MCPHERSON FAMILY'S NEW CHAPTER PAGE 8

ST. MARYS BOOK FAIR PAGE 12

St. Marys Independent

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FOCUS ON RAIL SAFETY (STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

A VIA passenger train collided with a tractor at this passive railway crossing on Samuel Street on Friday, Sept. 18.

Close call with train and tractor comes days before Rail Safety Week

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Things could have been much worse when an eastbound VIA passenger train collided with a southbound tractor on Friday morning at the Samuel Street railway crossing.

The crossing is one of the few "passive" railway crossings in the St. Marys area, meaning that it does not have gates and flashing lights. Instead, the railway crossing features a stop sign and crossbuck.

The tractor was headed towards Robson Scrap Metal when the driver of the green Deutz-Fahr Agrotron spotted the approaching train and was able to stop the tractor before it moved completely across the tracks. However, the driver was unable to shift the tractor into reverse.

Minimal damage was done to the train, while the visible impact to the tractor included loss of the front counterweights and a flattening of the front-right tire.

VIA passengers were delayed several hours by the collision. After a lengthy delay of close to four hours, the travelers were finally allowed to exit the train, which had stopped just a short distance from Broken Rail Brewery, located at the former St. Marys Junction Station.

Buses arrived mid-afternoon to transport the passengers to their next destination.

"Once they were finally allowed off, we had a number of them who enjoyed some beer while waiting for their bus," said Ryan Leaman, co-owner of Broken Rail.

The incident, which occurred Sept. 18, came

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

Proposed Sebringville subdivision moves one step closer to approval

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

A major residential development proposed for Sebringville moved one step closer to approval following a public meeting held by Perth South council on Sept. 15.

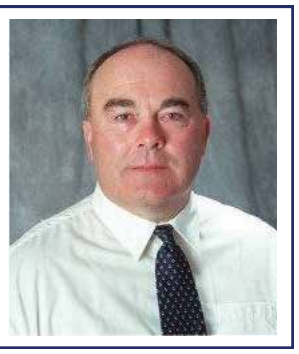
The proposed subdivision, located on Station Road, would bring 265 new residential units to the village, including 92 single-detached homes, 96 apartment units, and 77 townhouse units. The current proposal is down from the original plan for 302 units.

The development would also include a park and recreation area, as well as stormwater management infrastructure. Full municipal servicing, including water, sanitary and stormwater services, is proposed.

Caroline Baker of Baker Planning Group, representing the developer, told council that one apartment block had been removed from the proposal in response to public comments. The remaining apartment and townhouse

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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COMMUNITY

Close call with comes days before Rail Safety Week

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

just days before National Rail Safety Week, which runs Sept. 21-27. St. Marys Town Council proclaimed the week following a resolution passed earlier this month.

Council passed the Rail Safety Week resolution following correspondence received jointly from CN and Operation Lifesaver, a public/private partnership whose aim is to work with the public, rail industry, governments, police services, media and others to raise rail safety awareness.

According to the correspondence from CN and Operation Lifesaver, 252 railway crossing and trespassing incidents occurred in Canada in 2025, resulting in 69 avoidable fatalities and 60 avoidable serious injuries.

"We have recently seen disturbing spikes in deaths and serious injuries," wrote Patrick Lortie, a Senior Vice-President at CN.

CN and Operation Lifesaver called for municipalities to resolve that "educating and informing the public about rail safety will reduce the number of avoidable fatalities and injuries caused by incidents involving trains and citizens." This includes reminding the public that railway rights-of-way are private property, enhancing public awareness of the dangers associated with highway rail grade crossings, ensuring pedestrians and motorists are looking and listening while near railways, and obeying established traffic laws.

Tips to "Be Rail Smart" include:

-Stop a safe distance from tracks and crossings;

-Look both ways to ensure trains are not approaching;

-Listen for approaching trains.

For more information on rail safety, please visit www.cn.ca/en/safety/rail-safety/.



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Visible damage to the tractor following the Sept. 18 train collision was a loss of front counterweights and a flattened front-right tire.

Proposed Sebringville subdivision moves one step closer to approval

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

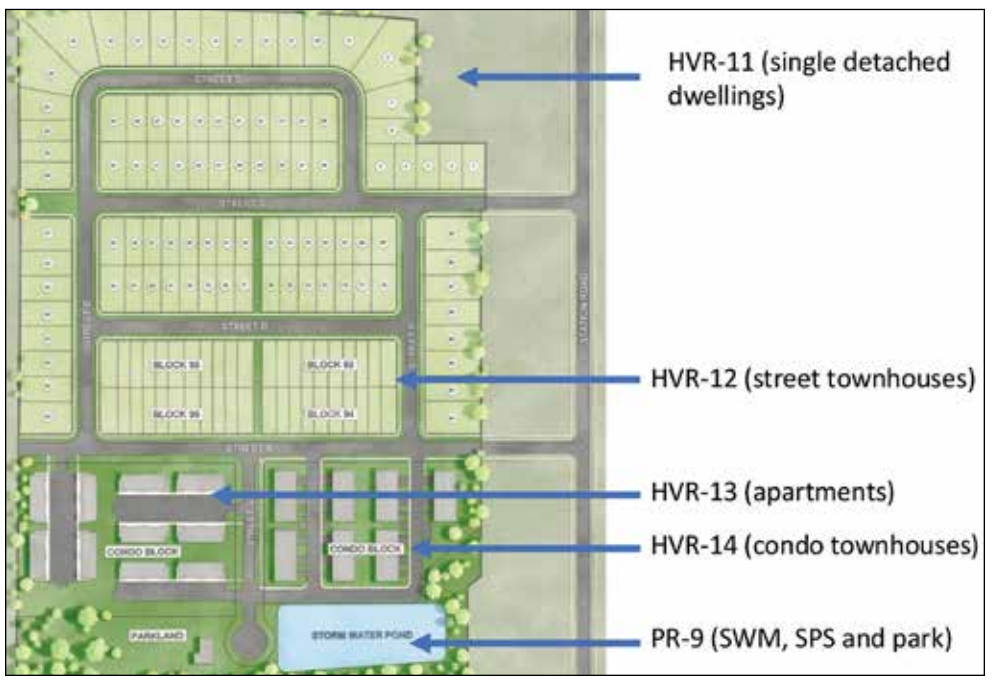
buildings would be a maximum of three storeys.

A number of residents spoke at the meeting, raising concerns about the scale of the development, parking, traffic and water.

One comment that captured the concern about the proposal's size came from Paul Neumeister, who said: "We're virtually doubling the size of the village. I think this is a big concern of a lot of people."

Council ultimately voted to approve the proposed zoning bylaw amendments in principle, with an amendment requiring two parking spaces per dwelling in certain portions of the development. Council also recommended that Perth County Council approve the draft plan of subdivision, subject to conditions.

The official plan amendment and draft plan of subdivision are expected to go before Perth County Council in October for consideration.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PERTH SOUTH)

Above is a map of the proposed Station Road subdivision provided by Baker Planning Group and presented by Caroline Baker during the Public Meeting held at Perth South Municipal Office on Sept. 15, 2026.

7 Day Forecast
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Wednesday Sept-23rd	Thursday Sept-24th	Friday Sept-25th	Saturday Sept-26th	Sunday Sept-27th	Monday Sept-28th	Tuesday Sept-29th
Sun & cloud	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	Sunny	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	Sunny
19°C	19°C	20°C	22°C	22°C	21°C	23°C
Feels like 19	Feels like 18	Feels like 20	Feels like 21	Feels like 23	Feels like 23	Feels like 24

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EDITORIAL

Moving offices



STEWART GRANT

Regional Editor

September always seems to be the busiest month of the year, but it has been especially so for us at the newspaper as we also prepare for our change of office.

By the time you read next week's Independent, we will be moved into our new location at 143 Queen Street East, which is on the north side of the road in between Four Happy Restaurant and Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters.

We've had many positive comments about the blue colour that was painted on the exterior by High Five Painting (formerly known as 519 Painters), as it creates a nice contrast beside the yellow buildings to either side. High Five's colour consultant Maria was fantastic, and through discussion with her we decided to go with Sherwin Williams colours 'Endless Sea' for the main and 'Oyster White' for the trim.

Justin Rutgers of Rutgers Renovations has been awesome to work with on the general contracting, and we've moved some interior walls around at the former location of O'Grady's Clothing to suit our needs.

The front area of 143 Queen will house Stonetown Travel; the former O'Grady's change rooms have been evolved to create an office space for myself; while the building's north end will house the newspaper operation.

For those who simply want to grab the week's paper, we plan to have an old-school newspaper box out front so you easily pick up the latest edition of the St. Marys Independent, plus other nearby papers like the Stratford Times, Exeter Examiner, and Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette.

Going through the past two decades of storage at 36 Water Street South has been an experience. It's amazing the things that can accumulate only to be ultimately purged. While we are proud to be stewards of local history, we need only keep a couple copies of each issue.

I had a storage area built within our new space to safely house and organize the bound copies of roughly 125 years of the Tavistock Gazette, 25 years of the St. Marys Independent, as well as past editions of our newer papers. Over time, with 13 different newspapers and counting, this could prove to be a logistical challenge. I guess this is why they invented microfiche and digital storage, but still, there's nothing quite like the real thing.

The worst aspect about moving is the literal weight of things. Old desks and filing cabinets are so heavy and awkward to move! I'm not looking forward to this part, which is coming later this week.

On Monday, we did a test run at Stonetown Travel and carried one desk directly across the street to the new office, because the move is literally too close to justify putting it in a moving van. It must have been quite a sight at 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon when three of us jaywalked across Queen Street with a big wooden desk. We sure won't choose rush hour to move the rest of the travel furniture.

It will take a little while for us to get everything completely in order, including new signage that should arrive in mid-October, but we look forward to serving you from our new location soon.

Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week

1) Bravo to the organizers of the annual St. Marys Terry Fox event. It was a wonderful morning. Well organized, energetic, and inspiring.

2) Bravo to the new owners of Foodland. Very people-friendly and kind!

Boo

We have 1 Boo this week

1) Boo to the drivers who gave the finger to the volunteers at the Terry Fox event on Sunday.

**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

"This ban could not be a more direct assault on the First Amendment nor a more blatant violation of our most fundamental constitutional principles."

- Statement by CNN, MS NOW, and POLITICO after being banned from the White House earlier this week by U.S. President Donald Trump

Overheard AT THE COFFEE SHOP

Sponsored by: Tim Hortons

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Great to see high attendance at Terry Fox runs across the country!

It's the time of year where Toronto Maple Leaf Fans start to feel hopeful and alive!

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

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

St. Marys Independent

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Thoughts OF THE WEEK

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To lose patience is to lose the battle.

It isn't the hours you put in but what is in those hours.

A true friend listens when you need it the most, not just when it is important to them.

Stay with those who make your heart feel happy, not heavy.

Town of St. Marys to commemorate National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

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 education, reflection and healing.

The St. Marys Museum is currently showcasing Talking About Treaty 29, an exhibit that examines the creation of Treaty 29, also known as the Huron Tract Purchase of 1827. The exhibit explores the history of treaties and the ongoing rights and responsibilities that continue to shape the area now known as St. Marys. It will be available during regular museum hours until Nov. 30. On Sept. 30, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Museum will also display The Truth and Reconciliation Banner created by community members and finished by artist Jeffrey "Red" George in 2021.

The public is invited to the St. Marys Public Library for a series of five virtual Lunch and Learn sessions hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Sessions will take place daily from September 21-25, from 1-2 p.m.

On Wednesday, Sept. 30, the Falstaff Family Centre in Stratford invites the community to join educator and facilitator Patsy Day, an Elder from Oneida Nation of the Thames and member of the Turtle Clan, for a sunrise ceremony and Indigenous teachings from 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. The gathering will take place at the fire pit and medicine wheel garden.

Later that day, the St. Marys Public Library and the Friendship Centre will livestream the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation broadcast from Parliament Hill beginning at 12 p.m.

The National Truth and Reconciliation flag will be flown at town facilities from Sept. 28 to Oct. 2.

Residents are encouraged to wear orange shirts on Sept. 30 to honour residential school survivors and support the message that "Every Child Matters." Those wishing to purchase an orange shirt are encouraged to support Indigenous-owned businesses.

In a press release, the Town of St. Marys said it is grateful to the many individuals who have helped deepen understanding and commitment to reconciliation.

"We are especially thankful for the guidance and teachings of Patsy Day, who continues to support us on this journey," the release states.

For a full schedule of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation events, visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/see-and-do/festivals-and-events/national-day-for-truth-and-reconciliation/.

2026

Fall Book Sale

Lind Sportsplex/Quarry

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Books, Puzzles, Music, DVDs for sale by donation

Wed. Sept. 23 - Fri. Sept. 25

10 AM - 6 PM

'Fill yer boots'

Sat. Sept. 26th - 10 AM - 4 PM

Donations to the **Library Pantry** are also appreciated!

FOL

Friends of the St. Marys Public Library

FriendsOfStMarysPublicLibrary@gmail.com

@StMarysFOL

www.StMarysFOL.ca

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys





SAFE ROADS FOR EVERY GENERATION

Road Safety Month Reminder

Whether driving, walking, or riding the Mobility Bus, seniors deserve safe and accessible travel. Be patient at intersections, watch for pedestrians, and help create a community where everyone can move confidently.

.

FAMILY FUN CONCERT & FUNDRAISER

In support of the Community Commons Project featuring live music from beloved children's performers Sonshine & Broccoli!

Saturday, October 3rd from 1:30 to 3:30pm

Pyramid Recreation Centre

Tickets are available at the Library by donation

Visit townofstmarys.com/CommunityCommons





CHECK YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION

If you've recently moved, changed your name, or aren't sure your voter information is up to date, now is the time to check. Confirm, update, or add your information to the voters' list by visiting Town Hall (175 Queen Street East), or contacting 519-284-2340 ext. 241 during regular business hours.

MEET YOUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER

October 17 | 10AM-12PM | Snapping Turtle Coffee

Join the Town for "Conversations with the Community Outreach Worker". Come meet Jade, our Community Outreach Worker, and discover the resources and supports available in our community.

Learn more: townofstmarys.com/StonetownSupports





SHOWER PROGRAM

Pyramid Recreation Centre

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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the Week is Dianna Deery who is 83 years young. Dianna loves being outside tending to her large flower gardens. For years Dianna did contract gardening for a number of clients and still maintains the garden for one customer. She also enjoys walking. One of her favorite hikes is from her home on Southvale Road to the Ann Street retirement community, a round-trip distance of approximately 7 km. Dianna has one son, two daughters, three grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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

Teddy Bears donated to ER thanks to Teddy Bear Reunion



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Staff in the emergency department were happy to accept more teddy bears from Teddy Bear Reunion organizer Marlene Forman. The successful Teddy Bear Reunion, which takes place annually every August, is a great event for kids and families to enjoy but it also raises money for a great cause. The funds raised are used to purchase these teddy bears that get donated to the Emergency department at St. Marys Memorial Hospital and are used to help calm the fears of children and some older adults that may need comfort. Staff members pictured above are Byron Horinga, Emma Carr, Heather Brock and Wesley Tin happily accepted the cute teddy bears knowing how much they will help young children when they have to come to the emergency room.

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. Who was the first emperor of Rome?
2. Which African country is known as the "Rainbow Nation"?
3. How many brains does a leech have?
4. What is the longest-running American sitcom?
5. Where did mahjong originate?
6. What was the first billion-dollar movie?
7. What creature holds the record for the world's largest eyes?
8. Who was the legendary king with the golden touch?
9. What type of acid gives grapefruit its tartness?
10. What is the national animal of New Zealand?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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Recognizing a year of service



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS

At the Sept. 14 meeting of the Rotary Club of St. Marys, Past President Ed Parkinson was recognized for his service as President during the past Rotary year. Pictured above, Assistant Governor Kirk Riehl (right) presented Parkinson with the Paul Harris Fellow recognition to honour his contribution and service.

FALL in love with the St. Marys Farmers' Market

SATURDAY, SEPT. 26 - APPLE PIE DAY
Buy slices starting at 8:45 a.m.
Live and silent whole pie auction at 10:30 a.m.
Entry details at www.stmarysfarmersmarket.ca

SATURDAY, OCT. 17 - SOUP DAY
Savour chef-made soups full of market ingredients at this cozy market fundraiser

SATURDAY, OCT. 31 - FINAL OUTDOOR MARKET

SATURDAY, NOV. 7 - FIRST INDOOR MARKET

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SOURCE FLOORING

After five decades, St. Marys family business begins a new chapter



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Brenda Neufeld and the MacPherson store and doll-making team welcome MP John Nater during his visit to learn how tariffs have affected the family business and how it is transitioning toward Canadian markets. Pictured from left to right, are Brenda Neufeld, MP John Nater, Shelly McLean and Angie Currah.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The late Joan MacPherson, founder of the family business, is pictured enjoying a tender cuddle years before her journey with dementia began. Her life and legacy continue to inspire the family's work with therapy dolls.

STEWART GRANT
Publisher

For more than five decades, the MacPherson family has built, adapted and reinvented its business in downtown St. Marys.

Now, facing major changes in the company's once-lucrative U.S. market, Brenda Neufeld is doing it again.

The latest chapter is bringing the family business back toward its Canadian roots, with the storefront at 91 Queen Street East now focusing increasingly on completed dolls designed for children, collectors, seniors and people living with dementia.

"Even when circumstances force us to change direction, I try to approach each new chapter with the same determination, personal care and belief in the business that she had," Neufeld said of her mother, Joan MacPherson.

The story began in 1972, when MacPherson opened a small shop called The Common Place in St. Marys. As the business grew, it became MacPherson Arts & Crafts and developed into a destination store for crafters from St. Marys and well beyond.

During the 1980s and 1990s, MacPherson built the business into a substantial downtown retail operation. Neufeld worked alongside her mother during those years before taking over the business in 1999 and downsizing the retail operation.

The next major transformation came in 2006, when the business entered the reborn doll industry.

Reborn dolls are highly realistic dolls created by artists, and MacPherson's business began supplying unpainted doll parts, kits and specialized materials to reborn doll makers.

It proved to be a niche business with an international reach.

At its peak, approximately 80 per cent of the company's sales went to the United States.

But changes to cross-border trade have prompted Neufeld to rethink the business yet again.

"We have had to reinvent ourselves more than once," she said. "It feels as though we are doing that again."

Rather than continuing to rely heavily on the U.S. market, Neufeld is using the company's experience, and its collection of more than 400 doll molds, to develop completed weighted dolls for the Canadian market.

The business, now known as the MacPherson Doll House, features two Canadian doll brands.

Dolls Inc. offers dolls for children, families and collectors, while Therapy Dolls Canada is being developed for seniors, long-term care communities and people requiring sensory support.

The therapy dolls have a particularly personal connection for Neufeld. Her mother lived with dementia later in life, giving the family firsthand experience with the value of comfort, familiarity and meaningful interaction.

The dolls are designed to be held and nurtured, with weighted bodies, realistic faces and soft cloth construction. Neufeld is working to introduce them to long-term care homes, community programs and families.

The Dolls Inc. line includes weighted baby dolls as well as Ready to beBorn kits, allowing children and families to assemble their own dolls.

And despite the company's international history, the latest chapter is very much local.

The dolls are weighted, stuffed, dressed and assembled by the company's team at the St. Marys location.

Neufeld said that connection to the community is important to her.

"St. Marys is our home, and this storefront represents far more than a place of business to me," she said. "It holds the history of my mother and father, my children and our extended family."

Joan MacPherson died in October 2025, adding another layer of significance to the family's latest transition.

Neufeld said her mother taught her that running a family business means being willing to change while never losing sight of the people the business serves.

"She showed me that success is not only measured by sales, but also by the relationships you build and how you contribute to your community," Neufeld said.

That philosophy is now guiding the latest incarnation of a business that has already undergone several.

"During the 1980s and 1990s, my mom built MacPherson Arts & Crafts into a destination store that brought people to St. Marys from near and far," Neufeld said. "It means a great deal to me to continue what she began and to work toward making our store a destination once again, this time as the MacPherson Doll House."

She hopes the new direction will allow the business to once again draw customers to St. Marys, but this time for a very different reason.

"I love this town, and I am very proud that our dolls are being assembled here and that the next chapter of our family business is still being written in St. Marys."



Record turnout, fundraising for St. Marys Terry Fox Run





(GORD BARNETT PHOTOS)

The 46th Terry Fox Run for Cancer Research was held on Sunday, Sept. 20. The event has been officially held in St. Marys since 1996, and heading into this year, a grand total of $133,878 had been raised over the past 30 years. This year was the most successful year yet in terms of both fundraising and participation, which included 30 volunteers and over 200 people of all ages who traveled the 5 km route from the YMCA to and from Broken Rail Brewing along the Grand Trunk Trail. Anna Doupe, co-organizer of the St. Marys Terry Fox Run, reported that 2026 saw a record $19,340 in funds raised by the community. Thanks go to all those who keep Terry's memory alive and who continue to work towards a cure for cancer.









Downie Central's first Grade 8 class reunites, honours classmate Sgt. Margaret Eve

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

The original class of Downie Central Elementary School held a reunion last weekend for the first graduating class of those born in 1962.

The former students in this class were the first to attend kindergarten through Grade 8. They graduated from Grade 8 at Downie Central 50 years ago.

"It was wonderful to see everyone; the energy in the room was electric," said Elaine Strawbridge, organizer. "Everyone was hugging and introducing themselves because, you know, we don't look the same as we did when we were 14. People were thrilled to attend."

The school was built during a period when Ontario was increasingly consolidating rural school sections into larger central schools. Instead of maintaining numerous small, one-room schools, school boards began bringing students together in larger buildings, often with several classrooms, specialized facilities and eventually school-bus transportation, which came with its ups and downs, said Strawbridge.

"We had quite an adventure on Jan. 26, 1971," said Strawbridge. "There was a massive snowstorm. Our bus and one other bus got as far as Avonton, about three kilometres from the school, but couldn't make it any farther. The only reason we got as far as we did was that one of the Grade 8 boys ran in front of the bus to show the bus driver where the road was. Three buses were stuck at the school for three days with the teachers that week, too."

Downie Central is part of the Avon Maitland District School Board and is located in the Downie Ward of the Township of Perth South. The school is located at 4384 Perth Line 20, Saint Pauls Station, between Stratford and St. Marys.

One person who attended the school and graduated with the first class was Sgt. Margaret Eve, a sergeant who was killed at a roadside stop during her time working with the Chatham-Kent Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Members of Downie Central School's first Grade 8 graduating class reunite 50 years after graduating from the school. Back row, from left: Jane Bickell Otto, Mr. Graham (spouse), Jayne Shackleton Dill, Colleen Eve (Margaret Eve's daughter), Brenda Vink (Margaret's sister), Sherry Forster Moraca, Pierre Chateauvert, Dave Gorvett (spouse), Peter Bisset, Daryl Stacey, Ken Brooks, Steve Otto, Andy Graham, Dan Jackson, Joan Tettman, Bob Galloway, Elaine Strawbridge and Reid Dundas. Front row, from left: Barb Costtick Gorvett, Lois Worden Gascho, Catherine Gibb, Liz Hislop Clarke, Jane Humphrys, Susan Hewitt Graham, Sherrie Wickenheiser Roulston and Kathryn Mallon (daughter of Bessie Blair, a kindergarten/Grade 1 teacher).

On the afternoon of June 7, 2000, on a deadly stretch of Highway 401 (known as "Carnage Alley"), Sgt. Eve, along with Constables Brad Sakalo and Patti Pask, checked a vehicle that was suspected to have been involved in an armed robbery in Windsor.

While talking with the occupants of the car, the driver of a transport truck drove directly into the three police cruisers, the suspect vehicle and all five people standing on the shoulder of the highway. All were rushed to the hospital with serious injuries. Sgt. Eve was airlifted to the Trauma Unit at the London Health Sciences Centre but later died on June 9, 2000.

Approximately 4,500 police officers and civilians attended the funeral service.

She was the first female police officer killed in the line of duty in Ontario, as per the OPP website.

Sgt. Eve was known as an incredible person and a true leader. She lived by two mottos: "Lead by example" and "Do it right, or not at all."

Though Sgt. Eve's tragic death was felt by communities across the province, her death was one of the tragedies that helped lead to Ontario's Move Over law, which requires drivers to slow down and, when it is safe, move over when passing certain stopped emergency vehicles.

The legislation was introduced in 2002 and, since

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11

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Downie Central's first Grade 8 class reunites, honours classmate

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

then, has been said to have saved countless police officers' lives.

Sgt. Eve's daughter, Colleen Eve, attended the reunion on her mother's behalf and said she was grateful for the opportunity to connect with those who knew her mother as a young child and teenager.

"It was such an honour for our family to be invited to the Downie Central Elementary School class of 1976 50th reunion," said Colleen Eve. "To have the opportunity to speak with her classmates and hear their stories was particularly special for our family. Margaret valued friendship and community, and we know that this class reunion would have been something she would have loved to attend herself."

The graduating class has now started a scholarship in Sgt. Eve's name. This fund will support a student graduating from Downie Central School and aims to recognize a student who exemplifies kindness, as Eve did.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The first graduating cohort from Downie Central School of those born in 1962.

"We are equally honoured that the class members had the idea to establish a scholarship in Margaret's name with kindness at its heart," said Eve. "It feels like a particularly fitting way to carry her legacy forward in her own community."

Anyone interested in more information about the scholarship can contact Strawbridge at strawbridge.elainef@gmail.com.





Local authors showcase their work at St. Marys book fair



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

St. Marys author Laura McAsh with her novel *Alison's Adventures in Time.*



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Local author Aly Westman donated five dollars from each of her sold books towards the St. Marys Imagination Library, as her son was a recent graduate of the program.

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

The St. Marys Legion became a one-stop shop for local and regional authors on Sept. 19 during the Local Author Fair and Book Market.

"It's actually the very first book fair I have been to," said Laura McAsh, a St. Marys author who wrote *Alison's Adventures in Time*. "It's been a really positive experience. Everybody here is so welcoming and there's such a variety here of different things going on, from books to the other vendors as well, which I think is great. Variety is the spice of life."

Authors from St. Marys, Stratford, London and surrounding communities promoted their books alongside local vendors, including Stonetown Tallow.

"It's interesting meeting other authors and talking to people," said Jessica Jones-Cole, founder of JJ Book Nook Publishing.

The Dorchester-based author was at the event with her daughter Maevis, a Grade Three student who wrote the book *ABC Animals*.

"She spent the year researching the animals and writing it, and then I illustrated it for her. She wrote it so little kids can read it and they'll learn the letters and an animal, but there's also some fun facts so that older kids can also enjoy the book too," said Jessica.

Freewill donations to the St. Marys Imagination Library, which provides books for children under five in the area, were being accepted at the event. St. Marys author Aly Westman also donated $5 from every book sale to the organization.

"My son was part of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library," Westman said. "He just turned five so he just graduated from the program and he looked forward to getting that book every month. It was the highlight of his day when it was in the mailbox. It's just something great to give back, especially being an author, and I think it's important for us to keep literature in the hands of kids."





London's Nine Fine Artists showcase artwork in St. Marys



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Gail Kumpf with her nature landscape paintings, two watercolour and one acrylic.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

The Station Gallery was filled with lots of guests checking out the Nine Fine Artists exhibition during its opening reception on Sept. 19.

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

The St. Marys Station Gallery hosted an opening reception on Sept. 19 for an exhibition featuring the work of the Nine Fine Artists of London.

The Nine Fine Artists is a group of visual artists founded in 1997 by Helen Bezeau Kajan. The group was created as a way for artists in London and the surrounding area to engage in conversation and develop their creative craft.

In addition to work by Bezeau Kajan, the exhibition features artwork by Michele Stewart, Anne McLean, Gayle Kumpf, Toni Ciantar Poole, Susan Moore, Debra Bailey, Gail Gifford and Joyce Rintoul.

"We're all very grateful for the opportunity to show our work in St. Marys. It's a great little town," said Kumpf, who grew up in the Stonetown.

Duncan MacDonald, curator and director of Station Gallery, said the exhibition provides an opportunity for artists and residents from London and St. Marys to connect with one another.

"We have some St. Marys artists here today who will start conversations. Maybe they will be doing shows together so it will open up possibilities, but I think it's an opportunity for communities to come together and a lot of these people actually have family from St. Marys and some of them grew up here," he said.

MacDonald encouraged residents to check out the exhibition.

"It's a lot of smaller affordable artwork done by some artists who have been making work for decades and decades and I think it's a strong show that I think everybody will enjoy something from."

The Nine Fine Artists exhibition runs until Oct. 24 and can be viewed in person at Station Gallery, 5 James St. N. A digital gallery of the exhibition is also available at stmarysstationgallery.ca.





Becoming part of a dairy farming team: An inside look at Kirkton Vet Clinic's dairy veterinary services

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Dr. Robyn Elgie, a dairy veterinarian with the Kirkton Vet Clinic, said the practice is unique compared to other veterinary care.

A dairy veterinarian will travel to see their clients regularly, usually every two weeks, to check for pregnancy, milking parlor protocols, medical treatment as needed and disease-prevention initiatives like vaccine protocols.

"You get to know the clients that you work with really well because you see them all the time and you definitely become part of their team on the farm and their advising committee that they have and they get information from," said Dr. Elgie.

The Kirkton Vet Clinic will also have emergencies every day, so there must be a block of time in her schedule left open and free from pre-booked appointments for her to travel as far as an hour and a half one way.

In addition to Kirkton and surrounding areas, Dr. Elgie travels as far as Parkhill and Sarnia to treat the cattle at farms in those areas, as there is limited access to veterinary treatment there.

"That didn't always used to be the case. … Every small town had a clinic that did both large and small, but just the way that the livestock industries have gone and there's less livestock farms in those areas than there used to be, it just didn't support large animal (veterinary care) out there," she said.

The Kirkton Vet Clinic is a large veterinary clinic that can accommodate out-of-town clients.

"Nowadays, farmers are really good and we spend a lot of time teaching them on how to do a lot of treatment and techniques on their own or at least in the interim until we get there, and educating them on detecting things early on in the process so that if it does take a bit of time to get intervention there to help, then we haven't lost time by just not checking the animal soon enough," said Dr. Elgie.

Dairy veterinary practices, such as disease prevention, are an important role in agri-food production and for large animal care.

"Every large animal veterinarian that's in that agricultural space cares pretty strongly about food safety and producing the best quality food that we can, so that's one aspect of it is making sure we are preventing disease as much as possible – so helping farmers have access to vaccines and to use them appropriately so they can get the most out of them, but also on the other side of just the care for the animals," Dr. Elgie said.

The personal connection between the dairy vet and their patients is what drove Dr. Elgie to the speciality, and she also enjoys the drives out to the farms.

"It can be long days and lots of driving, but your office is the countryside and living in Ontario, we get to see a lot of beautiful scenery," she said.

More information about the Kirkton Vet Clinic can be found online by visiting kirktonvetclinic.com.



(DR. ROBYN ELGIE PHOTO)

Dr. Robyn Elgie is a dairy veterinarian with the Kirkton Vet Clinic. She travels to dairy farms in the area and as far as Sarnia to provide care to cattle.



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Another busy year at Quarry despite weather conditions

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Highlights of the 2026 Aquatics summer season were received by the Mayor and Councillors during the Sept. 22 regular council meeting for the Town of St. Marys.

It was reported that "the Quarry had another successful summer with 27,109 in attendance." Although this figure was down 7.6% from the 29,328 who attended in 2025, this was easily attributed to the challenging weather conditions. It was noted that during the summer, the Quarry experienced 20 partial or full-day closures resulting from various factors including heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning, and poor air quality.

The report also indicated that within the fourth season of the Resident Swim Pass program, 24 passes were sold, which was an increase from 15 in the previous year. Meanwhile, the upstairs lounge at the Lind Sportsplex remained available for rental and was booked nine times throughout the season.

There was a reduction in swimmer incidents from the previous year, with 78 incidents in total being documented. Of these, five rescues were reported. Super Splash incurred a total of 55 first aid incidents, of which two involved EMS calls, one being for a dislocated shoulder and the other being due to muscle strain.

Zebra mussels were less frequent at the Quarry this year, but wasps were more prevalent. The wasp activity was bothersome enough around the slushie machine that it was removed during the final week of operations so to minimize stings.

Regarding the new fall season, there are 334 registered for fall swimming lessons that commence the week of Sept. 14. These include both group and private lessons, and children and adult lessons. Four head lifeguards have been hired for the Aquatics Centre this fall.

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Solutions on pg. 31

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St. Marys Independent SPORTS

Lincs take two of three, dominant over LaSalle, Woodstock

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincoolns improved their record to 3-1-0-0 on the regular season after a disappointing loss on home ice was sandwiched between two ultra-dominant performances.

The Lincolns began a stretch of three games in four days Sept. 16 with a visit to the LaSalle Vipers, coming away with a 4-2 victory. However, while the score wasn't totally lopsided, the actual flow of the game was heavily tilted in the Lincolns' favour.

"I thought we completely outplayed them from start to finish," said Jeff Bradley, Lincs' head coach. "I didn't think the game was close at all, aside from the score. It's very important to me that our forecheck becomes a huge piece of our identity, and to have two games where our forecheck has been near perfect is something I'm really happy with."

Leading the charge for the Lincolns' excellent showing in the eyes of coach Bradley was the line that started the game, Oliver Lacko, Chase McDougall, and Devun Colebrook.

"The (Oliver) Lacko, (Chase) McDougall, and (Devun) Colebrook line, I thought they were outstanding. I thought from their first shift, they were outstanding. The pressure they're able to put on the opposition is why we wanted to start them. Right away, there's a big hit by Devun, a good F2 play by Oliver to get pucks back, and we spent the entire first shift in LaSalle's zone. And then, their second shift, Chase went out there and laid somebody out.

"The priority for them is defending, and that's my priority at all times," Bradley continued. "So, when you share that with players, you're going to trust them a lot more. So, being able to trust guys like that for them to go out and do their job and then to actually execute it, it's a nice thing for me."

Tristan Kitchen got the game's first goal for the Vipers, but Ryan Hodkinson answered back for the Lincolns, opening the scoring for St. Marys for the second straight game.

The Lincs outshot LaSalle 16-6 in the first, but the Vipers managed to find more of a groove in the second, with the shot differential being narrowed to 15-13 for St. Marys in the middle frame. Despite the Vipers having their best period of the night in the second, the Lincolns outscored the home side three goals to one.

Jonah McIndoo made it 2-1 for the Vipers before three unanswered goals by Owen Bruining, Callum McAuley, and Devun Colebrook, the latter two coming in the final minute.

Bradley told the Independent he was thrilled with how the Lincolns withstood the second-period push by the Vipers.

"In the first, we were outstanding, but the turnovers overshadowed how well we were playing. I thought we limited our turnovers in the second period, but there are two teams playing and trying to win, and they played a bit better in the second, but I thought we handled it well. They put one push on us in three periods, and we were able to sustain it and outscore them. We outscored them in their best period."

Sluggish start costs Lincs against Stars

Although the Lincolns turned in a solid effort in the final 40 minutes, a sleepy first period was too much for St. Marys to overcome, dropping their Sept. 18 clash against the St. Thomas Stars 5-3.

Tyran Lawson and Pierson Clute put St. Thomas ahead 2-0 in the first, before the two sides traded goals back-and-forth in the second and third. McAuley scored twice



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

After playing some of the most gritty hockey in his three years with the St. Marys Lincolns in their first four games of the season, Ethan Weir, pictured, potted his first goal of the campaign in another strong effort Sept. 19 against the Woodstock Navy Vets, helping the Lincolns to a 9-1 win.

for St. Marys with Camden Kean also netting his first of the year. For the Stars, Dylan Willmott and Luke Wachowiak each restored two-goal leads, while Lawson scored his second of the night into an empty net.

According to the head coach, the Lincolns' push in the final two periods came too late.

"I don't think we were ready to go. It seemed like they thought it was going to be two points given, and that showed in the first period. We were quite physical in the second and third periods. I thought we were good on chasing down pucks and getting away from St. Thomas and taking away certain things from them," Bradley began.

"But, if you spot a team two goals, you put your goalie in a situation where he can't mess up, and their goalie has a good game for the next two periods, you're still chasing, and chasing in this conference is not a good thing to do. You can't take a night off. We feel we're going to get everybody's best, and we've got to be ready for the opening puck drop."

Lincs trounce Navy Vets in first-ever trip to Woodstock

Just 24 hours later, the Lincolns went to Woodstock in search of a response, and got it in the form of a cannonball through the Navy Vets' bow, winning 9-1.

"It was very important (to bounce back from the loss to St. Thomas)," Bradley noted. "Right from the start, we were physical, we moved the puck well, we took time and space away from them, and we supported the puck well. I saw the good little things that we need to do to be successful. We're trying to build confidence all throughout the lineup, and a 9-1 win normally will do that."

The Lincolns' dominance was evidenced by David Heath scoring the game's first goal 30 seconds in, while it took the Navy Vets eight minutes to register their first shot of the game. In the end, the Lincolns outshot Woodstock 40-13, and went four-for-seven on the powerplay, including two that were scored during a nine-minute man advantage in the third period resulting from Jordan Jacobs receiving two minutes for charging, two for instigating, and a five-minute major for fighting an unwilling player.

Bradley detailed what he liked about the work done by his powerplay units.

"We executed with the puck in-zone for the most part. When you have that many powerplays, you should score on a bunch of them, and we did. There's still definitely work to be done on the powerplay. We want to touch up our entries, breakouts, and retrievals on the powerplay, just the details like that, but to get goals in the meantime is nice."

Heath's goal was his first of two in the contest and came with Heath playing on the right wing of Hodkinson and Blake Elzinga.

"As long as you're willing to work to their pace and move the puck to them and be ready for the puck whenever they can get it to you, you should be able to fit with that line," remarked Bradley. "David (Heath) earned a good opportunity with his work ethic in the first three games, so I figured it was a good chance for him to jump in, and he did a great job."

Hodkinson tied a GOHL-era Lincolns record for most points in a single game with two goals and four helpers.

Ethan Weir found his first goal of the season as part of a three-point night, with the goal coming after some of the most tenacious, hard-nosed hockey Weir has ever played in a Lincolns jersey over the first few games of the young season.

"I'm really happy that Ethan (Weir) is diversifying his game a little bit," said Bradley. "He's a lot more physical than he was in the past. He's a good veteran. He's a good voice on the bench and in the locker room. He's really becoming a good leader for us. He's been to two Sutherland Cups, and he's able to set a good example for the guys who haven't played in those types of games."

McAuley had a five-point game including a goal, making it three straight games with a goal for the Timmins, Ont., native. Elzinga had a goal and three assists, giving him a point in every game so far this season, and Colebrook also made it a four-game point streak with a goal of his own. James MacGregor also found the back of the net for St. Marys.

Turnovers have been an early focal point for the Lincolns, and while still having some work to do in that and a couple other areas, Bradley saw some noticeable improvement in Woodstock.

"Our puck management was better. We still had a lot of turnovers, but when you have the puck the whole game, you're going to turn it over. We've got to keep working on how we defend in our zone and how we defend in the neutral zone for sure. Those are just things that we've got to touch up on, and that's the plan."

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Ryan Hodkinson leads hometown team as captain in final GOHL season



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Ryan Hodkinson, pictured, will wear the 'C' on his jersey for the 2026-27 season after being named the captain of the St. Marys Lincolns for his fourth and final season in the GOHL.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Callum McAuley, Devun Colebrook, Ryan Hodkinson, Blake Elzinga, Ethan Weir, and James MacGregor. The six St. Marys Lincolns' players make up the team's 2026-27 leadership group, with Hodkinson serving as captain, with Elzinga, Colebrook, McAuley, MacGregor, and Weir all serving as assistant captains.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Some things are destined to be.

Ryan Hodkinson serving as captain of the St. Marys Lincolns is one such thing.

Before their home opener Sept. 11, the hometown boy was introduced to the Pyramid Recreation Centre crowd by public address announcer Jamie Hahn as the captain of the Lincolns for the 2026-27 season.

Hodkinson described how meaningful it was for him to wear the 'C' for the team he grew up watching.

"It feels good," said Hodkinson. "Obviously, coming back for another year, it feels like forever ago that I started with this team. I've been here a long time. It's kind of crazy if you think about it. If you told me when I was a kid that I'd be the captain my final year after being here for all these years, I would have called you stupid. Words can't describe how much it means to me, but I'm trying not to look into it too much. I think the goal is just to win it all."

According to Hodkinson, he is "pretty proud" to have his name added to the list of captains who have played in St. Marys over the last decade and beyond.

"There have been so many good leaders that have come through, all the different captains, and I've watched them for 10 years, and obviously there were a lot of great ones before that too. So, just remembering those guys, I'm feeling proud to now be on the list with them," Hodkinson remarked.

"All of those past leaders led in their different ways. They're all fabulous leaders, and I think they showed us what it takes to win. Obviously, all of our leaders while I've been here, we've had successful years with them, and I think a major part of that is because of them and their leadership."

There were plenty of reasons why Hodkinson was the choice to serve as Lincs' captain beyond the obvious sentimentality of being a St. Marys native. On the ice, Hodkinson is one of the best players in the entire GOHL, as evidenced by his monstrous season last year, which saw him win the Pat Stapleton Memorial Award as the Western Conference's MVP, as well as the Kevin McIntosh Award as the West's best defensive forward.

Hodkinson finished 10th in scoring in the entire league in 2025-26, recording 16 goals and 47 assists in 48 games. In the playoffs, Hodkinson led the GOHL in points with 31, including 11 goals and 21 assists, in 23 games. Hodkinson had six more points than the next-highest-scoring players, including teammate Lincoln Moore and Reid Gammage of the Cambridge Redhawks, who both posted 25 points in the post-season.

As great a player Hodkinson is on the ice, he matches his ability off the ice as an exemplary teammate.

"You see what he does on the ice, and he's really a perfect player for us, but he's also an incredible teammate, which you may not always see if you're not in the room," explained Lincolns' head coach Jeff Bradley. "He just always makes sure everybody is taken care of."

Being a positive influence on the rest of the squad is something that Hodkinson sees as incredibly important.

"You see all the young guys come in and you just think, 'That was me at one point,'" Hodkinson noted. "You remember how intimidating coming in and the older guys were, so just welcoming them in and building the bonds with those guys who are just starting their career while I'm ending mine is important. Hopefully, it helps give them the best experience possible."

Hodkinson added he wants to lead both by his words and his actions, and instill the culture of the Lincolns into the next wave of core players who will carry it forward after he's gone, all while trying to help his hometown team finally achieve their ultimate goal – a Sutherland Cup.

"I think I want to just show the guys the ropes," Hodkinson said. "We've got a lot of guys returning, but for the new guys, I think all of us in the leadership group want to show them how St. Marys operates. Obviously, we've been successful for a while, and we do things a certain way, so showing them what it means to be a St. Marys Lincoln is the big thing. I think I'm a pretty vocal guy. I lead by example. I want to make sure everyone's on the same page and win games."





Tribe, Bears emerge as men's slo pitch division champions





(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left are the Tribe, who won the 'A' division championship with a dominant 23-5 win over the Flyers in the 'A' final. It was the eighth 'A' division title in 10 years for the Tribe. Pictured on the right are the Bears, who defeated the Jets by a score of 14-7 to take the 'B' division trophy. The game was tied 4-4 until the seventh inning when the Bears exploded for 10 runs. The St. Marys Men's Slo Pitch League hosted its year-end tournament Sept. 17-20.

DCVI boys baseball team opens season with pair of wins

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI boys baseball team picked up back-to-back wins in their first two games of the season Sept. 14.

Coach Graham Rae was thrilled with the opening to the season for the Salukis.

"It's always great to get off to a positive start," Rae told the Independent. "It gives us confidence to attack other teams. Our seniors, especially have worked hard to create a positive team identity and mentality."

In the first game against Listowel, DCVI was led to a 10-2 victory by Harper Murrell's four-hit game, as well as Donovan McGreggor's big RBI double, and Luke Showers getting on base in all three at-bats and scoring two big runs. Starting pitcher Zach Larmer locked the game down, only facing two batters over the minimum after the first inning in a dominant complete game.

In the second game of the day against Clinton, Parker Levy blew the Clinton hitters away with his strong fastball, only allowing one run. The bats were awake early in this one, scoring three runs in the first, and not looking back. Jude Schlotzhauer paced the offence with three hits as the Salukis cruised to an 11-5 win.

According to Rae, the team's enthusiasm for coming to the ballpark is the most important thing to the squad having success the rest of the season.

"I want to see them continue to enjoy the game and give it their best," explained Rae. "I have full confidence in this team, and that, if they do that, we will be right where we need to be at the end of the season."

High Dream 13 wins SMGCC's Ladies Fall Scramble



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Lisa Lyons, Paula Stoyanovich, Lynn Sebastien, and Donna Whitworth. The foursome from London, who played in the 'B' flight, put up an eight-under-par score of 64 to emerge as the overall winners of the St. Marys Golf and Country Club's Ladies Fall Scramble tournament, hosted Sept. 10. The course played a little tougher since some of the holes had been a little wet, but everyone seemed to have a great day. The 'A' flight winners were the Brantford Birdies, made up of Lori Graves, Heather Mcauliffe, Cindy Dunham, and Cheryl Ferguson, who scored 65. The Scramblers, Debbie Lemmons, Melanie Fisher, Janet Lanaus, and Isobel Jackson, shot 75 to win the 'C' flight. In the 'D' flight, the Sassy Slicers, made up of Sarah Taylor, Carly Bucholtz, Brit Hartfiel, and Mary Lou Jones, scored 70 to win their flight.

Johns, Wood win lawn bowling tournament



(PHOTO COURTESY OF PARKS LAWN BOWLING CLUB)

Pictured from left to right are Kay Johns, award presenter Chris Collins, and Rick Wood. Johns and Wood teamed up to win a tournament, hosted by the Parks Lawn Bowling Club Sept. 20 at the St. Marys greens. The tournament was sponsored by Tye's Detailed as well as the Collins and Warner family. The team of Everett Zwiers and Marilyn Lancaster finished second place in the tournament, while Larry McLellan and Sharon Farrish came in third. Rounding out the top five were Jody DiMelo and Paul Mutter taking fourth, and the consolation prize going to Denis Kearney and Dawn Collins.

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MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Brayden Rumble swings and records a hit during a Happy Valley Family Health Team U11 HL Grey St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Hannah Schmidt throws the ball from the outfield during a St. Marys Kinsmen Club U13 HP Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Will Richardson fires a pitch from the mound during a St. Marys Optometry U15 HL Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Derek Vernooy releases a pitch towards the plate during a Cubberley Plumbing and Heating U15 OBA St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Ben Forster plays the ball up the field from the defensive half during a U10 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm 'A' game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Lana Minhinnick passes the ball quickly across the pitch during a U11 Girls Tier Two St. Marys Storm game.

MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Blaine Seliske launches the ball into the field during a Veterinary Purchasing Ltd. U9 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Charlotte Holliday swings at an incoming pitch during a Hubbard Pharmacy Ltd. U9 HPFL Blue St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Elliott Maddock catches a pitch behind the plate during a U11 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Sianna Sicilia registers a hit during a Dunny's Source For Sports U11 HPFL Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Jack Anderson steps into a heavy shot after a rush up the field during a U12 Boys Tier Two St. Marys Storm game.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Bryson Stacey rockets the ball from the midfield towards the net during a U12 Boys Tier Two St. Marys Storm game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: Big cities have the buzz, small towns have the heart

ALONA VASYLIEVA
Independent Columnist

Small towns in Canada have a unique charm. People here are always on the hunt for a new weekend spot to spend quality time—and as a family, Sergii, Alex, and I have made a tradition out of exploring them.

It's a completely different mindset from what I was used to back in Ukraine. Growing up, the unwritten rule was that you had to head to the capital or big cities if you wanted to have any real fun, assuming small towns had little to offer. During our four years in Canada, we've discovered the exact opposite.

Take the local farmers' market, for example—it's an entire philosophy here. Did you know that some of Ontario's farmers' markets have been running continuously since the mid-1800s?

And right here at home, our St. Marys market has its own special magic. Just the option to drop by on a Saturday morning, bypass the chaotic big-city parking and rush, and be greeted by the warm, smooth sounds of a live saxophone playing in the background is something I never take for granted. Live saxophone music at a local market... honestly, how lovely is that?

Just last week, we visited Elora. On paper, it follows much of the same small-town formula as St. Marys—independent shops, local food, heritage buildings, and natural scenery—just with a bit more tourist hustle. You'd think that after visiting a few of these places, the predictability might get repetitive. But the most incredible thing is that even when you know what to expect overall, exploring each town still delivers an amazing, unique experience. That predictability doesn't make it boring—it makes it comforting.





(PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALONA VASYLIEVA)

How small-town support, local markets, and a slower rhythm keep communities alive and vibrant.

There is also a gentle rhythm to small-town living that completely changes how you experience time. In a big city, weekends often feel like a race to squeeze in as much entertainment as possible before Monday hits. Here, a Saturday morning walk down Queen Street or along the river trails isn't about rushing to a destination. It's about being present—noticing the changing seasons, stopping to admire a restored heritage storefront, or simply breathing in the quiet energy of the day.

Then there's the way Canadians support local businesses. Of course, logic and budgets exist—we all know that doing a massive weekly grocery run at a big-box supermarket is usually more practical for a family. But supporting local isn't about buying every single thing on your list from a downtown shop. Nobody expects you to do that. It's about the small, intentional choices—grabbing a fresh coffee, having lunch at a local spot, or picking up a handmade chocolate gift.

That support goes both ways, creating a sense of safety and familiarity you rarely find in metropolis crowds. You become a familiar face, not just a customer. The barista remembers your order, the shop owner asks about your family, and suddenly, routine errands turn into meaningful human interactions.

That is exactly how small towns stay alive and vibrant.

In big cities, starting a career or a small business often feels like shouting into a void. But in a small town, the distance between an idea and a neighborhood that supports it is so much shorter.

Over the years, I've noticed how many people in Canada find their career, business opportunities, and true calling right in a rural community. Of course, young people go off to college or university in the big cities to study, but there's no underlying pressure that you must stay there to be successful. You can achieve true professional fulfillment and make a meaningful impact right here, without sacrificing your ambition.

This spirit of mutual support is deeply rooted in how Canadians are raised, starting with the philosophy of volunteering that begins as early as elementary school. From a young age, kids are encouraged to give back through simple community projects, learning that value comes from helping others rather than asserting power over them. By normalizing service, empathy, and mentorship early on, this culture naturally leaves no room for toxic dynamics like hazing or systematic bullying. Instead of a hierarchy based on age or status, students grow up with a mindset of care and shared responsibility—a foundation that shapes how they interact with their neighbors for the rest of their lives.

Living and working in a place like St. Marys has shown me that quality of life isn't defined by the height of the buildings around you, but by the strength of the community you build your life with.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Have you got your tickets for the "Family Concert & Fundraiser for the Community Commons" yet? There's still time! Stop by the Library, Meridian, or Guest Services at the PRC to pick up your tickets today. You can also get them online here: tinyurl.com/Family-Concert-Tickets. As this is a fundraising effort for the Community Commons, donations are greatly appreciated and will be accepted at in-person pick-up locations as well as at the door on the day of the concert. Don't miss out on a fun afternoon of live music, cotton candy, balloon figures, and face painting next Saturday, October 3, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre!

Up This Week

- Fri., Sept. 25: FOL Fall Book Sale^ (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
- Sat., Sept. 26: FOL Fall Book Sale^ (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), Edith's Storytime Adventures (10 a.m.)
- Mon., Sept. 28: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Tues., Sept. 29: Tuesday Book Club* (11 a.m.)
- Wed., Sept. 30: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.), National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Live Stream (12 p.m.), Mahjong~ (1-4 p.m.)
- Thurs., Oct. 1: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Jack and Flossie Sgariglia

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

A few days ago, the St. Marys Museum received a donation of family photographs, newspaper clippings, genealogical pamphlets, and many other printed items. The Museum gratefully accepted this material for the archives because it concerned a family who had, just a few decades ago, been an important part of our town. Family records in the Museum's archival collections preserve the memory of individuals who helped build the community we know today. Attilio (Jack) and Florence (Flossie) Sgariglia are shown in this week's photograph, a formal portrait taken for their wedding in June 1924. For almost four decades in the mid-20th century, Jack's Fruit Store on Queen Street was a favourite stop for many local shoppers.

Attilio (Jack) Domenico Sgariglia was born on December 4, 1890, in Porto S. Elpidio, a small fishing village on Italy's Adriatic coast. This area is now a popular tourist destination, but when Jack was growing up, life for the people of that region was hard. They worked on their small farms, and possibly did some fishing, just to manage to provide for their families. Children had little time for school because they were expected to do their share of work alongside their parents. Jack learned to work hard from a very early age, but he also wanted adventure. When he was just 14 – the age when today, young Canadian boys are just starting high school – he and his friend, Vincenzo (Jimmy) Marziali, left home to seek their fortune.

The two boys found work as deck hands on a ship bound for Argentina. When they arrived in Buenos Aires, they discovered a well-established ex-patriot Italian community there. From 1850, the Argentine government had been actively recruiting Italian immigrants to work on farms in the underpopulated interior. Jack and Jimmy found work on a horse farm but after three years, possibly homesick for their families back in Porto S. Elpidio, they returned to Italy. But Jack was still restless. Perhaps he did not want to commit to a life of hard farm labour with little return – his expectations if he stayed in Italy. In 1910, at the age of 20, he set out for North America.

He landed in New York and travelled on to Ontario. Although Jack lacked training in any special skill, he was young, strong and willing. For the next two years, he had a variety of jobs that included working on the railway and on Great Lakes boats. He spent some time in Goderich, helping to build the breakwater at the harbour. In 1912, he came to St. Marys, possibly having heard that other Italians had found work at the new cement plant here. In 1914, he took an ambitious step: he left the plant and opened a grocery store on the north side of the main street, just east of the L. A. Ball building at the northeast corner of Queen and Water Streets. On a very proud day, July 5, 1920, at a Citizen Court in Stratford, he became a Canadian citizen. His framed citizenship certificate with his name, Attilio Sgariglia, was one of the treasures donated to the St. Marys Museum.

Jack Sgariglia was among the first group of Italians who came to St. Marys in the early years of the 20th century. He is featured in Bravi, A History of the Italian Community in the Town of St. Marys. Published in book form in 1996, Bravi was originally a research project completed in 1982 by Loriana Rocchetti and Robert Rose, supported by the St. Marys Historical Society. Jack's marriage to Flossie Switzer, a girl from Blanshard Township, is an important part of his story. Florence Jane Switzer was born on April 22, 1900, in Blanshard Township, near Kirkton. Her parents were Samuel and Mima (Doupe) Switzer. While Jack was Italian, Flossie – on both sides of her family – was descended from the Irish Palatines.

At the beginning of the 18th century, a large group of families left their farms in the Palatinate in southwestern Germany, fleeing both religious persecution and the economic conditions in that war-torn region. Thousands of these refugees arrived with few resources in London, England – a big problem for the government of that time. About 100 families were eventually settled in the Limerick region of Ireland where some of their descendants continue to live to this day. But in the mid-19th century, many of these Irish Palatines joined the Irish diaspora and emigrated to North America. Some families including Brethours and Sparlings, as well as Doupes and Switzers, settled in Blanshard Township west of St. Marys. The cairn at the intersection of the Mitchell and Kirkton Roads north of Rannoch commemorates John Switzer and his wife, Agnes Corneille, who were the first to arrive in 1843. Flossie's father, Samuel Cornelius Switzer, was their grandson and Flossie was their great-granddaughter. Flossie was very proud of her ancestry. Switzer family photographs and memorabilia are included in the donation to the Museum.

Flossie grew up on a farm on Lot 4, Concession 2, Blanshard Township, near to Kirkton. She was the second oldest in a family of seven children – she had three brothers and three sisters. Her two younger sisters and three brothers were born within a ten-year span. Flossie grew up helping with the younger children and doing her share of chores on the farm. She was social and had friends among her schoolmates at S. S. #11, the rural school located not far from her home on the highway, just north of Kirkton. The extended Switzer/Doupe families were all Methodists and many of their activities revolved around the brick Methodist Church in the village of Kirkton. She was part of a strong family and community network.

When she was old enough, Flossie got a job in nearby St. Marys, working as a clerk in White & May, a downtown department store. It was on the northwest corner of Wellington and Queen Streets, less than a block from Jack's Fruit Store. Flossie was not a shy person. She may have stopped in to buy groceries and struck up a conversation with the business's good-looking, young owner. Flossie and Jack fell in love and eventually became engaged. Both sets of parents would have initially had concerns. Jack's family would have hoped he would come home and find a girl in his village to take as his wife back to Canada. Then, when he became well-off, they would return to live in Italy. Flossie's family would have expected her to marry an Ontario boy, perhaps from a neighbouring farm. There would have been strong objections to an inter-faith union, but religion was not an obstacle in this case. Although born and raised Roman Catholic, under the influence of his friend, Dan Cappa, in St. Marys Jack Sgariglia attended the First Baptist Church. Still, he undoubtedly spoke English with an accent and, to the Switzers, he probably looked "foreign."

But Jack was a charming man and worked to win over Flossie's family. He owned his own business, worked hard and was doing well. He purchased a brick house on Church Street and could offer Flossie a home. It may have taken some time to reconcile the families but, in the end, the young couple succeeded. The records show that Attilio Sgariglia and Florence Jane Switzer, were married on June 3, 1924, by Methodist minister, R. W. Knowles. Jack was attended by his younger brother, Victor, who had joined him in Canada. Flossie's younger sister, Grace, was her attendant. An album, part of the donation, contains some informal photographs that show the event included a happy family reception. Next week's column will follow the fortunes of Jack and Flossie, their friends, their family and their contributions to this community.



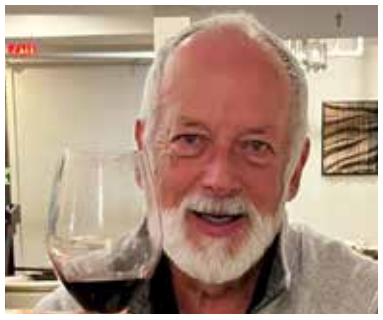
(PHOTO COURTESY OF SGARIGLIA DONATION, R. LORNE EEDY ARCHIVES, ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

The handsome couple in this photograph are Attilio (Jack) Sgariglia and Flossie Switzer, posing for a formal portrait on the occasion of their marriage in June 1924.





OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: "Living in the border": a museum captures the new reality



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

Those of us who live in southern Ontario have become very aware of our proximity to a country that was once our friend, but now, we're not so sure. We are familiar with the border between Canada and the United States, and with the newfound stress of crossing that border… or choosing not to.

But even living this close to our American neighbours, we Ontarians all share one reality – the United States is removed from us by bodies of water… Great Lakes, or the rivers that connect them, or the St. Lawrence. This may provide a certain sense of safe separation.

This is not the case in the communities in Québec's Eastern Townships, where the U.S. state of Vermont is, well… right there. A footstep away. But a footstep that is increasingly fraught with stress.

We learned a lot about this during a recent visit to the town of Stanstead. Stanstead is as far south as you can go in Québec, and still be in Canada. It abuts the American community of Derby Line. There are properties that straddle the border.

Once upon a time – in fact, for most of the history of these communities – they were truly neighbours, able to walk next door for a coffee, shop in stores regardless of border, join together in community organizations, have international family dinners.

Today, it is not so easy.

The story of the not-so-undefended border is told well in an exhibit on the second floor of Stanstead's Colby-Curtis Museum.

Ironically, the first-floor exhibits are all about the Colbys – an American family that moved to Canada in 1869, not out of any protest against the U.S., but because business prospects looked better here. They happily lived with a foot in both countries. Several generations of the family owned the house for 140 years, and eventually, the home was donated to the community to be used as a museum.

The exhibits on the first floor are interesting, documenting the changing times experienced by the Colbys through the decades.

But it was the "Living on the Border" temporary exhibit on the second floor that really caught our attention. There, we encountered the contemporary stories of local residents trying to maintain cross-border friendships in an environment clearly designed to discourage such international conviviality.

Perhaps the best-known example in Stanstead is the Haskell Free Library and Opera House. The library, which straddles the Canada-U.S border, was opened in 1908, with the expressed intention of providing the border communities with a centre for learning and cultural enrichment. The entrance was in Vermont, used freely by Stanstead's Canadian residents for 117 years… until the U.S. President changed the rules in 2025, insisting that Canadians had to clear customs each time they wanted to enter the library.

Clearing customs is no longer simple –local Canadian residents often find themselves being searched during their crossing.

There has long been a painted line on the floor of the library, marking the international border. It was intended as a symbol of cooperation, but we learned during our visit to the Colby-Curtis Museum that in October 2025, when the new rules came into effect, officers of U.S. Homeland Security stood with one foot in each country and chanted "51st State!"

But the Canadians refuse to abandon the long history of neighbourly cooperation. This summer, a new entrance to the library was opened on the Canadian side, and once again, residents from both countries can use the library without enduring a border crossing. Once inside, visitors can access the entire building. For now, at least.

You can tell that, even as they strive for community togetherness, the residents on both sides of the border are nervous. One group featured in the exhibit is the Choromondo women's choir, which includes singers from Québec and Vermont. They continue to meet and sing, but it is not always easy. Invited to do a concert in the Opera House that is the second floor of the library, some of the Canadian members were reluctant to set foot in the U.S., and their American colleagues understood.

But the concert proceeded. Choir member Abigail Stockman, an American, is quoted in the exhibit: "We were standing on the stage, because the stage is in Canada… The audience is in the U.S…. we were singing together in defiance of Trump's words, and of the international disrespect that he has paid to our Canadian friends and neighbours."



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Colby-Curtis Museum in Stanstead, Québec – a border town striving to maintain neighbourly connections across an increasingly challenging border.

The exhibit includes a number of examples of ongoing connections, including an international curling club, and mutual cooperation between the fire departments of Stanstead and Derby Line. But concern remains. Museum Director Samuel Gaudreau-Lalande says it is never certain that such mutual efforts will be able to continue. But he expressed hope. "Members of the community say, 'No, we are united, we stand together'… In a time of struggle, you realize what is important to you."

As we left the museum, we drove a couple of blocks south, to an ominous border crossing. We u-turned, and followed our GPS instructions to our next stop. It took us through the village of Beebe, officially part of Stanstead, where on the left side of an intersection there were crossing gates, warning sides, and people in uniform. We turned right.

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.



This photo of the Choromondo women's choir, part of the "Living on the Border" exhibition, shows the members of the choir who live in Stanstead, Québec, and Derby Line, Vermont.

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EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Welcome to autumn



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

The season is upon us bringing more delicious comforts back into our kitchens. Homemade soup is something we crave all year but especially in the 'ber' months. It's a nutritious and warming way to fill up the entire family and can be reheated for lunches throughout the week.

Hearty salads are also coming back into focus with a delightful spin on a classic Caesar.

Finally an easier sweet treat featuring the beloved pecan pie profile. Perfect for sharing.

Creamy Gnocchi Soup with Rosemary Bacon

This recipe is flexible, it is meant to be a base to let your creativity and tastes grow. Make it your own or stick to the basics - either way it is sure to be a cozy addition to your seasonal rotation.

8 strips thick cut bacon
1 tbsp dried basil
6 carrots, cut
24 celery stalks, cut
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups of kale (I subbed for fresh chopped yellow and green beans)
1 tbsp fresh rosemary
2 tbsp fresh thyme
1 yellow onion, chopped (I used less)
1 1/2 c coconut milk
4 c vegetable or chicken broth
1 lb fresh gnocchi
1 tbsp cornstarch
1 tsp fennel seeds
Salt and pepper to taste
Red pepper flakes (use sparingly)
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp butter
1/2 c parmesan or asiago cheese, shredded

Method:

- Cook bacon in large Dutch oven over medium heat. Cook until crisp, about 5m. In last minute add rosemary. Remove bacon and keep about 1 tbsp bacon grease in pot. Add olive oil and onions. Cook 5m until golden. Add carrots, celery, garlic, pepper flakes, fennel, basil, salt, pepper and cook for 5m until fragrant.

- Stir in butter and cornstarch. Add broth. Simmer over medium heat for 20m until carrots are tender.

- 10m before serving, stir in kale (beans in my case) coconut milk, parmesan and gnocchi.

- Serve warm with rosemary bacon and cheddar cheese. Add some warm bread of choice. I serve a garlic parmesan and parsley sourdough toast.

Unstuffed Artichoke Caesar Salad

A change on traditional Caesar salad, adding artichokes makes this recipe elite! Impress your family and guests with this twist on a classic.

3 heads of romaine lettuce, chopped
15oz can artichokes, halved
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt & pepper
1/3 c panko breadcrumbs
1/4 c grated parmesan
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Dressing:

4 tbsp olive oil
6 anchovies, made into a paste
1 tsp Dijon
1 tsp Worcestershire
1/2 tsp hot sauce
1 garlic clove, grated
1 1/4 c mayonnaise (not miracle whip)
1 lemon juiced
3-4 tbsp parmesan

Method:

- On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, add the artichokes. Drizzle olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with panko, parmesan, lemon juice, lemon zest, and parsley. Transfer to 400F oven and bake for 20m or until crispy and golden brown.

- In a large bowl, add romaine and roasted artichokes.

- In a small separate bowl, add ingredients for dressing and stir to combine. Pour dressing and toss salad. Enjoy!

Pecan Pie Cookies

Makes: 13 cookies Prep: 15m Cook: 15m Chill: 1.30m

Tender buttery cookies with a rich shortbread cookie dough and pecan pie filling cooked right in. Easy alternative to pecan pie and works as lovely Thanksgiving gifts!

Pecan Pie Filling:

1/2c packed light or dark brown sugar
2 tbsp heavy whipping cream
1 large egg
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbsp maple syrup
2/3c coarsely chopped pecans

Cookie Dough:

1/2c unsalted butter, softened
1/3c granulated sugar
1/4c packed light brown sugar
1 large egg yolk
1/2tsp vanilla extract
1tbsp milk
1 1/3c all purpose flour
1/4tsp baking soda
1/4tsp baking powder
1/4tsp salt

For Topping:

1/4c chopped pecans
4oz melted dark chocolate (optional)

Method:

Filling:

- Combine all filling ingredients except for pecans in a stainless steel saucepan, whisk to combine.

Add pecans and place over medium heat. Cook while whisking constantly until mixture begins to bubble and thicken .Allow to bubble for 30 seconds. This will take 5-7m. Immediately take off heat and let cool completely. Refrigerate 1hr until thoroughly chilled.

Dough:

- Combine softened butter, sugar, brown sugar in a large mixing bowl by hand with a spatula until creamy, pale and fluffy.

Add egg yolk and vanilla. Mix well. Mix in milk.

- Combine flour, baking soda and powder. Add to butter mixture and fold in until incorporated.

- Cover bowl and refrigerate or turn dough out onto large plastic wrap or parchment and roll into a 10" long log. Use floured hands. Refrigerate 1 hour or freeze for 30m.

Line 2 large sheets with parchment paper. Divide dough to make exactly 13 cookies. If keeping dough in bowl use a 1oz cookie scoop or 2 tbsp of dough and roll into smooth balls. If slicing, roll into balls. Space cookies 3" apart.

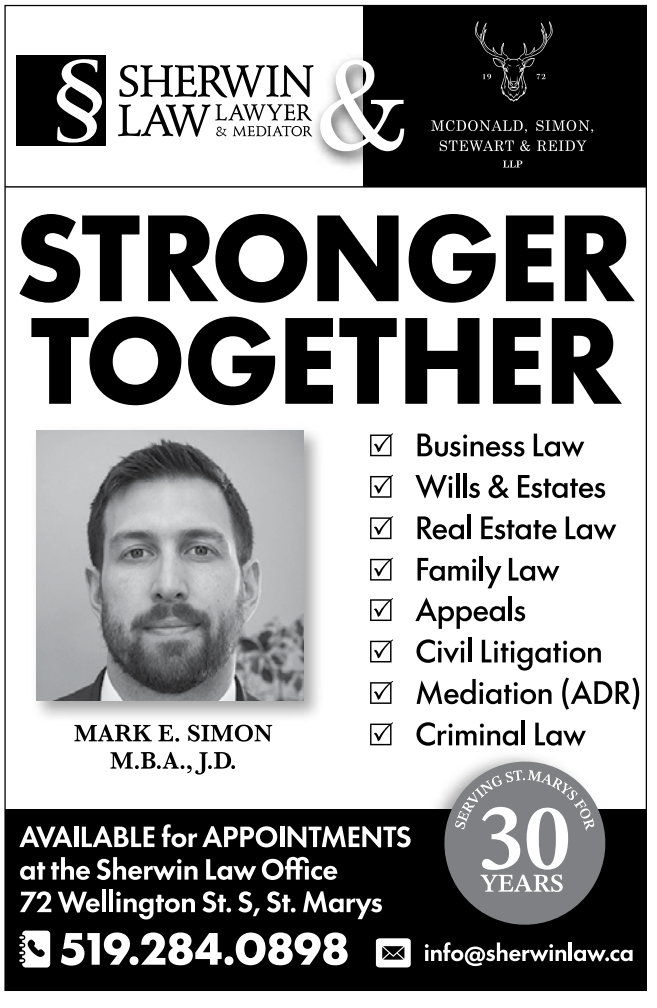
- Press a 1tsp measuring spoon into the centre of each cookie to make a divet. Spoon about 1tsp of filling into each indent. Don't use all the filling, you will finish the cookies with remaining. Place trays in fridge for 15m while oven preheats.

- Preheat oven to 375F.

- Bake cookies 8-10m until nicely golden brown around edges and filling starts to bubble. Transfer trays to a wire rack for 5m before transferring individually to racks to finish cooling.

- Once cool, spoon remining bit of filling on top and sprinkle with more chopped pecans if you like or drizzle melted dark chocolate if so inclined.







Riddles

What is the richest nut?
A cash-ew!

Why did the fruit salad skip its own wedding?
It had a lot of can't-elope!

What kind of beer won't get you tipsy?
Root beer!

What kind of poultry is always going to the bathroom?
Chick peas!

Why did the citrus tree go to the hospital?
Lemon-aid!

You cut me, slice me, dice me, and all the while, you cry. What am I?
An onion!

What kind of apples do computers prefer?
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?
Corn!

I'm a bird, a person, and a fruit. What am I?
A Kiwi!

I'm the father of fruits. What am I?
A papa-ya!

What vegetable always loses in every competition yet is a terrific rapper?
Beets!

What vegetable can you use to tie your shoelace?
A string bean!

- Word Search -

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Presents

The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Holly Smith (2)

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

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PET OF THE WEEK

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that can affect pets and may spread through contaminated water, soil, or urine from wildlife. Prevention through vaccination and avoiding high-risk areas can help keep your pet safe.

Talk to your veterinary team about whether the leptospirosis vaccine is right for your pet.

ABBY

Our Pet of the Week is Abby, a six-year-old feline that looks similar to an American shorthair. Abby was found abandoned in a ditch when still a kitten and has been looked after ever since by her owner, Dianna Deary. Abby is quite a handful, weighing approximately 12 pounds. She has one strange habit - she doesn't meow often but likes to hiss at strangers.



Thorndale News

A section within the St. Marys Independent





Two Thorndale women are on a challenge

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Whether it is the challenge or being inspired, Connie Bontje and Val Jary have been training hard this summer for the famous 'Camino de Santigo', an historic network of walking and cycling routes leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, in northwest Spain. As there are three routes that make up this pilgrimage, Bontje and Jary have chosen the 'Camino Portugues' route, comprising of 284 km, starting in Porto, Portugal, and end in Santigo de Compostela, Spain.

"My three sisters have done this walk and I don't want to be left out," stated Bontje with a smile. "I'm not doing this walk for spiritual reasons, but I like to push myself. I am looking forward to two weeks of not having to think about anything other than putting one foot in front of the other every day."

Jary exclaimed, "This walk is not on my bucket list. But turning 70 this year, I wanted to do something that reminds me, I am still capable."

For the past few months, both Bontje and Jary have been training either together or separately, walking 5 km a day. Bontje also has been taking strengthening and toning classes at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre to help build muscle. Beside putting one foot in front of the other, they also will be carrying backpacks with all their clothing and necessities such as rain gear, sleeping bag and extra shoes, which mounts up to about 14 lbs. "It's surprising how heavy 14 lb can feel" remarked Bontje.

As for accommodations along their route, they booked a few places, but they will mostly go day by day, staying overnight in hostels and private residences available along the route. Their plan is to walk 17 to 25 km a day, which is the requirement to collect two 'stamps' a day at the various check points along the way.

"Connie is a great friend," stated Jary, "and an inspiration. Our playlist will start with *I can walk 500 miles, and I can walk 500 more."*



(NORM JARY PHOTO)

Pictured are Val Jary, left, and Connie Bontje, right, on a training walk they took to St. Marys (approximately 20 km) to prepare for their challenge walk in Portugal and Spain later this month.

Saved by the Beep

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

It is an Ontario law that working smoke alarms are installed on every storey of a home and outside all sleeping areas. The slogan 'Saved by the Beep' is to encourage residents across Ontario to test their smoke alarms, check the batteries and review home fire escape plans for their family.

"It is important for our residents and business owners in Thames Centre," stated Fire Chief Nick Dorken, "to ensure that they test their alarms frequently and understand how they operate. Thames Centre Fire Department receives more emergency calls each year as a result of a misunderstanding of the different noises that smoke alarms make." Chief Dorken explained that the sounds from the alarms can be 'low battery chirps', 'end-of-life beeps', etc. These sounds are different from the alarm noises created when the unit senses smoke or fire. This is a reminder to residents to be diligent in understanding the alarms that they have in their homes or businesses.

"We urge people to reach out to the fire department", stated Chief Dorken, "with any questions that they may have about smoke alarms at fireadmin@thamescentre.on.ca or at 519-268-7334, ext. 720."



A sign spotted in Thorndale, promoting the Saved by the Beep event. (NANCY ABRAPHOTO)

Discover what's happening at Thorndale Library this October

JEAN MOIR

Thorndale Library

With National Seniors Day on Oct. 1 we are celebrating with two special senior programs this month. Drop in on Tuesday, Oct. 20 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. to join Kristy from the MTO to learn the process of renewing your driver's license once you are over the age of 80. This session also includes statistics, trends, tips, and a review of rules. Ooh Tasty Chips! will be on Tuesday, Oct. 27 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. - chips, crisps, and crunchies. We love our salty snacks! Join us and taste-test new, unusual, and international flavour of chips. Registration required.

Adults and seniors can get crafty this month with Mini Bookcase Creations on Thursday, Oct. 22 12-1 p.m. and Sew-Free Embroidery on Friday, Oct. 23 from 1-2 p.m. Registration is required for both.

For program dates, times, and registration details, visit us online at library.middlesex.ca or contact the Thorndale Library at 519-461-1150. We look forward to seeing you!

IN MEMORIAM

Bilyea

In loving memory of our dear Mother and Grandmother, Shirley, who passed away 45 years ago, September 24, 1981.

Those we love don't go away
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard but always near
Still loved, still missed and very dear.

Lovingly remembered by your family

IN MEMORIAM

Watkins

In memory of our wonderful mother Ivy who left us 28 years ago Sept 24, 1998

M - is for the million things she gave us
O - meant only she was growing old
T - was for the TEARS she shed to save us
H - was for her HEART of purest gold
E - was for her eyes of love light shining
R - meant right and right she will always be
Put them altogether and they spell **MOTHER**
The word that meant the **WORLD** to us **THREE**

Still missing you: Raymond, Phyllis, Jean

IN MEMORIAM

IN CHERISHED MEMORY OF

Shirley Irene Bilyea (COOK)

My dear mom who passed away 45 years ago on September 24, 1981.
Gone from my sight but never from my heart.

Love always,
Don and Heather Benner and Family

CELEBRATION



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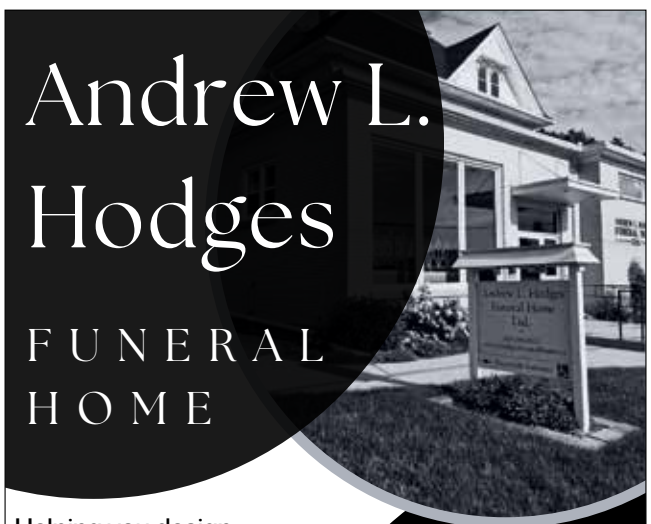
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RWTO celebrate 70 years



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Retired Women's Teachers of Ontario (RWTO) celebrated their 70th anniversary last week at the Stratford Legion. The organization has grown to include not just teachers, but educational assistants, early childhood educators, child and youth care workers, speech and language pathologists, audiologists, social workers, psychologists and office support staff. The Stratford and Area branch has over 80 members from across Stratford, Mitchell, St. Marys, Milverton, New Hamburg, Sebringville, Tavistock and beyond. Pictured are some members who attended last week event.

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FOR SALE

Upright Freezer 6.5 Cubic FT- 3 years old. Please call 519-284-1326

WANTED

Needed 1 Bedroom Apartment and parking around St. Marys. Please call 519-284-1326

FOR RENT

2 Bedroom Apartment in Seniors Building 275 Water St South available November 1st. Currently under renovation. $1,600 per month. Rent includes water all other utilities by tenant. One parking spot with unit. Building has a handicap lift. One year lease minimum. Tenant insurance, references and proof of income required. Please email alstrathdee@gmail.com for viewing.

FOR RENT

Bright and spacious 1 bedroom apt. Senior friendly, all one floor, walk in shower, wood floors, high ceilings, eat in kitchen. You'll love the outdoor garden deck with panoramic view. 3 blocks from downtown. References please. Call 519-697-1925

FOR SALE

1988 Chevy 1/2 ton. V8 Auto 107,800 kms, little to safety. Easy to restore, very good condition. Daily Driver. Priced to sell at $7,500. Call Ed at 519-284-8089

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THE WEEK AHEAD

SPONSORED BY: McDonald's St. Marys
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PRC & Friendship Centre events – See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 22

Thorndale Library October events – See Page 27

FRIDAY, SEPT 25

- Friends of the Library fall book sale at the Lind Sportsplex – 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation lunch and learn session at the Library – 1-2 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- Purple Hill Country Opry presents Owen Mac from Ireland – 7 p.m., Tickets $40
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Stoney Creek Generals at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPT 26

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon, Apple Pie Day
- Garage sale at 60 Thomas Street – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Browns School car show – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. Bob Lince Memorial Golf Tournament – 10 a.m. shot gun start
- Friends of the Library fall book sale at the Lind Sportsplex – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPT 27

- St. Marys Lincolns vs Elmira Sugar Kings at Dan Snyder Memorial Arena – 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, SEPT 29

- Royal Canadian Legion Buddy Check coffee at the Legion – 10 a.m. to Noon

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 30

- Falstaff Family Centre, Stratford hosts a sunrise ceremony & Indigenous teachings – 7:30 p.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Public Library will livestream the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation broadcast – 12 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCT 1

- Nourish Market at St. Marys United Church – 2-4 p.m.
- Optimist Club of Downie smoked pork chop drive thru dinner at 3185 Rd 122, St. Pauls – 5:30-7 p.m. Contact any Optimist Club of Downie member for tickets - $25 per ticket

GARAGE SALE!

Saturday September 26
60 Thomas Street, St. Marys
8 a.m. - 12 noon

Some of the items available are Kitchenware, Ladies Clothing, Decor, Squishies also for sale

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY
Independent Columnist

The days after 9/11

25 years ago (2001)

A small service and two minutes of silence were observed next to the cenotaph in St. Marys at noon on Friday, at the same time similar ceremonies were taking place all across Canada and the United States. Mayor Jamie Hahn led the brief service, offering prayer and condolences to victims of last week's terrorist attacks in America.

Local grief counsellor Eugene Dufour has been called on to help New Yorkers cope in the aftermath of last week's terrorist attacks on the city. The St. Marys man is on a team of 20 experts who will travel from Ontario to New York City to help debrief families and friends of some of the victims lost in the collapse of the World Trade Center.

50 years ago (1976)

The local Legion Colour Guard, with twelve parades under their collective belts thus far in 1976, have more lined up beginning with the annual Canadian Corps Torchlight parade in London this coming Saturday night. Other parades upcoming are in Simcoe and Owen Sound, plus two in the local scene.

Firemen extinguished a fire that started in the carburetor of a car owned by Nello Donati of St. Marys in Stratford last Friday. The car was near the corner of Ontario and Nile Streets when the fire started shortly after 8 p.m.

75 years ago (1951)

"Quiet Zone" signs have been placed on Queen Street, east and west of the hospital site. Hospital patients are still disturbed by cars which use the driveway for a turnaround sometimes at late night or early morning hours. The local police department are keeping a watch for thoughtless motorists who engage in this practice.

Resuming its business after the summer vacation, the Nora Clench Chapter I.O.D.E. met at the home of Mrs. W.H. Graham on Monday evening. The meeting was the annual outdoor affair, and the members enjoyed a wiener roast.

100 years ago (1926)

At the Regular Council meeting on Monday night, Council agreed to Rotary's request to call the new park by the old name of Cadzow Park. An explanation of the origin of the name was given, explaining its connection to the Weir family in Scotland.

Owing to the heavy traffic between St. Marys and London on Sundays, the T.K. & L. Coach Lines will put an extra bus on the 7 p.m. run from St. Marys to London on Sunday nights.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Augustus
2. South Africa
3. 32
4. The Simpsons
5. China
6. Titanic (1997)
7. The colossal squid
8. King Midas
9. Citric acid
10. The Kiwi

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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