

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1278

Thursday, September 4, 2025

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MARATHON OF HOPE

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Members of the Terry Fox committee and Mayor Al Strathdee raised the Terry Fox flag at the Town Hall on Tuesday morning. Town Council declared September 7-14 as Terry Fox Week in St. Marys. This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Marathon of Hope run to find a cure for cancer. This year the run is taking place on Sunday, Sept. 14 starting at the YMCA. For more information go to terryfox.org. Pictured, from left, Terry Fox committee members, Anna Doupe, Arlene Callender, Andrea Macko and Mayor Al Strathdee.

St. Marys council approves master plan for 14 Church St. N

Town to seek out government grants to help pay for estimated \$4-million capital cost

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

St. Marys council has put its stamp of approval on a master plan that will see the town spend an estimated \$4.06 million to renovate the former Mercury Theatre building at 14 Church St. N into what staff are calling a multi-generational community hub.

During a marathon council and commit-

tee of whole meeting Aug. 26, councillors had the opportunity to tour the building and hear from staff and consultants about how the building would be used, what it would look like when finished, how much construction would cost and what it would cost to operate the building annually. Following nearly two-and-a-half hours of presentations, councillors voted to approve the master plan without any changes or addi-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

Flag raised in recognition of Overdose Awareness Day

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

August 31st is the annual International Overdose Awareness Day. Mayor Al Strathdee and outreach worker Jade Orquin were on hand as a moment of silence was observed and a flag was raised to remember those that we have lost to overdose.

The event was organized by Anna Maria Ireland who lost her son Matthew in 2017. She was joined by some other moms that bravely shared their stories, each with their own unique history but forever joined through grief and support.

Joe Gladding, Peer Outreach worker at CHMA, told his story of addiction and recovery and how to help people instead of keeping them down through stigma and prejudice that come with not understanding.

He suggested things like staying away from the question, "are you using again? Instead, ask them "what's wrong, what's going on? How can I help?" Or don't ask anything, just listen.

Gladding said, "I encourage communities to try to grow awareness and knowledge about what this is. It is a mental health struggle. It is a health problem and a global pandemic. It always has been. Humans are not without struggle and will always find ways to cope with that struggle."

Nobody ever chooses to be an addict. They choose to do the drugs and know about addiction but never expect to be at that point until they are there.

Gladding ended his share with "Every sin-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 7

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys council approves master plan for 14 Church St. N

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

tions and gave staff the green light to begin packaging the project up so it can be presented to senior levels of government for potential grant funding.

“The community has changed a lot, even in the last 11 years since I’ve been here, and the reality is the demand and numbers (for our programming) ... sometimes they’re double and triple (what they were),” Mayor Al Stratthdee said. “What I hear – one of the outstanding things about this community – is that we’re innovative and we’re offering programs and trying to build a sense of community.

“So, yes this is expensive. Everything’s expensive, but the reality is I think it would check a lot of boxes (for) people that are squeezed into other spaces or are unable to be more creative. ... Take a walk to the (Pyramid Recreation Centre) or take a walk through the library during the summertime when the kids are off and the kids programming is on. There’s lots of things we could do better at by having this space. ... We bought the building with the idea we’re committed to the downtown economic growth, diversity, maintaining our heritage. ... I think we have a real opportunity to make a very reasonable investment for the future that I think people can look back and say, ‘Man, that was smart because that’s right in your backyard and look at all the creative things that have come as a result of this.’”

As was first presented to the community and visitors during Doors Open St. Marys on Aug. 9 and later reported in this newspaper, the designs for the interior of 14 Church St. N are meant to provide flexible spaces for programming across multiple town departments, for use by many different community groups and local businesses, and for the enjoyment of people across the age spectrum, whether they’re booking an office or meeting room, or just dropping in to hang out and connect with the community.

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



the community, a large multipurpose room for meetings and events, storage space, and several washrooms.

On the second floor, the building design includes a lobby, several small office/study spaces, an office and large meeting room/classroom for adult-learning programs, another large multi-purpose room that can be divided into smaller spaces, storage space, and two washrooms. The office/study spaces will likely be transitioned into offices for town staff at some point in the future when space for additional staff is needed.

In the plans for the building’s basement, there is even more storage space, room for mechanical equipment and another washroom.

“People just felt inspired, and I think that’s what you want in your community,” said downtown service location review consultant Angela Brayham, referring to how the building’s designs were received by the more than 300 people who toured the building during the Doors Open event. “You want the community to feel inspired and uplifted and that this is a place where they can come together.

“... If the space was to open tomorrow, you would have a really active, engaged, animated community space that both the municipal staff and programs would use, but also one that the community would embrace and welcome. We’ve got a lot of flexible, exciting spaces for people to use in multiple ways, and I think that’s what this project does; it is a project that inspires your community.”

To date, the Town of St. Marys has spent a little more than \$1 million to purchase and renovate the former Mercury Theatre building to where it is today. To bring it to where it needs to be to realize the vision that has been developed by staff, consultants and the

town’s downtown service location review committee, an additional estimated \$4,060,360 is required.

That cost, which is an early yet “safe” estimate according to CAO Brent Kittmer, includes just over \$2 million in interior renovations, roughly \$830,000 in exterior and structural work – an eventual roof replacement and the installation of windows and a proper stormwater outlet – roughly \$800,000 for furnishings and audio-visual equipment, and a \$370,000 contingency in case of any unforeseen expenses.

According to Kittmer, if council had wanted to proceed with the project immediately, there is just over \$1 million earmarked for the building in the town’s development charges reserve and the remainder of the cost could be covered through long-term debt with annual-debt servicing costs of \$150,000.

On the operating side, based on the assumption the building would be open to the public from Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with program space staffed by the existing employees who run those programs and the addition of one new full-time employee and several part-time employees to run the reception desk during operating hours, Kittmer estimated the annual operating cost to be just over \$360,000.

That cost, he told councillors, would represent an increase by roughly two per cent to the town’s annual property tax levy.

“I’m actually shocked ... at our capital costs,” Coun. Dave Lucas said. “Being in the business, I feel I’m comfortable with that. I think the project is awesome. Clearly there’s a use for it at staff level. I’m excited for the project; I guess I just come back to the fact that two per-cent annual increase, if that’s what it’s going to affect our tax base, that’s a hard pill for me to swallow as a taxpayer in this town. ... When you bring it down to that level, it is a struggle. I want to be forward-thinking, and I don’t want to get blinded by the numbers, but at the end of the day, we’re responsible to the taxpayer and we need to explain to them why we can justify a two per-cent increase outside of every other increase.

“... So, I’m in support of it based on the idea and I think the money makes sense. I just ... think we really need to reach out to different levels of government and see what’s available, and say, ‘This is what we’ve got on the table, our community needs it, we have community support. Help us out.’”

While Kittmer said there aren’t any existing government funding programs aimed at support community hub projects like this one, in the past, governments have been forthcoming with funding for projects like this. He added he is confident a project with the kind of support this one has from staff and the community, if put in the right hands, could secure funding from the provincial and/or federal government.



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EDITORIAL

For the love of a small town

WENDY LAMOND & STEWART GRANT
Contributed Article

This past week, there was a lot of talk around town regarding the possible stoppage of Graham’s corn sales at their traditional Pelissier location next year after a 60-year run by the family. A few things came to my attention on this. One, the support of this town is incredible. Second, sadly the online negativity towards a new building, newcomers to town, and our town leaders stood out.

As a newspaper, we had to cover this story as it was a significant happening and if we hadn’t, then we would have been questioned as to why we hadn’t. It is no different for when the town receives formal complaints. If they fail to follow up on them, they are told they aren’t doing their job and unfortunately some scenarios put them in a no-win situation.

An important point made within Galen Simmons’ front page story from last week is the town offering to help find a new location and help the Graham family with their next steps. As Town CAO Brent Kittmer clarified with us recently, the primary issue is parking compliance and traffic safety. “The parking compliance issue has arisen from the fact that we made Pelissier no parking at the request of the local residents, particularly Grahlyn Ave.” Kittmer added, “A sidewalk is expected to be installed on Pelissier later this fall, and that will improve

pedestrian safety.”

While Galen’s story last week provided a balanced look at the issue, the Boo that we printed last week unfairly implied that the traffic complaint came from the adjacent apartment building. It turns out this wasn’t true, and we should have fact checked this. While the intent of including the Boo was to capture the frustrations of many about the possible loss of Graham’s corn stand, some of the wording was regrettable and we’d like to apologize for not handling this better.

One week later, the thing that stands out for me is that St. Marys truly values its small-town traditions. There were so many reflections of Graham’s corn stand as being a great first job, for either those who wrote or for their kids. Others shared fond memories of family dinners with fresh locally grown corn as a staple.

A 60-year sales stand is nothing short of amazing and it is traditions like this that make a small town draw new people here, wanting to be part a connected community.

Our town leaders are St. Marys residents too and they share the same values that we do. Their jobs aren’t easy, but they are trying their best. Given the people involved on both sides of this tricky issue, I’m confident that everything will work itself out and that a solution will be found to keep this valued tradition alive for many years to come.

Bravo	Boo
We have 2 Bravos this week. 1) Bravo to the Town for getting the Glass Street extension road resurfaced. No more potholes! 2) Bravo to Yvonne DeWetering for getting my debit card to me after I absent-mindedly left it in the gas pump. Thanks for not going on a shopping spree!	We have 1 Boo this week. 1) Boo to the car, motorcycle, and truck owners racing up and down Queen street. There is a nursing / residential home, maybe signs on the road may help? That’s up to the powers that be! Time to put a stop to this.
*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

“With school starting back and buses back on the road we would like to remind everyone to; Be Alert, Be Safe & Stop for school buses.”

- Murphy Bus Lines

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Kiddos are back at school. Drive carefully!

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others? Either email them to us at info@stmarysindependent.com with the title "Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519-284-0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

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St. Marys Independent

Thoughts of the Week

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Having a soft heart in a cruel world is courage, not weakness.



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St. Marys Gives 2025

Won't You Be My Neighbour?

What is Giving Tuesday?

- Giving Tuesday is a global day of generosity.
- Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea; after two days of consumerism (Black Friday and Cyber Monday) could there be a holiday that celebrates our human inclination to give? It is a day that encourages people to do good; to thank, to help, to show kindness and to give to those in need.
- Canada was the first country outside the US to join the movement. In 2024 there were 58 community movements across Canada, including St. Marys!
- St. Marys joined the Giving Tuesday Movement in 2017 with 18 partners. In 2024 we had 55 partners, raised more than \$20,000.00 and helped 30 charities all in one day!
- Over the past 13 years the idea has grown into a global movement that inspires millions of people in more than 100 countries, unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world.
- Giving Tuesday is a time when Canadians, charities and businesses come together to celebrate giving and participating in activities that support charities, non-profits and their communities.
- In Canada, Giving Tuesday 2024 raised over 16 million dollars in 24 hours. People are inspired to give and to "do" on Giving Tuesday because they want to be part of a bigger group of people doing good!
- This year the message of Giving Tuesday will be even stronger. As a country we are working together like never before. In St. Marys we have become the Giving Tuesday Community to pay attention to, we have proven the power of working together as a community and as neighbours and this year will continue to show our strength and resilience in supporting each other.

**GIVING
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2



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STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news
from the Town of St. Marys



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LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION

September 13 | 11 AM - 1 PM | St. Marys Library

The St. Marys Public Library is actively gathering feedback on its Strategic Plan, seeking insights from the community. Discuss your thoughts directly with Library Board Members and the Library CEO.

townofstmarys.com/librarystratplan



SCRAPBOOKING GARAGE SALE

September 13 | 9 AM - 1 PM | Friendship Centre

The St. Marys Friendship Centre is hosting a Scrapbooking Garage Sale event with over 50 tables of products. This cash only, free to attend event is a great opportunity to shop gently used supplies tax free!

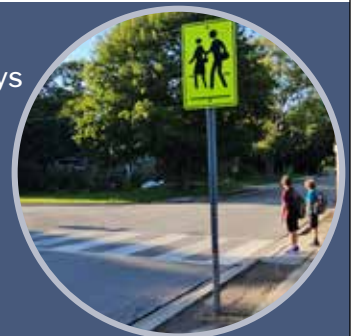


ROAD SAFETY MONTH

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

The Town of St. Marys would like to remind residents the importance of abiding by speed limits, watching for pedestrians, cyclists and other drivers. Help keep the roads in St. Marys safe!

townofstmarys.com/roadsafety



SHOWER PROGRAM

Pyramid Recreation Centre

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

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Active Living Open House

**Thorndale Lions
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Thursday, Sept. 4
1 PM - 3 PM



Visit us at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre this Thursday to learn more about new programs & activities offered this fall!



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communications@town.stmarys.on.ca





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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the Week is 84-year-old Brian Hardeman. Brian, who is the middle child of 15 children, was born in Holland and moved to Canada at age ten. Many people will remember Brian as the owner-operator of Hardeman Feeds in Kirkton. He also served on Usborne Township council for approximately 20 years. Brian and his wife, Helen, have four children and six grandchildren. In his retirement years, Brian enjoys his visits to the St. Marys Tim Hortons for a coffee and a chat.

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

Firefighter Mark Manzano named Firefighter of the Month for September

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The St. Marys Fire Department is pleased to announce Mark Manzano as its Firefighter of the Month for September.

Mark joined the department as a firefighter in May 2025 as he wanted to give back to the community.

“I had heard great things about the department and the firefighters who serve in it and knew I wanted to be part of their firefighter family,” said Manzano in a press release. “Becoming a firefighter has always been a dream of mine and I’m incredibly grateful to now be part of the dedicated team in St. Marys, learning from experienced and committed professionals.”

Fire Chief Phil West selected Manzano as Firefighter of the Month for his pursuit and drive to complete the Firefighter Initial Training Program ahead of the two-year probationary time as well as his willingness to take on additional courses at the same time.

Manzano is currently employed with St. Marys Cement where he explores his passion for the trades.

“This makes him a great addition to the team,” said Capt. Josh Becker in the release. “Mark knows the amount of time that is required of him to become an integral part of the fire department, and he is more than up to the task.”



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

Mark Manzano has been named St. Marys’ Firefighter of the Month for September.

Weekend Quiz

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1. What is the highest possible score the can be achieved on the SATs?
2. What is the birthstone for September?
3. How much is a carat in grams?
4. What is a male turkey called?
5. In what city does Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade take place?
6. Manhattan is not a city. It is a what?
7. What does the acronym GPA stand for?
8. Where does The Boots and Hearts Music Festival take place?
9. The mandible and the maxilla make up what bone?
10. Which has the thickest fur of any mammal?

By Jake Grant

This week’s answers are found on pg. 31



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- TUESDAY BUDDY CHECK**
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- BINGO FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH**
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Flag raised in recognition of Overdose Awareness Day



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

On Sunday, Aug. 31, Anna Maria Iredale organized an event at the town hall in honour of the annual Overdose Awareness Day. Iredale shared her story along with some other moms with their personal stories.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

gle person starts as a son or daughter, brother or sister, cousin or friend. We all start as babies, and we are all humans no matter what problems or successes come after that - we all start the same. The best thing we can do for each other is just to be there."

Justin Anantawan was the musical guest and sang a very emotional song called You're Still my Baby and finished with I Will Always Love You. Anantawan, who works with Patient Aids services, helps bring awareness about harm reduction, substance abuse, and resources for addiction. He has also collaborated with Iredale on a project called "My Child Too" for those impacted by substance-use-related harms and deaths, providing peer support to grieving families and fighting to change failed drug policies.

In speaking with some of the moms

before the service started, they talked about the power of grief and said it is not something you ever get over, you just learn to live with it. It is always on your mind but if you take it one day at a time you can find a little bit of happiness again.

Iredale is now at that point. "It has been eight years. It has softened. I have joy in my life again, happiness, I keep on trying to do my best. I have moments of tears and connecting with the other moms is very helpful. It lets me get a little bit of it out so I can have my moments and then I am ready to go out and face the world again."

By keeping this issue at the forefront, hopefully it brings the community together with awareness and some solutions can be found to help with mental health struggles and remove the stigma on addiction.

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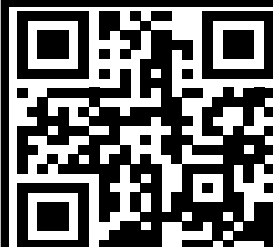
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York Street Thought Process' Art of Music Project sessions filmed at St. Marys Museum

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

The St. Marys singer-songwriter duo, York Street Thought Process, recently had the chance to have their live-music sessions filmed at a local landmark.

York Street Thought Process filmed four live-off-the-floor sessions videos for the Art of Music Project at the St. Marys Museum. The Art of Music Project is a nonprofit organization that gives artists a platform to showcase their talent.

"It's really cool that musicians want to highlight their local buildings, and I think it's a cool opportunity for us because sometimes the public just don't really see the museum in that light," said Amy Cubberley, cultural services manager for the Town of St. Marys. "I've seen a couple of the finished videos and it's really cool. It's not obvious that it's the museum, but if you're familiar with our site, then it would be more obvious. It's just cool that they thought of us as an appropriate venue for that."

Cubberley worked with York Street Thought Process previously for the ValenTune's concert with The Bone Radlers at St. Marys town hall and the Melodies at the Museum summer series.

"They're wonderful. I really enjoy working with them," she said. "They're so knowledgeable and so professional when it comes to the music industry."

In a statement sent to the St. Marys Independent, York Street Thought Process' Jaron Camp and Rachael Frankruyter said Art of Music Project audio producer Alex Krotz reached out after attending one of their shows and checked out their music online. The folk duo was interested after hearing about the project, which also involves video producer Malcom Cottle.



(PHOTO COURTESY ART OF MUSIC PROJECT ON YOUTUBE)

Jaron Camp and Rachael Frankruyter of York Street Thought Process filmed four live-off-the-floor sessions with the Art of Music Project at the St. Marys Museum.

"Because of Alex and Malcolm, the day ran so smooth which made for a fun and relaxed environment the day of the shoot," Camp and Frankruyter said. "We are thrilled with the final videos!"

They're also glad to include the St. Marys Museum in the process.

"The St. Marys Museum was a stunning, inspiring and visually unique space for us to shoot the project," they said. "We are incredibly grateful to Amy Cubberley for sharing the museum with us and allowing us to film there."

York Street Thought Process recognizes the importance of Art of Music Project pieces for emerging artists.

"Not only do they use their platform

to showcase us to new audiences, they give us access to professional live video footage that we can use for grant and festival applications, as well as other booking opportunities," the pair said. "We appreciated having a great team to work with, who were so meticulous about our artistic vision and showcasing who we are as a duo through video."

York Street Thought Process' Roots live-off-the-floor session can be viewed online by visiting www.youtube.com/@artofmusicproject/videos.

Upper Thames River watershed in low-water situation

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The summer's hot, dry weather has led the Low Water Response Team for the Upper Thames River watershed to declare Level 1 low water advisory.

The advisory is part of a three-tiered system used in Ontario to inform the public of local low water conditions.

"Precipitation and stream flows are the key indicators we use to evaluate low-water conditions," said Mark Helsten, senior water resources engineer with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), in a press release issued Aug. 28.

The watershed received an average of 62 millimetres of rain between July 22 and Aug. 21, which is about 78 per cent of normal. Rainfall over the last three months (May 23 to Aug. 21) was approximately 73 per cent of normal.

Flows in most streams across the watershed are at the low end of normal. The UTRCA's reservoirs at Wildwood (St. Marys) and Pittock (Woodstock) conservation areas are currently augmenting downstream flows in the north and south Thames rivers respectively.

Water is stored in these two reservoirs during the spring runoff and then slowly released back into the river system in the dry summer months.

Low-water conditions can have an impact on the amount of water available both for human use and for aquatic habitat.

Extended periods of below-normal precipitation can also affect groundwater, which is an essential source of drinking water for many municipalities and residents. Groundwater plays a vital role in sustaining the baseflow of rivers and streams. Declining groundwater levels can reduce the natural discharge of groundwater to surface water, placing added stress on both human needs and aquatic life.

Long-term monitoring by the UTRCA since 2001 has shown a decreasing trend in groundwater levels at many Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network wells. These findings highlight the importance of proactive groundwater conservation to protect both groundwater and surface-water resources for future use.

The Low Water Response Team en-

courages people, businesses and industries that rely on local surface water or groundwater to conserve water. Many watershed municipalities have water-conservation programs in place.

The City of London and some other

communities take water from Lake Huron and Lake Erie. Reducing water use in these communities will not improve flows in the Thames River or its tributaries.



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September is Road Safety Month in St. Marys

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Whether behind the wheel, on foot, or cycling through town, every road user plays a part in keeping our community safe.

The Town of St. Marys has declared September as Road Safety Month and residents of St. Marys are being reminded to slow down, stay alert and make choices that protect the most vulnerable in our community.

Throughout the month of September, St. Marys is sharing a series of practical reminders and resources to help drivers, pedestrians and seniors stay safe. Some of these key messages include:

Back-to-school and community safety zones

- School is back in session and children are once again walking and biking to class. Drivers are urged to watch for crossing guards, obey bus signals and stop for pedestrians at crossovers.

- St. Marys has five community safety zones where speed limits are reduced to 40 km/hr. These areas include schools, playgrounds and senior residences, places where extra caution can save lives.

Road watch

- Residents are encouraged to help identify unsafe driving and pedestrian hazards by using the new Stonetown Road Watch online form (forms.townofstmarys.com/Stonetown-Road-Watch). Every submission helps target improvements and keeps our streets safer.

Traffic bylaws

- Slowing down saves lives: reducing your speed by just 10 km/hr can drastically reduce the chance of a fatal collision.

- Ignoring bylaws such as bus loading zones and posted speed limits can result in fines, but more importantly, it puts neighbours and families at risk.

Senior road safety

- Seniors often face unique challenges on our roads,



whether renewing a license, crossing busy streets, or getting around town. Tools like the Mobility Bus, pedestrian push buttons downtown and Service Ontario supports help seniors travel safely and confidently.

Safe roads are built on awareness, respect and shared responsibility. When drivers slow down, when pedestrians use crossovers correctly and when community members report unsafe conditions, St. Marys becomes a safer place for everyone.

“Road safety is about protecting people,” said St. Marys public works coordinator Thomas Redman in a press release. “It’s about kids getting to school safely, seniors feeling confident to cross the street and drivers making it home without incident. A small decision – like choosing to slow down – can make all the difference.”

Residents are encouraged to follow the Town’s Facebook page over the next month for reminders and tips on how to be part of the solution.

For more information on road safety in St. Marys, visit www.townofstmarys.com/RoadSafety or contact the public works Department at 519-284-2340 ext. 213 or publicworks@town.stmarys.on.ca.



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Town of St. Marys offers update on aquatics centre renovations at the Pyramid Recreation Centre

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is working hard to complete renovations at the aquatics centre.

Since its closure in November 2024, the facility has undergone substantial improvements focused on enhancing safety and upgrading equipment to extend the lifespan of the space. The project remains on schedule, with reopening planned for fall 2025.

Ongoing work and recent updates to the space include the installation of HVAC ductwork and commissioning of the HVAC system, installation of new windows, new paint in the pool space, changerooms and lockers, and the removal of all scaffolding.

Once scaffolding has been removed in mid-September, the next steps of the project include, but are not limited to, the completion and maintenance of tile work and the installation of new floor drains and HVAC air inlets.

As fall approaches, the aquatics centre will begin recruiting and training life-

guards and staff so it is ready to greet the community at the updated facility.

“We understand that people are eager to come back and we are dedicated to completing the renovations to ensure the aquatics centre improvements endure,” said town director of community service Stephanie Ishe in a press release.

Updates on the project and a re-opening date will be announced soon through local media, the town website (www.townofstmarys.com), Facebook (www.facebook.com/stmarysontario) and Twitter/X (www.twitter.com/town-ofstmarys).

The Pyramid Recreation Centre will remain open for regular hours and continues to offer a variety of recreation and leisure activities during the aquatics centre closure.

For more information on swimming lessons, aquatics programs, or pool rentals, contact aquatics manager Andrea Slade at 519-284-2340 ext. 623. Advanced bookings for aquatics programs will be available to the public once an opening date has been announced.

Scrapbooking Garage Sale returns Sept. 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Volunteers with the St. Marys Friendship Centre are once again hosting their popular Scrapbooking Garage Sale on Saturday, Sept. 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (317 James St. S., Entrance C).

Shoppers will find a wide variety of gently used and new crafting supplies available at great prices — and tax-free. Admission is free; please note this is a cash-only event.

“This event is a wonderful example of community spirit,” said senior services program coordinator Sarah Jones in a press release. “Not only does it bring together people who share a love of

scrapbooking, but it also helps us fund programs that make a real difference for local seniors.”

Items for sale will include paper, hand-made greeting cards for all occasions, stamps, cartridges, embellishments and much more.

Those looking to put their new supplies to good use may also want to check out the Friendship Centre’s monthly Scrapbooking Crops and upcoming classes.

Donations of gently used or new crafting supplies are welcome and appreciated.

For more information about the sale, upcoming programs, or to donate supplies, call 519-284-2340 ext. 621 or email sjones@town.stmarys.on.ca.

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SPOTLIGHT ON ARTS & CULTURE

“A whop bop-a-loo-bop, a bop bam boom!”

Frank St. Germain tickles the ivories, and the crowds

DAN WELCHER

Contributed Article

In the pre-karaoke days, some long-time St. Marys residents might remember the back room at the Customs House (now Gilly's) where there used to be a little party every Friday night.

A beefy older guy with long gray hair sat at an upright piano, vigorously pounding out three-chord rock songs from the '50s and '60s with bejeweled fingers and singing up a storm. His regulars, mostly middle-aged people who grew up on this music, sang along enthusiastically, sipping beers and eating fries. They'd call out the names of their favourite songs and the hefty singer-pianist would gladly oblige.

Always funny, often a bit raunchy, Frank St. Germain held forth from behind his brown upright piano like a goofy, old-time preacher behind a pulpit.

Those days are gone, but Frank is still very much a fixture here. You may have heard his band performing at the Stonetown Heritage Festival on Queen Street, or in the Quarry Room last summer. And for several years, there was the Front Porch Show. For seven seasons, John Stevens headed up that summer staple on Sunday nights at Cadzow Park, broadcast live on Facebook and Frank was his sidekick, not just playing entry music for each guest (and improvising silly lyrics to order), but also offering his own bawdy take on the proceedings.

Once, when a teenage grunge band was featured on the show, the lead singer tore off his shirt in the ecstasy of rock-n-roll passion. Not to be outdone, Frank waited his turn and the next time he played, he began by removing his shirt and flexing his impressively large pectoral muscles, and doing an Elvis shimmy.

Frank was born in Toronto, into a large



(DAN WELCHER PHOTO)

Singer-pianist Frank St. Germain is always where the party's at in St. Marys.

family with good musical genes. His mother played the piano and his brother studied music seriously, becoming a composer and a theorist. Frank started a duo with a guitar-playing buddy named Stanley, calling themselves “Franken-Stan.” They toured all over Ontario in a 1961 Cadillac hearse and played ongoing gigs at venues like the Wheat Sheaf Tavern in Toronto. When the duo broke up, Frank formed a bigger group, which chose the name “Grampa.” This became a popular show band, at one time releasing a single called “Canadian Way of Life” for RCA Records, and then forming their own label called Good Time Records. Grampa lasted for 14 years and

Frank's chosen livelihood was established.

Frank's life took a dramatic turn when a major international booking agent named Vita Linder heard him at La Castile, an upscale restaurant in Mississauga, and invited him to audition for her team. The audition was held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto and Frank's turn came after a singer who performed Broadway standards in the style of Barbra Streisand.

“They're not gonna want me after that,” Frank thought, but he got up and played his 15 minutes. Seeing an amorous gay couple in the front row, Frank went for broke and sang “I'm In Love

With A Wonderful Guy” from SOUTH PACIFIC directly to the couple. His brand of improvised charisma had the audience (and the booking agents) eating out of his hand.

They asked him to stay and to play some more. By the time he left that night, he had a contract for a steady gig at the Sheraton Hotel in Stockholm, Sweden. Not a bad outcome for a boy from Ontario who hadn't seen anything of the world past the Great Lakes.

He played and sang in Sweden for 13 years, coming back to Toronto for R and R between six-month engagements. By this time, he had met the love of his life (his words), Gail Victoria Down. Her patience between his Sweden gigs kept the couple together, and when the bar jobs changed into cruise-ship engagements, he began to see more of the world. Gail joined him on a world cruise at one point, covering 34,000 nautical miles in four months.

The couple decided to settle down and Frank's constant traveling tapered off. They bought a commercial building in Neustadt, Ont., and created their restaurant, The Monk and The Nun. Gail did all the cooking and Frank was a combination of bartender, waiter and pianist-entertainer.

“I finally had my very own piano bar,” Frank exulted, “and we had up to 65 guests a night!”

This lasted five years and then Frank and Gail moved to St. Marys. The Front Porch Show began soon after, and Frank's place in the multicoloured artistic firmament of St. Marys was assured. Frank and Gail still get to indulge their bar-restaurant skills with holiday parties, where Gail can serve dinner to several dozen lucky guests, while Frank serenades the crowd. It's a good life.

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The closing act for the 2025 Melodies at the Museum



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTOS)

On Wednesday, Aug. 27, York Street Thought Process provided the entertainment for the final Melodies at the Museum event for 2025. The duo of Jaron Camp and Rachael Frankruyter have been writing their own songs and playing together for six years. They have two albums out and are recording a new one this fall. Their next local show is in Stratford on Oct. 4, 2025. It is a full day Festival at the Museum in Stratford. If you would like tickets, you can contact them at yorkstreetthoughtprocess@gmail.com.

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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

U18 OBA Rockies take silver at year-end tournament

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The Social Thirty-One U18 OBA St. Marys Rockies wrapped up their season with a silver medal at the LDBA Year-End Tournament in Dorchester on Aug. 15-17.

After dropping their first of four round-robin contests, the Rockies won their next three games, including a 7-0 shutout over Strathroy, an 8-6 win over Exeter, and doubling up Dorchester 6-3.

St. Marys then had a rematch against Dorchester in their semi-final matchup, which was deadlocked at two runs apiece after eight innings. The Rockies' offence exploded in the ninth, scoring six runs to secure an 8-2 victory and a spot in the gold medal game.

Head coach Justin Ewing said the team found a much-needed offensive spark they have been searching for all year.

"We battled really hard and eventually got rewarded for it in the ninth," Ewing told the Independent. "We've struggled hitting for a good part of the season, but we found our bats when we needed them most."

The Rockies recorded 13 hits in the semi-final, led by Grayson Boreham, who had three, and Michael Ewing, who registered two hits. Zach Larmer pitched a complete game, tossing 102 pitches, 72 of which were strikes, and only surrendering two walks. Ewing noted the strong pitching effort and defensive work by the Rockies was crucial to the win.

"Zach had a huge game for us," said Ewing. "Not only was his pitching unreal, but he got on base all five times he got up to the plate and earned two hits and three walks. Defensively, we had a clean game, making the plays we should make, which hasn't always been the case. Isaac Cousineau was a standout at third, with some really good plays."

According to Ewing, the team's excellent defence was a strong point throughout the tournament.

"Our defensive play was outstanding all weekend. When we did make mistakes, we found ways to clamp down and get outs. Our approach at the plate was outstanding. We had 56 hits and 28 walks over the six games. We kept finding a way to put the ball in play as opposed to striking out."

Despite a solid performance in the championship game against the London Tincaps, in which the two teams traded leads during the game, the Rockies fell 14-8, giving them the silver medal.

Simon Greig on a groundout and Evan Ballantyne on a single down the left field line each scored one run in



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Social Thirty-One U18 OBA St. Marys Rockies earned the silver medal at the LDBA Year-End Tournament on Aug. 15-17 in Dorchester. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Owen Dittmer, Brody Higham, Griffin McGregor, Isaac Cousineau, and Julian Walsh. In the back row, from left, Justin Ewing, Michael Ewing, Justin Ropp, Simon Grieg, Evan Ballantyne, Brier Frayne, Jared Ballantyne, Rich Ballantyne, and Ray Cousineau.

the first inning. Julian Walsh scored a run with a single in the second.

In the third, Brier Frayne singled to the right side of the infield to add a run, followed by Griffin McGregor hitting into a fielder's choice that cashed in another in the fourth. Boreham brought two more runs over home plate with a single in the fourth.

When discussing the season and why it was memorable for him, Ewing cited the team's dedication.

"The overall commitment the boys made to each other made this year special. These guys all work jobs now and have lots going on, and they were always at games and practices, giving the coaches their best."

"Ending the year with the finish we had was awesome," Ewing continued. "We worked really hard and didn't always get the results we deserved. It was nice to see the boys rally for each other. For those who are back next year, hopefully it shows them what they are capable of."

Ewing also expressed immense gratitude on behalf of St. Marys Minor Ball to the team's three graduating players, Boreham, Frayne, and McGregor, all for whom the head coach had high praise.

"All of these boys have played ball in St. Marys since U7, which was my first time coaching them, as I have always been with different groups. It was a lot of fun getting to know them. Grayson (Boreham) had an unbelievable season pitching. Every time we needed a win, we gave him the ball, and he never disappointed. He pitched 47 innings and only allowed 27 hits and six earned runs."

"Griffin (McGregor) was our defensive MVP," continued Ewing. "He is the kind of player a coach dreams about. He hustles every play, no matter the score. Brier had a great year. He was definitely a leader on the bench and was always talking. He saved his best performances of the year for the final couple of weekends, where he was an offensive standout."

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Burgin family shines bright at Ontario Masters Track and Field Championship



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHAGGY'S PHOTOS)

On the left, Aileen Burgin launches the javelin at the Aug. 16-17 Ontario Masters Track and Field Championship hosted at the Toronto Track and Field Centre at York University. In the middle, Leanne Burgin-Ball sprints towards the finish line during the 200-metre event. On the right, Harold Burgin makes a throw during his javelin event. For the first time, Burgin-Ball joined her parents Aileen and Harold Burgin as they competed in the Ontario Masters Track and Field Championship, with the three Burgin family members combining for six gold medals and three silvers.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

By now, Aileen and Harold Burgin are fixtures at the Ontario Masters Track and Field Championships. But earlier this year, the Burgin family legacy at the Ontario Masters grew larger with Aileen and Harold's daughter, Leanne Burgin-Ball, competing alongside her parents in her first appearance at the event Aug. 16-17 at the Toronto Track and Field Centre at York University.

Aileen Burgin told the Independent both she and husband Harold Burgin never fail to feel grateful to be able to compete and find success at such a high-level event.

"We are truly thankful that we can continue to retain the physical capacity required to compete," said Aileen Burgin. "It means that there is always another opportunity for a kick at the can and a chance to pretend that we are youngsters again, even with a few aches and pains. Both of us are aware that what we are doing at our age sends the message to many adults, and even children, that being old doesn't mean you can't excel at anything anymore."

According to Aileen Burgin, she received big boosts from other competitors who gave her incredible compliments throughout the weekend-long event.

"I was encouraged when more than a few younger folks declare that I'm their role model. That comment came from a handsome 71-year-old male competitor. It just doesn't get any better than that. We are having fun and we are fighting

to overcome the feeling that there is no joy in growing old.

"Although we didn't break any records this time, the chance to touch base and socialize with other likeminded elders is energizing," Aileen Burgin continued. "Next year, I will move up to the Women's 85 category and, as the youngest, hopefully, I will be able to break a few more records."

Aileen Burgin also mentioned a highlight of the championship event was younger athletes being featured in between the older adults' competitions.

"This year's competition was a little different because our events were threaded in between events for the Rising Stars Finale, which included U8, U10 and U12 divisions. On the Sunday especially, the whole stadium was abuzz with these young competitors plus their accompanying coaches, family and friend supporters. It was great to see their beaming faces and their enthusiasm for the same track activities that we were enjoying."

However, it wasn't just Aileen and Harold Burgin competing this year, as their daughter joined them for the first time and, in total, the three Burgin family members collected six gold medals and three silvers.

Aileen Burgin captured the Women's 80-84 gold medals in the 100-metre and 200-metre runs, plus a silver in her first appearance in the javelin competition.

Harold Burgin won the Men's 85 gold in the shotput and javelin throws as well as the 200-metre run, along with the silver medal in 100-metre dash and discus

throw.

Burgin-Ball captured the top prize in the Women's 55-59 javelin competition. Interestingly, with limited entries in each age category, both Burgin-Ball and Aileen Burgin's respective age brackets ran and threw in the same 200-metre and javelin heats, a first-time-ever occurrence.

Both Burgin-Ball and Aileen Burgin described the special nature of their 200-metre experience.

"It was especially memorable for me and for my daughter, who was watching, that I could run in the same 200-metre heat and throw in the same javelin group as my mom," Burgin-Ball said. "That was fun, and I am thankful to have the health to try to keep up to mom and dad."

"It never crossed my mind that a daughter would actually be racing in the same heat as their mother," added Aileen Burgin. "It was pretty special and, of course, a rare occurrence in the athletic world. Then you throw in Harold's 200-metre and it's even more rare to see two parents and their daughter all competing in an event's 200-metre and javelin."

Burgin-Ball added she wouldn't have made it to such a high level of athletics without her parents' coaching and inspiration.

"It was such a gift to tag along with mom and dad," she remarked. "I am so thankful that my dad, also known to me as coach, in particular, has been encouraging me to set goals of participating in physical events like these. If mom and

dad were not blazing the trail for me and my family, I would not have had the perseverance or inspiration to not only discover these events, but participate in them. I am just really proud of my parents. They are so upbeat about it all and love to encourage anyone they meet to improve their fitness level, no matter where that person is in their journey."

According to Burgin-Ball, her dad's coaching got her back into athletic endeavours after years focused on other aspects of life.

"My dad coached all through his teaching career and I was blessed to be one of his many athletes during my high school time at DCVI. Through university, early professional life and the years of raising children, I wasn't as active as I had been, and eventually, dad gently prodded me to get into running again at the Embro Highland Games and other local runs because it was close to home, and eventually, mom and dad discovered the Ontario Masters.

"I think he is careful to stress that we are not running against other competitors, but against ourselves and our old times or throwing distances, and that we just need to show up," continued Burgin-Ball. "I find, while we are at these Masters events, we run into other people who have inspiring stories, which encourage us to try other events. I think you call that a virtuous circle, the opposite of a vicious circle. I am so grateful to God that I am able to have these experiences with my parents and I hope God helps me to come alongside many others as an encourager as well."

Small but mighty U10-GT3 Storm ends season undefeated

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Anyone who underestimated the U10 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm this season lost money.

Despite having a roster of just seven players, a lineup that was on the edge of being too small to even take the field, the Storm's bite was far greater than their bark as they ended their season without a single loss on their record.

Following the team's final game of the season on Aug. 24, head coach Michael Garland raved about his team's season-long performance.

"This was my first year coaching and I couldn't have asked for a better team," Garland told the Independent. "The girls collaborated well and just put it all together on the field. We have strong individual players, but when they came together and played as a team, they were amazing."

Garland added the team managed to go undefeated while playing with a humble, fun-focused mindset.

"The bond they built with each other made them an undefeated crew," said Garland. "At this age, the girls are playing not just to win, but to nurture a love for the game. Time and time again this season, they have shown what it means to play with heart, sportsmanship and passion, and the support from St. Marys Minor Soccer and their dedication to the



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

The U10 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm, despite having a roster of just seven regular players, managed to go unbeaten throughout their entire season, which ended with the team's last game on Aug. 24. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Heather Puff, Mia Girard, Eeve Lamond and Abby Evison. In the back row, from left, are head coach Michael Garland, Addison Poetker, Lyla Monteith, Olivia Garland, Brynn Feeney and assistant coach Samantha Lamond.

sport and to these young athletes has made a meaningful impact."

Withstanding the rigours of a soccer season with such a small roster would

be an accomplishment on its own, but as Garland noted, the improvement made by every member of the team was another incredible facet of the U10-GT3

Storm's improbably impressive campaign.

"We had a really small roster. We called up some girls from the U9 team sometimes, but for the most part, we were playing shorthanded and didn't have any subs. But our girls were able to thrive with all that field time, and I think it helped them improve immensely.

"Each of them has gained some new skills," Garland continued. "Some of them haven't played a ton of soccer before. One of our girls hadn't played soccer at all. This season was her first time out playing soccer and she has built skills that are unbelievable and is picking up the different positions really well. To see all of them being able to play on the fly, being able to be diverse throughout the whole field was fantastic."

As he reflected on his squad's blemish-free season, Garland emphasized how a strong group of individuals managed to blend together and become an elite unit.

"I'm going to take away from this season just how diverse they were and what a great group of girls they are," Garland said. "They enjoyed coming to the field and playing together. They all wanted to be here and share that time on the field. They all had their own individuality and their own skills they brought to our team, but they were still able to play as a strong team. They did fantastic. I'm unbelievably proud of these girls."



Veteran Affairs Canada defines a veteran as "any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who successfully underwent basic training and is honorably released". This includes personnel who served as reservists. There is no minimum time required in service, and no need to have seen military action.

It is possible that service men and women who served for even short periods of time may be eligible for monetary awards in compensation for injuries that can be related to their time in uniform.

The Royal Canadian Legion is ready and willing to help all veterans, whether they are Legion members or not. If you believe there is even a small chance that you may be entitled to this assistance, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

The Provincial Service Officer, Britany Campbell, will be visiting the Perth Regiment Veterans Branch 236 St. Marys during the week of October 8-10. Her job is to use a variety of resources to assist veterans in obtaining all awards they are eligible for. Anyone who would like to discuss a possible claim with her is urged to call the Branch Service Officer, Mike Rumble at 519-317-9410 no later than September 11, 2025 to set up an appointment.



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St. Marys, Ontario

U13 Rockies win gold at year-end tournament

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The Forman Electric U13 St. Marys Rockies captured the gold medal at the Year-End Tournament in Listowel Aug. 22-24.

Assistant coach Jim Holliday explained how the team turned in some of their strongest baseball of the entire season during the weekend-long tournament.

“Our success stemmed from the ability to string together hits, which is something we had struggled with this year,” said Holliday. “In particular, Mark (Richardson) had a strong tournament at the plate, batting 10 for 12 in the leadoff position. Furthermore, I thought it was the best we’ve played defensively this season. We made a lot of outs in the field and didn’t allow multiple-run innings, which had been hurting us in previous games and tournaments.”

Holliday elaborated on the team’s two-way excellence, noting it was the culmination of a year of building up their abilities.

“Our defence got stronger as the year went on,” Holliday said. “We struggled early in the year to make the routine outs in the field. The improved defence in our tournament was a combination of our



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Forman Electric U13 St. Marys Rockies won the gold medal at the Year-End Tournament Aug. 22-24 in Listowel. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are James Holliday, Ben Becker, Lachlan Thistle, Derek Vernoooy and Jim Holliday. In the back row, from left, are Zach Rooney, Sawyer Hayes, Elliot Wilhelm, Briland Cunningham, Hudson Monteith, Luke Savile, Ryder Boemer, Mark Richardson, Cam Hughes, Jayden Rooney and Myles Newton.

practice repetitions and increased focus in the field. Offensively, we got a contri-

bution from every player in our batting lineup. It was the most consistent we’ve

hit throughout the lineup all year.”

After breezing through their three round-robin games, the Rockies rode strong pitching from Derek Vernoooy and Lachlan Thistle to a 16-2 victory over Saugeen Shores in the semi-finals, setting the stage for a gold-medal clash against Exeter.

In the championship game, a tightly contested, back-and-forth affair, St. Marys took a slim, one-run lead into the final inning, leading 7-6. In the last inning, the Rockies first got a jolt of momentum with a head-first slide into third base, firing up the entire St. Marys bench. This momentum led to the Rockies scoring four runs, in part thanks to a two-run double by Vernoooy. James Holliday came in to close out the win after solid pitching by starter Elliott Wilhelm and Richardson.

Jim Holliday reflected glowingly on the season and its victorious conclusion.

“We had a great group of players on this year’s team and the guys really came together in the final tournament,” Jim Holliday told the Independent. “There was a belief that we could win, and they executed on that vision. This tournament win proved to the kids that when you play together as a team, you can be successful. It was a very positive way to end the season.”



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The Lincolns' era of magic

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Few could have predicted the impact on St. Marys that two kids from Milton, Ontario would have when the St. Marys Lincolns signed Jaden Lee and Luca Spagnolo at the beginning of the 2022-23 season.

Three years later, the lifelong best friends, dubbed the 'Milton Magicians,' turned into cornerstone pieces of some of the most successful Lincolns' teams in decades.

Spagnolo reflected on the duo's tenure with the Lincolns.

"I've said this multiple times; this is the best junior hockey organization in the world," said Spagnolo. "They treat us unbelievably well. The fans are amazing. They made us feel like celebrities, even though it was just junior hockey and the players and coaches, we all loved each other. It was always an easy decision for us to stay here."

During their tenure, the Lincolns advanced to the Western Conference Finals in each of their three seasons, winning one conference title in 2024, the same year the Lincolns battled the Listowel Cyclones in the Sutherland Cup Final. Additionally, the 2024-25 squad set a new franchise record for the longest winning streak in Lincolns history when they won 18 in a row. They also



(MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

set a new record for the longest winning streak to start a season when they won their first 11 games of the campaign.

Individually, Spagnolo served as team captain in his final season and finished

with 71 goals and 153 points in 137 games with the Lincolns. Spagnolo's 35 goals last year led the Lincs in regular-season scoring. Spagnolo added 22 goals and 42 points in 56 playoff games. Spagnolo was also named to the 2024-25 Western Conference All-Star team, and he enjoyed the longest point streak in the entire GOJHL of the 2024-25 regular season. With nine game-winners last season and 14 in his career, Spagnolo also set the Lincolns' all-time single-season and career records for game-winning goals.

Lee led the Lincolns' offensive production in 2024-25, posting 77 points, which included 29 goals. In his career, Lee posted 62 goals and 165 points in 139 games, all of which came in a Lincolns' jersey. He registered 22 goals and 50 points in 55 career postseason games. In his final season, Lee was the recipient of the Kevin McIntosh Award as the best defensive forward and the Bill Lochead Trophy as the most gentlemanly player. Lee had the league's second-longest point streak in 2024-25 at 18 games, only behind Spagnolo, and tied for the longest goal streak in the GOJHL last season at seven games. Lee also set an all-time franchise record for shorthanded goals in a single season, scoring seven during the 2024-25 season.

Lee called his three years playing in St. Marys the experience of a lifetime.

"It really was the community that made it special," Lee stated. "The crowd and the atmosphere was something I've never been able to experience anywhere else in my life. It got us excited to come to the rink every day, and knowing the town had our backs was a special feeling that we could channel into our game and play with energy and passion. It's not what I expected when I came here to play while in university, but it turned

into a really special, homey experience."

That atmosphere of support that surrounded the team, according to Spagnolo, aided the pair in carrying on and building on the team's successful mentality.

"What stands out to me most is the culture we helped build," Spagnolo said. "This franchise was struggling for a few years before we got there, and some of the leaders we learned from got there. We played for each other every night. When you get a team that wants to do that, you build something special, and that's the biggest thing that I'm going to remember from playing here."

Both Lee and Spagnolo credited the Lincs' elite coaching staff with helping the group rise to the superstar level they did.

"I've just grown so much off the ice," said Lee. "On the ice, they gave us all the tools we needed to succeed. The practices we had were amazing. We practiced with such great pace, and Jeff (Bradley) is obviously an amazing coach. The drills, the skill development with (Mike Siddall and Mike Herman), and our systems were all amazing. We had super steady systems that we adopted early on in us being here, and we stuck to them."

"Jeff (Bradley) instilled that compete level in us from day one, and he taught us discipline and hard work," added Spagnolo. "I think he turned me into the leader that I am, and he taught us how to be great players and great men. He embodies what it means to be a hard-working individual."

Lee and Spagnolo didn't just become fan favourites and the stars of the team, but they also came to be the faces of the team's most successful era in recent memory. They became synonymous with the team's most magical triumphs of the last three years, and created a legacy among the team's greats in history.

"It's super special that I could have that impact on the community the same way that the community and the team had an impact on me," Lee said. "I'm looking around my room right now, and I have all my Lincs stuff scattered around everywhere. I have the jersey hung up, some milestone pucks, and to feel that the team gave so much to me, it's a really cool feeling that I might have given that back. Both Luca and I say it all the time, how much we love the Lincolns, and this team and this town will always hold a special place in our hearts."

Spagnolo echoed Lee's comments, adding what he believes it means to be a Lincoln.

"We all wanted to win. We all wanted to play for each other. Having that passion and that drive to be better every time you step on the ice is very enticing, and I think that's what it means to be a Lincoln."

"Every time I think of St. Marys, it puts a smile on my face," Spagnolo continued. "I hope Jaden and I have had an impact on hockey in St. Marys, because I know St. Marys has had an impact on us. It was by far the greatest three years of my life."

Gord Pearson sinks hole-in-one



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

On Aug. 21, 90-year-old Gord Pearson drained a hole-in-one at River Valley Golf and Tube Slide. It was Pearson's eighth ever hole-in-one and came on hole number 12, measuring 126 yards.

MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Aidan Ehgotz gets a swift hit during a Dunny’s Source For Sports U9 WOBA Blue St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Jordan Leppington rockets the ball to first base during a Hubbard Pharmacy Limited U9 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Charlotte Holliday swings at an incoming pitch during a Royal Canadian Legion U9 HP Red St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Edwin Walsh sends a pitch towards the plate during a Canadian Tire U11 OBA St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Dean Feeney steps into a long-range shot during a U11 Boys Tier Two St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Rens Debruin sends the ball flying up the field during a U16 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.

MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Briland Cunningham dashes around first base after getting a hit during a U13 WOBA St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Julia Gracey makes contact with an incoming ball during a Wildwood Care Centre U15 HP St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Madee Stewardson puts a quick shot on goal during a U12 Girls Tier Two St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Finn Reid blasts a shot on target during a U12 Boys Tier Three Grey St. Marys Storm game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Ayla Boemer releases a pitch during a McLean Taylor Construction U11 HP St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Sawyer Votary sends the ball flying through the air during a St. Marys Building Centre U13 EB St. Marys Rockies game earlier this season.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: A Ukrainian heart in Canada – finding gratitude in new traditions

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Aug. 24 has always been a day of vibrant celebration in Ukraine. It's our Independence Day, a time for parades, traditional foods and a deep sense of national pride.

But this year, being away from home, the holiday had a different, almost sombre flavour. The usual joyous energy was replaced with a quieter, more reflective feeling. I spent the day doing what felt right; curled up on the couch, wrapped in a Ukrainian flag, eating borscht and perogies, and sharing a video call with family back home. It was a strange mix of sadness and gratitude, a reminder that even thousands of miles away, our traditions and our hearts remain connected.

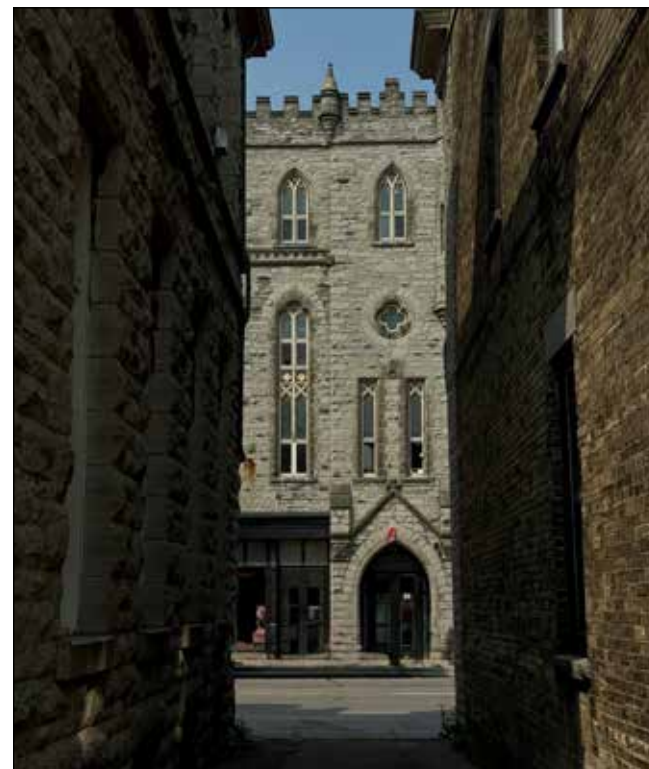
Here in Canada, there's no shortage of Ukrainian community events, and for that, I am truly thankful. But sometimes, you just need a day to yourself to process things. For many of us who have moved abroad, staying mentally afloat means staying busy and embracing new routines. We find ourselves adopting customs we never knew we needed. And I have to say, Canadian Thanksgiving has quickly become a new favourite.

I've always been a bit confused about why Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving in October while Americans do it in late November. Did one country just get a head start on the turkey? A bit of research revealed the truth; Canada's Thanksgiving is in October because our harvest season comes earlier. It also serves to prevent any confusion with Remembrance Day in November. The U.S. date, on the other hand, was officially set by President Lincoln during the Civil War. I find it fascinating that the same holiday can have such different origins, each rooted in its own unique national history.

The idea of having a specific day dedicated to gratitude is something I wish we had back home in Ukraine. Of course, every country has reasons to be thankful, but having a designated holiday makes it official, and let's be honest, getting a day off is a great reason to be grateful all by itself! The whole atmosphere of the Canadian harvest season feels so special to me. I can't wait to get my porch decorated with pumpkins and vibrant mum flowers.

This summer, I've been practicing gratitude. Every time I get a little overwhelmed, I stop and find at least five things to be thankful for. It helps put things in perspective. And what better way to do it than at a family potluck surrounded by people who feel like home?

As immigrants, we often face a bit of a balancing act. How do we keep our Ukrainian traditions alive while



(ALONA VASYLIEVA PHOTOS)

A Ukrainian immigrant grapples with a bittersweet Independence Day and a bafflingly peaceful Canadian summer, all while finding new meaning in Thanksgiving and the kindness of strangers. Pictured are two unique perspectives on the beauty of my new home in St. Marys.

also embracing the new customs of our adopted home? How do we stay true to our national identity without losing our minds in the process? Our kids seem to have this figured out. They've integrated so quickly and embrace Canadian holidays with an enthusiasm that's both a joy and a little bit hilarious. One minute they're learning a Ukrainian folk dance, the next they're obsessed with getting the best Halloween candy.

What has made this balancing act so much easier is the incredibly warm welcome we've received from Canadians. You never feel a cold shoulder, or that "I'm Canadian and you're not good enough" attitude. It's genuinely astonishing to see the patience and kindness with which Canadians welcome an unstoppable flow of newcomers from all over the world. It feels less like we're guests and more like we're long-lost relatives.

This summer has been so unnervingly tranquil, I'm starting to think I've accidentally moved into a still-life painting. The lawnmowers? They've been on strike. I haven't heard the familiar roar of a gas engine since July, and I'm starting to worry if all my neighbors decided to collectively switch to quiet, electric mowers

without telling me. The sheer, uninterrupted quiet is unsettling.

And don't even get me started on the trains. They've completely vanished. Poof! Gone. I used to rely on their rhythmic rumble to lull me to sleep – a comforting reminder that the world was still turning. Now? Nothing. It's a silence so profound I can hear my own ears ringing. I've even stuck my head out the window a few times just to make sure I haven't gone deaf. I'm beginning to wonder if a secret high-speed rail line has been built, or if my nervous system has finally found its Zen and declared a state of permanent vacation. I'm going with the latter; it's a much more flattering narrative.

This summer's peaceful vibe, combined with the new traditions and the endless kindness of our Canadian hosts, has been a beautiful reminder of the power of gratitude. No matter the struggles, no matter the distance from home, there are always things to be thankful for. And sometimes, those things can be as simple as a quiet evening, a kind neighbour, or a day off to eat perogies on the couch.

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HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Barn Fire at Coupland Heights, Part Two

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

On June 12, 1924, the Journal Argus carried the story of a barn fire on the previous Saturday evening at Dr. Percy Coupland's property on James Street South. The barn and contents were completely destroyed and six horses, stabled in the barn, perished. The newspaper continued to follow the story and learned that several days later, Dr. Coupland's insurance company, Waterloo Mutual, received a typed letter signed Pro Publico Bono. (For the public good!) It suggested that an enquiry into the recent St. Marys fire would be very desirable. Because the letter was anonymous, it was ignored. Then the insurance company received a second letter, and this one was signed: "Gentlemen: I think you would do well by making enquiries into the fire at St. Marys before paying anything out for damages done of loss caused by fire on Saturday, 7th day of June. I am referring to barn and contents at the Coupland Heights. I remain, Yours etc. C. O'Hara." Waterloo Mutual Insurance referred this letter to the Provincial Fire Marshal.

The position of Provincial Fire Marshal was created in 1916 by Ontario's Premier William Hearst to co-ordinate fire services throughout the province. The first appointment was Edwin P. Heaton who had been in the office for eight years at the time of the Coupland Heights fire. He had the authority to conduct official investigations into serious or suspicious fires. In response to O'Hara's letter, Heaton sent one of his inspectors, J. W. Pointon, to St. Marys, instructing him to find out if O'Hara had specific details to back up his letter's implications. On June 19, Pointon visited the site of the fire with O'Hara and the agent for Waterloo Mutual Insurance. He also obtained a transcript of a sworn statement, given and signed by Charles O'Hara at the St. Marys town hall. In it, O'Hara listed occasions when Dr. Coupland had approached him, suggesting that he burn down the barn and promising to pay \$200 for that service. But, O'Hara stated, he had not yielded to the temptation.

Pointon took his evidence to Crown Attorney G. G. McPherson in Stratford who instructed him to return to Toronto and submit his report to Fire Marshal Heaton. McPherson recommended that a full court of inquiry should be held as soon as possible. Heaton agreed, arranged to travel to St. Marys, and opened the official inquiry at 10 a.m. Friday, June 27, in the town hall. The Journal Argus gave the investigation full and detailed coverage in its next issue, Thursday, July 3. The newspaper called the investigation and O'Hara's charges "the Sensation of the Week" and reported: "Owing to the ominous rumours as to the origin of the fire that had been in circulation for the previous three weeks, widespread interest had been aroused, and the auditorium was filled with citizens eager to learn the ins and outs of the case at first hand."

In front of this large audience, two men's reputations were on the line. Dr. Percy Coupland, a professional man and an elder in the Presbyterian Church, was accused of offering his occasional employee, Charles O'Hara, \$200 if he burned down the barn at the new subdivision, Coupland Heights. James Brine White, a life-long St. Marys resident and a family man who rented stabling from Coupland, had been the last to leave the barn on the evening of the fire – at approximately 9:20. If O'Hara had refused the offer of money to commit an act of arson, had a similar offer been made to White? Both Dr. Coupland and James White had made insurance claims after the fire – Coupland for the loss of the building and its contents, White for the loss of his four horses and the wagons he used for his delivery business. Witnesses had been subpoenaed and would be examined by Crown Attorney McPherson. Dr. Coupland was represented by his lawyer, J.

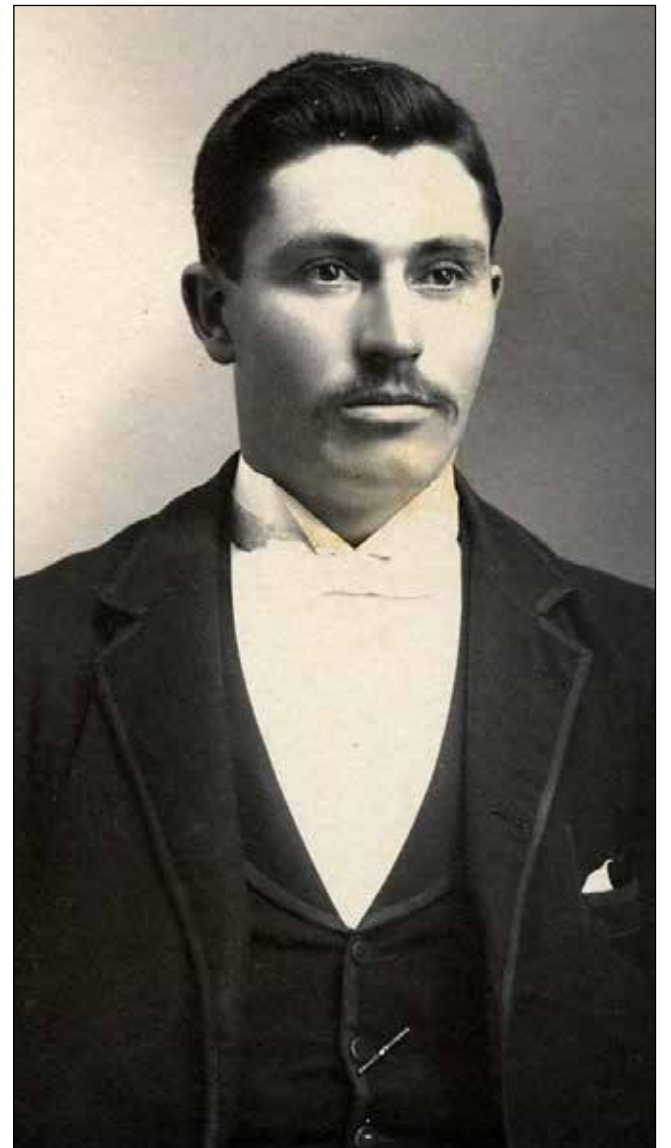
W. Graham. Another St. Marys lawyer, Armour W. Ford, was appearing for James White. Fire Marshal E. P. Heaton presided, assisted by J. W. Pointon. The Fire Marshal Office's recorder was also present to prepare a full transcript for the files. The Crown Attorney ordered that the subpoenaed witnesses leave the hall until they were called to give their testimony.

The first witness was St. Marys Fire Chief William Moyes. Crown Attorney McPherson questioned him to establish the time of the fire, when the alarm had been sounded (the whistle blew at 9:40 p.m.) and the local fire department's response. Dr. Fred Page, a veterinarian, was called next. He explained his informal agreement with Dr. Coupland for the stabling of two horses in the barn. Both had died in the fire and were not insured. Dr. Page's employee, Albert Ogglesby, was also questioned. Both he and Dr. Page described the layout of the barn's interior – the location of the stables and where the equipment and hay were stored. Questioning also concerned access to the barn. There were large sliding doors on either end so that teams could be driven through. One door was locked and bolted from the inside. The other door was padlocked on the outside. Who had keys to this padlock? It seemed that Ogglesby, James White, and Dr. Coupland had the only three keys.

James White was next, and McPherson questioned him at length. He established that White was a local resident and a carpenter by trade. He had been in the delivery business for about a year. Since the fire, he had done no work. McPherson took him through his actions on the evening of June 7, from arriving at the barn on Saturday evening to meet his four drivers, making sure the horses were settled and the equipment stored away. He had then bolted one set of barn doors on the inside and switched off the electric light. He went out with the last two of his drivers, closed and padlocked the other barn door. White described his route walking home, crossing James to Park Street and then turning south onto Water Street. He explained he had almost reached his house on Water Street when he heard the fire alarm. He turned back toward town and could see the fire in the distance from the corner of Park Street. He thought at first that the Wood Specialty factory on the west side of James Street was on fire, and didn't realize until he got closer that it was the barn.

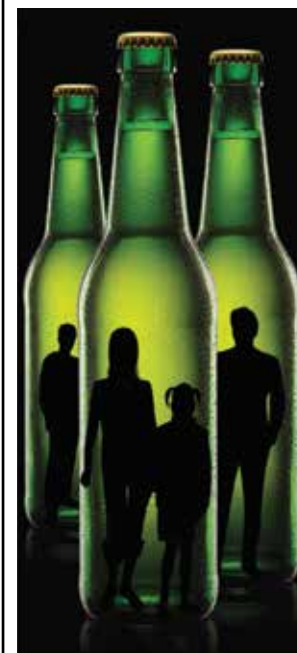
White was also questioned about his financial circumstances. He replied that his business was at last coming together and doing reasonably well although he admitted he was carrying a small debt. He hoped to be able to resume his business because carpentry work was hard to find. His lawyer, Armour Ford, cross-examined White. He asked him what communication he had recently had with Dr. Coupland. White replied that he had paid him rent on the Tuesday before the fire, but Dr. Coupland had asked him nothing. He didn't know how the fire started but "he was assured in his own mind that Dr. Coupland didn't do it." He had heard rumours, but he didn't believe them. Fire Marshal Heaton intervened at this point, rejecting hearsay testimony. The two delivery drivers who left the barn with White were also called and corroborated White's account of the evening of the fire although they could not say for sure how long White had stayed behind when they left to go downtown. The inquiry adjourned at this point. It was one o'clock and past time for lunch.

During the afternoon session the most startling testimony would be given, undoubtedly the part of the proceedings that the audience most wanted to hear. The attention turned to Dr. Coupland and to Charles O'Hara whose accusations were the reason for holding the inquiry. They were both to be called for questioning. Which testimony would be believed? To be continued...



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ST. MARYS MUSEUM'S DIGITAL COLLECTION OF HISTORIC IMAGES)

James Brine White (1871-1952) lost four horses and four wagons in Dr. Coupland's barn fire, the means of his livelihood. Nevertheless, rumours spread that he was somehow involved in starting the fire.



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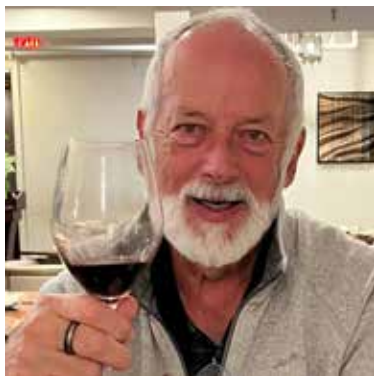
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Malaga celebrates Picasso, its native son



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

There are plenty of reasons to visit the historic Spanish city of Malaga – a beautiful cathedral, extensive Roman ruins, a glorious view of the Mediterranean among them.

But the truth is everywhere you go there is an overriding presence; this was the birthplace of iconoclast painter Pablo Picasso. Though he only lived here for the first 10 years of his life, Malaga has claimed Picasso as its own.

The truth is, almost no one is blasé about Picasso's work. Either people admire it greatly, or they think it is ridiculous. This is not a man who painted lovely pastoral scenes or photographically correct still lifes. Picasso is credited as a co-founder of the Cubist movement. Cubist art involves the deconstruction and re-assembling of the subject of the painting, to dramatic and often unrecognizable effect.

It can probably be argued all of modern art owns much of its origins to Pablo Picasso. On a recent visit to the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, which

features ceramic art, I was intrigued to spot a wildly painted plate amidst much more conventional designs – and yes, it was an original creation of Pablo Picasso.

But back to Malaga. And please don't misunderstand me; there really is much more to this ancient city than a groundbreaking painter. Malaga is, in fact, one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in western Europe, first founded by the Phoenicians around 770 BC. The Roman amphitheatre here is amazing. With its intact steps, tiers of stone seats and flagstone stage, it seems more like a contemporary performance space than a ruin that dates back almost two millennia. On the hillside above the Roman theatre is the Alcazaba, a citadel from the time of the Moors in the 11th century.

And then there is the lavish Cathedral of Malaga, one of several important historic churches in the city. It took about 250 years to complete the cathedral, a project that started in 1528!

So yes, history goes very deep here.

But inescapable in the heart of all of this is the reality that one of the most renowned, revered, disliked, adored, controversial artists of the modern period spent the first decade of his life here.

The historic sites throughout Malaga certainly gain their share of attention from avid photographers, but I suspect the most photographed scene in the city – and certainly the busiest selfie spot – is the

life-sized bronze sculpture of Picasso, seated on a marble bench that is clearly intended to invite visitors to join the artist on the bench. And in the background is his birthplace.

Malaga is also home to the Picasso Museum. Well, one of many Picasso museums – there are certainly similarly named galleries in Paris, in Barcelona, in Antibes and any art gallery worth its salt has a collection of Picassos. Fortunately, he was a prolific producer of pieces of art.

Yet while his work has spread far and wide, the Malaga museum has managed to garner a good collection and the guided tours offer a lot of insight into Picasso's work and the philosophies behind his complicated images.

Our guide there was genuinely honest, explaining that while there are lots of theories about the development of Picasso's styles – including the fact that he was dyslexic – there is much that is merely conjecture.

One example I enjoyed involves a painting labelled "Seated Woman." Before she revealed the name of the piece, our guide asked us our opinion about the subject of the work. I boldly suggested it was a self-portrait by Picasso, basing my uneducated guess on the sweater and beret the subject appeared to be wearing, similar to clothing I had seen on photos of Picasso.

The guide then told us the title, which seemed to discount my guess, but she admitted Picasso's paintings typically don't have titles given by the



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Malaga's first-century Roman amphitheatre.

artist. "Seated Woman" was the opinion of an expert, but the guide admitted she actually agreed with my very non-expert guess.

As we toured the museum with a small group, I was interested to see about half of the visitors rushed through, barely glancing at paintings they clearly did not appreciate. The other half (maybe a smaller percentage) soaked up every bit of information they could get and lingered over individual paintings.

And it was intriguing. Our guide pointed out that in some paintings, Picasso had intended the normally impossible task of presenting his subject from all sides at once; thus, the Cubist reconstruction.

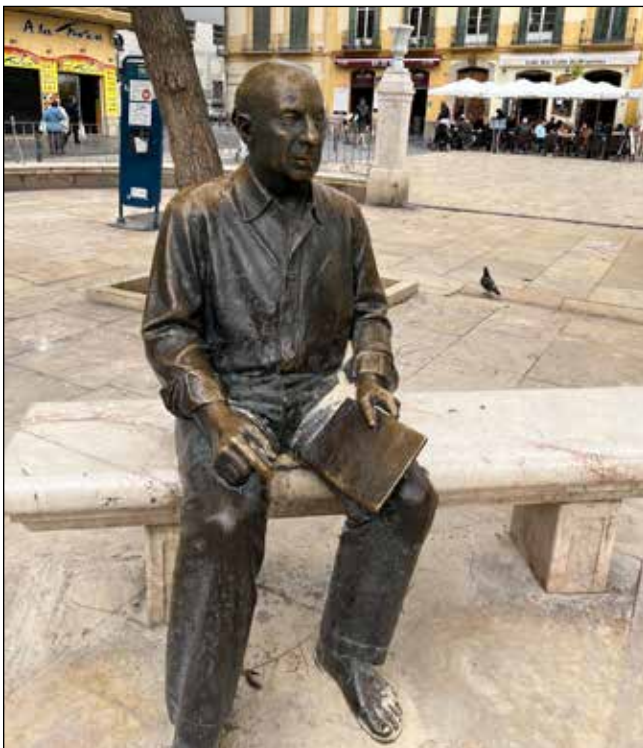
She also noted the overt sexualization in some of his work – his women tend to have large

circles portraying oversized breasts, for example.

Enough art studies for today; I simply found Malaga's obvious pride in their native son was very appealing and I was glad to benefit from their work to celebrate Picasso.

And then, as we took in the harbour view from atop the hills, I noticed two young girls below us, attempting to create their own art – purse-lipped selfies on smart phones. The results won't be Cubist – but they won't truly reflect reality either.

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



A bronze Pablo Picasso with his birthplace in the background.



A Malaga street musician.



Picasso's "Seated Woman," which may actually be a self-portrait.

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: What's for lunch?



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

September has arrived and schedules are bustling. This week features simple and healthy lunches prepared in under 15 minutes for back to school or work.

I've included a no-bake special and healthy snack option.

Sesame noodle bowl

Total time: 15 minutes

Sesame Sauce:

½ cup sesame paste (or tahini)

¼ cup warm water

3 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp sesame oil

1 tbsp rice vinegar

1 clove grated garlic

Siracha and sugar to taste

Bowl:

6-8 ounces stir-fry noodles, Chinese egg noodles, or linguini in a pinch

2 cups edamame, cooked

2 cucumbers, diced

1 pound chicken breast, cooked and diced

Sesame seeds

Method:

- Sauce: whisk all sauce ingredients together until smooth; you can run it through the food processor, or shake in a jar.

- Noodles: cook noodles for a few minutes less than package instructions. If noodles seem sticky, rinse in cold water. Toss with about half the sauce.

- Divide noodles, edamame, cucumber and chicken into containers. Drizzle with extra sauce and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Store in fridge for 3-4 days. Eat hot or cold.

Creamy kale Caesar salad

Total time: 15 minutes

1 large bunch of kale

1/3 cup chopped walnuts

½ cup sour cream

¼ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 clove minced garlic

¼ tsp salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Method:

- Remove and discard the large stems and centre ribs from kale and cut the leaves into narrow strips. Toss in a large bowl with toasted walnuts.

- In a small bowl, whisk together the sour cream, parmesan, olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper to taste. Pour dressing over kale and toss to coat. Eat within 24 hours.

Creamy pasta salad with broccoli and raisins

Total time: 15 minutes

Leave out raisins if that doesn't appeal to you.

1 small head broccoli

1 ½ cups cooked whole wheat elbow macaroni

1/3 cup raisins

1 green onion, white and green parts thinly sliced

1 tbsp honey

1 tsp yellow mustard or Dijon

½ tsp kosher salt

Method:

- Remove the thick stems

from the broccoli and discard (or save to use another meal). Slice the florets into bite-size pieces.

- In a large bowl, combine the broccoli, macaroni, raisins and green onions.

- In a small bowl, whisk together the sour cream, vinegar, honey, mustard and salt. Pour over the macaroni mixture and stir until well combine. Store in fridge in an airtight container for up five days.

Chocolate-peanut energy bars

Prep: 25 minutes; Total time: 1 hour and 25 minutes; Serves: 16 bars

No-bake energy bars, serving a healthy dose of protein, are perfect for lunchtime or after-school snacks. They contain peanuts, but you can use a peanut-free alternative. Taste like Snickers.

¾ cup Medjool dates

1 cup smooth natural peanut butter or nut butter of your choice

½ cup rolled oats

¼ tsp salt

½ cup unsalted, dry-roasted peanuts or nuts of your choice

¾ cup bittersweet chocolate chips

Method:

- Soak dates in hot water. Cover in medium bowl for 10 minutes. Drain, reserving soaking water.

- Meanwhile, line eight-inch square baking dish with parchment paper, leaving extra hanging over sides. Lightly coat with cooking spray.

- Combine soaked dates, nut butter of choice, oats and salt in a food processor. Process until very finely chopped and starting to clump together. If the mixture seems dry, add a little reserved soaking water, 1 tbsp at a time. Transfer to medium bowl and stir in chopped nuts. Spread the mixture evenly and firmly into prepared pan.

- Place chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave on medium (50%) until melted, 2-3 minutes. Spread the chocolate evenly over the oat mixture. Refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour. Remove from the pan by lifting the overhanging parchment. Cut into 16 squares.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH

St. Marys Public Library

Our resident puppet, Edith, has some fantastic news: she's running a new children's program! Join her one Saturday a month at 10 a.m. for songs and stories themed around her latest exciting travels. "Edith's Storytime Adventures" begins September 13 with her tales about the time she went to school. This program is free to attend, and no registration is required. Everyone is welcome!

This Week's Recommendation

Edith is a voracious picture book reader. One of her current favourites is "Ellie Has a Secret", a beautifully illustrated story by Amelia Bothe. In it, young Ellie deals with the physical manifestation of a secret. It starts out small and manageable, but as time passes, the Secret

becomes so large that Ellie can't eat or sleep due to its presence. How will Ellie handle this issue? Find out by borrowing "Ellie Has a Secret" today.

Up This Week

Fri., Sept. 5: **Movie in the Park** – Thunderbolts* (Dusk)

Sat., Sept. 6: Dungeons and Dragons (10 a.m.)

Mon., Sept. 8: Euchre Mondays (10:30 a.m.)

Tues., Sept. 9: Recipe Club (10:30 a.m.), Write of Way (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

Wed., Sept. 10: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.)

Thurs., Sept. 11: **FOL Book Sale** (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)^

*Cadzow Park (217 Park St.)

^Lind Sportsplex [The Quarry] (425 Water St. S)

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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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(700 Church Street North, St. Marys, ON) | Phone: 519-284-4408 | Cell: 226-374-8231
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AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

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

- Parks Lawn Bowling
- Doors Open
- Victoria Mboko
- Air Canada strike
- Museum Melodies
- Teddy Bear Reunion
- Trump meets Putin
- Gaza famine
- Mitchell Golf
- Grahams corn
- Purpourefillery



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Lyla Tomie (4)

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

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

PET OF THE WEEK



Have you heard about our online pet store?!
Pet food, toys and more delivered right to your door!
Stay tuned this month for weekly information segments.
Check us out! www.myVETstore.ca/stmarysvetclinic



OSCAR

Our Pet of the Week is Oscar, a four-month-old Bernedoodle. Oscar resides in Stratford with his owner, Elizabeth Johnston, and his canine companion, Blue, who he loves to torment. We met them at the local dog park. Oscar is a graduate of ball therapy which is a fun, non-invasive orthodontic intervention to improve pet dental health and wellbeing.



Thorndale News

*A section within the
St. Marys Independent*



Haunting memories

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

How does a small rural community be the premise of unsolved mysteries? The mystery of almost 60 years ago haunts the memories of people in the Thorndale area who remember the day Scott Leishman disappeared. That was March 1968, during Spring Break. Scott didn't show up to meet a friend in Thorndale or return home that evening. Family and neighbours walked the deep ditches that night with flashlights near his home at Valleyview, then Concession 1, and the county road just west of Thorndale. Some of the searchers combed the river flats across from the Leishman home and along the Thames riverbanks. But no Scott.

In February, Frankie Jensen was reported missing, walking to school from his west London home. The following month after Scott went missing, in April Frankie was found in the Thames River just north of the Thorndale Bridge, not that far from Scott's family home. Scott was found on the May long weekend, kilometres away from Thorndale, near Port Burwell in Otter Creek. Speculation among the community grew. People wondered if these two disappearances and deaths were connected.

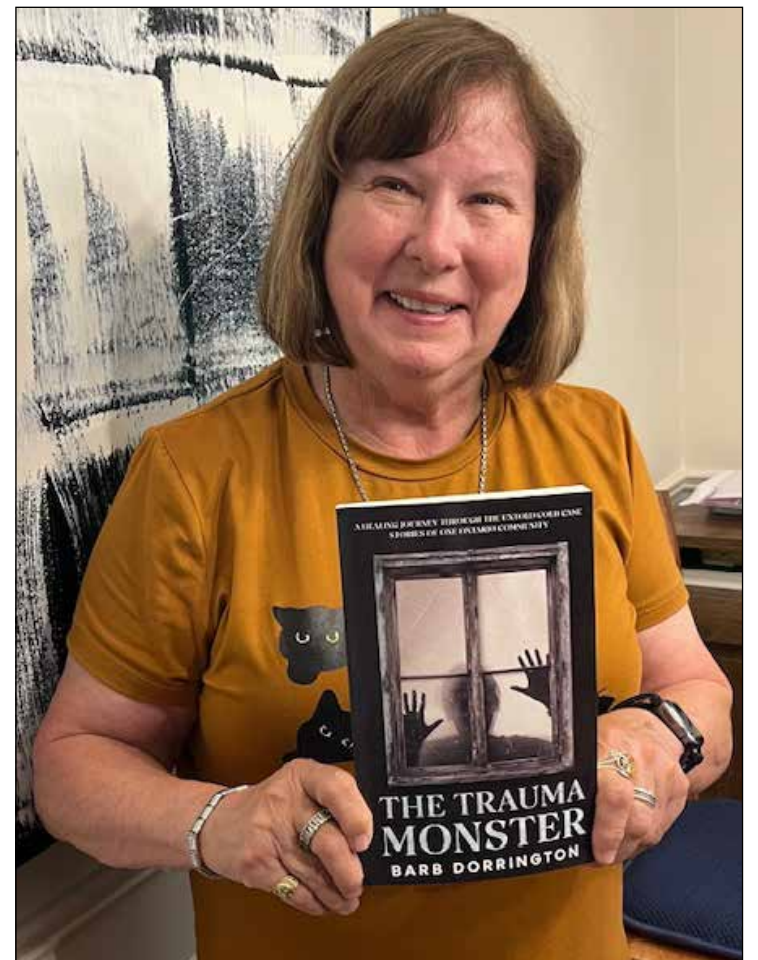
Barb Dorrington was a public-school friend of Scott in Windsor before he and his family moved to the Thorndale area. Their families had a close relationship in Windsor and Dorrington's older sister maintained her friendship with Scott's older twin sisters when they moved to the Thorndale community. Years later, Dorrington came to London to study at Western University to become a

social worker, married and raised a family. For over thirty years she worked as a registered social worker and art therapist with training in trauma. She was a counsellor for the Catholic School Board, with her position counselling children and young adults with their trauma and loss of loved ones. But Dorrington had trauma of her own that replayed often over the years in her mind of what happened to Scott.

Dorrington recently released her book, 'The Trauma Monster'. "I was encouraged by a mentor friend" she remarked, "to write about what happened to her childhood friend, Scott." She always wondered and that nagging trauma that haunted her memory never left her.

As she investigated Scott's disappearance and Frankie's abduction and death, she uncovered more stories of abduction and sexual assaults of unsolved cases involving children and young teens in the London area. A four-year journey of interviewing, searching for clues and uncovering the stories of survivors and family members of many of these unanswered and disturbing occurrences of the late 1960's and into the 70's haunted children of that era who are now seniors with these mysteries still troubling them today.

"Because Thorndale was centred to several of these cases" Dorrington stated, "I would like anyone who may recall, even if it is the smallest detail and however distant, about Frankie Jensen or when Scott Leishman disappeared. If you have memories, family stories, or observations, no matter how small, they may help clarify timelines or uncover overlooked truths. Please email me directly at barbdorrington@email.com."



(PHOTO COURTESY OF BARB DORRINGTON)

Pictured is Barb Dorrington holding a copy of her book "The Trauma Monster" that was recently released in June.

Thames Centre burn ban lifted

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Due to cooler temperatures and recent rains, the Municipality of Thames Centre lifted the burn ban last week. This

ban was for all fires, except for recreational fires, which are defined in the Thames Centre Open Air Burning By-law.

As it states in the Municipality's website, 'to minimize fire hazards and to en-

sure public safety, open burning must be done with the permission of the Thames Centre Fire Chief and in accordance with this bylaw.' Residents can apply for a burn permit online or at the municipal's office. No permit is required

for recreational fires, such as campfires. For more information go to <https://www.thamescentre.on.ca/home-property-and-utilities/fire-services/burn-permits-and-backyard-fires/>

What's on at Thorndale Library in September!

MIDDLESEX COUNTY LIBRARY STAFF

Contributed Article

For young families:

- Thorndale Storytime (Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.): Join us for stories, songs, rhymes, and fun!
- Early ON Play & Learn (Fridays, 9 - 11 a.m.): For families with children zero

to six years old.

- Family Movie PD Day (Tuesday, Sept. 2, 12 p.m.) Families can vote ahead at the library for the movie to be shown.

For school-aged children (ages seven to 11):

- After School Hangout (Wednesdays 4:30-5:30 p.m. starting Sept. 10) Join us

for crafts, games and have a blast with your friends.

For adults and seniors:

- Stitch 'n Chat (Tuesday, Sept. 2, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Wednesday, Sept. 17 6-8 p.m. Bring your needle project and chat. Registration required.

For all ages:

- Ni-ssss-ouri the Rock Snake

(Wednesday, Sept. 24, 3:45-4:45 p.m.) Come to the library to paint a rock to take home or to add to Ni-ssss-ouri the Rock Snake. Registration required.

For more information or to register, call 519-461-1150 or email thorndale_staff@middlesex.ca.

THANK YOU

Poole

Sincere thanks to all of those who have mourned the life of June Poole who passed away peacefully on Monday Aug. 10, 2025.

Mom had recently celebrated her 96th birthday.

June was predeceased by her beloved husband Howard in 2014.

She was dearly loved by her children Vicki & Randy and their spouses as well as two grandsons and three great grandchildren.

Mom and Dad had many years of exceptional medical care by Dr. Gatfield. Many thanks to Andrew Hodges Funeral Home and the wonderful staff at Wildwood Care Centre for all of their wonderful care and kindness.

With sincere gratitude, The Poole Family

IN MEMORIAM

Megens

In memory of a loving Mother, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother Maria A. Megens who passed away 40 years ago on Sept. 6, 1985

Mom, did the sun shine brighter

Or the sky a deeper blue

Or was it just a different world

When we shared our lives with you.

Forever is a long time

This we know is true

But that's how long our broken hearts

Will love and yearn for you.

Lovingly remembered by the

Megens, Degroot and Brandt families



Community Liaison Committee

The next Community Liaison Committee Meeting will be held on **Friday, September 12th at 10am** 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 at least 3 days prior to the meeting 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 **Wednesday, September 10th**

COMMEMORATION



Happy 90th birthday
to my guardian angel

I miss you more than words can express,
but I feel your love around me every day.
Happy Birthday in heaven Mom
Love, Patricia

Andrew L.
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Al-Anon Family Groups could help YOU! Call for time and place
1-800-706-9833 or App Available

HELP WANTED



Township of Perth South **SEASONAL EQUIPMENT OPERATOR / TRUCK DRIVER**

The Township of Perth South is seeking a qualified equipment operator/truck driver who would be available to work on a seasonal basis for winter maintenance purposes from **December 1st, 2025 until March 31st, 2026**. Reporting to the Operations Manager, applicants will be experienced with the ability to operate various pieces of equipment, such as wheel loaders, road graders, and tandem dump trucks equipped with snow plow, wing, and sander. The operator may be required to perform other duties within the Public Works Department, along with other miscellaneous labour duties from time to time.

Applicants must have a valid "D" license with a "Z" endorsement. Experience in road and/or equipment maintenance would be an asset. This position is subject to weekend scheduling and 24 hr. call-out, with a minimum of 32 hours per week.

The salary range for this position is **\$27.19 – \$33.99 per hour** for 2025, the 2026 salary will receive a cost-of-living increase as approved by council.

We thank all candidates for their interest, however, only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

Interested candidates are invited to submit a detailed resume expressing their interest to the undersigned clearly marked as "seasonal operator" by **September 15th, 2025**.

Ken Bettles, Director of Public Works

Township of Perth South

3191 Road 122, St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0

Email – kbettles@perthsouth.ca

Information gathered is under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and shall only be used for candidate selection purposes.



Stratford Police Service

We currently have openings for the following position:

FULL-TIME CLERK (1-year contract)

Please refer to the City of Stratford website at www.stratford.ca for details of the duties for this position, minimum qualifications, and application submission process.

Completed application packages for this Clerk position will be accepted until September 22, 2025.

Please mail or deliver completed applications to Stratford Police Service, 17 George Street West, Stratford, ON N5A 1A6 OR email to recruitment@stratfordpolice.com

We thank all applicants for their interest; however only those selected for testing will be contacted.

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Legion

BRANCH 236, ST. MARYS



Buddy Check



Coffee

Veterans, serving Canadian Forces members, RCMP, allied forces and first responders are welcome. You do not need to be a Legion member to attend.

Come meet fellow veterans in a safe, non-judgemental environment of comradeship. There will be free coffee and doughnuts.

Every Tuesday morning from 10 a.m. until 12 noon at the St Marys Legion, beginning September 16.

66 Church Street North, St Marys.

For additional info, contact Mike Rumble at 519.317.9410



BINGO

FIRST SUNDAY EVERY MONTH



BRANCH 236 ST MARYS

\$15.00

MIN BOOK PLAY

UPCOMING DATES DOORS OPEN AT 11:30

SEPT 7

1-4PM

FOOD AND DRINKS AVAILABLE

EARLY BIRD

12:45

66 CHURCH STREET ST. MARYS

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY
Independent Columnist

Cool wet summer

25 years ago (2000)
Shur-Gain recently opened a poultry/swine mill on James Street South. On site to cut the ceremonial ribbon last week was recently retired company president, John Hensel.

Despite a last-minute heat wave, the cool wet summer has yielded low attendance at St. Marys' most famous swimming attraction. Admission sales were down 31 per cent year over year, or \$14,083 compared to last year's \$20,390. In addition to cool weather, staff had to deal with heavy rain and flooding that saw the Quarry levels rise, covering the concrete deck for several days. Only last year, the record low water levels required the addition of longer ladders poolside.

50 years ago (1975)
A strike called for last Friday morning at the DeLong Scovill plant on Wellington Street North was averted when the workers, members of the international moulder and foundry workers union, accepted a last-minute company offer.

The Kinsmen Club map of St. Marys, enclosed in a glass case, was recently mounted upon the front wall of the St. Marys Arena, north of the main door, by Kinsmen Doug Haycock and Carmen Stacey. Originally, the map was promoted for the front of Town Hall or the downtown area, but it will probably be more useful to many strangers at the arena during the year as any other location.

75 years ago (1950)
A preliminary survey with estimated costs and suggestions for alleviating the floods which annually cause damage and discomfort to a third of the downtown business firms and a number of private homes along the riverbanks will result from a conference held in Town Hall on Friday afternoon.

Local members of the Provincial Police on night patrol have found only one door open on places of business here during the past several weeks. The police hope this is a sign that St. Marys merchants are tightening up on their security practices.

Two St. Marys lads who have volunteered for service in the Royal Canadian Navy have received their call to duty notices this week. Ed Tucker will enter the Navy as Ordinary Seaman and Douglas Parkin will take the stoker-mechanic's course.

100 years ago (1925)
Dispatches to The Globe during the past few days report bush fires in various parts of Ontario, with considerable loss in timber.

The Queen and Wellington branch of the Bank of Montreal here has undergone extensive alterations in the past month. A new vault has been added, the whole interior has been re-decorated, and a new glass door has been put into the front of the building.

At the meeting of the Fair Board on Monday night, it was decided to purchase a young Jersey heifer which will be given away free to someone holding a membership ticket which happens to be the one drawn on Fair Day.

Sudoku

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Solutions on pg. 31



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

St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 25

Thorndale Library events - See Page 27

Friday, Sept 5

- Royal Canadian Legion "hot dogs and more" lunch at Noon

- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.

- Kirkton Fall Fair - Open at 6:30 p.m., Fireworks at dusk

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

Saturday, Sept 6

- Science Hill 50th anniversary 4-person scramble

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon

- Kirkton Fall Fair - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Truck and tractor pull at 3 p.m.

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

Sunday, Sept 7

- Kirkton Fall Fair - Community breakfast at 9 a.m., Demolition derby 1 p.m.

- Vining Cemetery decoration day at 22157 Purple Hill Rd - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- Legion Bingo - Doors open 11:30 am., Early bird 12:45 p.m., Games - 1-4 p.m.

Monday, Sept 8

- Community dinner at St. Marys United Church - 5 p.m., Sponsored by Avonbank Church

Tuesday, Sept 9

- Canada's Outdoor Farm Show at 744906 Oxford Rd 17, Woodstock - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept 10

- Canada's Outdoor Farm Show at 744906 Oxford Rd 17, Woodstock - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Friends of the Library social at the library - 6:30-8 p.m.

Thursday, Sept 11

- Canada's Outdoor Farm Show at 744906 Oxford Rd 17, Woodstock - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Friends of the Library book sale at the Lind Sportsplex - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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