. After spending some time in St. Marys, she fell in love with the small-town feel, met her husband here and, 15 years ago, decided to open her own optometry practice on Queen Street.

“After 15 years, it was time to freshen up the office,” Venn said. “When exploring options, I found this building that was a great fit for what we need. It has more usable space inside, and outside, it offers parking which is so beneficial for our patients. We now have a beautiful and modern office with room to grow as the practice continues to evolve.”

The practice has a pretesting room that contains an optical coherence tomographer (OCT), which records images through the retina in the back of the eye, allowing the optometrists to detect changes sooner than ever before. There is an autorefractor, which measures how the eyes are focusing.

One of the most interesting machines is called the Myah. This measures, among other things, the length of the eye. This piece of equipment is used a lot with kids as there is scientific evidence showing that many kids’ eyes are growing too quickly, which can lead to myopia (nearsightedness) during child-

hood and other eye issues later in life. The Myah is used like a growth chart that keeps track of the changes. If caught early, there are technologies that can slow the growth of the eyes down.

The practice currently has three examination rooms with space for a fourth down the road. There is also a contact lens room that provides a spot to learn how to insert them and how to care for the lenses. Contact lenses are still very popular as corrective prescriptions and comfort are continuously improving.

Presently, there are two optometrists on the team. One is Venn, who works full-time, and the other is Dr. Erica Gagnon, who is onsite three days a week. There are also four friendly staff members ready to help make each visit enjoyable. The team has all jelled together and shares the core values of excellence and experience. They want to make sure they are embodying these values for their patients. They all agree that slower eye exams, taking the time to get to know patients and learning their individual eye issues helps the team find better solutions for each patient they care for.

Being in the industry for as long as Venn has, she has seen some major changes take place in eye care.

“The biggest change I have seen is technology. When I started, I did all my exam charting with pen and paper. We had no ability to take images of the inside of the eye. Now, I have four computer screens in front of me where I can see the results from all our specialized testing while I am examining my patient and I can put it all together. It is amazing to think that a small practice in a small town has such advanced technology that I can take and assess an image of the microscopic details inside your eye,” Venn said.

On Saturday, Sept. 27, St. Marys Optometry is inviting the public to their



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The new location at 766 Queen St. E is very bright, fresh and welcoming.

grand-opening open house. There will be a ribbon cutting at 11 a.m. and the event will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be draws, giveaways, savings and, of course, cupcakes. Also onsite that day will be representatives from the company, Morel, who will showcase their line of glasses frames. This brand

was new to the practice earlier this year and so far, patients are loving both the style and the unique hinge design which is more durable and doesn’t use screws.

The staff of St. Marys Optometry is looking forward to welcoming the community to their new office space.

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United Way Perth-Huron shares impact of 2024-2025 fundraising campaign

Town of St. Marys donated more than \$11,000 to United Way Perth-Huron fundraising campaign last year

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As the United Way Perth-Huron and its team of local volunteers prepare to kick off another annual fundraising campaign, representatives from the organization recently shared the local impact of last year's campaign with St. Marys council.

As an organization, the Town of St. Marys donated \$11,079 to the campaign last year, all of which, as well as the money donated by local residents, businesses and organizations, remained in Stonetown to support programs and services locals in St. Marys and Perth South hold dear.

"All the donations that are given here and in Perth South all stay in this area to support your community and we're very proud to keep everything right here in St. Marys," said Pam Zabel, a member of the United Way's St. Marys and area community committee. "We support over 25 different programs and services across Huron and Perth, and we focus in on these different areas: mental health, access to services, food security, discrimination, housing, income and intimate-partner violence.

"We approach them from the perspective of trying to help people in their immediate need, in their medium to long-term need whilst we're also working on system changes as well, so all along that spectrum. We are the second-largest funder of social services in Canada – United Ways across Canada. ... Here



United Way Perth-Huron

at United Way Perth-Huron, we concentrate on six different regions, and in that way, we can delve in deeper to what each specific community needs and help them with their specific challenges."

Though the local United Way's work goes beyond simply funding programs and services, with work being done in social research, planning and advocacy, the United Way Perth-Huron supported the following programs and services in St. Marys and the surrounding area last year:

- **Nourish Equal Access Food Market:** Offered by the Local Community Food Centre, this service provided access to affordable and healthy food, as well as cooking and nutritional education, to 2,040 people last year.

- **Community outreach worker:** St. Marys' community outreach worker connected 100 vulnerable clients last year to the housing, mental-health, addictions and support services they needed while taking action to increase housing stability locally.

- **Family Services Perth-Huron:** The organization offered subsidized clinical counselling to 153 St. Marys and area residents last year.

- **211 service-connection hotline:** Connected more than 1,800 people to services across Perth-Huron.

- **United Way social research and planning council:** Dedicated to the collection, analysis and distribution of information relating to social trends and issues in Perth and Huron County.

- **United Housing:** Building better communities by developing, creating, constructing and managing mixed-income housing in Perth and Huron counties.

- **John Howard Society:** Offered post-incarceration, re-integration supports to 14 people.

- **Shelterlink Youth Services:** Provided shelter for seven youth from the community.

- **Emily Murphy Centre:** Provided trauma-informed counselling for six children who witnessed domestic or oth-

er violence.

- **Huron County Distribution Centre for Food Banks and Aid Agencies:** Two local foodbanks received supplies through this organization.

- **YMCA Newcomer Journey Finding:** Offered service navigation and supports to 11 local newcomers.

- **Urgent Needs Fund:** Provided immediate financial support for six people in crisis.

- **Ontario Living Wage Network:** Advocated with local businesses to pay a living wage.

"I just want to touch on Coldest Night of the Year and how the Town of St. Marys and friends put in a team every year, and we're very appreciative of that," Zabel said. "The last Coldest Night of the Year raised \$48,257 from all the community members here in St. Marys, so that's really amazing."

In total across Perth and Huron counties last year, the United Way Perth-Huron raised \$2,356,497 through the annual campaign and an additional \$542,050 for United Housing, resulting in a record-setting total of \$2,898,547.

The United Way Perth-Huron will launch its 2025-2026 annual fundraising campaign in St. Marys on Sept. 20 at the St. Marys Farmers' Market at Milt Dunnell Field from 8 a.m. until noon. St. Marys community committee volunteers as well as campaign co-chairs John Wolfe and Kristin Sainsbury will be on hand to announce the campaign goal at 10 a.m.



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This year “there be dragons,” trustee warns school board

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Amid rumours the trustee system will soon become a thing of the past, trustee Michael Bannerman, chair of the Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB)’s board of trustees, warned uncharted territory is before them.

“Mapmakers, when they created maps, they would have uncharted territory and they put all the design in the mountains and they would get out there and they usually draw a picture of a dragon and write, ‘There be dragons,’ ” Bannerman said. “... Who knows, right? Uncharted territory. And I feel like, as we go into this school year, there be dragons.”

“We’re heading into some uncharted territory and it is an interesting climate to be a school board trustee.”

Days after the return to school for students and teachers across the province, Minister of Education Paul Calandra teased through various media channels the end of the trustee system, spurned by recent scrutiny into spending at the Thames Valley District School Board, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the Toronto District School Board.

In a statement posted to his Face-

book page on Sept. 5, Calandra said he has been clear, “The current school board governance structure is based on an outdated system that needs to be modernized. Our focus is to provide students with better outcomes and certainty, and we are looking to finalize governance changes as soon as possible.”

At the AMDSB board of trustees meeting on Sept. 9, much of the conversation surrounded the fate of the trustee system, with many around the conference table wondering where that left them. Trustee Robert Hunking wanted to have a meeting before the next one scheduled on Oct. 28 so that trustees could discuss the matter at length.

“It’s a provincial thing,” trustee Sheila Armstrong-Marshall replied. “I don’t understand what our role is to get involved with that. ... Our hands are tied.”

“I think the danger of a meeting like that is we’re crossing over from our role which is public interest and discussing our personal interests,” trustee Jospeh Cohen agreed.

Vice chair Patricia Smith argued that it was in the public interest.

“Having spoken to a number of parents who are very upset about it – and to the point where they’re considering writing letters and protesting it because they want their voices to be heard and that is one way trustees work

is to ensure that the public’s voices are heard,” Smith said. “So, if the trustees are not here, that is a loss. And so, if the people who were supposed to represent the parents are expressing that concern, to me, that automatically becomes a trustee interest.”

Ultimately, the board passed a motion to allow the chair, vice-chair and director of education Graham Shantz to schedule a special meeting should the need arise. Until then, Bannerman urged the trustees to focus on their responsibilities.

“We are in our boat,” Bannerman said. “We can’t control the wind but we can adjust our sails. ... My challenge to us this year as trustees would be that we would focus on things we have control over. Let’s be great trustees, let’s remind our communities, the schools that we work with, that we represent, why trustees are important, why we are essential, why we do play an important role. ... I think it’s going to be an interesting year.”

“You think it’ll be a year? Three months,” joked Cohen.

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SPOTLIGHT ON ARTS & CULTURE

Celebrating art and spice together

JAMES GILES, EDITED BY ALICE RIXSON

Contributed Article

He is known as the Picasso of the north because his artwork is characterized by its vibrant colours, bold forms and expressive style, which some find reminiscent of Pablo Picasso's approach to art.

Lionel Venne's art has been exhibited across Canada and internationally, and his work is held in numerous private, public and corporate collections, indicating a level of recognition and appreciation that is comparable to that of Picasso.

After a successful exhibition at the St. Marys Station Gallery in the summer of 2023, Venne's mixed-media artwork has returned to downtown St. Marys in a partnership with Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill at 202 Queen St. E., which is featuring a dozen of Venne's exciting artwork.

"The people of St. Marys and area really welcomed and appreciated my artwork in 2023 so I wanted to find a home where my work could be appreciated and valued more," said Venne. "The opportunity and invitation to partner and enhance the dining experience of Naina's restaurant with their large wall space was a true gift."

Venne believes mixing cultures leads to stronger social cohesions and a more vibrant culture and community. Venne is the subject of a new bilingual book, *Lionel Venne: Entrelacer le soleil, Around the Sun Again*.

At 89 years of age, despite health concerns and challenges, Venne continues to create everyday, living in the small town of Elk Lake, Ont., 120 kilometres northeast of Sudbury. Like Picasso, Venne is a prolific artist and expresses rather than depicts the northern landscape that he experiences. Watercolour, acrylics, collage, printmaking and textile arts are among the media he chooses for interpreting what he sees and feels. Living in northern Ontario affected his artwork by eliminating distractions and he values the closeness to nature, the open skies, northern lights and the landscape in all its seasons.

Naina's owner, Prahlad Meena, is an experienced and innovative chef who studied culinary arts at the Institute of Hotel Management in Jaipu, India. He has lived in Canada for 18 years, plying his profession in Indian restaurants in Edmonton, Alta., and Niagara Falls before choosing St. Marys for his own Indian



Prahlad Meena in front of a collage by Lionel Venne.

(JIM GILES PHOTO)

restaurant. His flavourful food is known for its vibrant flavours, aromatic spices and diverse range of dishes. The art of blending spices is a crucial skill for any chef. It requires knowledge, experience and proficiency to create the perfect blend. Meena has more than two decades of experience and has acquired a deep comprehension of cooking techniques, ingredients and flavours. He doesn't shy away from experimenting in the kitchen as Venne does in art.

"It's possible to learn basic Indian dishes quickly but mastering the diverse regional cuisines, techniques and flavours of India requires years of dedicat-

ed learning and practice, just like it has taken Lionel Venne to master his art," said Meena.

Get ready! Naina's is having a special celebration on Saturday Sept. 27 from 5-9 p.m. to celebrate the revitalization of the restaurant with Art and Spice, featuring a new Naina menu with food options for all including vegetarian and gluten-free items. This special event will feature a buffet of Venne's visual art in a new dining atmosphere with a buffet of the great flavourful Indian food and hospitality that Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill has a reputation for.

Join Us For An Evening of Art and Flavours!

Saturday, Sept. 27 - 5 to 9 p.m.

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Artwork by Lionel Venne. Reserve for \$45 or pay \$49 at the door.

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Education and understanding remain focus for truth and reconciliation events

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys will commemorate National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with a week of activities focused on healing and education.

Beginning on Monday, Sept. 15, the St. Marys Museum hosted an exhibit titled "Talking About Treaty 29." The exhibit examines the creation of Treaty 29, also known as the Huron Tract Purchase of 1827. It also explores the history of treaties and how the ongoing rights and responsibilities impact the area now known as St. Marys. The exhibit will be available for viewing during the museum's regular hours until December 2025.

The St. Marys Museum is also inviting locals to join educator and facilitator Patsyenne Day on Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 2 p.m. as she shares her story, "From Standingstone to Stonetown." The story will be told beneath the Truth and Reconciliation banner displayed in front of the museum. Attendees are encouraged to wear an orange shirt and bring a lawn chair or picnic blanket for seating.

All are also invited to join Day every month at the Friendship Centre to learn about the 13 Grandmother



Moons teachings and ceremonies. The September session will engage with the Corn and Planting Moons, and will also feature a story and activity. This event is free and open to all ages. Please register in advance as space is limited. Donations will be accepted.

The St. Marys Public Library and the Friendship Centre will also be livestreaming the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation broadcast from Parliament Hill at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 30.

The public is also invited to the library for a Micro Learning Film Series on Sept. 30 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

This free, educational program will feature a collection of short films including *Indigenous Heritage & Identity*, *Residential Schools*, *The Indian Act*, *Reflections on Reconciliation*, *Our Role as Canadians*, *Lasting Effects of Residential Schools and Working Toward Reconciliation*, and *Witness Blanket*. Open to all, this program does not require pre-registration.

The National Truth and Reconciliation flag will be flown at town facilities from Monday, Sept. 29 to Wednesday, Oct. 1.

Locals are encouraged to wear an orange shirt on Sept. 30 to honour survivors of residential schools in support of the "Every Child Matters" message. Those looking to purchase a shirt are encouraged to buy from Indigenous-owned businesses.

The Town of St. Marys is grateful for the input of many individuals who have helped the community begin to understand and commit to a better future. The town is especially grateful for the guidance and teachings of Day.

For a full schedule of National Day of Truth and Reconciliation events, visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/truthandreconciliation.

Petals and Foliage starts Giving Tuesday fundraiser early

Fundraiser aims to donate baby items to Salvation Army

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Petals and Foliage has gotten an early start on Giving Tuesday with a fundraiser for the Salvation Army.

The garden centre at 1729 Perth Road 139 is selling plants at its roadside market stand with proceeds supporting the Salvation Army.

Glenna Day Hicks of Petals and Foliage told the St. Marys Independent that the nursery has always been a part of Giving Tuesday, right from the start. Petals and Foliage donated to different organizations over the years and keeps coming back to the Salvation Army.

"We have volunteered with the Salvation Army for years," Day Hicks said. "It was a very important service that my dad donated to every year."

She added that this year, proceeds from the market-stand plant sales will go towards the purchase of baby items to be donated to the Salvation Army in honour of a new family member.

"We have welcomed a new baby into the family and thought that donating baby items would be a good thing to do," she said.

Giving Tuesday is on Dec. 2.

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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

First Favacho Fall Classic features touching moments, terrific tennis

ANDREA MACKO

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Tennis Club held its newly named Favacho Fall Classic doubles tournament on Sept. 13.

While the tournament has been played annually for 12 years, this edition opened with a naming ceremony, honouring Rob Favacho's 70 years of involvement in local tennis.

Speakers touched on his incredible life. Jamie Hahn recalled a young Favacho teaching lessons in the early 1950s; a message from Wayne Murray detailed their decade together coaching the DCVI team; Ivy Chung spoke of their doubles play in Stratford; and Andrea Macko read his dedication to the 2014 court restoration fundraising project.

"You are living proof that tennis is the healthiest sport around and can extend your life, improve your outlook on life and makes you a happier person," said Macko. "You're a great person and a great tennis player."

After a ceremonial first serve, Favacho recalled his early days on the courts, learning to play from his father in 1952 – only after being dragged out of his first love, swimming in the quarry.

"Every time I did something wrong, he made me do 10 push-ups," Favacho joked.

After detailing an incredible list of tournament wins, Favacho thanked his family and, notably, his wife Barbara, "for letting me go to all these tournaments."

"I have so many good memories of tennis that I can't keep them all in my head," Favacho said. "Thank you for this – this is a memory that I'm ready to take with me."

The eight teams participating in the double-elimination tournament may have played a little better in the presence of a legend, with many hard-fought matches in contrast to the more social nature of the club's weekly play.

The powerful and precise team of Adam Pallone and Roger Batch cruised unscathed to the finals, facing off against the athletic and occasionally amusing duo of Macko and Andrew Hodges. While Pallone and Batch sent Macko and Hodges to the consolation bracket 6-2, Macko and Hodges gained a game in the final for a set score of 6-3. The set score belies the skill and speed the duo put in against Pallone and Batch but, in the end, experience won the day.

The St. Marys Tennis Club continues its season until late October, when the nets are typically removed. All adult and teen players with tennis experience are welcome to try the club on for size Tuesday and Thursday nights beginning at 7 p.m.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Roger Batch, Adam Pallone, Rob Favacho, Andrea Macko and Andrew Hodges. Batch and Pallone defeated Macko and Hodges in the final of the Favacho Fall Classic tournament on Sept. 13.



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Young Lincs blow away expectations with near-perfect start to season

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Anyone who watched either of the St. Marys Lincolns' first two games of the regular season and knew nothing about the roster composition would come away thinking they just watched a veteran squad that had been largely the same for several years.

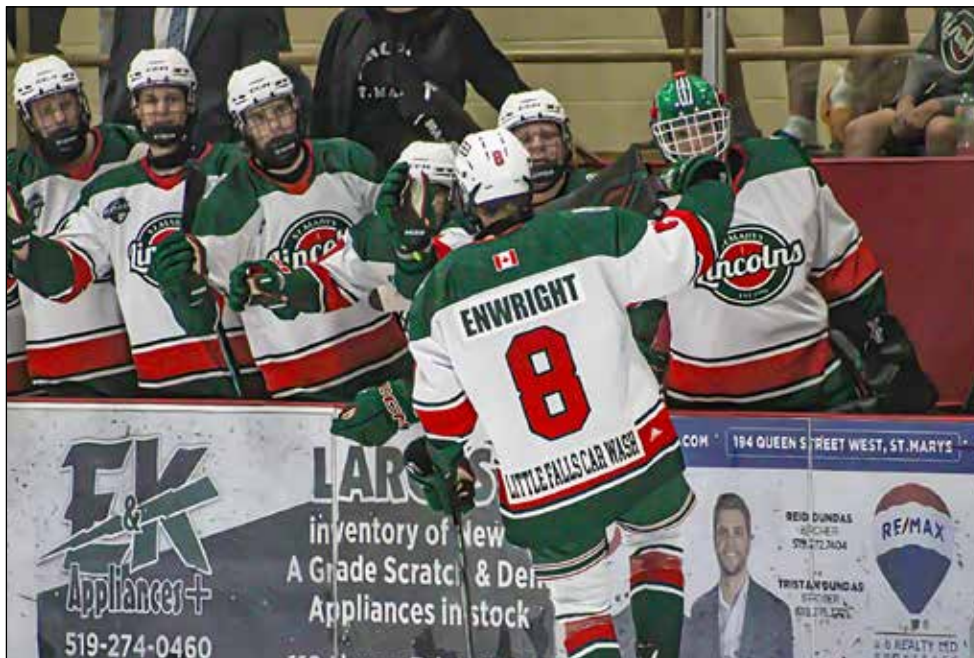
There was no inkling this was a largely new-to-each other roster with just six skaters dressed who were either 19 or 20 years old.

What was preached and expected by everyone was that this was a talented but young team that would likely show many reasons for optimism, but also have moments where fans saw their inexperience and the holes in their execution of the team's systems.

Patience. Growing pains. Time. That was the expectation of what to expect, and what was needed.

Instead, the Lincolns delivered back-to-back games in which they not only won, but looked like a team that had been playing together for months, if not years, rather than just the handful of weeks they've actually had together.

Head coach Jeff Bradley told the Independent the coaching staff saw precisely what they were hoping to see from the



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Nathan Enwright goes by the bench after scoring his first GOJHL goal in the St. Marys Lincolns' 7-1 win over the Sarnia Legionnaires on Sept. 12.

youthful roster.

"With our teams in the past, we had more of a feel for what we had, and we knew how hard they were going to compete," said Bradley. "Whereas this year, coming in, it was a bit more of a question mark in terms of do you have that base of competing and the desire for the

game, and I think in both of our first two games and the limited practice time we've had, we're seeing that from this group. We wanted our guys to compete hard and we definitely saw that from a lot of our guys. We're working from a really nice starting point."

The Lincolns opened their season on

home ice with a 7-1 thrashing over the Sarnia Legionnaires. St. Marys outshot the Legionnaires 60-25, including a first period in which the Lincs had 27 shots while Sarnia managed just five.

Owen Voortman opened the scoring just 28 seconds into the contest, assisted by linemates Chase MacQueen-Spence and Lincoln Moore. Just under 15 minutes later, Nathan Enwright jammed home a loose puck in a goal-mouth scramble for his first Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL) goal.

Enwright described the strong play by his line, which also included Chase McDougall and Declan Ready, leading to his gritty goal.

"It was just a really good shift by our line," Enwright said. "We got it in deep and hemmed them in their zone. Declan (Ready) made a nice pass out front and I buried it. Fortunately, I was parked in the crease and waiting for something to happen. That's where guys make their money, bringing their shovels to the front of the net."

MacQueen-Spence, Moore and Voortman all scored in the second, after Sarnia's first and only goal of the night by William Harding. Moore potted his second of the game in the third and Thomas Paleczny rocketed home his first of his

CONTINUED TO PAGE 19

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Young Lincs blow away expectations with near-perfect start to season

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

GOJHL career. MacQueen-Spence and Moore ended the night with four points, while Voortman had three and McDougall and Ready each earned two assists.

Making his debut in between the pipes was 19-year-old Brogan Colquhoun, who made 24 saves in the victory and credited his teammates and the fans for helping him deliver a strong performance.

"It was really exciting," said Colquhoun. "The boys played great in front of me. They made it pretty easy for me. I love the fans and I felt really good playing in that atmosphere. It helped me play to the best of my abilities. I was just trying to live in the moment and appreciate the fanbase we have. It was electrifying."

The bigger test of the weekend was waiting for the Lincs 24 hours later when they travelled to Caledonia to take on the Corvairs, which is expected to be a strong team in the Eastern Conference.

Yet once again, the Lincolns controlled much of the game and secured a 3-1 win over the Corvairs.

"It was a big test for us," said Bradley. "Caledonia is a team that is very open about what they want to accomplish this year. They consider themselves a championship-contender-calibre team, and for us to go into their arena and their home opener and have the type of performance we did, it says a lot of really good things about our team and where



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Brogan Colquhoun makes one of his 33 saves during the St. Marys Lincolns' 3-1 victory over the Caledonia Corvairs on Sept. 13.

we're at."

The superstar trio of MacQueen-Spence, Moore and Voortman led the way offensively with that line netting all three of the Lincolns' goals. Moore had two goals and an assist while Voortman scored one and assisted on both of Moore's tallies. MacQueen-Spence nabbed helpers on all three.

Colquhoun picked up his second consecutive win, making 33 saves, only getting beat by a play off the end wall that came out the opposite side and was

banged home by Brayden Hobson.

According to the bench boss, though they were held off the scoresheet, the line of Blake Elzinga, Jack Clarke and David Heath was one of the team's most consistently impressive.

"I thought the line of Jack, Blake and David was great for us in both games. They haven't put up the numbers yet, but you can tell it's right there. They gener-

ated a lot of chances over these first two games and we just have the feeling that when they get one, they will get a bunch.

"They just have a mix of everything," Bradley continued. "David has that youth and excitement as a 16-year-old, and obviously, he's very highly skilled. Jack has a really good edge to him. He's got the tools offensively and is working hard to be good defensively. And Blake has that veteran presence. He's familiar with what we've done over the last couple of years and what we expect. It's a really good mix and we're really happy with what they've done through two games."

With the team delivering such structured, well-rounded performances, Bradley noted the coaching staff doesn't have to deviate from their plan as they prepare for the second week of regular-season action.

"It just lets you progress on your plan without any wrenches being put in. We want to get these guys to a certain point, and when things pop up where you're not very good at this or we need to work more on that, it can mess up your plan a little bit. But having the work ethic and the understanding from the players that we've gotten, we're able to look ahead to this week and continue progressing and pushing forward the way we planned, and we don't have to change it."

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MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Landon McIntosh cracks the ball off the bat during a St. Marys Firefighters' U9 OBA St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Nash Near catches a fly ball in the outfield during a Hubbard Pharmacy Limited U9 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Aaliya Campbell throws the ball back from the outfield during a St. Marys Cement U9 HP Blue St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Cameryn Stokes releases a pitch towards home plate during a Canadian Tire U11 OBA St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Sullivan Rumble launches the ball up into the air while on the field earlier this season for the Happy Valley Family Health Team U11 EB St. Marys Rockies.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Myles Newton makes a throw to get an out at first base during a U13 WOBA St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.

MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Cassie Adams catches an incoming pitch during a Stonetown Electric U13 HP St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Teodora Walsh sends a quick pitch at the opposing hitter during a Wildwood Care Centre U15 HP St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Odin Puiras blasts a long-range shot on goal during a U12 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Tristan Fraser rockets a shot from the edge of the box during a U12 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm Grey game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Addisyn Lichti boots a shot towards the opposing goal during a U12 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Deanna Muir loads up a quick shot on target during a U16 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.

River Valley Golf and Tube Slide hosts Club Championship



Pictured is Jess Murray, who won the ladies' title at the River Valley Golf and Tube Slide Club Championship. River Valley hosted their Club Championship tournament on Aug. 30-31.



Pictured is Jeff Griffiths, who won the men's title at the River Valley Club Championship on Aug. 30-31. Griffiths was also the winner of the men's 'A' flight at the two-day tournament.



Pictured is Larry Henderson, who earned the senior men's title at the River Valley Club Championship.



Pictured is Jan Jenkins, the senior ladies' champion at the Aug. 30-31 River Valley Club Championship.



Pictured is Ben Becker, who emerged as the junior champion at the River Valley Club Championship on Aug. 30-31.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)
Pictured is Ben Lobsinger, who posted the best score in the 'B' flight at the River Valley Club Championship.

St. Marys Minor Ball thanks sponsors for support

ST. MARYS MINOR BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Contributed Article

On behalf of the St. Marys Minor Baseball Association, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our generous sponsors for their incredible support during the 2025 season.

Their contributions, whether as general sponsors or team sponsors, have a direct and meaningful impact on our players, families and the broader St. Marys community. Thanks to their support, we are able to keep our baseball program accessible and affordable for families while providing a fun, safe and high-quality experience for young athletes at all levels.

This season, hundreds of kids had the opportunity to get outside, build friendships, grow their confidence and learn the values of teamwork and sportsmanship. Your sponsorships help make all of that possible – covering costs like uniforms, equipment and reduced registration fees.

We are proud to have such strong support from lo-



cal businesses and organizations. Their investment in youth sport is also an investment in the future of our community and we are truly grateful.

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LA Batts, Bears reign supreme at men's slo-pitch year-end tournament



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The St. Marys Men's Slo Pitch league hosted their annual year-end tournament on Sept. 12-14. Pictured on the left is the LA Batts, who picked up the win over the Royals to win the 'A' Division Championship. On the right are the Bears, who were victorious in the 'B' Division final, downing the Sox in the championship game.

Bringin' The Heat, Wannabees win titles ladies' slo-pitch tournament



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The St. Marys Ladies Slo Pitch league held their annual year-end tournament on Sept. 5-6. Pictured on the left is the team called Bringin' The Heat, who narrowly defeated the Free Agents 13-12 to win the 'A' Division Championship. Bringin' The Heat maintained an undefeated record throughout the tournament. On the right are the Wannabees, who edged out the Comets by a score of 3-2 to capture the 'B' Division Championship for the fourth straight year. The Wannabees went 3-1 in the tournament, while the Comets had gone unbeaten heading into the finals.



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SMPA hosts Terry Fox fundraiser event at St. Marys courts



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Members of the St. Marys Pickleball Association (SMPA) attended a fundraiser day of play on Sept. 14 in support of the Terry Fox Walk and Run For Hope. Pictured on the left are many of the members who came to play and raise \$635 for the Terry Fox fundraiser for cancer research. In the first row, from left to right, Carol Venn, Jody Henderson, Mia Moore, Angela Reid, and Tracey Marchment. In the second row, from left, are Marianne Debrabandere, Pam Zabel, Mike Ferguson, Elizabeth Hill, and Judy Lawton. In the third row, from left, are Mike Brine, Patty Brine, Lisa Evans, Dwayne Henderson, Chris Evans, Barb Nicholson, Brian McKinnon, and Carey Mills. In the fourth row, from left, are Matt Payette, Mike McKinnon, Francis Brekelmans, and Scott Lobb. Not pictured was Lore Brekelmans. On the right, Carol Venn and Barb Nicholson return a serve during one of the many games that took place during the day of pickleball action.

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An apple (pie) a day...

Delicious Farmers' Market fundraiser returns Saturday, Oct. 4

ANDREA MACKO

Contributed Article

Move over pumpkin spice: this autumn in St. Marys, the scent and flavour of apple pie reigns supreme when it comes to seasonal cravings!

The St. Marys Farmers' Market has resurrected its Apple Pie Day contest and auction, taking place at the Saturday, Oct. 4 market. There are three parts to the event. Local bakers are asked to submit two homemade pies, one for judging and one for the auction.

Slices from the judged pies will be sold to enjoy at the market, and the

whole pies will be auctioned by John Stevens. Funds from both will support market activities.

Pies for the Best Apple Pie competition must be submitted at the market by 8:15 a.m. on Oct. 4. Judging will take place at 8:30 a.m. Apple Pie slices will be available for sale at the market starting at 8:45 a.m. The esteemed judges for the event are Megan Brode (who won in 2019, the last year the event was held), Dan Troyer of Troyer's Spices and St. Marys Coun. Rob Edney.

The Apple Pie Auction will take place at 10 a.m., by auctioneer John Stevens,

after the winner of the baking contest has been announced. Auction pies must be submitted by 9:45 a.m.

Bakers are strongly encouraged to purchase their apples at the market on Saturday, Sept. 27, and each entrant will receive a bag of apples from Forest Hill Orchards. If bakers cannot purchase their apples at the market, they are asked to purchase Ontario apples from another source.

Both the winner of the competition and the baker of the highest-selling pie at the auction will receive a St. Marys Farmers' Market 2026 calendar (when

available), and four containers of soup at the market's Harvest Soup Day on Saturday, Oct. 18.

Full contest details are available at www.stmarysfarmersmarket.ca/apple-pie-day, on the market's Facebook page, and paper copies will be available at the Saturday, Sept. 13 and Sept. 20 market, at the manager's desk.

A special thank you to Farmers' Markets Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture for their support to promote the St. Marys Farmers' Market Apple Pie Day.

Happy baking – and eating!

Meet the St. Marys' community outreach worker

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Friendship Centre is hosting an event with St. Marys' community outreach worker on Tuesday, Sept. 23, from 6-7:30 p.m. to discuss the realities of housing and homelessness in the community.

Meet Your Community Outreach Worker is a free event taking place at the Friendship Centre (317 James St. S) and will offer town residents an opportunity to remain informed about the challenges faced by vulnerable members of the community. Community outreach worker Jade Orquin will present experiences from her frontline work and offer perspectives on the difficulties encountered by individuals experiencing homelessness or relying on social assistance.

"This topic deserves attention so we can unite and offer meaningful support as a community," said St. Marys senior services supervisor Jenny Mikita in a press release.

"Every story I encounter reminds me of the resilience and hope that exists even in the face of hardship," Orquin added. "By coming together, we can create lasting change for our neighbours in need."

Attendees will be encouraged to engage and learn about resources available for those facing housing instability. Whether locals have personal experience, want to support members of the community, or simply wish to better understand the complex issues surrounding homelessness, this event promises valuable insights and practical information to strengthen community connections.

Registration is strongly encouraged through ActiveNet (www.townofstmarys.com/activenet), or by calling the St. Marys Friendship Centre (519-284-3272).

Additional details on available social supports within the town can be found at www.townofstmarys.com/stonetownsupports.

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COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: Surprising differences in Ukrainian and Canadian health care

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Moving to a new country is a deeply emotional and challenging experience, often feeling like a crash course in a new way of life.

For me, as a Ukrainian immigrant, one of the most significant and eye-opening adjustments has been navigating the intricate Canadian health-care system. While both the Ukrainian and Canadian systems are designed to care for people, they operate on fundamentally different principles, leading to some truly surprising discoveries. This isn't a critique of either model, but rather a personal account of a journey from one medical world to another.

For newcomers to Ontario, the first and most crucial step is obtaining the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). This provincial plan acts as a safety net, guaranteeing access to essential medical services for eligible residents. It covers a wide range of needs, including doctor visits, hospital stays and many medical procedures. For someone coming from a country where out-of-pocket expenses for health care are common, the security that OHIP provides is an immense relief.

However, the "essential" part of the OHIP promise has its limits. I quickly learned that routine dental care, optometrist appointments and prescription medications are generally not covered. The initial shock of this reality was significant. Suddenly, the notion of people traveling abroad for affordable dental work, which I once found humorous, became a relatable and even tempting idea. The cost of a simple root canal here can easily rival a plane ticket back home, turning a once-unimaginable scenario into a practical consideration. This is a stark reminder that even within a universal health-care model, private costs for certain services are a significant factor.

One of the greatest challenges for new Canadians, particularly those in larger urban centers, is finding a family doctor. In my community of St. Marys, we were incredibly fortunate to secure one relatively quickly – a rarity, as I've heard stories of people waiting for years in some areas. Having a dedicated family doctor is like having a personal health quarterback who coordinates all aspects of your care, from routine check-ups to specialist referrals.

This contrasts sharply with my experience in Ukraine, where the system, while often flawed and under-resourced, typically did not involve multi-year waiting lists for non-emergency surgeries. When I first heard of a Canadian friend waiting a year for a procedure, I couldn't believe it. I initially thought it was a joke. I've since learned these long wait times are a genuine and systemic issue, driven by a combination of high



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

An immigrant's perspective on the Canadian health-care system, contrasting it with the one they left behind in Ukraine.

demand and resource limitations.

The situation in emergency rooms can be just as challenging. While they are a vital safety net for critical care, the wait times can be extensive. Waiting for hours with a sick child can be an agonizing experience, leading to a kind of internal calculus: "Is our situation serious enough to justify this wait?" This is compounded by the fact that many over-the-counter medications available in Ukraine, like antibiotics, require a doctor's prescription in Canada. This extra step, while a crucial part of Canada's more cautious approach to health care, can feel like a hurdle when you're trying to get help for a sick family member.

The differences in how the two systems handle everyday medical needs are perhaps the most telling. In Ukraine, the private sector plays a significant role. If you needed a specific lab test, you could often simply pay out of pocket and get it done without a doctor's referral. This offers a certain level of convenience and speed, though it's not without its own financial barriers.

In Canada, the process is far more structured and controlled by the public system. Getting a lab test often requires a multi-step process: you must first see your family doctor, who then provides a referral. This ensures a consistent and coordinated approach to care, but it can feel incredibly slow to someone used to a more direct, transactional model.

The most profound difference, however, lies in the financial aspect of emergency care. In Ukraine, as in many other countries, you often have to pay for a hospital visit, even for emergencies. The

thought of needing to bring your wallet to the emergency room is a concept that simply doesn't exist in Canada. Here, once you're inside the hospital doors, the focus is solely on your health, not your ability to pay.

This sense of security is truly a cornerstone of the Canadian system and provides a deep, underlying peace of mind that is invaluable.

Over time, I've come to appreciate the Canadian approach. It's a system built on a philosophy of cautious, measured care. There's an emphasis on preventative health and a reluctance to prescribe medication "just in case." It feels less like a quick fix and more like a thoughtful, deliberate strategy for long-term health.

My friends who've given birth here consistently praise the care they received. The Canadian approach to childbirth often involves fewer interventions and tests compared to what's common in Ukraine. The nurses also play a more prominent role, often handling the initial assessments and checks before a doctor even enters the room. This team-based approach to care was a welcome surprise.

I was also initially confused when my family doctor handled my routine women's health check-up. In Ukraine, this is strictly the domain of a specialist. I quickly learned that Canadian family doctors are generalists in the truest sense of the word, equipped to handle a wide range of issues, from minor injuries to reproductive health.

While the desire for a quick and affordable dental visit back home still lingers, I've grown to deeply appreciate the Canadian health-care system. It's a privilege to live in a country that prioritizes the health and wellbeing of all its residents, regardless of their financial status. The system may have its challenges, but it's a system that's also teaching me to embrace a more proactive and thoughtful approach to health, which is a valuable lesson in itself.

Ask the Arborist

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



Dear Arborist,

My birch tree is wilting with brown leaves looking pretty sick. Any idea why? I did have someone trim it, and now it looks pretty sad.

Thanks, B

Dear B,

It seems I am seeing a lot of birch trees that are struggling this year. It could be that it was very hot this summer, and causing stress. Also possible, the tree was contaminated by trimming if tools were not sterilized regularly.

There is a disease called birch wilt which is normally brought on by drought. You could try fertilizing, but other than that, it's a watch and wait kind of thing. Make sure it gets water at least twice a week.

Sincerely,

The Arborist

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

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Barn fire at Coupland Heights – conclusion

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

On June 27, 1924, Ontario Fire Marshal Edwin P. Heaton from Toronto spent a very long day in the auditorium of the St. Marys town hall. In morning, afternoon and evening sessions, he listened to evidence concerning a suspicious barn fire on Saturday evening, June 7. The barn, on James Street South, was on property belonging to Dr. Percy T. Coupland, a local dentist. The barn and entire contents were destroyed and six horses, stabled there, perished in the fire. Dr. Coupland was accused of conspiring to burn the barn because it was in the way of his new subdivision, Coupland Heights. James Brine White, who had a delivery business and who rented stabling in the barn, was also suspected of being involved. He had left the building just minutes before the fire started.

The St. Marys Fire Chief, William Moyes, had been ready to put the fire's cause down to spontaneous combustion of hay stored in the barn's loft or, perhaps, a carelessly dropped match or cigarette butt. However, Charles O'Hara, who occasionally did handyman work at Coupland Heights, testified at the Fire Marshal's inquiry that Coupland had offered to pay him \$200 if he burned down the barn. O'Hara had refused that offer, but still the barn was destroyed. Dr. Coupland denied ever making O'Hara such an offer and insisted that the barn was an asset. He had no reason to wish it destroyed. Fire Marshal Heaton had taken this contradictory evidence back to Toronto to review the inquiry transcripts thoroughly before writing a final report.

The weekly Journal Argus published complete coverage of the hearing in its next issue, Thursday, June 3. At Heaton's request, the publisher, J. W. Eedy, sent several copies of the newspaper to the Fire Marshal's office in Toronto. The two men seemed to have established a rapport. Heaton sent a very friendly thank you letter, saying: "It is gratifying that a journal so widely read and distributed should give so much space to an investigation of this kind, and particularly as it has been done with such accuracy and comprehensiveness. Whatever may be the result of the investigation, the thanks of the community, as also of our office, are due to you for the excellent report." Heaton explained that he was still working on his final report but continued, "I will let you know further when I am in a position to do so." True to his word, on Wednesday, July 9, just in time to make the deadline for Thursday's paper, a copy of the Fire Marshal's report arrived in the morning mail.

When the Journal Argus had breaking news, it posted the information on a large bulletin board in the office window. Fire Marshall Heaton's report was quickly summarized and placed on the board for all to read. The full report dominated the front page on Thursday, with the summary highlighted. It read: "In considering O'Hara's attitude on the witness stand, the very evident bias and spirit of vin-



(PHOTO COURTESY OF REBECCA TURNER, TAKEN IN 2016 FOR THE ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

In 1924, Dr. P. T. Coupland lived in this beautiful house on the southeast corner of Widder and Church Streets. It was close to the Presbyterian Church where Dr. Coupland was an elder, just a short walk to his dental office on Queen Street, and across town from the barn he owned on James Street South.

dictiveness, and the lack of the slightest corroborative evidence, I conclude that no credence whatever is to be attached to his story, and that it must be regarded, for some reason that I am unable to deduce, as a malicious and unwarranted attempt to injure Dr. Coupland in the eyes of community.

"There remains to consider the circumstances previously recited surrounding James White's interest in the property, and the possibility that the fire may have been instigated or set by him. Without going into too much detail, I must say that not only did White make a favourable impression as a witness, but gave full and satisfactory answers to all the questions put to him. His demeanor did not indicate any impression or evidence of guilt; moreover, the fire destroyed his means of livelihood, and I fail to see the least motive for him desiring the fire. Had he been induced to set the fire at the instigation of any other party, it is not likely that the opportunity of doing so would have been seized when his entire stock was in the barn. No evidence was available to enable us to determine the cause of the fire."

Both Dr. Coupland and James White must have been greatly relieved when they read the Fire Marshal's report. No evidence had been presented that linked either of them to the cause of the fire. Charles O'Hara's testimony had been completely discredited. But since the report admitted that the cause was still unknown, the rumours and suspicions that had circulated within the community were not completely laid to rest. They remained with all three men as they resumed their daily lives.

It's difficult not to feel sympathy for Charles O'Hara. Having immigrated in 1922 from England, he was still a newcomer, working hard to find a means of supporting his young family. He had held several jobs and perhaps believed some remark by Dr. Coupland was a tempting opportunity to advance his fortunes. When the barn burned, he may have been

truly suspicious and felt justified in seeking a reward from the insurance company. According to the Journal Argus, when he was called to testify, he "came onto the platform quietly and undisturbed." But he overplayed his hand. Anxious to prove his story, he cited occasion after occasion where Dr. Coupland repeated his offer to pay him to set the barn on fire. Then Coupland's lawyer called church elders and prominent businessmen who contradicted this 33-year-old labourer's testimony. When their statements suggested that the two men could not have met on some of the occasions O'Hara described, his testimony did not stand a chance. But he did not let this setback defeat him. By the 1931 census, he was farming in Downie Township. Before he died in 1961, he saw his own sons well-established in the St. Marys business community.

James White did receive some insurance compensation for his losses, but he seems to have lost the will to rebuild his delivery business. Once he had paid his drivers' wages, his profits had been marginal at best. The fire, along with the lingering suspicions, may have completely discouraged him. By 1931, White, now

59 years of age, was working again as a self-employed carpenter in house construction. But he too had the pleasure of seeing his family succeed. Not long after the barn fire, his son, David C. White, the owner of a grocery store, was elected to town council. Throughout the Great Depression in the 1930s, David White was chair of the town's Relief Committee and was known for his compassion and practical assistance to those seeking help. From 1939 to 1945, David White was the town's mayor and helped guide the community through those anxious years. James Brine White died in 1951, age 80.

In 1924, Percy T. Coupland, age 45, was by far the most prosperous of the key figures in the Fire Marshal's inquiry. He lived in a lovely house on the southeast corner of Widder and Church Streets. He had a well-established dental practice, and many lots in his subdivision in the south ward had been sold. There was every indication that he would continue to succeed. But he had become over-confident, too ready to take shortcuts to achieve his goals. In 1922, without permission, he built a road from Elgin Street to his new subdivision on Elizabeth Street, cutting right through the centre of the old Methodist Cemetery. It had been abandoned but there were still many gravesites there. Not only the Methodists were upset!

In the mid-1920s, Coupland bought a large parcel of land in central Florida and encouraged many of his St. Marys acquaintances to invest in vacation property there. However, this property was undeveloped, and, with the start of the Great Depression, it was clear that no development was going to take place. The investors lost their money. Coupland himself was declared bankrupt. Some felt that, because of his earlier high-handed actions, he deserved this fate. They remembered the suspicious 1924 barn fire and the doomed horses. By 1931, Coupland had lost his Widder Street house. By 1932, he had sold his dental practice and moved to Toronto where he was involved in the promotion of mining ventures. He died there in 1952, age 73.

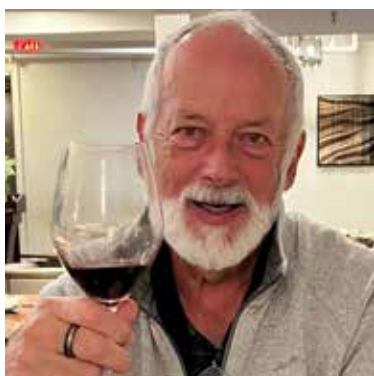


HOUSE FOR SALE

LOVELY MOVE IN READY BUNGALOW in the west end of picturesque St. Marys. 72 Carrall Street. This property features a large corner lot, 2 main floor bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a partially finished basement with 2 additional rooms, plus a family/rec room. Single detached garage.

Go to Kiji Ad ID 1724804443 or Facebook Marketplace, search "72 Carrall Street" for all of the details and photos. Must see! Contact 519-570-6931 or kristafrancisishere@hotmail.com.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Unexpected delights in a “drive-through province”



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

The exact numbers are tough to authenticate, but the trend is very clear; a lot of Canadians are opting not to visit the United States and are choosing, instead, to travel within Canada.

For example, some statistics suggest that up to 30 per cent fewer Canadians visited the U.S. in the first months of 2025, while at least 10 per cent more are vacationing here at home.

If you are among those planning in-Canada vacations in the next year, you will not be disappointed. I've had the opportunity to travel in eight provinces in the last year and a bit, and I enjoyed every visit. And I especially appreciated my time spent in three of Canada's less-visited provinces.

It's probably no surprise to know that the most popular provinces for visitors are Ontario, Newfoundland, Québec, British Columbia and Nova Scotia, but there are three provinces that are seen as “drive-through destinations” – places to pass through on your way to something more interesting. I am referring to New Bruns-

wick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Well, I have to say that if you are not stopping to explore these destinations, you're making a big mistake. Each of them holds amazing surprises for travellers, and each is worth a lengthy stay.

This week, I want to focus on something that was a complete revelation to me during my visit to Saskatchewan a couple of months ago because, as an avid if generally inconsistent golfer, taking a golf holiday in Saskatchewan would never have occurred to me.

Wrong.

I got the chance to play in three unique settings north of Saskatoon, and each offered a terrific golfing experience. With a small group of travel/golf writers, I played Dakota Dunes Golf Links on the Whitecap Unceded Dakota Territory; Cooke Municipal in Prince Albert; and the three nine-hole courses at Elk Ridge, described as “Saskatchewan's premier destination resort.” I also stayed at Dakota Dunes and Elk Ridge.

And I have to say, for any golfer planning a golfers' group getaway, an itinerary including these three courses would be a guaranteed hit with your golfing companions.

What makes this special is the three golf courses are entirely different, one from the other.

We started at Dakota Dunes. Its full name is “Dakota Dunes Golf Links,” which may seem odd, since “links” courses are supposed to be beside the ocean and Saskatchewan is a fair distance from any salt water! But I

think the name is appropriate – this is a “prairie links” course, with lots of sand, high-grass rough and plenty of challenges. It's also beautiful, presenting amazing scenes unlike anything you would find in Ontario, and I guarantee golfers will be pleasantly distracted by the prairie dogs, striped squirrels and unique flowering plants that are some of the delights of the course.

And speaking of delights, our dinner at Dakota Dunes' Moose Woods Home Fire Grill was over-the-top amazing. The restaurant has a farm-to-table menu that features local ingredients; this being Saskatchewan, local ingredients include bison, elk, Bannock and more amazing tastes. We were presented with planks of roasted meats and vegetable, and I thought I had died and been transported to foodie heaven.

Our next golfing stop was Cooke Municipal. It's a lovely course, but for an Ontario golfer looking for something different, it was the least interesting of our choices simply because it is a beautifully care-for parkland style course that you might find at one of the finer courses in Ontario. That being said, it's in remarkable condition for a municipal course and I would recommend including it in your itinerary.

Last stop was Elk Ridge, where we had the chance to play all three nines – and repeat one, if we chose. The Elk Ridge courses are in the heart of Saskatchewan's northern boreal forest and the course designers have taken full advantage



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Dakota Dunes offers a unique experience for Ontario golfers.

of the breath-taking opportunities that landscape offered them. That landscape is home to lots of wildlife; we saw deer during our rounds and it's not rare to spot the elk for which the course is named.

Personally, I loved it. So much so that on day two, when it started to rain as we finished the first nine of the day, I opted to replay nine I had already played the day before while the others hustled off to have a beverage in a warm and dry restaurant. I got soaked, but then the sun came out and by the end of the game, I was as warm and dry as my better-refreshed friends.

In addition to the golf, a highlight of our visit to Elk Ridge

was a seminar on creating and preparing cocktails – an opportunity offered (for a fee) to visitors to Elk Ridge. By the time we finished mixing, sampling and resampling our cocktails, it was probably a good thing I had skipped the earlier drinks.

So, if you love food, drink, scenery, wildlife and even golf, don't just drive through Saskatchewan. Stay and discover one of the best destinations our country has to offer.

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 incredible selection of “local ingredients” at Dakota Dunes.



Elk Ridge's cocktail expert Sandeep Maurya with an eager student.



Sandeep Maurya, conducting a delightful cocktail-making session.

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: One pound, three ways



LAUREN EEDY
Independent Columnist

One pound of ground beef – beef mince, as the British call it – can equate to three efficient dinners serving four people each.

These are British-influenced dinner recipes that go a long way with very few ingredients and are easy to whip up for a weeknight meal. At least one of the three should appeal to your family, saving yourself time during busy September and fall evenings.

Beef stroganoff
Feeds four.
Ingredients:
6 strips smoky bacon
1 large onion, finely sliced
¾ cup or a handful of mushrooms of your choice, wiped and sliced
1 cup dried pasta of your choice
330 g beef mince (a little over

1 ¼ cups)
1 tbsp paprika
1 tsp mixed herbs
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 cup sour cream
100 ml (less than ½ cup) chicken stock
100 ml (less than ½ cup) milk
Small handful of parsley, chopped

Method:
- Heat a drizzle of oil in a large, nonstick pan. Add the bacon and fry until crispy. Remove from pan and set aside.
- Add onion and mushrooms to pan and fry until soft. Remove from pan and set aside. Place the pasta in boiling, salted water. Bring to a boil and simmer until al dente. Drain and set aside.
- Place beef mince in pan and fry for 5-7 minutes until browned all over. Drain excess fat.
- Stir in paprika, mixed herbs and garlic. Fry for 2 minutes.
- Chop the bacon into bite-size pieces and add to mince with onions, mushrooms.
- Add sour cream, stock and milk. Season with salt and pepper and give it a good stir until combined.
- Gently bring to a simmer for a couple of minutes un-

til heated through, thick and combined. Stir reserved pasta into sauce, add finely chopped fresh parsley. Divide between four bowls.

Ginsters (meat and potato pastry)
Can be eaten hot or cold. Feeds four to six.
Ingredients:
1/3 cup butter
1 onion, finely chopped
½ cup peeled potato, cut into half-inch cubes
330 g beef mince (a little over 1 ¼ cups)
2 tbsp flour
1 tsp ground black pepper
½ tsp garlic powder
1 ¼ cup beef stock
Salt
2 tbsp milk
1 Sheet puff pastry
1 egg beaten

Method:
- Melt the butter in a large, nonstick pan. Add onion and potato cubes, fry on medium heat for 5 minutes until onion is soft and the potatoes are starting to soften.
- Add the beef mince to the pan for another 5 minutes until browned. Break up the beef as you stir.
- Stir in the flour, ground black pepper and garlic pow-

der.
- Stir on medium heat until the flour has completely disappeared and the mixture is starting to sizzle.
- Add half the beef stock to the pan. Stir on medium heat until it comes to a boil and thickens, before adding second half of the stock.
- Bring back to a boil, season with a little salt and stir in the milk. Set mixture aside to cool a little.
- Preheat oven to 375°F. Roll out pastry. Cut into quarters until you have created eight rectangles of pastry.
- Spoon around three dessert spoons of beef mixture over pastry pieces and spread evenly. 1.5 cm from the edge.
- Lay the other rectangles of pastry over filling and lift the edges together, pressing firmly. Using the prongs of a fork, make indents around the edge. Brush with beaten egg.
- Bake in oven 20-25 minutes until golden brown and cooked through.
- Serve with a chilli, salsa or HP Sauce.

Beef and tomato noodles
Feeds four.
Ingredients:
Oil for frying
1 onion, finely chopped

330 g beef mince (a little over 1 ¼ cups)
1 cup ramen
½ tsp garlic powder
4 tbsp tomato sauce (recipe calls for ketchup)
2 large tomatoes, finely chopped
2 tbsp soy sauce
¼ cup frozen peas
7 heaping tsp beef gravy powder or beef bouillon mixed with 1 ¼ cup boiling water
Salt and ground pepper to taste

Method:
- Heat a drizzle of oil in a large nonstick saucepan. Add the onion and fry on medium heat for 5 minutes.
- Stir in the chopped tomatoes and beef mince. Fry for 5 minutes, breaking up the beef with a wooden spoon until browned. Drain off any excess fat. Place the ramen in boiling water. Bring to a boil and simmer for 4 minutes until cooked. Drain.
- Stir in the garlic powder, tomato paste or sauce and soy sauce before adding peas and the beef gravy mixture. Bring back to a boil, season with salt and pepper before adding the noodles. Divide between bowls and serve with thick slices of buttered bread.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH
St. Marys Public Library

The St. Marys Public Library is a crafter's paradise! Stop by tonight from 6:30 to 8 p.m. for a new program: "Create and Connect". Tonight's session will focus on making a mini quilt. All skill levels are welcome, from seasoned crafters to intrigued experimenters. Future "Create

and Connect" nights will focus on topics from fabric mending to watercolour painting. Stay tuned for more details on these upcoming offerings. This program is free to attend, and no registration is required. The recommended age of participants is 14+.

Speaking of watercolour, "Fun with Watercolour" is returning this fall. On September 26 and November 14 from 1

to 3 p.m., pick up your paintbrush and experiment in a relaxing environment. Attend one session or both. Everyone is welcome! This program is free to attend, and no registration is required.

Up This Week
Thurs., Sept. 18: Create and Connect (6:30-8 p.m.)
Fri., Sept. 19: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sat., Sept. 20: Dungeons and Dragons (10 a.m.)
Mon., Sept. 22: Euchre Mondays (10:30 a.m.)
Tues., Sept. 23: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Wed., Sept. 24: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Chocolate Bar BINGO* (7 p.m.)
*Registration Required



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BOB "LINC" LINCE
MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNEY
Sat. Sept. 27th - 4 person scramble
Shotgun start - 10:00 am at River Valley
Cost: \$80/player includes green fees, cart, 1/2 chicken dinner, donation
SIGN UP AT THE CLUB BY SEPT 22ND
MEAT DRAWS EVERY FRIDAY 6PM



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Sun. Sept. 07 - Keith Jacobs, Stratford	\$50.00
Mon. Sept. 08 - Eleanor Kittmer, Lakeside	\$50.00
Tues. Sept. 09 - Nancy Ellens, Mitchell	\$50.00
Wed. Sept. 10 - Matthew Nevbrand, Dublin	\$50.00
Thur. Sept. 11 - Bob Phillips, St. Marys	\$50.00
Fri. Sept. 12 - Margie Taylor-O'Rourke, Stratford	\$50.00
Sat. Sept. 13 - Darlene A. Dunbar, Stratford	\$200.00

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Riddles

- I have four legs but I don't walk. I come in handy when you eat. What am I?
A chair.

I grow without legs, I drink without a mouth, and I sleep when the sun goes out. What am I?
A plant.

I have hands but cannot clap. I have numbers but cannot count. What am I?
A clock.

I'm full of keys but I open no doors. I can play music when you press my keys. What am I?
A piano (or keyboard).

I fly without wings and cry without eyes. Whenever I go, darkness follows. What am I?
A cloud

I have a tail but I'm not an animal. I can tell you which way the wind blows. What am I?
A weather vane (or a kite).

I wear a green coat in summer and a brown coat in fall. I stand still and drink through my roots. What am I?
A tree.

I have a face but no nose, mouth, or eyes. I tell you the time day and night. What am I?
A clock.

I'm white and cold and fall from the sky. I make a blanket on the ground in winter. What am I?
Snow.

- Word Search -



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FALL ACTIVITIES

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

- Pick apples
- Corn maze
- Hiking
- Oktoberfest
- Fall fairs
- Play in the leaves
- Make scarecrow
- Carve pumpkin
- Scenic drive
- Collect leaves
- Plant bulbs
- Birdwatching
- Harvest crops



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK



Beau Kittmer (5)

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

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

PET OF THE WEEK



Have you heard about our online pet store?!
Relax knowing you're getting the right products from professionals who know your pet!
Check us out! www.myVETstore.ca/stmarysvetclinic



POPPY

Our Pet of the Week is Poppy, short for Popcorn, who is approximately six years old. Poppy loves lettuce and likes playing with the curtains in the living room. He is a member of the Finch family.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent

Thorndale teen cherishes summer memory playing lacrosse with Team Ontario

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

As young people return to their schoolbooks and fall activities, many will cherish summer memories of camp, family adventures or playing sports. Sixteen-year-old Liam Turner's memory of this past summer will stay, no doubt, with him throughout his life.

When most children dream of playing hockey, Turned chose lacrosse, following his older brother into the sport. He has played lacrosse for 13 years and currently plays offence for the London Blue Devils. Earlier this year and after many tryout rounds, Turner was selected along with two of his teammates to play on Team Ontario.

"My expectations were very high playing on this team," he said. "I knew that it would be competitive and tough, but I also knew it would be fun competing against the best players from other provinces in the Summer Games."

The 2025 Canada Summer Games in St. John's, Nfld., brought together over 5,000 athletes, coaches and managers from across the country, competing in 19 different sports. The games are designed for up-and-coming amateur athletes, typically ranging from ages 14-22 depending on the sport. Each sport has its own eligibility criteria, but the focus is on youth and junior-level competitors who represent the future of Canadian sport.

At this year's Canada Summer Games,

lacrosse returned after its 2022 reintroduction.

"Representing Ontario in the Canada Summer Games was unreal," Turner said. "I felt special knowing I wasn't just playing for myself or my team, but for the whole province. The atmosphere, the competition and the chance to represent Ontario gave me a huge sense of pride."

"It's something I will always remember."

In the Men's Box Lacrosse gold medal match at the 2025 Canada Summer Games, held on Aug. 24, Ontario defeated British Columbia to claim the gold medal. It was a thrilling final that displayed the depth of talent in both provinces, but Ontario came out on top. The match was part of a broader celebration of lacrosse's return to the Canada Games, and it capped off a strong tournament performance by Team Ontario.

"There are so many amazing memories, it is hard to pick a favourite," Turner said. "If I had to pick one, I'd say the athlete village life is my best memory. Being able to stay in the village packed with other athletes from different provinces and competing in different sports is just an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience."

As for future dreams, Turner said he would like to go to the U.S. for university and play lacrosse in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and eventually play lacrosse professionally in the National Lacrosse League.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Thorndale athlete Liam Turner recently played at the Canada Summer Games in St. John's, Nfld., with Team Ontario.

Therapy Worx celebrates five Years in Thorndale with a food drive

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Sheena Ball, registered massage therapist (RMT) and owner of Therapy Worx in Thorndale, is marking a special milestone – five years of her registered massage therapy practice serving the local community.

Since opening her practice in 2020, Ball has felt deeply supported by the residents of Thorndale, and now she is giving back in a meaningful way.

To celebrate her anniversary, Ball is hosting a food drive to benefit the Dorchester Food Bank. Community members are invited to drop off non-perishable food items at her office, located

at 160 King St., Thorndale, now through Oct. 3. As thanks, anyone who donates five items or more can enter a draw for a prize.

"With the growing demand on local food banks, I felt this was the perfect way to celebrate my time here," Ball said. "Thorndale has been so generous and supportive; this is my way of celebrating my anniversary with the community."

Ball has been an RMT since 2011 and remains in good standing with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario. She is enthusiastic about continuing education and is committed to delivering personalized, effective care in a welcoming environment.

Thorndale Horticultural Society members learn the ins and outs of floral design



(PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZ IGLESIAS)

At the Thorndale Horticultural Society September meeting, guest speaker Jim Mabey, avid gardener and certified Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) judge, demonstrated floral designs to inspire members to enter their designs at the upcoming Thorndale Fall Fair. His demonstration was filled with tips as to what judges want and look for in entries.



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BOYS GRADES 7-8 > SEARCH #13844



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

Solutions on pg. 35

Looking
Back

AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist



Beyond chicken thieving

25 years ago (2000)

A number of St. Marys DCVI students left classes last Wednesday to protest the suspension of extra-curricular activities at the school. They would like to see teachers get back to coaching sports and leading extra-curricular activities. The teachers are unhappy about government legislation which forced them to spend more time teaching each day.

The Kirkton Llazy Llama Club traveled to the Western Fair to compete in an inter-club Llama Show of 4-H members from Elgin, Norfolk, and Perth. A total of seven Perth members competed in the first 4-H llama Show to be held at the Western Fair: Angela Gregory, Erica Levy, Kendra Levy, Cheryl Nethercott, Erin Robson, Laura Robson, and Ryan Steffler.

50 years ago (1975)

The St. Marys swan population will have a handy dandy home for the winter, thanks to the new owners of the former Beaver Lumber property, Bob and Gary Douglas. A corner of the Beaver Lumber shed will be made over into quarters for the six swans, complete with a “waddleway” out to Trout Creek.

A newsletter for birdwatchers and naturalists is being compiled for midwestern Ontario. Monthly summaries of their observations are compiled and sent to contributors. Items include sightings of different species, feeder populations, etc. If you are interested in recording your observations, contact Mr. and Mrs. Neil Nutt of St. Marys.

75 years ago (1950)

Ralph Ainslie, who is one of the few kite enthusiasts of the town, launched a new creation recently in the shape of a lady of broad proportions - in fact she's five feet tall and several feet wide, but with a very slim waist. This is one of many kites which Ralph has built.

A couple of small toy balloons were picked up by the threshers on Don Grant's farm north of town this past week. They were advertising an auto dealer in Romeo, Michigan and had drifted over 100 miles before coming to earth to be picked up by Roy Johnson.

George Taylor's garbage truck, when backed over the dump face Saturday night, settled on top of a smoldering fire which, fanned by the exhaust, blasted up and threatened to ignite the truck tires and platform. St. Marys Firemen quickly brought action which suppressed the flames and no damage was caused.

100 years ago (1925)

Robert, the young son of Mrs. W. Gilpin, North Ward, suffered a fractured skull on Monday morning when he struck a stray dog while riding his wheel on Water Street. He is now making a good recovery.

Edward Harlton of London, formerly of St. Marys, is being sought for the killing of Jack Waddell, Middlesex County Motorcycle Officer, at the Harlton home on Egerton Street in London. The wanted man is still at large, but the two men, Lewis Brunden and Alex Goldstein, who bought chickens from Harlton are in custody. The shooting allegedly occurred when the officer attempted to prevent Harlton from escaping when he was being watched as a suspect of recent chicken thieving.

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OBITUARY



Seymour

Christine Seymour, 82, passed away peacefully on September 9, 2025, surrounded by her family and under the remarkable care of the staff at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital.

Born in Swainby, England, on November 24, 1943, Christine immigrated to Canada in 1966 with her then-husband Ian to foster a better life for their family. She was the first of three children of Ray and Joan and was loved and appreciated by her sister Pat (Bill) and brother Paul (spouse Eileen). Christine was a loving and devoted mother to Andrew (Lori), David (Ellen), and Jason (Sophia). She was a doting grandmother to Spencer, Milan, and Marisa (Jon) and great-grandmother to Tyler, Lauren, and Olivia. Christine was a lively and loyal friend to many who were lucky to enjoy her friendship. Christine valued her long career at McKinley Hatchery in St. Marys, and spent almost the entirety of the last decade of her life living in St. Marys. In retirement, she was accompanied every day by her best friend, her dog Sammy, and enjoyed many nights of trivia and card games with her family. She also loved hosting Christmas gatherings in her well-decorated home. Christine was truly the matriarch of the Seymour family, and would go to the ends of the earth to help the people she loved. Her family will remember her generous heart, bright smile, infectious laugh, quick wit, enigmatic spirit, and wholesome soul. Christine's family also sends a special thanks to Pam Caldwell, Christine's best friend of 50 years, for her support and assistance through this difficult time.

Christine touched everyone she met with her warm and vibrant presence. She left a lasting impression on everyone who were lucky enough to know her, and will be deeply missed. Cremation has taken place, and a private ceremony will be held at a later date.

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 29

Friday, Sept 19

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- Thorndale Fall Fair – Gates open 5 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Linolns vs LaSalle Vipers at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Sept 20

- Moving sale at 567 Elgin St E
- Thorndale Fall Fair – Gates open 8 a.m.
- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Rotary Club fun golf & Kenyan BBQ at River Valley – Register at rotarystmarys.ca
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.

Sunday, Sept 21

- Thorndale Fall Fair – Gates open 8 a.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Chatham Maroons at Chatham Memorial Arena – 7 p.m.

Monday, Sept 22

- Community Dinner at St. Marys United Church – 5 p.m., Sponsored by Sunset Diner

Tuesday, Sept 23

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee – 10 a.m. to Noon

Wednesday, Sept 24

- St. Marys United Church strawberry supper (drive thru pickup) – 5:30-6:30 p.m. Call 519-284-2704 or 519-284-3016 for tickets, \$25

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Marilyn Monroe

6. Cambridge

2. Pongo

7. George Orwell

3. Spain

8. 8min, 20sec

4. Saffron

9. Omnivores

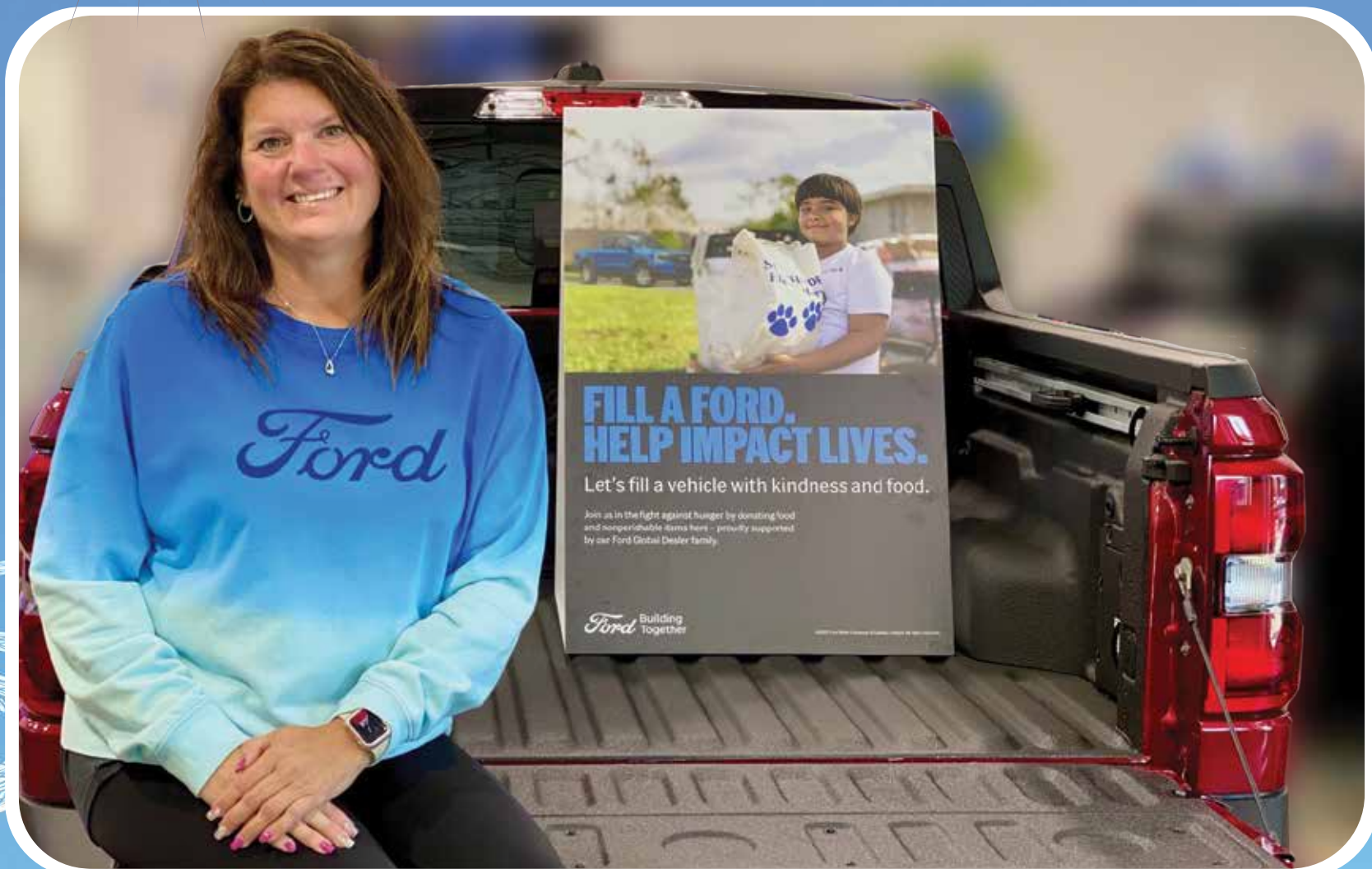
5. Bradley Cooper

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