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Issue #1326

Thursday, August 13, 2026

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Time to pass the torch: Lariviere family ends newspaper-delivery tradition



A CHANGE IN DELIVERERS

All grown up, Jonah, Justin, Joshua and Isabelle Lariviere show the final issue of the Independent newspaper they delivered. The family has been delivering the St. Marys Independent newspaper for 14 years.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF LARIVIERE FAMILY)

Perth County council seeks further changes to stewardship grant program

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County council is considering several administrative changes to its Stewardship Program for 2027, directing staff to return with additional recommendations aimed at making the grant program more equitable and ensuring more of the funding goes toward planting trees rather than labour costs.

Council considered staff's recommendation

to limit applicants to one project per grant stream, per property, per year and to create a separate administrative process for lower-tier municipal applications after hearing the program has been oversubscribed in two of its first three years. The changes are intended to spread funding among more landowners while simplifying the application process for municipalities.

According to a report prepared by resili-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Since 2012, the Lariviere family has been diligently delivering the St. Marys Independent newspaper. Now, after 14 years, the family is calling it quits.

Justin Lariviere, who was nine at the time, asked for a paper route for his birthday. The job became a family affair as younger siblings Isabelle, Jonah and Joshua got to tag along as they were too young to stay at home on their own.

As the kids got older, the family took on a second route and, if someone wasn't available to deliver, the other siblings stepped up to help get the job done. Over the years, the Larivieres delivered in three different areas of town. Their first route was in the James Street South, Timms Lane and King Street area. After that, it was the Jones and Elgin section. This was in their neighbourhood at the time, and the kids were getting older and were able to walk the route. They also relied on friends to step in when they were away.

When the family moved to Edison Street, which was a new subdivision, they were able to take on that new route.

"Some winters, the snow was so bad we would have a snow day for school, but we would still get all bundled up in our coat and snow pants to hike through waist deep snow to deliver our papers. Those days were always best to finish with a big mug of hot chocolate made by our mom," Isabelle Lariviere said.

Though they had to deal with the bad weather, the family shared they also learned some life lessons by delivering papers for the Independent – the first being work first, then play, and just getting it done so that they didn't have to think about it. In the wintertime, this meant getting it done before it got dark.

There was also a money lesson learned. Each

CONTINUED TO PAGE 7

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COMMUNITY

Perth County council seeks further changes to stewardship grant program

Continued from front

cy and stewardship co-ordinator Hannah Cann and presented by director of public works Bill Wilson, the program has supported 99 stewardship projects since launching in 2024, resulting in the planting of more than 28,000 trees, the establishment of 43 kilometres of windbreaks and the restoration of more than 52 acres of degraded land. The county plans to maintain the program’s \$100,000 budget in 2027.

While councillors supported the pro-

posed changes, several argued they do not go far enough.

Coun. Bob Wilhelm pointed out that limiting grants to one project per property still allows landowners with multiple properties to receive funding for each parcel.

“This change does not correct that,” Wilhelm said. “If an owner has 10 properties, they can get 10 grants, and I do have a bit of a problem with that.”

Staff acknowledged that landowners with multiple properties identified by separate property identification numbers

would still be eligible to apply for each property under the proposed rules.

Coun. Matt Duncan questioned whether the evaluation process should instead favour first-time applicants when demand exceeds available funding.

“If we get to the maximum limit and somebody has five projects and somebody has one, does that person with five projects only get four so the one gets included?” Duncan asked.

Warden Dean Trentowsky, who also serves as chair of the county’s agricultural advisory committee, which reviews the program applications and makes recommendations to council, agreed the issue deserved another look, noting repeat applicants can consume a significant portion of the available funding while new applicants receive reduced grants because the program budget must be prorated.

“I would prefer to see the newcomer be put to the top of the priority list, receive their full amount, or as close to their full amount as possible,” Trentowsky said.

Council ultimately directed staff to review the program’s scoring and evaluation system to enhance the prioritization of new applicants over previous recipients and to examine options such as limiting applicants to one application per property owner each year rather than one per property. Staff are expected to report back as early as September.

The discussion also turned to labour costs eligible under the program.

Deputy Warden Sue Orr questioned

whether taxpayer funding should be paying contractors rather than putting more trees in the ground, arguing the county may be duplicating services already offered through local conservation authorities.

“I have no problem planting trees. I want to get more trees in the ground, but people are benefiting their business through this program and I have a real problem (with that),” Orr said.

Orr initially moved to eliminate contractor labour as an eligible expense, but the motion was defeated after staff reminded council that applications declined when labour costs were removed from the program in a previous year before rebounding once they were reinstated.

Instead, Duncan proposed a compromise that received council’s support.

Staff will report back on the percentage of program funding spent on labour, labour costs per tree planted, the feasibility of capping labour costs on a per-tree basis and the range of tree prices being charged through the program.

Trentowsky supported further review rather than eliminating labour funding outright, noting many farm operators rely on contractors because tree planting coincides with busy spring and fall farming seasons.

“There needs to be a labour component included in this project,” Trentowsky said. “To what extent? Yes, that would be worth the investigation to find out. But at the end of the day, labour is the work. Otherwise, the trees just don’t get planted.”



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EDITORIAL

The sounds of summer



WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

My husband and I have a second home from May to October that we visit two or three times a week. It is beautiful, sometimes relaxing, sometimes frustrating

but it is run by a great family, and you are always greeted with a warm welcome and happy smiles.
While visiting this magical place, you get to carry a variety of wooden or steel clubs around with you. There are opportunities to see wildlife like deer, racoons, wild turkeys and chickens, but the frustrating part of the visit is what you do with these clubs you carry. You see, they are used to get a tiny ball that first sits on a higher-up device called a tee to its final resting spot, a tiny hole, that could be up to 400 yards away in as few shots as possible.
Sound easy? Not really, and

even when you think you have the hang of it, you don't.
To keep the scenery inviting, the owners of this wonderful place have strategically placed nature along your journey of getting the tiny ball to its home. There are many trees you can visit, ponds of water to wash your ball in and they have even put tiny beaches for you to visit on a hot day.
Many other people visit this place as well. Some are happy and it makes you smile when you hear laughter, people high-fiving and having a great time trying to get their ball from the little tee to the hole. Sometimes you

can hear a loud whack and you look at each other and knowingly agree that, yep, they are exploring the forest. Also, more frequently than you would like to believe, the "F" word, "Fore" gets yelled out and everyone automatically covers their heads like there is a flock of seagulls flying over.
You can tell how our game is going on Wednesday nights for ladies league depending on what hole we start discussing what the special for supper is.
What have I learned after years spending summers here? I have found that sometimes it is boring to go the direct route in getting

the ball in the hole. You need to see the whole course and get your money's worth. I also do not understand how one night's visit is so different from the next night when you are using those clubs the exact same way.
I do know, even with all the cursing and frustration, there is still lots of fun to be had with a great group of friends. I also know the challenges of finding a yellow ball amongst the autumn leaves, but then you look up and the scenery is breathtaking.
Lastly, I have also learned there is always that one shot that keeps you coming back and doing it all over again.

Bravo	Boo
We have 1 Bravo this week 1) Bravo for the Rotary Club of St. Marys for stepping in by contributing to Derick Ruthig's wonderful project in saving bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks. St. Marys will have enthusiastic bird watchers coming from far and wide. Helping to save God's creation!	We have no Boos this week
*Please note all Boos and Bravos must be signed in order to be considered. Bravos and Boos are submitted by community members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent.	

Quote of the Week

"The hours and days ahead will be difficult. The Bald Ridge fire remains extremely active and significant challenges remain. But British Columbians always show up for one another when it matters most. We will continue to support affected communities, stand with those who have lost so much and do everything possible to keep people safe. Our thoughts are with every person, family and community affected by this wildfire. We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available."

- From a statement issued by the premier of British Columbia, David Eby, after a provincial state of emergency was declared due to the ongoing wildfires

Overheard
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Back to school shopping with a teenager is my favourite thing to do, said no parent ever!

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

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St. Marys Independent

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Regional Editor

Galen Simmons • galen@granthaven.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Tyler Carruthers • info@stmarysindependent.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant

Wendy Lamond • wendylamond74@gmail.com

Contributors

June Grant, Spencer Seymour, Emily Stewart, Jake Grant, Mary Smith, Nancy Abra, Lauren Eedy, Paul Knowles, Amy Cubberley, Laura McAsh, Alona Vasylieva, Nancy Bickell

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2

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Thoughts OF THE WEEK

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Learn to appreciate what you have before time makes you appreciate what you had.

Look for something positive everyday, even if some days you have to look harder.

The world around you is beautiful when the world within you is peaceful.

A mind stretched by new experiences will not go back to old dimensions.

Tree Power returns to Perth South



(PHOTO COURTESY OF UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY)

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority is once again partnering with the Township of Perth South to offer its annual Tree Power program.

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Township of Perth South and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) have once again partnered to make native trees available and affordable for residents.

The Perth South Tree Power program launched in 2021 and has been held annually since.

Tree orders for this year opened online at <https://shop.thamesriver.on.ca/product/perth-south-tree-power-trees> on Aug. 11 at 9 a.m. The trees will be available for pick up at the Kirkton Community Centre on Saturday, Sept. 26. The goal of this project is to create a greener and

more beautiful community by adding native trees.

"The success of Tree Power in Perth South reflects the strong partnership between UTRCA, the township and Perth County. Our residents look forward to this annual event and have made it a tremendous success," said Perth South Mayor Sue Orr in a press release.

"The UTRCA is very happy to partner with the township of Perth South and run the Tree Power program for a sixth year," added UTRCA forestry and restoration supervisor Rob Davies in the release. "We have eight species that are well suited to growing in the area and, in our experience, Perth South residents are excited to get more trees in the ground."

the Hitching Post
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STONETOWN CRIER

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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the Week is Rod Betteridge, the eldest of Ralph and Eleanor Betteridge's nine children. Rod celebrated his 80th birthday on Saturday, Aug. 8 with an open house at his residence. Approximately 75 people attended. Rod spent the majority of his working years with Stratford Farm Equipment. He has two children, four grandchildren and five step-grandchildren. Rod loves to golf and is an active member of the Table of Knowledge that meets at the Creamery every Wednesday afternoon.

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

Perth County approves asset management plan, identifies \$2.8-million annual infrastructure funding gap

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

After making two minor corrections during discussion, Perth County council unanimously approved the county's 2025 asset management plan Aug. 6, adopting a long-term strategy that identifies a \$2.8-million annual infrastructure funding gap and recommends an average annual tax increase of 1.3 per cent over the next decade to eliminate it.

Prepared by public works director Bill Wilson with assistance from Public Sector Digest Citywide, the plan brings Perth County into full compliance with the province's final phase of municipal asset-management reporting requirements. It covers the county's roads, bridges and culverts, as well as non-core assets including facilities, fleet vehicles, machinery and computer systems.

Wilson told council the updated plan incorporates the county's latest bridge inspection data and recent changes to municipal drain funding, providing the most accurate picture yet of the county's long-term infrastructure needs.

The plan values the county's infrastructure portfolio at \$328.4 million. Staff have assessed the condition of 91 per cent of those assets, with 76 per cent rated in fair or better condition. To maintain current service levels and prevent infrastructure backlogs, the county estimates it will need to invest an average of \$9.8 million annually in capital infrastructure. With current annual capital funding sitting at roughly \$7 million, leaving an annual funding shortfall of \$2.8 million.

Wilson stressed council's approval of the document does not automatically mean future tax increases.

"Approving this plan does not commit council to any immediate tax change," Wilson said. "This is a high-level, long-range planning tool meant to guide future budgets and financial forecasting."

The plan recommends closing the funding gap through

an average annual tax increase of 1.3 per cent over the next 10 years. Wilson noted the county's proposed 2.6 per-cent infrastructure levy in the draft 2027 budget is intentionally higher because it addresses recent financial pressures.

"The 2027 draft rate is a temporary front-loaded correction required to address recent operational deficits, specifically our winter maintenance and municipal drain deficits from 2024 to 2025," Wilson said, adding the county's goal is to "return to the plan's long-term 1.3 per-cent path in subsequent years."

Chris Vanderheyden, director of asset management with Public Sector Digest Citywide, told council the document should be viewed as an evolving roadmap rather than a one-time exercise.

"This is not a once-and-done report," Vanderheyden said. "It's very dynamic. Data is going to change, costs are going to change, conditions are going to change, and this is a dynamic document that must be married to your data going forward."

He added municipalities are increasingly finding provincial and federal grant applications tied to comprehensive asset-management planning.

"We do know by experience from other clients that grant-funding applications are now being tied to the completion of these asset management plans," Vanderheyden said.

During discussion, Coun. Bob Wilhelm pointed out two issues in the draft plan, noting the replacement value for a grader appeared too low and that references to schools and recreation centres should identify them as lower-tier municipal responsibilities.

"I think a new grader costs around \$800,000," Wilhelm said. "It should indicate that the lower tiers look after schools, rec centres, etc., not county."

Wilson agreed both items should be corrected before the final plan is published, and council approved the document with those amendments.

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. Albuquerque is located on the shores of what river?
2. What are baby Koalas called?
3. What is the most spoken language on earth?
4. The deficiency of which vitamin causes scurvy?
5. What is the term for the maximum amount of oxygen the body can use during exercise?
6. The "Hollywood" sign originally spelled out what word?
7. What's the name of the pig in the book "Charlotte's Web"?
8. How many points does the Star of David have?
9. Which dinosaur is famous for having three horns?
10. What is the term for being romantically or sexually unfaithful to a partner?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31



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COMMUNITY CARE – IT'S WHAT WE BELIEVE IN.

Time to pass the torch: Lariviere family ends newspaper-delivery tradition

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

of the kids opened their own bank account and learned to save 80 per cent of what they made but could spend 20 per cent on whatever they wanted. According to mom, Jenn Lariviere, Toys 'R' Us trips were exciting when they could pick out what they wanted, which was usually Lego. They would save what was needed for the purchase and they would go as a family for a fun outing.

The family has learned over the years that St. Marys is a wonderful community. By delivering newspapers, they got to know the neighbours well, as well as the wider community.

Another lesson is to work well with siblings. The Lariviere kids learned they should cover for them because each of them might need the same favour in re-

turn at some point.

As they got older, other jobs came into play – Justin Lariviere at Tim Hortons, Isabelle Lariviere at Vet Purchasing, Jonah Lariviere at McCully Hill Farms and Joshua Lariviere at Tim Hortons and, more recently, Feltz Design. The family said it feels like this is a good time to let another family take over.

"Thank you, St. Marys Independent for teaching our family so much! It has been a wonderful 14-year experience," the Larivieres said in a statement.

However, like Jonah says, "It's time to pass the torch."

The Lariviere route has been filled but if any other families are looking for information on a paper delivery route, email wendylamond74@gmail.com for more information.



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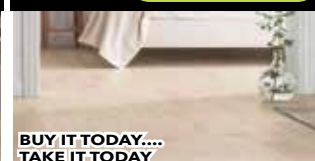
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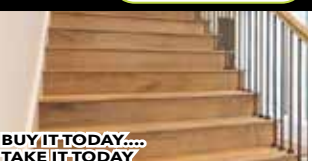
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Overdose Awareness Day flag raising offers remembrance, support and hope

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Nearly nine years after losing her adult son, Matthew Keller, to an overdose, St. Marys resident Anna Marie Iredale continues to turn her grief into support for families navigating substance use and the loss of a loved one.

Iredale will host the town's annual International Overdose Awareness Day flag raising at St. Marys town hall Aug. 31 at 9 a.m. The gathering will include speakers with lived experience who have lost loved ones to overdose, along with information and resources intended to provide hope, understanding and connection.

Iredale lost Keller in September 2017 after he experienced an overdose and remained without oxygen long enough to suffer a fatal brain injury. His liver was later donated for transplant. Before returning to substance use, Keller had been substance free for three years. Iredale said he began using again while grieving the sudden death of his stepbrother and close friend.

"He thought he would be able to stop it tomorrow," she said. "It didn't happen. It grabbed him and it owned him that time, and he couldn't get out. He tried. He did really try."

For years after his death, Iredale struggled to process the loss.

"It took a good five years" before she felt able to think clearly again, she said. "It's different when it's your kid."

As Matthew's death anniversary approaches each year, Iredale finds it helpful to plan something constructive that honours him and supports others.

"Sitting at home and just hurting didn't bring him back," she said.

That need for connection ultimately led her to Moms Stop The Harm, a national network of families affected by substance-use-related harms and deaths. The organization provides peer support through groups including Healing Hearts



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Pictured are Anysha Keller-Ivory and Anna Marie Iredale, who is holding a photo of her late son, Matthew Keller – also Keller-Ivory's uncle – who died in 2017 from a overdose. The pair are hosting the annual Overdose Awareness flag raising at St. Marys town hall Aug. 31 at 9 a.m. in memory of those who have been lost to overdose and addiction, and in support of their family members and friends who are grieving their loss.

for grieving families and Holding Hope for those supporting someone who uses substances.

"There was a lot of comfort in the groups from other moms across Canada that have gone through very similar situations," Iredale said. "Hearing about their grief made me realize, 'OK, I'm all right. I'm just going through the process of what a mother would go through losing her kid like this.'"

Through Moms Stop The Harm and other bereavement groups, Iredale has built relationships with mothers across Ontario and Canada. She now reaches out when she learns of someone whose child is struggling with substance use or has died from overdose.

"I don't have all the answers, and I may not be the friend that they need, but maybe some of the people I know could be," she said.

Her granddaughter, Anysha Keller-Ivory, who is Matthew's niece and recently graduated from an addiction and mental-health worker program, said she admires the way Iredale uses her experience to help others.

"It is very nice to see how much she does for Matt and for Overdose Awareness Day and to help others," Keller-Ivory said. "I love hearing about how (she's) gone to other moms who have just gone through this, and (she's) there waiting to help take them into (her) arms."

Iredale said that support can make a

meaningful difference. She recalled encouraging one woman to reconnect with a son from whom she had been estranged for roughly 15 years. The two rebuilt their relationship and spoke each Sunday for the final two years of his life.

"I was glad I made a difference," Iredale said.

She also works to reduce the stigma surrounding substance use and overdose deaths, including by encouraging people-first language that does not define someone by their addiction.

"We don't identify our loved ones by their addiction. That's not who they are," she said. "You wouldn't call a person who has cancer 'cancer,' so you don't label people that way."

Keller-Ivory agreed that language matters.

"Nobody wakes up and decides, 'I want to be a substance user when I grow up,'" she said.

Iredale hopes the Aug. 31 gathering will help grieving families understand they do not have to suffer in isolation and give those supporting someone who uses substances a place to find resources without shame.

"It helps ease their mind that they don't need to be like this – that they can hold their head up," Iredale said. "It's nothing the parents did. Nobody chooses addiction."

The event also allows families to remember the people behind the statistics and demonstrate that joy and meaningful relationships remain possible alongside grief.

"The pain is not gone," Iredale said. "But we've brought joy into our lives because we don't want to sit there in the pain day in and day out."

Iredale has previously honoured Matthew through food and clothing drives, advocacy and other community initiatives intended to reduce stigma and support vulnerable residents.



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Community Liaison Committee

The next Community Liaison Committee Meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 10th at 6 p.m.** at the St. Marys Municipal Operations Center. Members of the public who wish to observe are welcome to attend. Residents who wish to speak in front of the Committee may submit a detailed request in writing to the Committee. The request will be considered by the Committee and approved prior to the meeting.

Please submit all requests, questions, and concerns for the meeting to kara.pelissero@vcimentos.com by **Tuesday, September 8 at 12 p.m.**

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Amanda Martin helping St. Marys residents find the root cause of pain through osteopathy and massage

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

When Amanda Martin first became a registered massage therapist nearly 20 years ago, she loved helping people recover from injuries and feel better in their bodies. But after years in practice, she wanted to better understand why pain develops in the first place.

That search led her back to school to study manual osteopathy, graduating in 2019. Today, Martin combines nearly two decades of massage therapy experience with manual osteopathic treatment at Revive Holistic Health Centre, located at 99 Queen St. E. in St. Marys.

"I had a teacher at massage school who was an osteopath," Martin said. "I actually had no idea what it was. I just knew whatever he had, I wanted that. He had a really good way of understanding the body at a whole different level."

After moving to St. Marys three years ago, Martin began practicing one day a week at Revive. Demand has steadily grown, and she now sees patients there four days a week while gradually transitioning away from her Kitchener practice.

While massage therapy and osteopathy often work hand in hand, Martin says the two disciplines approach the body differ-



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Manual osteopathy practitioner and registered massage therapist Amanda Martin is ready to help St. Marys and area residents find solutions to their pain at Revive Holistic Health Center in St. Marys.

ently.

"People ask me all the time, 'What is this mysterious thing called osteopathy?'"

" she said with a laugh.

Rather than focusing solely on the area that hurts, manual osteopathy looks at

how the entire body functions together.

"If somebody comes in because their shoulder hurts, is the shoulder just the shoulder, or is it something else? A lot of times it's something else."

Martin explains osteopathy as recognizing the relationship between the body's structure – including muscles, fascia, joints, nerves and organs – and overall health. Restrictions in one area can create a chain reaction throughout the body, leading to pain or dysfunction somewhere else.

"Our bodies are designed to heal," she said. "Sometimes the communication gets lost because life interrupts that flow. My job is to try to bring it back."

An osteopathic appointment begins with a detailed discussion about a patient's health history, work, hobbies, previous injuries and daily movement patterns before progressing to gentle assessments of posture, movement and tissue quality.

Unlike some hands-on therapies, osteopathic treatment is generally slow, gentle and non-invasive.

"The deeper isn't always better," Martin said. "Sometimes it almost feels like you're not doing anything at all. But when you listen to the tissues instead of

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11



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Amanda Martin helping St. Marys residents find the root cause of pain through osteopathy and massage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

forcing them, the body responds.”

Because pain often develops over years rather than days, Martin says treatment is rarely a one-time visit.

“It’s very layered,” she said. “Your entire life is a story in your body.”

Her background in massage therapy allows her to recommend the treatment that best suits each patient. Some people benefit most from massage, others from osteopathy, while many alternate between the two.

“I’ve had some people convert completely because they got more benefit from osteopathy,” she said. “Others switch back and forth depending on what they need.”

Martin also works collaboratively with physiotherapists and chiropractors, noting each profession brings different strengths to helping patients recover.

“I love rehabilitation. I love relaxation. I love trying to help people feel better in their bodies overall.”

She has developed particular interests in infant care, women’s health, concussion recovery, craniosacral therapy and hypermobility, and continues pursuing additional education in each area.

For infants, gentle treatment may help address concerns such as torticollis, tongue ties, acid reflux and feeding difficulties. For women, Martin has expanded her training to include pelvic health, breathing mechanics and hormonal



health. She’s also continuing her education in concussion recovery and plans to complete a Pilates rehabilitation course this fall to further support patients recovering from injuries.

Above all, Martin says her greatest motivation is helping people regain confidence in how their bodies move and function.

“I honestly really love helping people,” she said. “I’m not going to be the best fit for everybody, but I feel like it’s worth a try. I just want to help the body restore balance and get to a place where health can be found.”

For more information, call Martin on her cellphone at 226-750-5251 or visit www.revivehmc.com.

Follow the QR code above to learn more about Amanda Martin and to book an appointment.



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Alzheimer Society Huron Perth welcomes new executive director



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Cathy Ritsema, left, retired as executive director of the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth after 28 years of service. She officially passed the role to new executive director Tracey Jones on Aug. 1.

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth (ASHP) has welcomed Tracey Jones as its new executive director, effective Aug. 1, following the retirement of longtime leader Cathy Ritsema.

Ritsema retires after 28 years of service supporting people living with dementia and their care partners. She became executive director when the Huron and Perth Alzheimer societies merged in 2022, following 23 years as executive director of the Huron County Alzheimer Society.

Before moving into leadership, Ritsema served as a chapter coordinator, organized adult day programs and worked with Wingham and District Hospital from 1987-1998 in Alzheimer's adult day pro-

grams and financial analytics. She later became manager of programs and services before assuming the executive director's role.

Jones brings more than 25 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector to the position.

Raised in Wiarton, she earned a degree in anthropology from Western University and a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Athabasca University. Throughout her career, she has held leadership roles with organizations supporting people affected by neurological diseases and cancer.

Her experience includes overseeing the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada, working with the Parkinson Society in Goderich, where she helped establish support groups, and serving for seven



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth board of directors, as of the end of March 2026, includes, front row from left, Susan Andresen, chair Donnalene Tuer-Hodes, Francine Lafontaine and Dianne Godkin. Back row, Eddie Matthews, Hali MacLister Adair, vice chair Susan Underwood, Nancy Walker, Maaik Van Hittersum and Rick Paradis.

years as executive director of Wellspring Cancer Support Centre in London, which serves communities across southwestern Ontario, including Stratford.

Jones also previously worked as public education coordinator with the Alzheimer Society of Elgin-St. Thomas.

The appointment follows a search conducted by the ASHP board of directors, which is responsible for hiring the organization's executive director.

In her message in the society's annual report, board chair Donnalene Tuer-Hodes reflected on the organization's continued growth since the Huron and Perth chapters merged.

"As the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth marked its fifth year since unification of the two county boards," she wrote, "all members remain committed to strength-

ening its position as a trusted source of dementia knowledge and support."

Tuer-Hodes said the organization continues to collaborate with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and the Huron Perth and Area Ontario Health Team to enhance integrated care throughout the region.

She also acknowledged the importance of community support in sustaining local programs.

While approximately 75 per cent of the organization's funding comes from the Ontario government, she noted donations from the public make it possible to expand and enhance services for people living with dementia and their care partners.

"Every contribution, no matter the size, has a direct and meaningful impact on the lives of individuals living with dementia, along with their care partners," she wrote.



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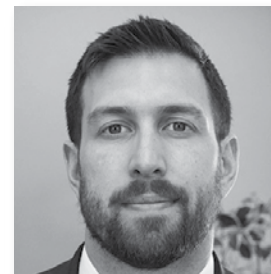
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Stratford Police Youth Initiative Program hosts Junior 911 Day



St. Marys community outreach worker Jade Orquin and her niece, Ellie, and nephew, Austin, join Stratford Police community and media relations officer Const. Darren Fischer in front of a light armoured vehicle.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Saturday, Aug. 8, the Stratford Police Service (SPS) hosted its second annual Stratford Police Junior 911 Day at the Tremblets Independent Grocer from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event was organized by the YIP (Youth Initiative Program) and organized by Stratford Police student Rachel Sinko. The purpose of the event is to allow children to interact with emergency services, learn about safety basics, meet and talk with first responders and educate them on all things 911.

On hand to meet the community were members of SPS emergency response, identification, crime reduction, special constable and auxiliary units. There were members of the OPP, Perth County Para-

medic Service, Perth East Fire Department and St. Marys Fire Department. Food donations were collected for the St. Marys Salvation Army and reps from 107.7 2Day FM and 107.1 CJCS Stratford were also on hand to play some music.

"I want to say thank you to everyone who made our Junior 911 Day a success, especially our volunteers from St. Marys Fire, OPP, Perth County EMS and Perth Fire," Sinko said. "It was a great day for kids to meet and interact with the first responders who are working every single day to keep them safe, and an even better way to make sure that youth in the community know they can come to us when they need to."

"Seeing upwards of three weeks of planning come together was really special for me, and I hope everyone who came to check it out enjoyed it."



Student organizer Rachel Sinko stands with Dusty the service dog in front of a Stratford police vehicle.



The Stratford Police Service had a number of armoured rescue vehicles on display at Junior 911 Day Aug. 8.



Const. Steve Coakley of the OPP tactics and rescue unit (TRU) stands in front of an armoured rescue vehicle. The vehicle is approximately two years old and attends all the TRU's calls.



Saying hi to Dusty, the Stratford Police Service Dog, and social worker Rachel Braden is Charlotte Bell.



Steve Togh attended with his kids, Charlotte and Cole, and visited with auxiliary Const. Brandon Cook.

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTOS)

Cars, community and fun: St. Marys Lions host annual classic, vintage and exotic car show



Oldest car: W. Dan Denoon, 1926 Ford Model T.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS LIONS CLUB)

ST. MARYS LIONS CLUB

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Lions Club's Annual Car Show at the Pyramid Recreation Centre brought together car lovers, families, friends and community members for a fantastic day celebrating some amazing vehicles and, more importantly, the wonderful community we call home.

The wildfire smoke and threat of inclement weather impeded the original scheduled date of July 18. The difficult decision was made to postpone the event until Aug. 8.

A car show doesn't happen without a lot of people working behind the scenes,

and the St. Marys Lions would like to send a huge thank you to our incredible volunteers. From setting up and organizing to welcoming visitors and helping throughout the day, your time and enthusiasm helped make the event a success. We couldn't do it without you!

We would also like to give a big shout-out to our generous sponsors. Your support helps make this event possible and allows the St. Marys Lions to continue giving back to St. Marys and area through community projects and local initiatives.

Please join us in showing our appreciation to:

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Longest distance: Brent Little, Goderich.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS LIONS CLUB)

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To everyone who brought a vehicle, stopped by to admire the cars, volunteered their time, sponsored the event, or simply came out to enjoy the day, thank you! Your support is what makes community events like this so special.

The St. Marys Lions are proud to be part of a community that continues to show up, pitch in and have fun together. That's what Lions are all about!

We look forward to seeing everyone again next year for another great day of shiny cars, friendly faces and community spirit.

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(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

The Lions Club car show was held on Saturday, Aug. 8 at the PRC parking lot. This 1971 Plymouth Cuda was proudly displayed by its owner, Adrian Vander Vloet from Parkhill.



(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

Richard Thibeault from Strathroy stands beside his 2007 Saturn Sky at the Lions Club car show. This model was only made for four years, 2007 to 2010, and only 2,400 of this model were manufactured.



(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

Mike and Cathy Elliott of St. Marys displayed their 1954 Ford Sunliner convertible at the Lions Club car show. They have owned this vehicle for 45 years. Twenty years ago, Mike and his son, Rob, restored this vehicle.



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The travels of CJ the Bear



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Before the upcoming Teddy Bear picnic, CJ the bear is currently travelling in Normandy, France, with Theresa Peirce and seeing the sites. CJ has travelled all over and even meets new friends along the way like travelling with Nancy to Jordan and Egypt.



Do yourself a favour and take a moment to look up

DAN ROLPH
Independent Reporter

Depending on when you find this issue of the St. Marys Independent in your hands, you may have a fantastic opportunity to experience the wonders of our universe ahead of you.

This year, we're particularly lucky that two fascinating astronomical events will be happening on the same day.

On Aug. 12 and 13, the Perseid meteor shower will reach its peak and grace the night sky with dozens of meteors each hour. The annual arrival of the Perseids is something many who have an interest in astronomy look forward to as it's easy to watch and will almost certainly be under better weather conditions than the Geminids in December.

If you're up for a late night (or a very early morning), the best time to take in the Perseids is between midnight and dawn, though you should be able to see meteors by 10 p.m. if you're looking for a more manageable evening.

This year's shower will also be particularly fit for viewing with the new moon, meaning stargazers won't need to worry about moonlight hindering their views.

But this year is also particularly unique as the meteor shower's peak aligned with a solar eclipse, which was set to happen on Aug. 12, after the Independent went to press.

In our region, this eclipse wasn't the

stunning display of the sun's corona that many of us got to see in April 2024. Those looking for another chance to see that natural wonder would have needed to hop on a plane and get across the Atlantic.

Locally, we saw a partial solar eclipse where the moon blocked a small chunk of the solar disk. You probably didn't notice a change in daylight if you weren't expecting the eclipse, but those who still have a pair of solar eclipse glasses handy could gaze at the sun and take in the sight.

The partial eclipse was set to begin just before 1 p.m., reaching its maximum at 1:37 p.m.

Events like the peak of the Perseids or a partial solar eclipse aren't only rare moments. They are invitations to step outside, look up and remember that sometimes a love for learning about the universe around us isn't just born in a classroom.

So, if the skies are clear and the weather is kind to us, make a plan to take part. Set an alarm, find a dark spot, bring a lawn chair or blanket and get comfortable. For any solar eclipse, always use proper solar eclipse glasses or another safe viewing method, and for the meteor shower, give your eyes time to adjust and let the night sky do the rest.

You don't need to be an expert to enjoy it. You just need to be willing to look up.

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Melodies at the Museum back at Cadzow Park this month



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTOS)

The St. Marys Museum is hosting its 13th Melodies at the Museum summer concert series for the month of August. Each Wednesday evening from 7-8 p.m., a different musical performance will take place outdoors on stage at the Cadzow Park. Pictured above left on Wednesday Aug. 5, The Faultliners, a duo featuring Stacey Frayne on vocals and Alex Richards on guitar, performed in the park. They played some wonderful music from the 1990s as well as modern hits. Above right, the crowd enjoyed listening to a wonderful performance on a lovely summer's evening in Cadzow Park.

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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

Sloane Bell competes at Ontario Summer Games, TORP development camp



(NATASHA BELL PHOTO)

Sloane Bell, pictured in the bottom row second from right, along with her teammates on Team E, which claimed the silver medal at the Ontario Summer Games.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Sloane Bell of St. Pauls enjoyed a week of high-level volleyball development and competition, attending the Ontario Volleyball Association's (OVA) Team Ontario Regional Program (TORP) week-long development camp and the Ontario Summer Games.

Bell, who is entering her third season with the U15 Stratford Volleyball Club and will be attending St. Michael Catholic Secondary School this coming school year, detailed her experiences at the events, calling all of it incredibly memorable.

"It was really fun," said Bell. "I met a lot of new people and I learned a lot of new stuff about volleyball and how to have high-performance habits – going to bed early, eating healthy food and not going on screens before you go to bed. (Experiencing the Ontario Summer Games and the OVA TORP development program) means a lot because I feel like I'm going to remember everything."

Bell attended the TORP development camp hosted July 26-30 at the University of Guelph, where the athletes stayed on campus in the university's residence for an intense week of development, coaching, indoor and beach volleyball and high-performance coaching. According to Bell, she had nerves entering the week

that went away quickly.

"I was so nervous because I didn't know anybody and I didn't know if I was going to be the worst player or the best player there. But it ended up being really fun. I feel like the other people were really strong. Everybody there was so nice. I felt like I was friends with a bunch of

people there. I loved it so much."

Immediately after that, starting July 30, Bell travelled to Waterloo for the Ontario Summer Games' volleyball competition, playing both beach and indoor volleyball over the three-day event. The competitors battled through extreme heat and sun, with play paused for about an hour

due to several athletes experiencing heat exhaustion. Bell played on Team E and helped her squad emerge with a silver medal.

"The first day, it was beach (volleyball), and we got assigned partners, and then some of our beach rankings go into our indoor rankings," Bell said. "And then, the second day, we had six games, and you get ranked based on how many games your team has won, and you have to be ranked in the top six to make it to the next day to be in the playoffs. We got third, and on the third day, we won quarters, we won semis and we got silver."

Bell cited a couple of key factors in the team having success and leaving the Ontario Summer Games with the silver.

"I feel like our serve receive and our communication were really good," said Bell. "I feel like if you don't communicate, then it's not going to work out because you have to be able to communicate on the court and off the court to be able to succeed."

Bell also raved about the coaching she had at the tournament.

"We had really good coaching," Bell said. "They were just so nice about everything. If you made a mistake, they'd just be like, 'It's okay, you can get the next one. We believe in you.' Everybody was so supportive. I feel like I wasn't in my head as much as I normally am."



(PHOTO COURTESY OF JP.IMAGE)

Sloane Bell, pictured, bumps the ball during one of her team's beach volleyball matches at the Ontario Summer Games July 30 to Aug. 2. Bell also attended a development camp as part of the Ontario Volleyball Association's Team Ontario Regional Program.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured are family and friends of Sloane Bell, who were in attendance while Bell competed at the Ontario Summer Games.

U18 OBA Blue Rockies win playdown games, qualify for provincials



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Zach Larmer whips a pitch towards the plate during the Red Rock Construction U18 OBA Blue St. Marys Rockies' first of two OBA playdown games Aug. 3. Larmer pitched the entirety of the first game, leading the Rockies with a stellar pitching effort to a 10-0 victory. The Rockies won the back-to-back against the Flesherton Rangers to earn a trip to the OBA Provincial Championships in Clarington Aug. 13-16.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The Red Rock Construction U18 OBA Blue St. Marys Rockies will compete at the OBA Provincial Championships Aug. 13-16 in Clarington after winning back-to-back playdown games Aug. 3 against the Flesherton Rangers.

Head coach Justin Ewing explained what the trip to OBA provincials means to the U18 squad.

"This is the final year of minor ball for nine of the boys," said Ewing. "So, getting to go to the provincial championships is a big deal and basically was one of the main objectives when we picked the team last September. The job is not done, but getting to the tournament was the first step."

In the first of two playdown games, the Rockies rode a stellar full-game pitching effort by Zach Larmer and hits from throughout their batting order to beat Flesherton 10-0.

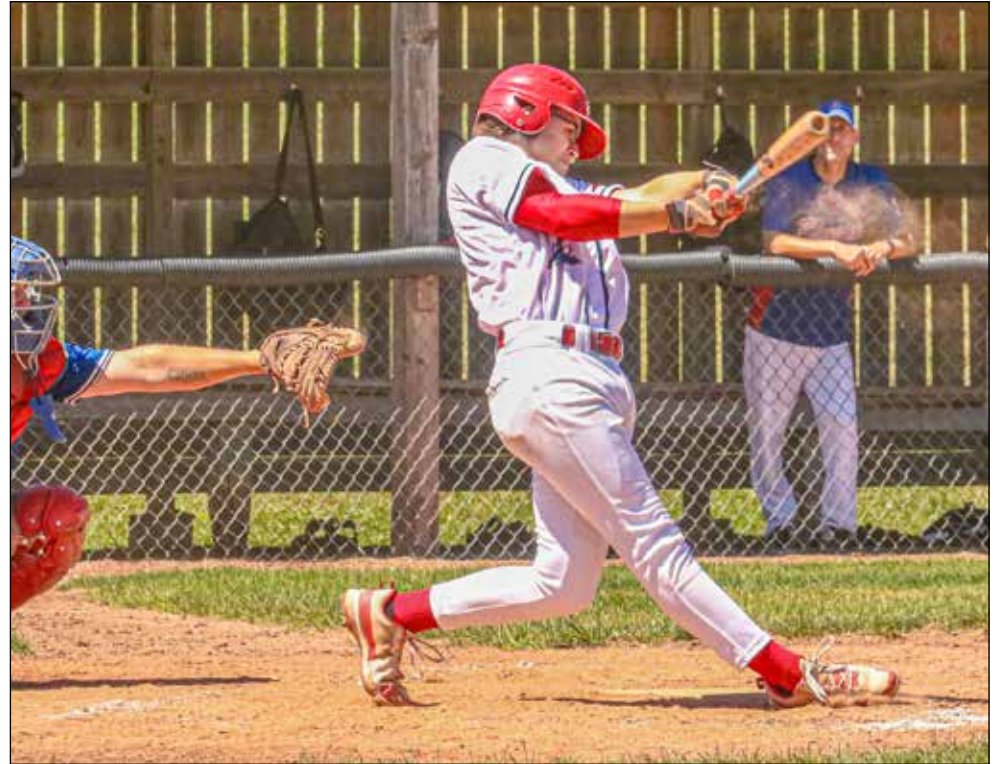
"The win in the first game came down

to a couple of things. Zach (Larmer) pitched so well that we didn't have to use anyone else. Zach pitched six innings, throwing only 76 pitches and 53 of them for strikes. I have always said to the team, when Zach is pitching, there will be lots in play because he is always in the strike zone. We played a clean game defensively as well.

"We got big hits to support Zach later in the game, including five in the bottom of the sixth to secure a mercy," Ewing continued. "All 15 guys played a role in the win with a lot of clutch hits. Jared (Ballantyne) continues to lead us offensively. He was two-for-four and drove in four runs."

A much tighter game followed in the second half of the back-to-back, but once again, the Rockies managed to secure the victory, winning 5-3. Ewing noted the game was highlighted by a clutch hit that eventually secured the game-winning advantage.

"The second game was a little different," Ewing said. "Flesherton threw



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Dan Dittmer gets a hit during one of the Red Rock Construction U18 OBA Blue St. Marys Rockies OBA playdown games Aug. 3. Dittmer came up with a clutch hit in the second of two games for the Rockies, scoring a bases-loaded triple to give the team the lead that eventually won the game and secured a spot at the OBA Provincial Championship, to be held Aug. 13-16 in Clarington.

a better pitcher, and we played a little bit tight. With their season on the line, Flesherton played really well. The game was tied when Dan (Dittmer) hit a bases-loaded triple with two outs to get us the lead for good. We have struggled to get a clutch hit in big games all year, and this was definitely a momentum-building hit for us."

In the second game and during the two-game set as a whole, Ewing had no shortage of strong contributors to mention.

"Donovan (McGregor) had a big day, collecting four hits overall, but three in the second game, which was great for him and his confidence as well as for the team. Justin (Ropp) and Evan (Ballantyne) combined for the win on the mound. Justin pitched really well, going five innings. We made a few miscues late, but with the tying runs in scoring position, Justin really locked in to shut down their offence and get us three big outs.

"Harper (Murrell) puts a lot of pressure on the pitchers and defence in his at-bats because he sees a ton of pitches and

makes guys work," added Ewing. "Owen (Dittmer) had three big plays in the outfield where he held runners at third on fly balls with strong throws home, including one in the bottom of the seventh (in the second game)."

As the Rockies gear up to compete on the provincial stage, Ewing detailed what is required of the Rockies to find success at the OBA championship.

"Overall, our expectations are very high going into OBAs," Ewing said. "If we get some hits and pitch well, I like our chances, but as always in these tournaments, you need a little luck. We need every single player to contribute to be successful. It has been the way we have played all year. We also need to relax in the big moments and treat every at-bat the same, although that's easier said than done. Pitching and defence, as it always is, will be key. We need the pitchers to throw strikes and trust the guys behind them will make the plays they are supposed to."

Lincs add scoring punch with Owen Bruining signing

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

With approximately a month remaining until their home opener Sept. 11, the St. Marys Lincolns have boosted their offensive attack with the addition of Owen Bruining.

Bruining, a 19-year-old native of Barrie, was acquired from the Newmarket Hurricanes of the Ontario Junior Hockey

League (OJHL). Bruining split the 2025-2026 season with the Hurricanes and the King Rebellion, totalling 17 goals and 41 points in 52 games.

Over the last two seasons, Bruining's production has remained consistent, posting a near-identical stat line in the 2024-2025 campaign, scoring 15 goals and 26 assists for 41 points in 52 games.

General manager Pat Powers told the Independent about the dynamic Bruining

adds to the Lincolns' offence.

"Owen (Bruining) is a proven goal scorer at every level that he has been at," said Powers. "He will provide us with some high-end offence from the right side of our forward group. Owen also adds veteran leadership and experience in big games from playing in the OJHL championship series last year."

Powers added the acquisition further cements the Lincolns' forward group as

being highly experienced and skilled.

"As far as our forward group goes, they are an extremely deep and veteran group with some very talented young guys sprinkled in," Powers said. "We will definitely be able to roll four lines out on every single day and hopefully tire the opposition's defenders."

McLellan joins Christie, Davis, trio advances to nationals

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Larry McLellan, a member of the Parks Lawn Bowling Club in St. Marys, joined forces with Wayne Christie and Andy Davis of Grand Bend's Grand Cove Lawn Bowling Club to capture the silver medal at the Senior Triples Lawn Bowling Provincial Championship June 23-24 in Hanover.

The silver medal advanced the trio to the Canadian National Championship, to be hosted Aug. 25-29 in Windsor.

Davis explained how a relaxed approach helped the trio earn the silver and a spot at nationals.

"I think we're all very composed, and I think that we feel that we finally have the experience now to believe we can play at this level with these players," said Davis. "And having that in my mind, I just had to relax, bend over and roll it because I know I can do it, and we just have to go out and do it more times than the other team. I guess, on that weekend in Hanover, it was our turn."

Christie added the result was a highlight of the relatively young lawn bowling careers of him and Davis.

"Andy (Davis) and I have bowled against the best bowlers in Ontario in all sorts of OLBA tournaments, and we've done okay, but we've never really won anything," Christie said. "So, for Andy and I to get this, it's a really good feeling and a feather in our caps to be able to accomplish it."

Davis added the accomplishment is extra special for him and Christie given how much less lawn bowling experience they have than many of the other competitors.

"Wayne (Christie) and I are rather new to the game. This is our sixth year, not



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Wayne Christie, Larry McLellan and Andy Davis. The trio claimed the silver medal at the Senior Triples Lawn Bowling Provincial Championship June 23-24 in Hanover and, in doing so, qualified for the national championship Aug. 25-29.

counting two years of COVID, while a lot of our competitors have been playing it for 40 years," Davis said. "So, based on how good they've been, the competition that they provide us, we're very proud to finally get past a lot of those people."

The third member of their team, McLellan, added invaluable experience to his teammates, according to Davis.

"Larry (McLellan) has been in lawn bowling forever, and he's done everything in lawn bowling, and he's been to several of these competitions," Davis said. "He's one of those guys that we always were trying to get to his level and try and beat him, and now we had the opportunity for him to join us, and we just gelled on that weekend to make it to the Canadian nationals."

McLellan, a fixture in lawn bowling in St. Marys and Ontario generally, de-

scribed how important a strong dedication is to the game to get to the level of playing for provincial and national titles.

"You have to be committed to what you're there for," McLellan said. "We've only played two games a day, so there's lots of other time to do other things. But I think you have to be committed to be ready to play."

On the opening day of the provincial championship, 17 teams were in the competition, with McLellan, Davis and Christie winning their first match against a team from Seaford by a score of 11-10. They then defeated a trio from Chesley 20-5, and then a group from Hanover 17-10.

Their winning ways continued on day two with a 16-12 victory over a team from Kitchener. This set them up for a semi-final match against a different

Kitchener squad, which McLellan, Davis and Christie won 12-8 to earn a spot in the finals and punch their ticket to the national event.

McLellan and Christie detailed how the trio found so much success in Hanover.

"Number one, we knew who we were playing, so we used our strategy, which was to take away the opponents' strong points," said McLellan. "We jumped on them quickly. We got a good lead, and then after that, we just nursed the win home."

"When you have all three players playing well, good things happen," added Christie. "Andy (Davis) was leading and he was getting in on the jack. I was playing vice, and I was making some shots to move balls around or get close to the jack. And then Larry (McLellan) was awesome at skip and made some great shots. So, when you put it all together, we all contributed to make it easier on one another."

McLellan also said it meant a great deal to him to be viewed as the missing piece for Christie and Davis to finally achieve such success.

"It's very important because, with them being two less experienced guys in front of me, it was nice that they could take turns in picking each other up. That's why they asked me to skip them. They've been so close to getting to the nationals, and they said, 'We need somebody to get us over the hump, and we'd like you to be our skip.'"

"It's very important to me (that they believed I could help them get over the hump). I didn't want to let them down either. We worked really well as a team. If one of us wasn't on, the other two were. I think the experience is now coming their way."



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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Matthew Pickel makes contact for a hit during the Social Thirty-One U9 WOBA Blue St. Marys Rockies game last Tuesday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Nolan Seliske releases the ball while pitching during last Thursday's Happy Valley Family Health Team U11 HL Grey St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

James Lord catches the ball at first base for an out during the Forman Electric U11 HL Blue St. Marys Rockies game last Thursday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Liam Von Nguyen fires a pitch towards the plate during last Thursday's Stonetown Electric U11 HL Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Tony Fluttert loads up to rocket a shot on goal during the U10 Boys Tier Three 'B' St. Marys Storm game this past Sunday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Melody Weber blasts the ball towards the net during this past Monday's U17 Girls Tier Two St. Marys Storm game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: What makes a wedding unforgettable?

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Wedding season is in full bloom, and being a guest is always such a charming experience. Even though I haven't attended a Canadian wedding yet, I've learned so much about them from conversations with my local friends.

Because Canada is so wonderfully multicultural, modern weddings here rarely look identical. Honestly, I'd love to be invited to one just to see how seamlessly different cultural traditions blend together into a unique, modern fusion.

It got me thinking about how much wedding culture has changed back in Ukraine. Today, modern Ukrainian couples borrow heavily from western trends. But growing up, I remember a very different kind of celebration.

In rural areas, the wedding feast didn't happen in a formal venue; it took place right in the middle of the backyard under a massive tent. Generations of relatives would gather days in advance to cook for at least 100 guests. Ukrainians love hosting, but when it comes to weddings, people go above and beyond to impress everyone with an endless spread of delicious home-cooked food. Back then, a wedding was a three-day marathon packed with non-stop dancing, live music and hilarious games.

These days, more and more couples choose to skip the chaos, opting for simpler celebrations. But to be completely honest, "simple" nowadays definitely doesn't mean "more affordable!"

What I've noticed is that planning a wedding today requires the patience of a chess grandmaster. A single year is often



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ALONA VASYLIEVA)

Written in honour of our wedding anniversary in August, a look back at our whirlwind, three-week celebration and why unconventional stories mean the most.

no longer enough to pull it all together, mostly because venues of choice are sometimes booked out two or three years in advance.

And the venue is usually just the tip of the financial iceberg. It feels like the moment the word "wedding" is attached to anything, an invisible magic price tag appears. Suddenly, prices rocket skyward for every tiny detail, from the exact shade of the tablecloths to a simple floral arrangement. Vendors just assume you're prepared to spend a small fortune simply because it's the big day.

That's why more and more couples are taking a DIY approach – or getting

clever with their bookings. Some don't even mention the word "wedding" when reserving a space, fully aware of how quickly a quote can double overnight!

Yet, the best celebrations are often the ones that break the mold entirely. I recently learned that in Newfoundland and Labrador, some couples rent fishing boats to hold their official ceremony right out on the ocean, followed by a lively, traditional kitchen party. I love that idea; it proves that a wedding doesn't have to follow a rigid formula to be unforgettable.

My own wedding was far from traditional, too. Planned in just three weeks during the absolute peak summer season

for the airline I worked for, my partner and I squeezed everything between my flights – I even had to ask for one extra day off for the occasion!

Luck was on my side; I stumbled upon a building that housed a dress studio, a makeup artist and a photo studio all under one roof. I bought my dress and left it right there until the big day. On the morning of our wedding, I got my hair and makeup done, walked next door to put on my dress, took studio photos and then headed out for outdoor pictures. Our friend was supposed to be our wedding driver, but a last-minute emergency with his girlfriend meant we had to improvise, so we simply ordered a premium Uber to make the ride feel special!

To keep stress at a minimum, we split the event into two days. We signed the official papers at the registry the day before, saving the full photo session and celebration for the next day. One of our photo stops was the pub where we had our first date. Eating a juicy burger in a full white wedding dress under the amused gazes of the locals is still one of my favorite memories.

Looking back, the only thing missing was our parents. Planning everything at the last minute, we decided to keep the day exclusively for the two of us. While it felt right at the time, I now realize how much it would have meant to them to be there. That's why I've made a promise to myself; for one of our upcoming wedding anniversaries, we will hold a beach ceremony – this time surrounded by our parents and our son. No fancy wedding dress needed, just a simple white swimsuit, a beautiful floral arch on the shore and the people who matter most.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

This weekend is packed with family fun! Tomorrow's Funday Friday is a live presentation by the Canadian Raptor Conservancy (register here: tinyurl.com/SMPL-ActiveNet) at Cadzow Park. Participants will meet hawks, owls, eagles, and more as they learn about the animals' unique adaptations, behaviours, and habitats. In the evening, come back to Cadzow to see the outdoor screening of "Hoppers". Presented by Quadro, this free night out wouldn't be complete without complimentary popcorn from FOL! Be sure to bring a chair or blanket for maximum movie-watching comfort.

The summer fun continues next week with our End of Summer BBQ on Thursday! All are welcome to stop by the Queen Street lawn between 4:30 and 7 p.m. for an evening of good eats and good times. Get a balloon animal, enjoy cotton candy, win a prize, and look back on a great summer with friends.

Up This Week

- Fri., Aug. 14: Funday Friday – Canadian Raptor Conservancy* (11 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Movie in the Park – Hoppers* (dusk)
- Sat., Aug. 15: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Mon., Aug. 17: Picnic in the Park*^ (12-1 p.m.), Discovery Den* (3:15 – 4:30 p.m.)
- Tues., Aug. 18: Reading Help* (10:30 – 11:30 a.m.), Crafty Kids* (1:45 – 3 p.m.)
- Wed., Aug. 19: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.), Picnic in the Park*^ (12-1 p.m.), Mahjong~ (1-4 p.m.), Imagination Station (2-4 p.m.), Reading Help* (2:30 – 3:30 p.m.), Teen Program* (6-7 p.m.)
- Thurs., Aug. 20: Mini Makers* (10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Fluency Fitness*^ (2-3 p.m.), End of Summer BBQ (4:30-7 p.m.)

*Registration Required

^Held at Cadzow Park (217 Park St.)

~Held at Kin Park (109 James St. N)

~Held at the PRC, 1/3 Hall (317 James St. S)

Ask the Arborist

By Joel Hackett • 519.272.5742 • jtsquote@gmail.com

Joel Hackett is a certified Arborist residing in the St. Marys area. Currently, he spends most of the year running Joel's Tree Service. For contact call 519.272.5742 or email jtsquote@gmail.com



Dear Arborist,

I have a giant willow tree near my house that is very big, like gigantic. What should I do with it? It makes a huge mess, but my wife wants to keep it. I want it out. I don't want it falling on the house.

Thanks, Guy

Dear Guy,

Typically, with giant willow trees you have three options.

Option 1. You can remove the canopy or branches over the house. We would call this a heavy pull back.

Option 2. You can pollard the entire tree, which is basically removing all the small branches and just leaving a trunk and main large limbs.

Option 3. Remove the tree.

If the base is not decayed, I would normally recommend pollarding the tree.

Sincerely, The Arborist



HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The end of the fair

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

In the 1930s, the South Perth Agricultural Society firmly established its status as a tenant of Lex Wilson's thoroughbred horse training centre on Queen Street West. Their lease allowed the directors to use the grounds and the buildings for the annual fall fair each year. The 1940s and 1950s were generally good years for the fair with new exhibition categories added. In 1950, a separate Ladies' Division was created, meeting separately with representation on the main Society board. Several profitable years meant that improvements were made to the grandstand and the display areas. In 1953, the directors voted to change the name to the St. Marys Agricultural Society. Although the complement of directors still included representatives from the adjacent townships, the new name reflected the Society's centre of operations. The Town of St. Marys provided an annual grant and many hard-working volunteers.

However, the 1960s brought uncertainty. When Lex Wilson died in 1962, the St. Marys Agricultural Society was still able to use his property for the fair but the terms of the lease with Helen Wilson, his widow, were much less generous. As well as paying an annual sum of \$3,000 to lease the grounds, the Society was now also responsible for repairs and maintenance of the buildings. In 1968, the annual fair dates were Tuesday and Wednesday, September 24 and 25. By Tuesday afternoon, all the exhibits were in place in the covered circular track. The midway and exhibits were scheduled to open to the public that evening. The judges and many of the fair directors were finishing their work in the covered building when, at 4:30 p.m., a tornado hit the west end of St. Marys. According to the *Journal Argus*, "The twister ripped and tore at concessions on the grounds, lifted 400 feet of the training track building housing the exhibits, and dropped the twisted sections of steel and wood well away from the footings." At least 50 people were in the covered building when a section was blown apart. Three people suffered minor injuries but, miraculously, no one was killed.

The tornado meant an abrupt end to the 1968 fair. Only people willing to help clear up the debris were allowed on the site on Wednesday. Many of the exhibits, such as women's handwork, were buried under the rubble. The Kirkton Fair board offered its facilities so that the 4H Dairy Calf Club and other livestock entries could be judged as scheduled. But the fair itself was a disaster. To save money, the directors had not taken out weather insurance that year. For the next two years, the Agricultural Society limped along, with the directors and other volunteers working hard to repair the damage to their buildings. In 1969, Helen Wilson finally found a buyer for the property. The Society directors were surprised to learn that the fairgrounds – along with their lease – had been transferred to Theodore (Teeder) Kennedy, the former captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team and now an enthusiastic thoroughbred horseman.

The 1970 fair got off to a good start with a parade on Queen Street on Tuesday evening, but it rained on Wednesday and attendance was low. In an editorial the following week, September 30, 1970, the *Journal Argus* regretted that a bit of bad weather had kept people away. "So that's it. A few stalwarts and enthusiasts work their hearts out to see that the Stone Town and district have a Fall Fair each year, and seemingly the great majority of citizens of the town do not seem to care in the least whether the Fair takes place or not." The editorial suggested three options for the future of the St. Marys Fair. First, call it quits – "after all, 123 years is a pretty long time for any effort like this to last." Second, join up with another district fair and hold a larger event in a central location. Third, the local community should get behind the Fall Fair and "see that sufficient effort, spirit and showmanship is pumped into it in order to make it a resounding annual success."

These were reasonable suggestions and, of course, the



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

This photograph from the *Journal Argus* shows a crowd watching the heavy horse competition at the north end of the Flats (Milt Dunnell Field) during the annual agricultural fair. The fair was held on the Flats from 1971 to 1986.

Agricultural Society had considered all of them. But in 1971, under President Lloyd McLean, the Society came up with yet another option. It decided to change from a fall to a summer fair. A three-day event would be held on the Flats in July. The Society acquired the abandoned DeLong pin factory building on Emily Street just south of the trestle, hoping to use it as an exhibition hall. However, it needed too many repairs, and so tents were rented for the exhibits. The cost of the Friday night parade was shared with the Downtown Merchants Association to promote Sidewalk Days. Visitors to St. Marys that weekend could search for bargains in front of downtown stores and then cross Trout Creek and enjoy the fair.

The fair was held on the Flats for 16 summers, a great location in many respects. It was large enough to accommodate the exhibition tents, the midway, a livestock judging ring and a small track for the horse show. In this week's photograph, teams of heavy horses and wagons go through their paces for the judges, with the backyards of houses on Emily Street in the background. During the time on the Flats, the St. Marys Agricultural Society erected the pavilion/storage building and shared the cost of new washrooms with the Lawn Bowling Club and the Town. In the mid-1970s, the Kinsmen took on the running of the beer tent, and it became a popular mid-summer place to meet old friends.

But a summer fair by the river brought its own problems – hot, muggy weather, mosquitoes, and – inescapably – muddy grounds and rain! After discouraging rain in 1986, the following year, the Agricultural Society was persuaded to leave the Flats and move to the arena and community centre on James Street South. The Society paid for the installation of a new horse ring on the south side of the grounds. Opening ceremonies and the Saturday evening dance took place inside the community hall. Homecrafts and other exhibits were set up in the hall while antique machinery and other heavy items were displayed on the concrete arena floor. The *Journal Argus* reported on July 29, 1987, that the fair had been well-attended and that the arena and community centre had "proved more than adequate."

By 1997, when the Agricultural Society celebrated its 150th anniversary, there had been several profitable years for the fair in this new location. The Friday night fair parade now started downtown, proceeding east on Queen Street and then south along James Street to the arena. The popular midway set up to the south and east of the community centre. New attractions, such as the tractor pull and pig roast competition were crowd-pleasing features. But use of James Street South for the annual fair became more complicated when the town built the new Friendship Centre for St. Marys and Area Seniors in front of the community centre complex. This took away a considerable portion of space available for fair installations.

Even more worrying, in the early years of the 21st century, interest in some key aspects of the fair was dwindling. Certainly, kids still loved the midway. The loud

roar of the tractor pull engines was exciting. The beer tent still drew crowds each evening. But fewer people entered the traditional fair competitions and fewer people wandered inside to see the results of the judging. It was a struggle to recruit volunteers to run the fair. The Agricultural Society offered free admission to the grounds to increase both interest and attendance. But the directors' worries turned to anxiety. In an editorial for the *Journal Argus*, Stew Slater reflected how important the fair had once been to rural families but admitted that this interest had declined. Echoing the 1970 editorial, he wrote that only renewed interest by the community could give the fair a fighting chance to survive.

Unfortunately, this didn't happen. Although for its 160th anniversary in 2007, the Society offered the community an amazing fair, the event lost thousands of dollars, reducing the Society's bank balance to an alarming low. At a difficult Annual Meeting, November 10, 2007, in a vote by ballot, the result was 11 to 5 to end the fair. The Agricultural Society's wonderful records have survived, preserved at the St. Marys Museum. A treasure trove for researchers, they record not only the fair's history but also offer insights into 16 decades of St. Marys and area social history.

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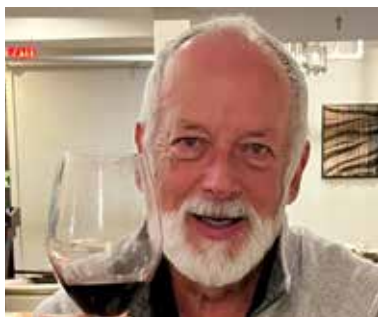


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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Witness to a 50-year-old mystery



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

Laurie Wickens passed away last month.

I know what you are thinking; "That's a very odd opening sentence for a travel feature." I agree.

But the thing is, not many people have used a unique, personal experience to create a travel destination – a museum that has drawn visitors for two decades. But Laurie Wickens, and a few dedicated friends, did exactly that.

And three years ago, I had the chance to visit their museum, officially the Shag Harbour UFO Interpretive Centre founded in 2006 by the Shag Harbour UFO Incident Society, and until his passing in July, usually staffed by Laurie Wickens. And that's where I met him.

But the story goes back decades further to the night of Oct. 4, 1967. On that evening, a number of Shag Harbour, N.S. residents saw something they could not explain and would never forget. One of those witnesses was Laurie Wickens.

What they saw – and this was corroborated by several witnesses – was a flying object about 60 feet in diameter with flashing lights. It was flying above the waters of Shag Harbour, and then crashed into the sea and dis-

appeared.

Wickens, then a 17-year-old kid, had the presence of mind to get to a pay phone and call the RCMP to report the incident.

Whoever answered the phone at the local RCMP office was skeptical. Instead of asking for more details, Wickens was asked if he had been drinking! The call ended. But a few minutes later, before he left the area, the phone rang. Turned out, the cops had been getting quite a few calls since Wickens' and they all agreed that something mysterious was happening. Later on, the testimony of Pan Am pilots added to the veracity of the sighting – they had seen an object that matched the description flying over the Gulf of Maine that night.

Wickens' answer to the return call from the RCMP? "I told you I wasn't lying."

In the end, the Shag Harbour UFO became officially noted as "the only government-documented UFO crash in the world." So even the government agreed that something "unidentified" happened that night.

But to this day, no one knows what exactly.

It's probably important to note that Shag Harbour is located close to the southern tip of Nova Scotia. It's 65 kilometres south of Yarmouth, due east of Portland, Maine, and not all that distant from Boston.

Those proximities are probably important because while Laurie Wickens and his colleagues were happy to talk about the Shag Harbour UFO, they didn't insist it was anything other-worldly.

Wickens told me that almost immediately following the crash, a large American navy

vessel sailed into Shag Harbour. Townspeople were instantly aware that the place was suddenly teeming with American and Canadian military officers, and a U.S. Navy dive team was also in town.

The kerfuffle lasted for about five days. And just as quickly as the American contingent had arrived, they were gone – the ship sailed away, the uniforms were gone and everything was back to normal, including, it was eventually determined, the sea bed of Shag Harbour.

No evidence was ever found – or at least, ever acknowledged by powers that be – of any crashed flying object, unidentified or not. A spokesperson for Canada's National Defence Headquarters stated, "The Rescue Coordination Centre conducted a preliminary investigation and discounted the possibilities that the sighting was produced by an aircraft, flares, floats, or any other known objects." Thus, by definition, an Unidentified Flying Object.

Local people, including Wickens and occasional visiting UFO enthusiasts, continued to search, but to no avail.

There is a bit of a contradiction between the museum and the actual opinions of Wickens and his colleagues. The museum includes a lot of UFO theory, including figures that look remarkably like E.T.

But the witnesses and experts I met hold to one of two other possibilities – either the Americans spirited away a wrecked, experimental craft, or the Shag Harbour UFO was an amphibious vessel that left under its own power.

Either way, those in the know point straight south of the border



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

UFO witness Laurie Wickens, who helped turn that experience into a quirky tourist destination.

for their answer, concluding that an American military vessel that had no business entering Canadian airspace or water, did so anyway.

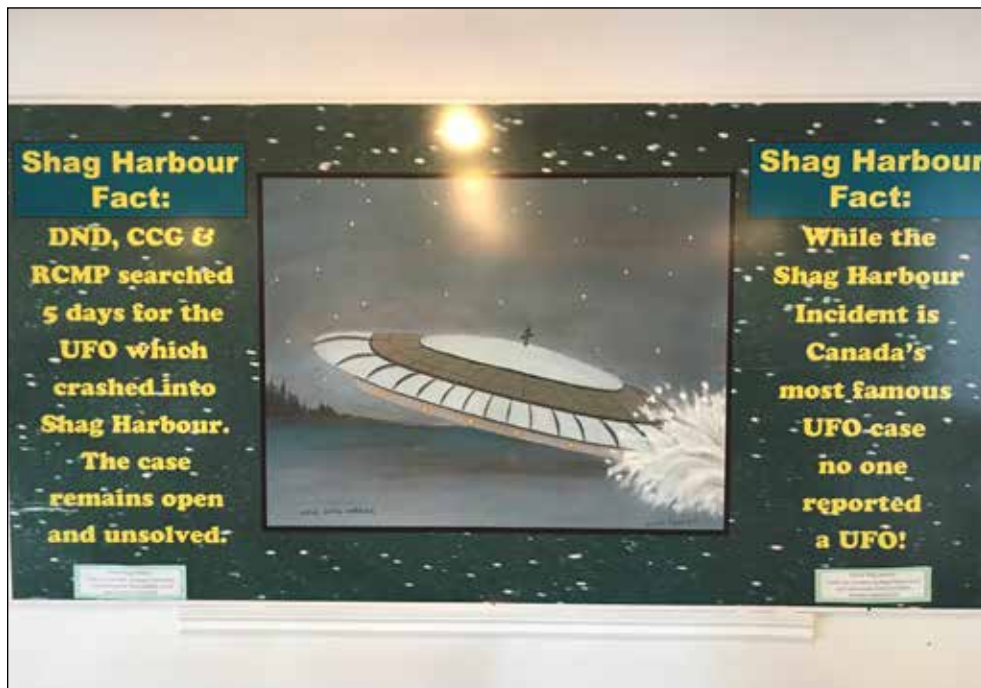
Wickens was a fisherman by profession but spent countless hours at the museum. His obituary, marking his passing in July, stated that he "was a huge part of the Shag Harbour UFO Incident Society and museum."

Another publication, The Canadian Gothic, wrote, "For many Canadians, and for countless people around the world fascinated by the unexplained, Laurie was much more than the primary witness to the Shag Harbour Incident. He was the reason the story endured. Laurie's passing marks the loss of one of the last

living connections to one of Canada's greatest mysteries. His story, and the mystery that followed him for nearly six decades, will continue to inspire curiosity for generations to come."

The Shag Harbour museum is one of the quirkiest and most charming small museums I've had the privilege to visit. I hope that it can continue to operate, after having lost one of its most valuable human resources, UFO witness and eager story-teller Laurie Wickens.

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.



Just the fact, folks.



A painting that reflects the memories of the UFO witnesses.

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Perth County bounty



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

Here are some fun recipes to try this week featuring local ingredients from zucchini and cheese to tomatoes and chicken.

Zucchini 'meatballs'

The perfect way to use up that plentiful fresh summer zucchini!

Ingredients:

- 1 lb zucchini cut into small cubes
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 1/2 cups plain breadcrumbs or panko
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Fresh parsley, chopped
- Fresh basil
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Extra virgin olive oil

Method:

- Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high. Add zucchini and sauté for 8-10 minutes

until soft. Let cool slightly.

- Transfer zucchini to a large bowl, add eggs, parm, breadcrumbs, garlic, parsley, salt and pepper.

- Mix until well combined. If mixture is too wet, add more breadcrumbs.

- Lightly wet hands and roll mixture into golf ball-sized balls.

- Heat a generous layer of olive oil in a skillet over medium heat.

- Fry balls until golden all over.

- Finish with grated parm and basil.

Three-ingredient cheese scones:

These scones are so easy, you'll be making these every night! They work well as mini burger buns.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup grated cheese *save 1/4 for tops
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup milk

Method:

- Preheat air fryer or oven to 350°F

- Mix everything together. If too wet, add a little more flour; too dry, add a splash of milk.

- Pinch of salt or mustard powder if you wish. Top with remaining cheese.

- Roll into balls and cook in air fryer or oven for 12 minutes.

Crispy chicken sandwiches

The chicken in this recipe is marinated in buttermilk until tender, coated in a perfectly seasoned shaggy crust and fried until golden. A fun homemade chicken that tastes better than ordering out!

Prep: 40m Cook: 20m Marinating: 2-4hrs Serves: 6

Ingredients:

Marinade:

- 3 medium chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, halved into 6 cutlets
- 1 1/2 cups low-fat buttermilk (or add 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice or white vinegar to 1 cup milk and let sit for 10 minutes)
- 1 tbsp hot sauce of your liking

Classic breading:

- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Oil of choice for frying: veg, canola or peanut

Topping suggestions:



(LAUREN EEDY PHOTO)

This chicken sandwich you can make at home is better than eating out!

- Lettuce
- Dill pickles
- Heirloom tomatoes
- Onions
- Mayonnaise or sauce of your choice such as aioli

Method:

- Pound chicken cutlets between 2 pieces of plastic wrap to 1/2-inch thickness.

- Make marinade and marinate chicken in fridge for 2-4 hours or overnight.

- In a separate shallow bowl, whisk together breading ingredients. Remove chicken from marinade and let excess drip off. Dip chicken into flour, ensuring

it's completely covered and adhering. Transfer to a wire rack.

- Heat 1 inch oil in a soup pot or Dutch oven to 350°F. Just before frying chicken, dip into flour again.

- Add chicken, 2 pieces at a time, adjust temperature to 300-325°F. Cook 3-4 minutes on first side then 2-3 minutes on second side until chicken is crisp and golden.

- Rest chicken by transferring to a wire rack. The internal temperature will continue to rise as it rests. It should reach 165°F on a thermometer.

- Lightly butter and toast buns and top to your hearts desire!

UNDERSTANDING GEN Z: Summer mode on



MEREDITH A. STOKES

Independent Columnist

Summertime! A word that brings joy to the soul of every sensible being from the age of three to 300. For kids, it means freedom for two months. For adults, it means as much freedom as you manage to steal from your employer.

Ask a kid about anything beyond their name and age a week into vacation, and you'll probably get nothing but blank stares. This is not because, as most of you so cleverly put it, "our brains have fallen asleep." There is no off switch on the back of

our heads. If that was the case, I would have a much better sleep schedule.

I'm sure you've all been on vacation before. Maybe you went to the Bahamas, or Mexico, or just to that slightly sketchy hotel a town over. You probably didn't check your emails, skipped the news channel and hung up the "do not disturb" sign for a while.

The whole point is to get away. And for folks between the ages of four and eighteen, that looks like none of the following: science, math, history, English and French. Physical education is permissible, and if road trips count as geography, then that's ok too.

If you start quizzing us on our times tables in late July, we might actually fall to the ground and have a heart attack. You see, when it takes us more than 20 seconds

to answer, the adults in the room all laugh and smile with some kind of comment like, "It must be summer because their brains are mush!" Ninety percent of us can't answer 20x6 that quickly on a good day. Just ask our teachers. Regardless, now you've got kids wondering, "Was I supposed to know that?" "Just how much did I forget this summer?" "Am I actually going to fail this year?" As someone who is going into high school this September, those are the questions that keep

us awake at night. We definitely don't need more fuel for the little doubt demon up there.

Here's some advice. Just let us enjoy our time away from the world. After all, wasn't it an adult who came up with "enjoy your youth?" We can't in winter because we have school and hockey or ringette season. Plus, it's just plain cold.

So today I'm signing off with a message for any kid or teen who will listen. It's your summer, and you're allowed to ignore every-

thing if that's what you want. If the only thing you remember how to do for two months is cast a fishing line, swing a bat, or pull off the perfect dive, that's ok. As for school? That's a problem for future you. Today you are ready to live. So, get out there and play.

If you have any specific questions or ideas, feel free to reach out to the St. Marys Independent and I will do my very best to answer.

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Riddles

- I fly without wings, I cry without eyes. Whenever I go, darkness flies. What am I?
A cloud.
- The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?
Footsteps.
- I'm full of keys but can't open any doors. What am I?
A piano.
- I'm tall when I'm young, and short when I'm old. What am I?
A candle.
- I get wetter the more I dry. What am I?
A towel.
- I can be cracked, made, told, and played. What am I?
A joke.
- I'm not alive, but I can grow. I don't have lungs, but I need air. What am I?
A fire.
- I'm round and bright and seen at night, but sometimes I'm gone from sight. What am I?
The moon.
- I can run but never walk, I have a bed but never sleep. What am I?
A river.
- I shine bright in the sky, but I'm not the sun. Kids wish on me when the day is done. What am I?
A star.
- You can hear me and feel me, but you can't see me. I make trees dance. What am I?
The wind.

- Word Search -



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The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Blakelyn Baker (8)

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

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Our Pets of the Week are the royal girls of Cluckingham Palace located at Eileen Stacey's residence on Line 16. Home to a flock of feathered divas who enjoy snacks, sunshine and judging anyone who walks by. They pay their rent in eggs... when they feel like it!



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



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Busy streets during Thorndale-wide yard sales



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Thame Centre Thorndale Station firefighters were at the corner of Foxborough and Fairview roads during the Thorndale-wide yard sales with their boot drive collecting change for Muscular Dystrophy Canada. Pictured from left to right are firefighter Dave Broomfield, his helper, Blake Broomfield, and firefighter Cody Gorden.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Despite rain in the forecast and construction on part of King Street, Thorndale's streets were busy with bargain hunters and collectors on Saturday.

The Thorndale-wide yard sales, held annually on the second Saturday in August, have been a village tradition for more than 35 years. The event was originally started by Don and Karen Bentum, former owners of Thorndale Hardware.

The Thorndale Fall Fair: the largest and longest-running community event

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Thorndale Fall Fair books are now available, and anticipation is building for the community's largest and longest-running event, taking place Sept. 25, 26 and 27.

For 169 years, the Thorndale Fall Fair has been a community highlight. While fair activities have evolved since its 1857 beginning to reflect modern interests, its longevity is rooted in strong community participation.

There are many ways to get involved in the Thorndale Fall Fair, from volunteering to entering its competitions, and participation begins at a young age. The School Fair competition welcomes children from preschool to Grade 5, giving budding artists, engineers, designers, photographers and horticulturists a chance to display their talents. Children take pride in seeing their work on display and beam when ribbons are attached to their entries.

For students in grades six to 12, the Youth Fair offers

Over the years, the number of tables set up on residents' lawns has declined somewhat. This year, however, the annual Thorndale event seemed to gain new energy, with residents along King Street, in the Monteith, Foxborough and Wye Creek subdivisions, taking part.

Thorndale United Church on King Street continues to draw a steady crowd with its bacon on a bun and well-stocked bake-sale table. The Thorndale Fire Department held its boot drive this year at the corner of Fairview and Foxborough roads, collecting change for Muscular Dystrophy Canada.

categories in crafts, food, flowers and photography, giving teens the opportunity to exhibit their talents as well and take pride in participating.

The competitive categories are not just for youth. The Homecraft Competition featuring baking, preserves, needlework, crafts, photography and flowers, has been a major part of the Thorndale Fall Fair since its earliest days. Prize-winning pies and tarts are auctioned off Friday evening to open the fair weekend, and the lively bidding to claim the best pie is always entertaining and a crowd favourite.

Rules and entry guidelines for the School Fair, Youth Fair and Homecraft Competition are included in the Thorndale Fair book, available at several Thorndale businesses, the library and the Thorndale Lions Community Centre. A full list of competitions, rules and activities is also available at www.thorndalefair.com.

Whether attending for fun or entering a competition, the Thorndale Fall Fair offers something for everyone.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

The Thorndale United Church drew a large crowd during the Thorndale-wide yard sales last Saturday, selling their bacon on a bun and baked goods.

It is encouraging to see the tradition continue, with so many Thorndale residents participating. The event remains a great way to find a few treasures, some bargains and meet more neighbours.



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OBITUARY

Longeway



It is with great sadness that the family announces the passing of (Anne) Arden Longeway in her 67th year on Sunday Aug 2, 2026 at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital.

Survived by her BFF husband Tomas Longeway (St. Marys). Proud mother of Tom (Shannon) Van Oosterhout

(Waterloo), Cathy (Justin) Van Oosterhout (Cambridge). Adored Grandmother of Henry, Alice & Edison Cumby (Cambridge). Survived by her sister Linda O'Hara (St. Marys). Beloved Aunt to Samantha (Annanth) Brown-Aravinthan (Toronto), Olivia (Geon) Brown (Toronto). Cherished by MacKenzie Ballantyne (St. Marys). Predeceased by her Father Elwyn (John) Bryan (Blanchard Township) and Mother (Leona) Ann Bryan (St. Marys).

As the saying goes, "died peacefully surrounded by loved ones" well, I did go peacefully and I was loved, comforted, and hugged until my last breath by my husband and children. Arden was an incredible woman, but most importantly, she was the most loving Mom, wife and Grandmother. She thrived with an early morning coffee, accompanied by a routine breath of fresh air. In the evenings you could find her enjoying a frosty Alexander Keith's.

Arden will be fondly remembered for being a musical prodigy on both the piano and violin. She was a graduate in music from the University of Western Ontario. She carried on throughout her life playing music for loved ones and teaching students who will continue to carry out her musical legacy. She will also be remembered for the time she spent working at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital. She remembered her time there fondly. She will be so incredibly missed by her family. We intend to honour her by carrying out her sarcasm, dry sense of humour and continue to enjoy the little moments that made our time with her so special.

A private family gathering will be held. In lieu of flowers and text messages, donations may be made in Arden's memory to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation or the Stratford-Perth Humane Society. The family would like to express their gratitude to Dr. Berta and the staff at St. Marys Memorial Hospital for the care given to Arden and our family during this difficult time. A thank you and acknowledgement to the London Health Science Centre - Oncology department for their services. We will be forever grateful for the dedication and regard.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

"Your body is not a temple, it's an amusement park. Enjoy the ride." — Anthony Bourdain

["the song is ended, but the melody lingers on" — Irving Berlin]

OBITUARY

Ivins



Gayle Gertrude Ivins, nee Taylor of Thorndale, Ontario passed away on August 6, 2026, in her 87th year. Gayle was born on October 6, 1939, to the late William and Florence Taylor. She attended SS#6 Public School and graduated from Medway High School. Gayle went on to work at Loblaws and Dominion grocery stores and Purple Hill

Meat Market until becoming a dedicated school bus driver for Elgie Bus Lines for 32 years. Gayle also played the organ and sang in the choir for many years at Grace Anglican Church and St. George's Anglican Church.

On June 14, 1958, Gayle married the love of her life, Herbert Jerome Ivins, and together they built a home filled with warmth, faith, music, love and laughter. Gayle was a loving and caring mother who always reminded her children how proud she was of each of them. She treasured every moment spent with her grandchildren and her great grandchildren.

She is survived by her children Scott and Heather Ivins, Laurie and Jeff McDonald and Heather and Kevin Smith and her 9 grandchildren and their partners and 20 great grandchildren who knew her as G.G. She is also survived by her brother George and beloved sister-in-law Anna Taylor and their family. She will always cherish her 60+year friendship with Pat Redman as well as many other treasured friends and family along the way. A special thank-you to all her caregivers who have helped Gayle over the last few years.

A funeral service was held on Monday, August 10, 2026, at 11 a.m. at St. George's Anglican Church, Thorndale. Cremation has occurred.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to St. George's Anglican Church 172 King Street, Thorndale N0M 2P0. Online condolences may be made at memorialfuneral.ca

OBITUARY

Ratcliffe



In loving memory of Robert Ratcliffe, we are saddened to announce his sudden passing on August 3rd, 2026, at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

Robert was born on July 1st, 1952, in St. Marys, Ontario to Robert (Bob) Ratcliffe and Jean Ratcliffe (née MacLellan).

His memory lives on through his loving wife of 37 years, Lisa (née Trecroce); his beloved children, Justin, David, and Lauren; and his sisters, Rosemary and Laurel.

Robert Ratcliffe was an experienced legal counsel with over three decades of work at Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General's Crown Law Office – Civil. Before the Attorney General's office, he worked for the Catholic Children's Aid Society, where he met his wife, Lisa.

Robert was passionate about his work, believing in the importance of contributing to society and being involved in the civil process. Among his proudest professional accomplishments was standing before the Supreme Court of Canada on behalf of the Ontario government.

Robert was an award winning amateur photographer. He was the author of multiple books, including most recently Photography and the Law, bridging the gap between his career and his passions. Robert loved music, the arts, literature, and history.

His kindness, gentle nature, and devotion to his family will be remembered by all who had the privilege to have met him. He will be deeply missed.

A memorial will be held on August 15th, 2026, at Oakview Funeral Home, 56 Lakeshore Rd W, Oakville. A celebration of life will be held from 2 - 3pm, followed by refreshments from 3 - 4pm.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for a donation to be made in Robert's name to the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation or the Canadian Lung Association.

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Annual Decoration Day

AT THE ZION CEMETERY
IN USBORNE TOWNSHIP

ON THE 4TH SUNDAY
AUGUST 23RD, 2026

The cemetery will be opened to allow family, friends and guests to visit and decorate their loved ones grave site. There will be board members available if anyone would like to make a donation for the care and maintenance of the cemetery.

ST. MARYS FARMERS' MARKET

Raspberries and peaches and PETS!

Pet costume parade at 10:30 a.m.

Free pet photos from 9 to 11 a.m.

Milt Dunnell Field | 1 Veterans' Circle
Saturday 8 a.m. to noon



@farmersmarketofstmarys



@stmarysfarmersmarket

OBITUARY

McKenny



John "Mark" McKenny passed away peacefully surrounded by his loved ones at St. Marys Memorial Hospital on August 8, 2026 at the age of 76.

Beloved husband of Marlene (nee Forrest). Dear Father of Andrea. Brother of Janice Houston (Bob), Laurie Roth (Tom) and brother-in-law of Paul

Forrest. Cousin of Joan Martin, Darrell Gorvett and Debra Chappel (Dave). Also remembered by nieces, nephew and their families. Predeceased by his parents John "Jack" and Florence McKenny and parents-in-law Alex and Wilma Forrest.

Born and raised in St. Marys, Mark was a faithful member of St. James Anglican Church and member of the St. Marys Legion Br. 236 for over 50 years. His career with Victoria & Grey Trust, National Trust and Scotia Bank allowed him to travel across Ontario and Canada. He was happy to finish his working career close to home and move back to St. Marys. Early retirement at age 55 allowed him to spend more time with family and friends. He enjoyed socializing with a good game of cards, watching baseball and volunteering his time at the church and Legion. Mark was a long-time member of the St. Marys Legion Cribbage Team.

Family and friends are invited to the St. James Anglican Church, 65 Church St. S. St. Marys, on Friday, August 14, 2026 for visitation from 10 am until the time of the Memorial Service at 11 am. Interment in St. Marys Cemetery followed by a reception at the St. Marys Legion.

Memorial donations may be made to the St. James Anglican Church, St. Marys Legion Br. 236 or the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY
40th
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**Congratulations to
Steve and Dianne Rounds
ON 40 YEARS**

Aug 16th, 1986 - Aug 16th, 2026

From Steven and Ashton, Easton and Lennon, Lauren and Adrain, Luca, Emmy, Oliver

IN MEMORIAM

Henderson

In memory of Michael Anthony Henderson

Son of Diane Henderson and Tony Wilhelm

Born Feb 4, 2000 - Died Aug 16, 2018

in Fredericton, New Brunswick as the result of a construction accident. The beauty of a life cannot be extinguished by the tragic circumstances of death.



There are no tomorrows for us to share, but yesterday's memories are always there.

We cherish the memories, special moments of love, laughter and kindness.

A soul as bright as yours, will never lose its light, you have left our lives, but will never leave our hearts.

Life is not always fair, but life is not measured by years.

But the love you shared in those short 18 years.

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

Gamma Bessie and family

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Aug. 3 - Colton Campbell, Embro	\$50.00
Aug. 4 - Holly Graham, Stratford	\$50.00
Aug. 5 - Norah Ahrens, Stratford	\$50.00
Aug. 6 - Ron Cahill, Stratford	\$50.00
Aug. 7 - Vanessa Bricknell, Oshawa	\$50.00
Aug. 8 - Sydney Nicholls, Grimsby	\$200.00

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Avonbank COMMUNITY

Cemetery Decoration Service

Sunday, August 23, 2026

2:30-3:15PM



*Receipts for donations over \$20 available
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	8			5	7			
			2		8	3		5

Solutions on pg. 31

GRANTON CEMETERY »» DECORATION DAY «« SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2026



Volunteers will be at the cemetery accepting donations for the care & maintenance of the cemetery.

*Receipts provided
for all donations.*

NORTH MISSOURI

CEMETERY DECORATION DAY

AUGUST 23, 2026

**24058 Fairview Road
Service begins at 2 p.m.**

**Speaker - Gail Kavelman
Music - Paul Droog**

*All are welcome to visit the Cemetery and place
flowers on graves*



**Directors will be available to answer questions and
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3. English (1.5 billion)
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5. VO2 Max
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9. Triceratops
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9	3	5	8	2	6	1	7	4
8	6	7	4	1	3	5	2	9
3	1	6	5	8	2	4	9	7
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6	5	3	9	4	1	7	8	2
2	8	4	3	5	7	9	6	1
1	7	9	2	6	8	3	4	5

THE WEEK AHEAD



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

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 22

FRIDAY, AUG 14

- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.

- Friends of the Library Movies-in-the-Park at Cadzow Park at dusk

SATURDAY, AUG 15

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon. Pet costume parade 10:30 a.m., Free pet photos – 9-11 a.m.

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

SUNDAY, AUG 16

- Granton Cemetery decoration day

- Harrington decoration service at Knox Presbyterian Church – 11 a.m., Lunch to follow

- Teddy Bear Reunion at Milt Dunnell Field – Parade 1 p.m., Judging 2:30 p.m.

- Good Neighbour Project pork BBQ and corn roast at Brown's United Church on Plover Mills Road. Entertainment at 5:30 p.m., Supper 6 p.m., Bring a salad or dessert

WEDNESDAY, AUG 19

- Dream catcher making workshop at Falstaff Family Centre, Stratford – 6-9 p.m. Pre-register required at <https://tinyurl.com/towrownnow>

- Melodies at the Museum at Cadzow Park – 7-8 p.m., York Street Thought Process

- TriCounty Foodgrains Group music night and silent auction at First Baptist Church – 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUG 20

- Cascades BBQ – 4-7 p.m., RSVP at 519-284-1840, Ext. 62331, Retired team members welcome

- Shakespeare Optimist Club Chicken BBQ dinner at Shakespeare Community Center - Drive thru 5-7:30 p.m., \$25, Call or text Gary at 519-272-9140 for tickets

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Looking Back

AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist



Legion renovations

25 years ago (2001)

Recreation Program Coordinator Sharon Barnes reports that St. Marys Quarry revenues for the month of July were up 76 percent over last summer. A year ago, by the end of July the Quarry had taken in \$11,398 in admissions and coupons. This summer to the end of July, the Quarry turnstiles took in \$20,083.

Firefighters from Thorndale, Arva, Dorchester and Bryanston battled a huge blaze at Meyer's Country Sausage on the Thorndale Road Monday afternoon. Smoke could be seen for miles. The building was destroyed with loss estimated at \$2.5 million.

50 years ago (1976)

Tom Bailey, 18-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Bailey of Tracy Street, reports to the Kingston Canadians on September 2 for a try-out with that O.H.A. Jr. A Club. Tom was a member of the 1975-76 all-Ontario Junior B Championship Lincolns the past two seasons.

The indoor and outdoor renovations of the Legion Hall on Church Street North are now complete. The decorators, Jack Scheuerman, Roly Tonks, and associates, have really done themselves proud, especially the auditorium interior. Notice that air conditioning installers were on the job this week so the final recovery from the disastrous fire of some months ago is almost complete.

75 years ago (1951)

The forms for the footings of the new St. Marys Arena have been put in place in the foundation excavations this week.

Swimmers at the quarry are well looked after this summer by Lifeguard Ron May and his assistant Ron Knowles. So far this summer, there has been only one serious incident. On a recent Sunday, Lifeguard May watched two young men from Stratford swim out to the raft. On the way back, one of the swimmers made it but one got into difficulties and called for help. Ron threw in the life ring and then dived in to rescue the struggling Stratford boy who was brought to land safely.

100 years ago (1926)

Walter Roe, a youth of sixteen, who said he hailed from St. Marys, was up in the Toronto Police Court on Monday, charged with the theft of a bicycle which he claimed he borrowed in St. Marys to return to his home in Toronto.

St. Marys Independent

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