

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1269

Thursday, July 3, 2025

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ST. MARYS CELEBRATES CANADA DAY!

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The Canada Day Parade started at 11 a.m. leaving from the PRC parking lot down James St. South up to Queen Street, down to Wellington and up Park Street and finishing at Cadzow. There was a variety of entries in this year's parade with local dignitaries, tractors, local businesses, bands, church groups and service clubs. The town had lots of events planned to follow at Cadzow Park with hands on activities, barbecues, face painting, and children's inflatables. The ceremony started at 12 p.m. and was followed by performances from Bradley Kerr and York Street Thought Process. Happy Canada Day!

Anonymous donation results in council approval for Grand Trunk Trail lighting project

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A well-used section of St. Marys' Grand Trunk Trail from Ingersoll Street to the Sarnia Bridge will soon be better lit thanks to an anonymous donation of \$60,000.

At the June 24 St. Marys council meeting, council approved a new capital project to be completed later this year that will see the installation of 13 new LED streetlights and poles along that section of trail west of the Thames River. In 2023, a number of large donations were similarly made to support new lighting and asphalt along 700 metres of trail. According to the staff report on this project, one of those donors committed to

donating funds for this year's trail-improvement project.

"When we were approached earlier this year by a resident who made a large-sum donation to the trail network, we reviewed some of the priorities for the trail and some of the issues we've heard from trail users in the past, and the highest-priority item within the available funds of the donation was a lighting project from Ingersoll Street to the Sarnia Bridge," said infrastructure services manager Jeff Wolfe.

According to the staff report, the Grand Trunk Trail west of the Thames River has steep embankments along the sides of the trail and is very dark at night with

CONTINUED TO PAGE 7

Connie Douglas awarded the 2025 Senior of the Year Award for St. Marys

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Congratulations to Connie Douglas for being recognized with the provincial 2025 Senior of the Year award.

The award gives each municipality in Ontario the chance to honour one outstanding community member who plays a vital role in shaping our town by volunteering countless hours of their time and by making our community better for all. I am beyond honoured to write this story about my mother as I know she is so deserving of this award.

It was presented to her at the regular council meeting on June 24 by deputy mayor Brogan Aylward and town council members. Douglas, along with her husband, Harold, started the Town and Country Cheese Shoppe in 1990. Since the sale of their business 10 years ago, she has spent many days volunteering at the Friendship Centre.

Through the centre, she has helped prep meals, delivered groceries and participated in the outreach program by visiting with those in the community who want company.

Besides the Friendship Centre, Douglas has also volunteered her time with the Salvation Army manning the kettle in December, helping at the food bank throughout the year and assisting with anything else they need help with. She has helped set up for induction day for the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and she has helped with many events put on by her church, the East Missouri Union Church.

She has met many people through this time and has loved being able to give back to our

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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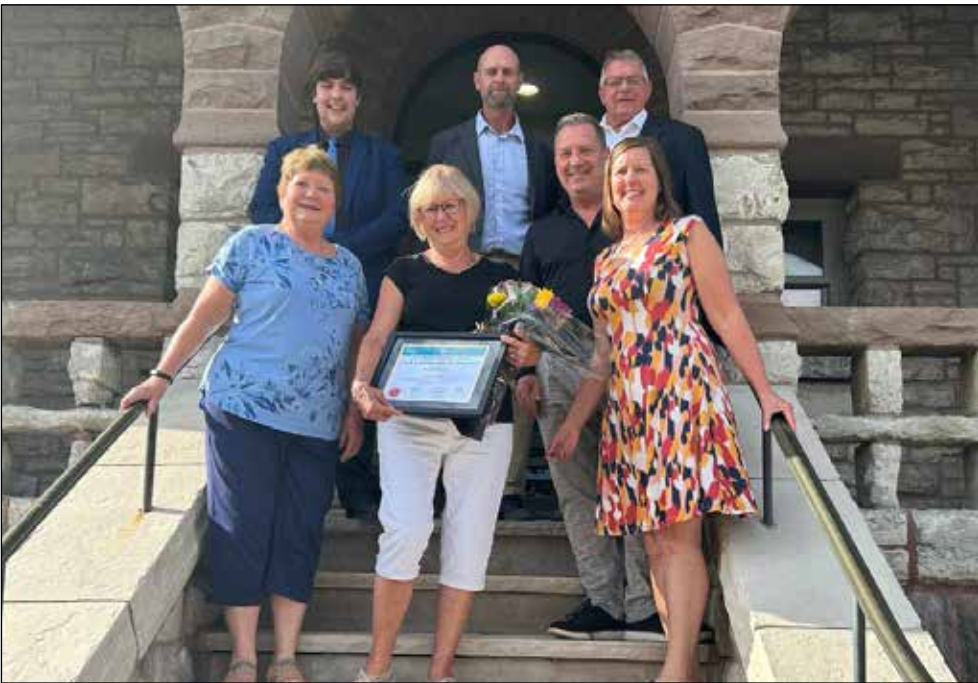
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COMMUNITY

Connie Douglas awarded the 2025 Senior of the Year Award for St. Marys



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

Connie Douglas and members of St. Marys council pose for a picture at town hall after Douglas was presented with the 2025 Senior of the Year award. In the front row from left to right are Coun. Marg Luna, Connie Douglas, Coun. Rob Edney, Coun. Fern Pridham. In the back row from left to right are deputy mayor Brogan Aylward, Coun. Dave Lucas and Coun. Jim Craigmile.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

community. Her warm, welcoming personality is a magnet to all who meet her. “We would like to congratulate Connie Douglas on this well-deserved recognition,” said Aylward. “Recognizing those who dedicate their time to our

community is important for all of us on town council.” Douglas, who is very humble about the award, shared what a huge honour this is and that she feels very fortunate to live in a town where there are so many people who can volunteer their time to help



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Connie Douglas with her 2025 Seniors of the Year award.

others.

She also thanked the staff at the Friendship Centre for being so active in getting seniors involved and by making sure they are looked after. “I would just like to thank everyone for the kind wishes. We are lucky to

have so many opportunities to volunteer, something to keep us motivated when we retire and still need to accomplish something in a day,” Douglas said. Congratulations, mom!





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Town of St. Marys appoints new fire chief and director of emergency services

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys has announced the promotion of deputy fire chief Phil West to the position of fire chief and director of emergency services for the town effective June 30.

Since joining the department in 1995, West has held leadership positions at every level. Beginning his career as a firefighter, he advanced to fire lieutenant in 2019, fire captain in 2022 and deputy fire chief in 2024, demonstrating his unwavering dedication to the community and expertise in the field.

Building on the legacy of former chief Richard "Andy" Anderson who recently took on the position of deputy chief/CEMC with the Stratford Fire Department, West plans to focus on public education, risk reduction through fire inspections, continuous improvement in procedures and strengthening emergency preparedness to enhance the community's safety.

"I am delighted to announce the appointment of Phil West as our new fire chief," said Mayor Al Strathdee in a press release. "Phil's dedication to the community and passion for the fire service will undoubtedly enhance the safety and wellbeing of our communi-



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

Phil West has been appointed fire chief and director of emergency service for the Town of St. Marys effective June 30.

ty. Congratulations on behalf of council and welcome aboard, Phil!"

Expressing heartfelt gratitude, West acknowledges the support and mentorship of past and present colleagues, including many influential instructors from both the department and other trainers representing the Ontario Fire College training program. West appre-

ciates the support and bravery of the St. Marys fire service members and their invaluable role in serving the community. He is grateful for the community's support and is dedicated to serving them to the best of his abilities.

"Commanding at a fire scene is about seeing the big picture, protecting your team, anticipating changing conditions

and always having a Plan B," said West in the press release. "It's about making quick and informed decisions while prioritizing safety and strategy."

As fire chief and director of emergency services, West will oversee all aspects of fire department operations, including emergency response, training, administration and public safety initiatives. He will also lead fire suppression, hazardous-materials response and rescue operations while continuing to advance emergency preparedness and fire-prevention efforts in the community.

Under West's leadership, the town's emergency services department will continue its proud tradition of excellence while embracing new challenges and opportunities. West is committed to fostering a culture of innovation and professional development within the department, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all residents, the fire department and fellow first responders.

Throughout his career, West has been recognized for his exemplary service. He is a recipient of the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal for 20 years of distinguished service and the Ontario Fire Services Long Service Medal for 25 years of dedicated service, demonstrating a longstanding commitment to the fire profession.

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EDITORIAL

The great fireworks debate: When should they be allowed and how should the rules be enforced?

GALEN SIMMONS
Editor

As the sun sets in the leadup to Canada Day, or any fair-weather holiday for that matter, the sound of fireworks going off is rather commonplace. Similarly, complaints on social media about scared dogs, lost sleep and the debris left behind by fireworks found on neighbouring properties and in nearby parks and green spaces the next morning are also rather commonplace.

It's a pattern that seemingly repeats itself year after year. So, let's ask ourselves, are consumer fireworks more harmful than they're worth, or is the age-old tradition of setting off colourful explosions against the night sky worth keeping around?

Personally, and I say this knowing I'll rustle some feathers, I don't much care for fireworks. I'm not really a fan of craning my neck to watch a display that is both too loud and too bright, and in the case of your standard backyard fireworks, leaves much to be desired.

And while I totally understand the concerns around fireworks for pets, livestock and wildlife, as well as the fire hazards they can pose when handled by someone who's maybe had a little too much to drink, I can't, in good faith, recommend their abolishment altogether.

I understand there are many who love fireworks displays and look for-

ward to them as a final sendoff to our much-beloved summer holiday weekends, and I would never take that away from them. In my opinion, if you don't like them, go inside and close the windows for a couple hours.

But I do agree there are those who abuse fireworks, setting them off at inappropriate times or in ways that unjustifiably disturb the peace in otherwise quiet communities.

In St. Marys, the fireworks bylaw permits the setting off of consumer fireworks between dusk and 11 p.m. on Victoria Day and Canada Day, or two days preceding or following both holidays. The bylaw also outlines a permitted process through the local fire department for selling fireworks, as well as regulations for safely storing and setting off consumer fireworks, and it imposes fines for those found to be in contravention of the bylaw starting at \$5,000 for a first offence.

Personally, I'm not sure the regulations in the town's bylaw go far enough. With five straight days open for fireworks for both Victoria Day and Canada Day, there is plenty of room for irritation, aggravation and environmental harm.

Do you think these restrictions adequately address concerns around fireworks, do they go too far or not far enough? Send your thoughts in a letter to the editor to info@stmarysindependent.com.

Bravo	Boo
We have Bravos this week. 1) With reference to last week's Boo about the lack of Canadian flags in the downtown area, the St. Marys Lions Club have come to the rescue. Bravo to the St. Marys Lions Club for their efforts in hanging Canadian flags in downtown St. Marys. 2) Bravo to our hometown player Trent Dundas, who plays catcher for the Yellowknife Merchants. They won the championship in Prince George last weekend.	We have no Boos this week.
*Please note all Boos and Bravos must be signed in order to be considered.	Bravos and Boos are submitted by community members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent.

Quote of the Week

"Summerfest this year is proving to be bigger and better than ever. Pre-sales have surpassed previous years. We are blown away with the community support and we are so excited to continue growing this event. See you this weekend"

- Ryan Leaman, co-chair of the Kinsmen Summerfest taking place July 3 to 6

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Happy Canada Day eh!

I wish mosquitos would suck fat and not just blood!

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!



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

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The St. Marys Independent THOUGHTS OF THE WEEK

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St. Marys Downtown Business Improvement Area supports Stonetown Heritage Festival



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Thank you to Downtown St. Marys Business Improvement Area (BIA) for their gold sponsorship at the Stonetown Heritage Festival this year. The Shuttle Service will be made possible thanks to their gracious contribution. The BIA wants festival-goers to arrive at ease by sponsoring the air-conditioned accessible shuttle. Park at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (317 James St. S) and catch the shuttle to town hall or Milt Dunnell Field. "Supporting the Heritage Festival also means celebrating the heart of downtown. Nothing makes us happier than to see the crowds of people of all ages taking in what our downtown businesses have to offer. These donations are critical to driving these interactions." – St. Marys Downtown Business Improvement Area



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STONETOWN CRIER

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from the Town of St. Marys



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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the week is Maria Hathaway. Maria was born in Turnhout, Belgium. She was married for 20 years before her husband passed. She has two children, four grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Maria ran Hathaway Bed & Breakfast for about 20 years. She is turning 100 years young on July 3. Happy Birthday Maria.

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

A grand opening!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Mayor Al Strathee, shown here cutting the ribbon, was among the hundreds to take part in celebration during the Grand Opening for Domino's Pizza on Saturday, June 21. General Manager Abhishek Salian told the Independent that over 900 free pizzas were distributed during the day and that a fun atmosphere was enjoyed despite the periodic rainfall. "We couldn't have wished for anything more. The weather sure didn't waver us and the support from everyone was heart-warming. People were so welcoming. Thank you to everyone in the community for your support and love!"

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Weekend Quiz

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- What is the former name of Canada Day?
- Which Canadian singer is the best-selling French language artist of all time?
- What year were women granted the right to vote in federal elections in Canada?
- Which province is the dish Poutine from?
- What is the largest great lake?
- What is the national animal of Canada?
- When was "O Canada" established as the national anthem?
- Which aerobatics flight demonstration squadron performs on Canada Day?
- What is Canada's national sport?
- How many provinces make up Canada?

By Jake Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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Donations in support of a portable x-ray machine is the gift that keeps on giving



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION)

In 2023, Jill Burgin and her family generously chose to direct their donation toward the St. Marys Memorial Hospital's then-new portable X-ray machine. Today, that same piece of equipment has become an essential and well-used tool, providing imaging for patients of all ages. The ongoing impact of this gift highlights just how meaningful community support can be in enhancing local healthcare. The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation extends its heartfelt thanks to Jill and her family for their continued generosity over the years.

Anonymous donation results in council approval for Grand Trunk Trail lighting project

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

limited light cast from adjacent properties. Town staff regularly receive concerns from trail users about the lack of lighting in this area. Wolfe said improved lighting in this section of trail would improve trail users' comfort level on the trail at night and reduce the risk associated with the steep embankment adjacent to the trail.

Similar to the 2023 trail-improvement project when the Kinsmen Club of St. Marys helped with installation of the streetlight conduit, the town has again received a commitment for support installing the conduit cable from pole to pole from several community volunteers – representing an in-kind donation of labour valued at roughly \$10,000 toward this project.

Meanwhile, the pole installation and electrical work would be completed by a licensed electrician. The streetlight poles would be spun concrete, consistent with poles installed along the trail east

of Wellington Street in 2024, and the LED light fixtures would be a decorative post-top style similar to fixtures installed east of Wellington Street in 2023.

While the cost of materials, installation and electrical work will be covered by the funds from the anonymous donor and the in-kind donation from community volunteers, the town will be responsible for covering the cost of staff time to oversee the project as well as annual maintenance costs, the additional hydro costs and the replacement of the new assets at the end of their lifecycles – 20 years for the lights and 40 years for the poles and streetlight conductor.

Wolfe said the project will likely get underway in September.

"I just want to acknowledge that, again, I think all council and the town is very grateful for the donation we're receiving and in-kind work, and I don't know how that's passed on to the anonymous donor, but I hope that it is in some way," Coun. Fern Pridham said.

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St. Marys council turns down request to provide residual waste services for City of Toronto

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Town of St. Marys will not provide local landfill space to help the City of Toronto dispose of residual waste as it deals with impending landfill-capacity issues.

At the June 24 St. Marys council meeting, councillors voted to have staff submit a response to the City of Toronto's request for expression of interest indicating the Town of St. Marys is not interested in accepting, selling or partnering with the City of Toronto for their residual waste management services.

"They are basically starting the process that we started a decade ago related to our own landfill expansion where they're running out of capacity at their Green Lane facility and are looking throughout the province, basically, to see if anyone is interested in supporting them in any way related to their residual-waste strategy moving forward," St. Marys environmental services manager Dave Blake told councillors.

"Because we went through this process for the last decade or so ... we have looked at additional sites within the community for our own landfill needs, and didn't really find viable alternatives to our existing landfill, which is why we decided to go down the path for expansion at our existing facility. But what they're looking for in annual capacity is far in excess of anything that we would be able to accommodate."

According to the staff report to council, the City of Toronto is exploring long-term waste management solutions due to the impending capacity exhaustion of the Green Lane Landfill by 2035. Currently, the Green Lane Landfill in the Township of Southwold handles approximately 450,000 tonnes of residual waste annually, with projections indicating a need to manage over 500,000 tonnes within the next 25 years. The City of Toronto has issued a request for expression of interest to municipalities interested in handling their excess waste.

In 2024, the Town of St. Marys re-

ceived approval from the Ontario Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) to expand the St. Marys landfill site. The expansion of the St. Marys landfill site would allow for the suitable disposal of waste generated from within the Town of St. Marys for a 40-year planning period.

The approved capacity as part of this expansion is approximately 700,000 cubic metres and enables the town to effectively manage resources and costs related to waste management within the community.

However, this volume, in comparison to what would be required for the City of Toronto waste management needs, would not be sufficient, Blake wrote in his report.

Additionally, as part the environmental assessment completed by the town, an assessment of alternative sites within the Town of St. Marys was undertaken. Given the town's small geographic area, existing development and complex Source Water Protection Area, there were few alternative sites suit-

able for a municipal landfill, let alone a large operation that would be required to manage waste from the City of Toronto.

Before council voted to have staff respond to Toronto's request, Coun. Marg Luna asked if there is any impending or newly enacted provincial legislation that could force St. Marys to accept residual waste from Toronto.

"At this point, no, we haven't seen anything that would say that a municipality is forced to partner with another municipality for solid waste," CAO Brent Kittmer said. "Given the amount of money and time we've invested in having landfill capacity – it's something we view as a very significant resource for our community – we would strongly oppose any sort of legislation like that."

Currently, the St. Marys landfill only accepts waste generated from within the town, with the exception of household hazardous waste, which is also accepted from residents of Perth South.

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Jacobs Liquidation holds first annual Vendfest



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Avon and Atomy rep Louvie Arthur was on hand at Vendfest showcasing some popular items.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Anyone who was at Jacobs Liquidation on June 27 and 28 would have seen Vendfest, the first annual event showcasing local vendors with items from handmade crafts and gifts to an assortment of yummy treats.

Also onsite to provide some delicious food was the Sunset Diner food truck. Some of the featured vendors were Tup-

perware, Avon, Mary Kay, Schmidtys Epoxy Creation, Fashion Jewelry, Country Flower Shed, Hand Crafted Vintage Jewelry Creation and Crochet Toys, towels & Blankets and so many more.

According to owner Craig Jacobs, they had wanted to do something similar at the previous location on Wellington Street as he knows what it is like to start a new company and get your product seen, however, they just didn't have the space. Now, with the three acres at their



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The first Vendfest was a success as many local vendors attended to share their products.

new location, they were able to host 13 vendors over the two days.

The space and the canopy out front of the building was a huge hit with the vendors as Friday was a very hot day. Jacobs said they plan on this being an annual event. The vendors were happy with how much of their products sold and some have inquired if they could host a Vendfest a couple more times this year.

"I was super happy with how the event

went. Local business getting in front of potential customers and I know it brought in a bit of a different crowd to our business as well, so that's a win-win," Jacobs said.

Vendors interested in participating in similar events in the future can email jacobsvendfest@gmail.com and join the email newsletter at <https://jacobsliquidation.com>.



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Smiles, hugs and genuine happiness at Campbell Soup, Schneiders and Maple Leaf Foods plant reunion



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TARA FIRBY)

Former employees of the Campbell Soup, Schneiders and Maple Leaf Foods plant reunited on June 28 at the St. Marys Legion.

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Plenty of coworkers from a former food-production plant in St. Marys had the chance to reconnect with each other at the first reunion for employees over the weekend.

More than 100 former employees of the Campbell Soup, Schneiders and Maple Leaf Foods Plant in St. Marys gathered together for their first reunion on June 28 at the St. Marys Legion. Tara Firby, one of the event organizers, told the Independent the reunion was about six months in the making through a group chat with other employees.

The drop-in event had many people come and go throughout the day. Many guests enjoyed the reunion, and those who were absent wished they could make it.

"It was nice to see all the smiles, hugs and genuine happiness," Firby said.

"The room was filled with laughter and good vibes."

The St. Marys processing plant was built in 1969 with a second addition in 1972 by the Campbell Soup Company for processing poultry. The building changed ownership and became Horizon Poultry in 1993 and eventually became Schneiders. Maple Leaf Foods acquired the Schneiders brand in the 2000s and operated at the St. Marys plant until its closure in 2023.

By the time the plant closed, there were about 500 employees. Firby said a small group of employees stayed in contact via social media and hosted smaller get-togethers like dinners at the Mandarin in London. They continued to celebrate birthdays, graduations and other milestones virtually. The reunion gave them and their coworkers a chance to catch up after not seeing each other for a long time.

"When you work together, you make

connections and build relationships that last and, as time goes on, you may lose touch, but you like to catch up and reconnect," she said. "Many employees spent a lot of years there; some would say they grew up in the plant. Of those, many only planned to be there a short

while, then 20-30 years later were still there.

"But even those who only worked at the plant for a short time came out to reconnect, which was amazing to see how everyone ebbed and flowed together throughout the afternoon."



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More information, showings, and offer packages are available upon request.

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Canada Day Parade held in St. Marys on Tuesday



Stonetown Karate had a full turnout for their Canada Day Float. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)



Charlie Irwin takes his father's 1957 Allis-Chalmers D-14 for a tour in the parade. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)



Noah Crawford, Scott Crawford and Tom Bishop were getting the bbq tent ready for the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame fundraiser at Cadzow. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)



Tourism and Events Coordinator Morgan Easton spent many hours getting ready for the fun events taking place at Cadzow Park for Canada Day. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)



Members of the Canadian Legion Branch 236 were ready to proudly march in the Canada Day Parade. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)



Deputy Mayor Brogan Alyward or Waldo, showed what it was like to be locked in a cage for Crime Stoppers during the parade. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Beating the summer heat at the St. Marys Quarry



(JUNE GRANT PHOTOS)

The 30 degree weather brought many people out to enjoy the St. Marys Quarry on Sunday. The St. Marys Quarry was formerly a limestone quarry that closed in 1920. In the mid-1940s it was converted into a public swimming area and remains one of the most popular spots in the area to visit on hot summer days. In 2022, the Super Splash inflatable water park was added. It is the first of its kind for the London region and in the summer months, is a drawing card for the St. Marys Quarry and the community in general.



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Perth County Information Network launches new Book Club Kit website

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

After having a separate website for each library in Perth County, patrons in the area can now visit one website for book-club kits across the region.

The Perth County Information Network (PCIN), which includes the public libraries in St. Marys, Stratford, West Perth, North Perth and Perth East, now have a centralized website link for their book clubs in a bag. The book-club kits encourage library patrons to run their own discussion groups about books found in the kits. Each kit features a sign-out sheet, discussion questions and 10 copies of the book inside a canvas tote bag.

Kate Long, acquisitions library tech-



nician at the St. Marys Public Library, told the Independent there are fiction and nonfiction book-club kits available, so there's something for every kind of reader. The book-club kits also offer flexibility.

"Offering book-club sets to Perth County patrons is important because it allows community members to host

their own clubs in their homes or locations of their choice and at their convenience," Long said. "It also brings people together for meaningful conversations and connections. As well, it never hurts to read something that you may not have picked up on your own."

So far, the book-club kits are popular with library patrons.

"People across Perth County were very eager to get into the site and book their sets," she said. "Many of the kits are booked into the next year. Not to worry though, we have over 100 book-club sets to choose from."

Book-club kits can be signed out for 35 days at a time and there are no renewals. All copies of the books in the kits must be returned for the kits to be checked in. When requesting a book-club kit, it may take up to five days for processing.

Books can be found by title and availability online by visiting www.mugolibrary.com/pcin/book-club-kits. Any questions from St. Marys and area residents about the kits can be sent to Long by email at klong@stmaryspubli-library.ca.

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St. Marys DCVI valedictorian's address

TREVOR RICHARDSON

St. Marys DCVI Valedictorian

This speech was delivered by St. Marys DCVI 2024/2025 valedictorian Trevor Richardson at the school's commencement ceremony, hosted at the Pyramid Recreation Centre June 26.

Good evening families, friends, staff and fellow graduates,

Graduates, don't worry, I'm not going to go over the time limit. It has likely been said this evening, but I would again like to thank our parents, the staff, our friends and community members. You have been there to support us through a time of development and supported our path to success, whether it's providing rides, helping us think critically or being a shoulder to lean on. This has led to tonight, a celebration of our class and recognition of our four years of hard work. Four years ago, we were Grade 9s and surely we weren't anything like the Grade 9s of today, taking up the halls and making teachers dread their classes. We were welcomed into DCVI and our lives have been shaped by this small school with a big heart. Although this is a place for academics, we have learned more than how to complain about tests and question why we're learning derivatives and Shakespeare. The real lessons DCVI has taught us are the meaning of community, importance of involvement and the need for resilience as keys to reaching our achievements.

DCVI is one of the smallest schools in our board and it doesn't take long to figure out it is a different experience than larger schools. Many of us knew each other and the building coming into high school, which helped alleviate some of



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Graduating student Trevor Richardson addressed the audience at St. Marys DCVI Commencement 2025 ceremonies held on Thursday, June 26 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

the nerves we had. I know I felt welcomed from day one when Mr. Moore joked about my dad being the principal and has continued to make fun of me to this day. The other benefit of a small school is we know every face walking across this stage, which also means tonight we leave quicker. The small school community at DCVI has created deeper relationships, which made it easier to ask for help with familiar faces and be recognized for our accomplishments. It has created a sense of belonging and a safety net. We will always be a part of the DCVI community, but going forward, it is important to continue meeting new people to grow your network and form a new community with the ideals we have learned.

The importance of extracurriculars and getting involved are another key to our success at DCVI. I don't know how

I would have gotten through these four years without missing some time from class to follow my passion. For me, this was sports, but others were involved in student council, clubs, band, or participating in trades competitions. Involvement brings many opportunities including the ability to connect with people of similar interests, creating lasting friendships and increasing self esteem. Mentors are also a big part of involvement, and they can shape your thoughts and have a positive impact on your life. We were lucky to have many staff devoted to extracurriculars. By participating, we opened up many beneficial opportunities which can help develop a sense of self and a voice. DCVI has made it easy to get involved, but moving forward we need to search to find a past time which brings enjoyment. Getting involved creates enjoyable breaks from

life's stresses and builds communication and leadership when adjusting to a new environment.

Our high-school journey was not without mistakes, and it has taken patience and many long days with even longer nights to get to this point. Although we were all at the same school, we have had our individual challenges. These challenges have developed our resilience. At DCVI, our Nordic ski team is a testament to resilience. Whether it's tough training or trying to get to OFSAA through bus cancellations for too much snow, or other trips for too little snow, there was always a season full of laughter and success. The result doesn't always come the first time you try, but we keep going. For many, high school has presented personal challenges with finding an identity and a balance between academics and social life requiring resilience to persevere, and we did!

As we leave DCVI, it is important to move forward with the lessons we have learned. The future is unknown, but success will come by finding a supportive community, taking chances by getting involved and not getting discouraged by failures. Be quick to get back on your feet and try again. The world is a vast place of opportunities, so keep your options open and know that with resilience comes success.

Good luck wherever the next years take you, whether it's the trades, the workforce, university, college, or other endeavors – and though I still don't know the importance of derivatives, I see the value in William Shakespeare's words: "It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves."

Congratulations, Class of 2025



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St. Marys DCVI Commencement

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Commencement ceremonies were held on Thursday, June 26 for the Class of 2025 of St. Marys District Collegiate & Vocational Institute (DCVI).

This year's valedictorian address was given by Trevor Richardson, while the Ring and Cane Awards this year were presented to Sydney Grant and Elissa Gammon. Abigail Martin was recognized with the Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Service Award for being the student with the greatest number of volunteer-service hours. Graysen Porter won the Governor General's Medal, which goes to the graduating student with the highest academic standing in the school.

In total, 97 graduating students plus five previous graduates were recognized during the ceremony.

Making the honour roll this year were: Trevor Aarts, Danella Antenor, C.J. Arthur, Oliver Black, Ella Boersma, Grayson Boreham, Enya Brennan, Rowyn Calcott, Victoria Clark, Noah Crawford, Gabrielle Doupe, Kylie Fifield, Sofia Gomez Chaparro, Sydney Grant, Colton Hawkins, Colton Henderson, Avery Hoskins, Taylor Jackson, Guin Jester, Abigail Martin, Miley McCauley, Olivia McGavin, Griffin McGregor, Callum McIntosh, Mychaela Nirta, Declan O'Doherty, Charlee Pickering, Graysen Porter, Cienna Price, Chloe Richardson, Trevor Richardson, Kayla Rock, Nate Schiedel, Eden Sinnett, Owen Slade, Rebecca Sleeper,

Niko Taylor, Alyssa te Grotenhuis, Nathani Tran, Isla Unich, Rachel Wilhelm, Keirsyn Wood and Hailey Wubs.

Other awards and scholarships presented during Commencement were as follows:

- Academic Proficiency Award – College Stream: Avery Hoskins, Graysen Porter
- Academic Proficiency Award – University Stream: Sydney Grant, Abigail Martin
- Academic Proficiency Award – Workplace Stream: Mychaela Nirta, Cienna Price
- AMDSB Skilled Trades Bursary: Raella Brodhagen, Brier Frayne
- Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home Scholarship: Ella Carter
- Bank of Montreal Bursary: Trevor Richardson
- Brent McRoberts Memorial Scholarship: Logan McIsaac
- Cade Family Scholarship: Callum McIntosh, Rachel Wilhelm
- Charles and Vera Courtnage Memorial Scholarship: Enya Brennan
- Community Living St. Marys Scholarship: Kylie Fifield
- Community Spirit Award – St. Marys Insurance Group: Hannah Buckland, Kayla Rock
- Compass Group Scholarship: Sydney Grant
- Cooper-Standard Automotive Award: Trevor Aarts, Raella Brodhagen
- Dan Rankin Memorial Scholarship: Danella Antenor
- David Bonis Memorial Award: Jayden Fenton

- Deep Waters Music Scholarship: Sofia Gomez Chaparro
- Delmar Foods Award for Family Studies: Avery Hoskins
- Douglas Waghorn Memorial Award: Olivia McGavin
- East Nissouri Union Church Sheila Greason Scholarship: Adam Turner
- Festival Hydro Award: Nate Schiedel
- Finnie Distributing Technical Proficiency Award: Declan O'Doherty
- Governor General's Medal: Graysen Porter
- Happy Valley Family Health Team Scholarship: Kylie Fifield, Rebecca Sleeper
- Hillcrest Rebekah Lodge Award: C.J. Arthur
- Hubbard Pharmacy Scholarship: Eden Sinnett
- Inner Wheel Club Bursary: Isla Unich
- Janice Mitchell Culinary Bursary: Taylor Jackson
- Kathy McPhail Memorial Cooperative Education Award: Connor Evans
- Kinetite Award of Merit: Hannah Buckland
- Kinsmen Club of St. Marys Scholarship: Abigail Martin
- Kintore Optimist Scholarship: Olive Aarts
- Larry Bannerman Foundation Scholarship: Sofia Gomez Chaparro, Brooklynn Jessome, Declan Matheson
- Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Service Award: Abigail Martin
- Marion Warder Bain Language Scholarship: Keirsyn Wood
- McConnell Club of St. Marys Award: Oliver Black
- Media, Arts, Communication, Knowledge, Outgoing Award: Victoria Clark
- OnePoint Association of REALTORS Foundations for the Future Award: Oliver McHugh
- OSSTF District 8 Perth County Award: Ella Boersma, Hayden Swarthout
- Principal's Award for Student Leadership: Ella Boersma
- Richard Hawkins & Family Memorial Scholarship sponsored by INOAC In-

- terior Systems: Hayden Brintnell, Kiara McGregor
- Robert Weston Jr. Award: Joseph Hawkins
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236 Bursary: Abigail Martin, Rebecca Sleeper
- Salukis Merit Award: Rory Brockman, Hailey Wubs
- St. James #73 Masonic Lodge Bursary: Sabahat Abulahetti
- St. Marys Cement Construction Technology Award: Graysen Porter
- St. Marys Community Players Arts Award: Finley Houston
- St. Marys DCVI Retiring Student Council Award: Sydney Grant
- St. Marys Firefighters Award: Abigail Martin
- St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary Scholarship: Sophia Everett
- St. Marys Independent English Award: Kylie Fifield
- St. Marys Kinettes Wendy Richardson Memorial Award for Service: Chloe Thynne
- St. Marys Lions Larry McClelland Memorial Scholarship: Charlee Pickering
- St. Marys Optometry Awesome Award: Carlee McCutcheon, Alyssa te Grotenhuis
- St. Marys Presbyterian Church Legacy Award: Nicholas Campbell
- St. Marys Rotary Club Math/Science Award: Griffin McGregor
- St. Marys Rotary Club Service Above Self Award: Niko Taylor
- Stratford Festival Drama Award: Danella Antenor
- Teahen Construction Ltd. Plumbing & Design Group Skilled Trades Award: Diego Franco-Farmer
- Town of St. Marys Scholarship: Cae-lyne Truax
- Tradition Mutual Insurance Company Cormick Wheeler Award: Gabrielle Doupe
- Trouw Nutrition / Shur Gain Canada Inc Manufacturing Technology Award: Carson Van Fleet
- Wellburn Agromart Agriculture Bursary: Harvest Elliott

DCVI Ring and Cane Awards



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Sydney Grant (left) and Elissa Gammon (right) were the 2025 winners of the "Ring and Cane Awards", sponsored by Human Synergistics. These awards are presented to "two graduating students that other students look up to. These students set an example in the way they encourage others to get involved and be part of the school. They understand that learning is a two-way street and that school life is multi-dimensional requiring student involvement. They understand that their effort counts." Sydney and Elissa are pictured with DCVI principal Petra Goetz and Human Synergistics president Allan Stewart.



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St. Marys Lions Club proud to put up Canadian flags downtown



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

St. Marys Lions Club member Ernie Monk works to install one of many Canadian flags above shops and businesses in the town's downtown.

ST. MARYS LIONS CLUB

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Lions Club is proud to follow the long-held tradition of putting up the Canadian flags for summer holi-

days and events.

The merchants whose shops and businesses the flags fly over have graciously donated their space to have their Canadian pride shown for all to see.

We would like to send our sincere



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

St. Marys Lions Club flag committee chair Luke De Brabandere and member Ernie Monk hang a Canadian flag in downtown St. Marys.

thanks to all the merchants for their continued support of our service. Another thanks to the members of the St. Marys Lions club for their dedication in keeping the flags in good condition throughout the seasons.

If you would like to donate to our flag project, please contact Lion's president Gwendolen Boyle at 519-284-2112 or drop a donation off at GC Boyle Law Firm in St. Marys.

Inner Wheel Club of St. Marys to participate in Stonetown Heritage Festival

INNER WHEEL CLUB OF ST. MARYS

Contributed Article

The Inner Wheel (IW) Club is the largest women's group in the world. With 101 years of history, it has 2,400 clubs in 120 countries.

We are volunteers doing our part to create a better world by celebrating friendship and promoting international understanding, and we are pleased to welcome new members. Our local IW is in its 51st year and has helped the Stonetown Heritage Festival financially and through volunteering since its beginning almost 30 years ago.

This year, we decided to have a table to help continue the celebration of the wonderful architecture in St. Marys. We

will host a booth to promote the Plaque Program for the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO), Stratford/Perth Branch. The ACO is a volunteer organization that aims to educate and advocate on behalf of heritage and heritage concerns. Its president, Dan Schneider, has provided an example of the heritage plaque and application forms for anyone interested in having their heritage home involved. The organization has volunteers who spend 40-50 hours researching the history of the homes that are given a plaque.

Our twice past president and secretary, June Cunningham, was the creator and founder of the St. Marys Stonetown Heritage Festival. Her suggestion was that a festival to celebrate the remarkable

stone architecture in St. Marys would be a great way to help the downtown.

It has been a decades-old success with the help of hundreds of volunteers, the Downtown Merchants Association, the St. Marys Downtown Business Association (BIA) and our generous businesses. The town has done a wonderful job with wonderful heritage tours thanks to Mary Smith and Larry Pfaff.

Our architecture has been celebrated in many ways, including with heritage plays, DCVI poster competitions, Stone Masons on the street to explain this incredible trade, costumed student heritage ambassadors, heritage house tours, three stone churches open houses and art shows, Victorian teas and garden tours, edible architecture contests, chil-

dren's heritage fairs, horse and carriage rides and so much more.

We had t-shirts printed and pewter ornaments created of the major stone buildings in town thanks to the generosity of Colin McQuirk, who let us use his wonderful drawings of town hall and the other stone buildings for free.

In addition to the ACO material, the Inner Wheel Club will also have some of June's memorabilia of the Stonetown Heritage Festival and will be giving suckers to young children. Please drop by and share your memories of the Stonetown Heritage Festival and find out about the ACO Plaque Program.

East Nissouri Union Church raises money for St. Marys Healthcare Foundation



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION)

On May 31, East Nissouri Union Church hosted a fun musical night at the St. Marys Legion featuring the amazing band, Harmony of Friends. They were able to raise \$1,000 for the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation to go towards the new x-ray machine at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital. Pictured from left to right are Harold Douglas, Stew Slater, Connie Douglas and Pam Zabel.

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St. Marys Independent SPORTS

Bob Davis retires from coaching hockey after three decades, part one

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Bob Davis, a staple behind many St. Marys Minor Hockey benches for more than 30 years, announced at the end of the 2024-2025 season that it would be his final campaign as a head coach.

Davis told the Independent he has gotten “satisfaction and fun” out of coaching.

“I have a passion for hockey and I really love the sport,” said Davis. “So, even when I was finished playing, I still wanted to go watch kids play. I love watching the puck movement and watching people skate. For me, if I can go out and teach some kids how to do something and then see them learn it and not give up, it’s incredibly satisfying.”

Davis began coaching in 1994 when his son, Michael, began his first year skating at the Mite level. After an injury stopped Davis’ playing career in 1996, he devoted more time to coaching his two sons Michael and Andrew’s teams, which Davis, a doctor by trade, said not only gave him an outlet to continue indulging his passion for hockey, but also allowed him to bond with his kids amidst his busy work schedule.

“It took a long time to replace the feeling of playing because I loved to play, but I really enjoyed coaching. I liked the strategy part of it. Plus, I have to admit, by coaching (Michael and Andrew’s) teams, I got to spend more time with them. My job was time-consuming to say the least, so when I wasn’t at work, I was at the rink and that was one way I could interact with Michael and Andrew.”

While Davis has always strived for on-ice success and led many of his teams to triumphant results, he has always asked for a solid work ethic and commitment above all else, with the promise all of his players would be taught the same.

“The most important thing for a coach is knowing how to deal with each individual player. We always tell our players at the beginning of the year, ‘We teach everybody equally, but we don’t play everybody equally.’ Fair playing time isn’t necessarily equal playing time, but we always teach everybody equally, and everybody has a role. Everyone gets a regular turn five-on-five, and then we cut down who plays in the last three minutes, or in a tournament or significant game.

“You have your kids who play on the powerplay and penalty kill, and then you have the kids on the bench who are supporting them, or who come on to give those other kids a rest,” Davis continued. “That is a big role. We also say throughout the year that nothing is set in stone, and if they keep working hard



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Pictured is Bob Davis talking to his team during a game this past season. Davis announced his retirement from coaching after over three decades behind the bench for the St. Marys Minor Hockey Association.

and you’re a positive on the bench, we will keep looking at you because it’s all about what is best for the team.”

As one of the longest-tenured and most well-respected coaches of the last three decades in St. Marys, Davis’ philosophy of coaching is likely one many present-day coaches have sought guidance and taken inspiration from. Among the variety of difficult aspects associated with the role of a head coach is disciplining players when rules are broken, which Davis explained as coming down to a fundamental core tenet, honesty.

“We never sit anybody out without telling them why they’re not going out,” said Davis. “Sometimes, we have to discipline kids for various reasons, but the kids know why they’re being disciplined. We try to teach respect for the team, the officials, and the opponent. I don’t use things like skating as punishment, and I try not to sit them for long periods. The big thing is you have to be honest with your players at all times.”

Another trademark of Davis’ coaching career has been his ability to remain calm, cool and collected, no matter what adversity comes his teams’ way. Davis, known for wielding a quiet intensity behind the bench, has seldom, if ever, been known to get angry at officials. Davis explained how his constant thought process about what is taking place on the ice, combined with the knowledge that he is in a position to model correct behaviour for his players, has allowed him to never get negatively animated.

“You have to think one step ahead of whatever riles you up. You can’t think if you’re riled up. I’ve never had a referee give me a bench minor penalty. I’ve probably yelled at a referee occasionally, but I’ve never abused a referee ever. I try to always talk to them respectfully because you’re not going to change their

mind. You don’t gain anything by yelling at them.

“The times I have lost my cool have mostly been because a player has abused another player on the bench or is about to cause a problem for the rest of the team.

But you don’t want to fold your arms or put your hands in your pockets and look bored. Your players are watching you and if they see you losing it, they’re going to lose it. If they see you in control, they are more likely to stay in control.”

As Davis reflected on his coaching career, he explained how the simple moments of arriving at the arena and having his senses engage with his surroundings are what he will miss most in retirement.

“Truthfully, walking down the hallway and all the smells and sounds that go with that, it just stirs up so many emotions from all the years from coaching, playing and being part of that whole environment. That’s what I’ll miss. I’ll miss the kids. I’ll miss the teaching part, but most of all, I’ll miss that feeling when you walk down that corridor and you smell all the smells of hockey. It’s like going home again. It’s just a nice feeling.”

Part two will come out in next week’s Independent. It will explore the influences of Ferris Stewart, Ernie Little and Kenny Schiedel on Davis, coaching alongside his sons Andrew and Michael, and tales from his coaching career.

Collins’ win Open Pairs tournament under the lights



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Dawn Collins, Len Boreham, and Chris Collins. Dawn and Chris captured first place at the Parks Lawn Bowling Club’s Open Pairs Tournament at the St. Marys greens on June 26. The tournament was the first night-time tournament hosted by the local lawn bowling club in over a decade and was sponsored by Boreham. Peter and Leslie Hurn earned the second-place finish. Kaitlyn Fares and Doug Johnston came in third. Wayne and Gail Christie came away with fourth place. Rounding out the top five was the duo of Murray Bennewies and Marilyn Lancaster.

Finn Reid sets five personal bests at regional swim meet

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

St. Marys resident Finn Reid capped off his first year of competitive swimming with a strong showing at the Western Long Course Regional Championships in Windsor, Ont., June 13-15.

Reid, who trains with the Middlesex Swimming program under coach Mackenzie Salmon, credited his training and the calibre of the competition for driving him to set five personal-best times at the regional championships.

"The experience that I had was amazing," said Reid. "My coach did a great job preparing me for this moment and I tried to deliver, and I did. That was the best part for me, being able to represent my swim team at a higher level than I was before, so that was a really big moment in my swimming career. Being able to compete against so many great swimmers and seeing their talent made me push to make big improvements and be my best."

The 10-year-old also described his eager-yet-nervous feelings heading into the competition, which motivated him to increase his training frequency.

"Making it to that level of swimming in my first year was a big accomplishment. Coming into this competition, I felt excited to see the environment there and hear how loud it was. I was also a bit worried because this was the biggest meet that I had ever gone to, and I want-



(PHOTO BY RENEE KARDASH PHOTOGRAPHY)

Finn Reid swims during the Western Long Course Regional Championships in Windsor, Ont., June 13-15. The event was the exclamation mark on Reid's first swimming competition, with the 10-year-old St. Marys resident setting five personal-best times and coming within less than half a second of setting a sixth.

ed to deliver, so I was in my pool a lot more than I usually am practicing."

That accomplishment, according to Reid, was the product of a year of constant improvement born of a strong desire to grow with his teammates.

"Over the course of the year, I've pushed myself to be able to compete with the older kids on my team and be able to catch up to them and keep up with them. I also think that I have improved on my

sportsmanship over the course of the year, not just focusing on the things that I do best, but also on what other people are doing and their achievements. I think that really matters in sports.

"I also think I was able to succeed this year because of the time that I spent in my grandparents' pool in the summer, and I am always in the pool practicing my strokes," Reid continued. "That really made it easier to fit in within the

sport of swimming, being able to do the strokes properly and not having to get critiqued."

At the Windsor event, Reid's five personal best times came in the 100-metre freestyle (1:37:69), 100-metre backstroke (1:46:06), 200-metre freestyle (3:38:54), 200-metre individual medley (3:55:09) and 50-metre breaststroke (50.54). Additionally, Reid came within less than half a second of a personal best time in the 100-metre breaststroke event, a personal best that he smashed by nine seconds at his last meet. The breaststroke is Reid's favourite and best stroke.

"I just wanted to do my best that I could do," Reid said. "I never thought that I was going to get five personal bests. It surprised me for sure, but I was very happy to compete with that momentum in the regional finals, so I was really excited to find out after my races that I had set a personal best time. At the end of the meet, to have gotten five personal-best times was really mind-blowing."

While the meet was arguably the most successful point in Reid's young swimming career, he only has aspirations for more.

"Over the course of my swimming career, I hope to do many things," said Reid. "The main one is to keep improving and not let anyone tell me what I can or can't do. I want to keep performing at the level that I am right now and hopefully get even better."

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Lincs continue building roster with three acquisitions

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincolns have added a pair of gritty and skilled forwards to their offensive punch as well as a goaltender to round out their tandem as the build towards the 2025-2026 season continues.

Joining 16-year-old St. Marys native Vaughn Barr in between the pipes is 19-year-old Brogan Colquhoun. The 19-year-old from London, Ont., split the 2024-2025 season between the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League's (NOJHL) Elliot Lake Vikings, with whom he posted a 0.907 save percentage in 10 games, followed by a sparkling 0.950 save percentage, 1.23 goals against average and an 8-1-1 record in 10 games with the Essex 73's of the (Provincial Junior Hockey League) PJHL.

In the post-season, Colquhoun backstopped the 73's to the Schmaltz Cup Final, posting a 0.916 save percentage, a 2.04 goals against average and a 17-5-3 record. Lincs' general manager Pat Powers cited Colquhoun's experience and drive as reasons for the signing.

"Brogan (Colquhoun) is a veteran goalie who plays a positionally sound game," said Powers. "We think he can serve as a good tandem partner for Vaughn (Barr).

He is a motivated goalie who is hoping this opportunity can springboard him to opportunities in the future, so we know we will get the best of him. Having a calming veteran presence between the pipes frees the players up in front of him to play their game."

Up front, the Lincolns acquired Jack Clarke from the Elmira Sugar Kings in a deal that sent overage forward Kyle Morey to Elmira. The 18-year-old native of Milton Keynes, U.K., appeared in 36 games last year, all but one of which came with the Sugar Kings and Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL). Clarke also represented Great Britain in international competition as a member of the national team at the Division 2 under-18 and under-20 World Championships.

"Jack (Clarke) is another hard-nosed player who will make our team hard to play against," Powers told the Independent. "Jack is a tenacious player with a year of OHL and GOJHL (Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League) experience. He is known as a quality person and a true hockey player. He adds to the size, physicality and depth that should make us a strong team once again."

At the end of the 2024-2025 season, the Lincolns sat with a surplus of players entering their 20-year-old seasons, with nine 2005-born players on the Lincolns'

roster compared to the limit of five overagers per team. Morey joins Noah VandenBrink and Ian Gedney as players who have been moved so far. The Lincolns will need to move one of their remaining six overagers, a list that includes forwards Quinn Gavin-White, Chase MacQueen-Spence, Lincoln Moore and Owen Voortman, as well as defenders Owen Kalp and Jacob Montesi.

Rounding out the recent additions is Peterborough product Declan Ready, a 2024 10th round pick of the OHL's Flint Firebirds. Ready, who turns 17 years old on Aug. 19, spent last season with the Cobourg Cougars of the Ontario Junior Hockey League (OJHL) where he posted three goals and 11 points. According to Powers, Ready brings a youthful hunger that will make him a play-driver in the Lincolns' forward group.

"Declan (Ready) is a young player with junior experience, which is a nice luxury to acquire. Declan is a hard-nosed player who thrives below the hashmarks in the offensive zone. He creates opportunities for his linemates while keeping plays alive. He is the definition of a 200-foot player who will not cheat the game. He is a player aspiring to make the OHL as a Flint draft pick, so his motivation is high to perform well."

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MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Scarlett Maddock rockets the ball to first base during the Royal Canadian Legion U9 HP Red St. Marys Rockies game last Wednesday.



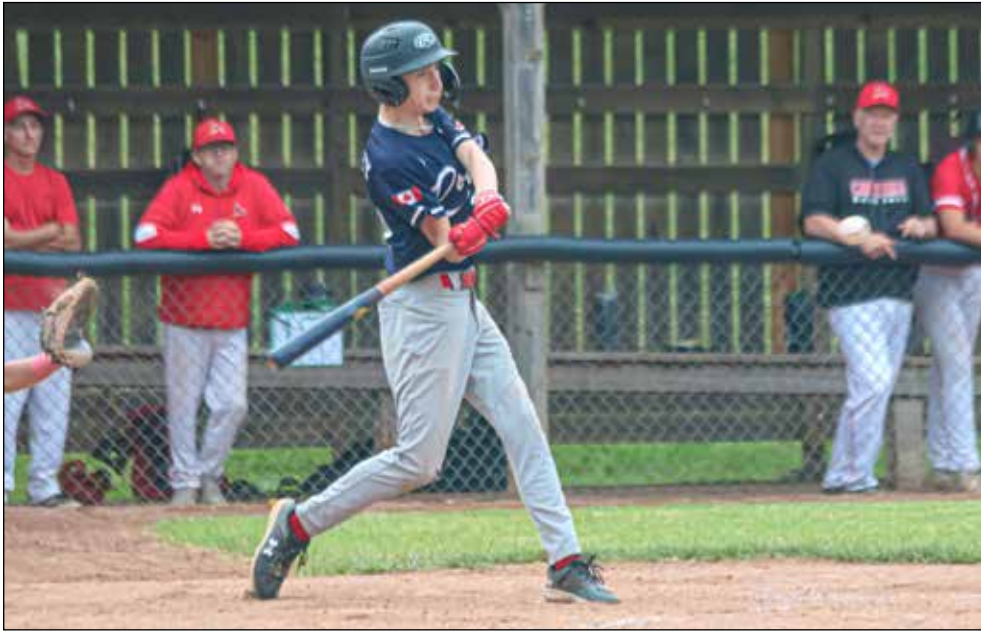
(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Liam Sheldon dashes to first base after getting a hit during last Thursday's Dunny's Source For Sports St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Harper Schmidt cracks the ball off the bat during the McLean-Taylor Construction U11 HP St. Marys Rockies game last Wednesday.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
James Holliday sends the ball flying with a hit during last Thursday's Forman Electric U13 OBA St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Grayson LeBlanc Mossey gets a hit during the Red Rock Construction U16 OBA St. Marys Rockies game last Thursday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Maverick Akins kicks the ball up the field from centre during last Tuesday's U12 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm Grey game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: Amazing places of Ukraine, Part 2

TETIANA DIDKOVSKA

Independent Columnist

Ukraine's landscape is an ever-shifting tapestry of mountains, glass-clear lakes, hidden caves and sun-washed coastlines – and our journey continues with four natural treasures that prove just how varied the country can be.

Perched 989 metres above sea level, Lake Synevyr rests like a sapphire in a spruce-clad hollow of the Carpathians. Though it covers only five hectares, the water plunges to 25 metres and mirrors the seasons with painterly brilliance: pastel greens in May, emerald in July, copper and crimson in October, and a silent crust of ice in mid-winter.

Even in high summer, the surface rarely tops 13 degrees Celsius, so travellers trade swimming for row-boats, wooden boardwalks and quick hikes to rocky outcrops where cowbells echo through the forest. Local legend claims the lake was formed from the tears of a count's daughter who wept for her lost love, and a pair of towering wooden statues immortalise the tale on the shore. Whether you come for folklore, fresh air, or wild-berry varenyky in a nearby hut, Synevyr always lifts the heart.

Beneath wheat fields near the village of Korolivka coils Optimistic Cave, the longest known gypsum cave on Earth. Since its discovery in 1966, speleologists have mapped more than 260 kilometres of passages, yet laser scans suggest hundreds more still hide behind clay plugs and narrow fissures. Visitor routes suit every ambition: an easy two-hour stroll for novices, a half-day crawl through knee-deep sand and an overnight expedition where helmet-clad explorers sleep in an underground bivouac called Crystal Hall. Torchlight turns the walls into a celestial gallery of ivory, amber and smoky crystals that sparkle like constellations; silence is broken only by dripping water and the whisper that the next bend may reveal a cham-

ber no one has ever seen before.

Greek myth says the sea goddess Thetis poured sand beneath the fleeing priestess Iphigenia to save her from Achilles, and thus Dzharylhach was born. Today, the 23-kilometre ribbon of dunes and lagoons guards Karkinit Bay and ranks as Ukraine's largest island. With no permanent settlement, it remains a sanctuary for red deer, mouflon, wild boar and shy jackals, while swans, egrets and pelicans feed in the shallows. A lattice-iron lighthouse, designed in 1902 by a student of Gustave Eiffel, still stands sentinel at the eastern tip and a freshwater spring bubbles up just metres from the salty surf – a welcome surprise for campers and, legend says, the exact spot where Achilles finally caught his quarry.

Close to the Polish border, Shatsk National Nature Park protects 24 glacial lakes that, together, cover more than 60 square kilometres. Each has its own personality, yet all share remarkable clarity. Svityaz, at 58 metres, is the deepest freshwater lake in the country and is so transparent that on windless mornings, you can count shells 10 metres below. Its slightly silvery water, enriched with glycerine and trace silver ions, was bottled for field hospitals during both world wars. Lake Lucimer, ringed by whispering pines, yielded Roman coins during excavations in the 1930s, proof that trade routes crossed these forests two millennia ago. A tiny seven-hectare island in Svityaz remains untouched and serves as a nesting refuge for black terns and grey herons, while the entire lake system is a rest stop for European eels and Dalmatian pelicans on their long migrations.

Whether you crave alpine tranquillity, subterranean mystery, a myth-laden coastline, or mirror-bright wetlands, Ukraine offers experiences that linger long after the journey ends. Lace up sturdy boots, sample rustic mushroom soup or freshly smoked carp, and clear space on your camera – the hardest part will be deciding which magical place to return to first.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

1: Lake Synevyr. 2: Optimistic Cave. 3: Dzharylhach. 4: Shatsk National Nature Park.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH

St. Marys Public Library

Creepers and Zombies are just some of the formidable foes present in the Overworld, a cubic paradise where customization and creativity rule the day. However, it's the Piglins of the Nether who pose the greatest threat as they seek to harness the Orb of Dominance and control all. Fortunately, a rag-tag team of unlikely heroes are willing to face the challenge of defending the citizens of the Overworld. Will they succeed? Come to our next Movie in the Park to find out! Join us at Cadzow Park on Friday, July 11 at dusk to watch "The Minecraft Movie". Bring your own chair or blanket (and maybe a can of bug spray, just in case). Thanks to the Friends of the Library, everything is free, including the yummy popcorn! "The Minecraft Movie" is rated PG.

This Week's Recommendation

Looking for more Minecraft? Head over to BiblioCommons (stmarys.bibliocommons.com) to browse the Minecraft-re-

lated materials available across the Perth County Library system. We've got everything from graphic novels and building guides to the game itself for the Nintendo Switch! Log in using your barcode and PIN (the last four digits of your phone number) to place holds today!

Up This Week

Fri., July 4: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sat., July 5: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mon., July 7: Crafty Kids (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Euchre Mondays (10:30 a.m.), SMPL: Adventure Zone (1:30-3 p.m.)

Tues., July 8: Reading Help* (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Discovery Den (1:30-3 p.m.), Write of Way (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

Wed., July 9: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Summer Book Club* (10-11 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Reading Help* (1:30-3 p.m.)

Thurs., July 10: Reading in the Park~ (10-11 a.m.)

*Registration Required

~Kin Park (109 James Street North)

When social media blocks your access to the news, turn to your local newspaper.

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: David A. Robertson

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

David Archibald Robertson (1818-1892) was a significant figure in the history of our town. He came to St. Marys in 1852 when the settlement was still a village and was soon a leading businessman. He was one of the village's first innkeepers and his National Hotel was a prosperous concern. Robertson invested in land within the town, owning a large block of property in the downtown core, as well as lots in the west ward between Robinson and Ontario Streets, and in the north ward along Widder Street East. He served as reeve of St. Marys in 1858 and 1859 when it was still a village. After it had earned the status of an incorporated town, he was a town councillor for several terms and mayor in 1878 and 1879. In 1869, he left the hotel business to concentrate on farming and built a beautiful fieldstone house for himself and his family that still stands at 465 Widder Street East.

These details about D. A. Robertson are easy to discover by consulting the standard reference books on the history of this area and the index to local newspapers at the St. Marys Museum. But these facts don't really provide a sense of what he was like as a person. Unlike his contemporary, Thomas Boy Guest, another early St. Marys entrepreneur and the first mayor of St. Marys, D. A. Robertson didn't write long letters to the newspapers, hurling startling insults at his political opponents. Guest was regularly involved in well-publicized lawsuits while Robertson kept a much lower profile. Still, by examining information found in census returns, assessment rolls, cemetery records and various genealogical websites, it is possible to construct an outline of his life.

David Archibald Robertson was born in 1818 in the village of Hawick, Roxborough, in the Scottish Borders. He came to Canada as a young man although it is unknown whether he emigrated by himself or as part of a family group. (His older, unmarried sister, Elizabeth, was living in the D. A. Robertson household in the 1871 census.) On January 12, 1849, David Robertson, 30 years of age, married 19-year-old Helen (sometimes Ellen) Jackson of Galt, the only daughter of Andrew and Margaret Jackson. Both bride and groom were Presbyterian. In 1850, they had their first child and named her Margaret after her maternal grandmother. According to the 1851 census, D. A. Robertson was living in Galt with his little family and working as a carpenter. A second child, William, was born in 1852. By this time, the Robertsons were living in St. Marys.

Helen's parents, Andrew and Margaret Jackson, and her two brothers, Robert and Andrew, also moved to St. Marys and, according to assessment records, lived in the north ward. They may have arrived first, followed by the Robertsons, and, to begin with, they may have all lived together. Helen Robertson had ten children over a period of 25 years and must have appreciated having her mother nearby. Perhaps D. A. Robertson brought his family to St. Marys because, having done well as a carpenter, he was looking for new business opportunities in this growing community. He ended up as the proprietor of the National Hotel at the southeast corner of Queen and Water Streets.

This was a prime location for the hotel business. A log hotel had been built there as early as 1843, providing accommodation close to the first grist mill across Water Street and to the first general store/post office on the north side of Queen. In 1847, Lauriston Cruttenden, an early St. Marys entrepreneur, purchased the log building and replaced it with a more substantial, two-storey, limestone hotel that he named the National. In 1852, this five-year-old building was gutted by fire. Cruttenden sold the ruins to D. A. Robertson who set out to build the three-storey hotel shown in this week's picture. With good stables and meal service,



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

The National Hotel, built in 1852 by David A. Robertson, stood on the southeast corner of Queen and Water Streets. It was destroyed by fire in 1896. A woodcut from Morey's Directory, 1896.

the hotel was popular, not only with travellers but also with full-time boarders. The 1861 census shows that, as well as the members of the Robertson family, two merchants, a medical doctor and a wheat buyer were residing in the hotel. There were also four young female servants, a barkeeper and a stable boy. It was a busy establishment.

Still, D. A. Robertson found time to become involved in municipal politics. The National Hotel was an informal meeting place for many groups, some with political objectives. Perhaps Robertson was drawn into their discussions. By 1857, he was elected to the village council. In 1858 and 1859, he was the village reeve. These were controversial years for the St. Marys councillors. The Grand Trunk Railway was just completing the construction of the two important lines that met at a junction at the northeast boundary of the town. Some very vocal citizens urged council to lobby the GTR for a passenger station close to the centre of town. When the Junction Station was built on Glass Street, Robertson and others who owned undeveloped land nearby were accused of supporting that site so that the value of their property would increase. It was not a popular or convenient location. In a letter to the St. Marys Argus, one angry resident declared: "The station will stand as monument to the stupidity of some and the cupidity of our Council for ages."

D. A. Robertson withdrew from politics for a few years, perhaps because of these allegations, but more likely because, through the 1860s, the National Hotel was increasingly busy and needed his attention. His homelife was also busy: his household, according to the 1871 census, included himself and Helen, nine children ranging in age from two to 20 years of age, and his 56-year-old spinster sister, Elizabeth Robertson, who lived with them. In 1869, Robertson sold the National Hotel and turned his attention to farming on his property on Widder Street East. The fieldstone farmhouse was built in the early 1870s with Robertson, an experienced carpenter, possibly doing some of the fin-

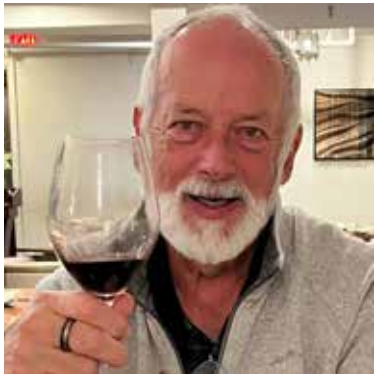
ishing work with the help of his older sons. The assessment roll for 1875 shows the family living on 70 acres of land in the north ward of St. Marys. They owned ten head of cattle, 20 sheep, and two horses.

David Robertson re-entered municipal politics. He was elected as a councillor representing the north ward for four consecutive years, beginning in 1873. In 1878, he was elected mayor, defeating the incumbent, Dr. Adam Enoch Ford. Although Ford was respected as a doctor and popular with his sporting friends, members of the town's strong temperance movement did not approve of his convivial social life. Robertson defeated Ford by a substantial margin and was acclaimed for a second term in 1879. That year, Robertson was a patron of the Belden Historical Atlas of Perth County and was listed as "Mayor, Ex-Reeve and Farmer." Through the late 1870s and the early 1880s, Robertson contributed his talents as a member of the building committee for the First Presbyterian Church on Widder Street, built of limestone with a magnificent steeple.

In 1875, Helen Robertson, now 46 years old, had her tenth child, a daughter named Ethel May. David Robertson was 57, and their oldest daughter, Margaret was 25. In 1877, when Margaret married Milner Hart, a land surveyor, her little sister was only two years old. Robertson continued farming through the 1880s along with Archibald, the son who remained at home. D. A. Robertson died in 1892, age 74. Archibald, continued to farm for his mother until 1910 when they sold the property to Thomas and Martha Rundle. Helen Robertson moved to Stratford with Archibald and two unmarried daughters, Agnes and Helen. She died there in 1913, age 84.

In 1999, the St. Marys Museum received another potential source of information about the Robertson family. It was a copy of a short novel, written ca 1920, by Helen Robertson, David and Helen's fourth daughter and eighth child. Although fiction, it is obviously based on her own family life. The contents of this little book will be explored in next week's column.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Canada: the best destination anywhere



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

O, Canada! What a wonderful country!

In this week in which we give particular attention to Canada, I again realize how grateful I am to have been born and raised in this, perhaps the best country in the world.

I know Canada is not perfect. We have a horrendous record in our treatment of Indigenous Peoples, and in spite of some important steps being made in this area, there is still much to be done.

But while we have significant flaws, this is still an amazing country. And I have been very fortunate, having been able to visit eight of our 10 provinces within the past year. Every stop, from Cape Breton Island to Elk Ridge, Sask., left me feeling grateful and a bit awestruck.

So here, during Canada Day week, I invite you to make a flying trip across much of our country.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Like almost anyone who visits our newest province, I fell in love with The Rock. I was gob-

smacked by the stunning shorelines and quickly smitten with the warmth of the Newfoundland people. And, of course, there is the music, always the music. St. John's is one of the most visitable cities I have ever been in – the shops, restaurants and pubs exude hospitality, not to mention the nearby villages like Quidi Vidi. I am going back, and soon.

Nova Scotia

Don't try to do the whole province – you'll either miss a lot, or rush madly through everything. There are several regions, each worth your holiday time, and I love them all. Last summer, we spent several days on Cape Breton, enjoying every second. We also dropped into Halifax for a couple of days and freely admit that was not nearly enough time.

My previous trip to Nova Scotia was spent at the southwest tip, in Yarmouth and the Acadian district, and that is a perfect destination for a visit lasting a week or two – there is so much heritage to discover, lobster and scallops to eat, golf to play, boats to sail. Maybe, like my friend Richard, you will visit and never come back!

New Brunswick

New Brunswick has become one of my favourite destinations. It's a province of unique, quirky, fascinating attractions, ranging from the Railway Interpretation Centre in Edmonton – the labour of love of railway devotee Guy LaForge – to the Maxim Albert House-Museum, celebrating bootlegging in Saint-Hilaire where you'll meet Reg Nadeau, the local expert, to Potato World,

in Florenceville-Bristol. And that's just a small sample; New Brunswick is knee-deep in off-the-beaten-path attractions all worth a visit.

Prince Edward Island

Yes, there are all things "Anne," but there is so much more. Great beaches, great golf, great food and great theatre. Also, charming coastal villages and, like everywhere in the Maritimes, marvellous live music – feasts for the ears. As for feasts for the appetite, P.E.I. is home to the astonishing Fireworks Feast at Chef Michael Smith's Inn at Bay Fortune. Expensive but exquisite!

Québec

You could travel Québec constantly and never take it all in. La Belle Province has so many richly rewarding districts. Three that we have enjoyed last year or two were the Eastern Townships, with quaint villages, dark-sky experiences and terrific food and local wines; the southern Laurentians, where exploring the foodie trail – le Chemin du Terroir – provided one of the most delicious days of my life; and the Saguenay, a strikingly beautiful region along the unique fjord.

Ontario

Sure, we all know Ontario – or do we? When was it you last spent time in Kingston and Gananoque, or Ottawa, or Sault Ste. Marie. A recent highlight for me was a visit focused on the waterfronts of Kingston and Gan, where I learned about fresh-water diving, great lakes luxury liners and the challenge faced by Thousand Islands tourism promoters who have always collaborated with their



(PHOTOS BY PAUL KNOWLES)

Lobster fishers off the coast of Newfoundland.

American colleagues – not so easy in today's political environment.

Manitoba

Winnipeg is an overlooked destination that deserves far better. This city is home to the absolutely essential Canadian Museum of Human Rights; the amazing Winnipeg Art Gallery collection of traditional and modern Inuit art; and most recently, The Leaf, a new attraction featuring gigantic tropical and Mediterranean biomes. The Leaf is located in the wonderful Assiniboine Park, and close to "The Forks" – the shopping, dining and entertainment area located at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers.

Saskatchewan

My June visit to Saskatchewan was the first time I had stayed in the province. It was

quickly apparent that ignoring this province was a big mistake. Saskatoon is a vibrant, interesting city, and I got the change to explore the countryside north of Saskatoon, on a golf trip that took me all the way to Prince Albert National Park. The landscape ranged from prairie to wetlands to something darned close to mountainous, and all beautiful.

So, yes, I am grateful for the opportunity to explore our wonderful country. In every good way I can imagine, there is no place like home.

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



Gananoque and some of Ontario's Thousand Islands.



The welcome committee at the Champêtre County Howling Coyote Saloon in Saskatchewan.

FROM THE GARDEN: Day trips for gardeners



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist

It's summer. The long-awaited season of planned vacations, trips to the cottage or camping adventures are here. If your summer plans are based on 'stay vacation', then picnics in a park, fun at the beach, or day trips are a good solution. For the gardener, southern Ontario is a horticultural treasure trove of natural beauty and stunning gardens to visit.

A trip to at least one of the botanical gardens in Southern Ontario should be included in your 'day trip' list. The Royal Botanical Gardens, Toronto Botanical Gardens and Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens have not been given the label 'botanical' because of their pretty plants. There are specific characteristics that set them apart from other public and private

gardens. In the accreditation of being a 'botanical' garden, governance, sustainability and community engagement are the major factors. It's not just about the plants which are the major component of these gardens, but it is about its purpose, education and stewardship.

The Royal Botanical Garden is Canada's largest botanical garden with over 850 hectares of gardens and a nature sanctuary that spans Hamilton and Burlington. It has four distinct garden areas of plant collections, 30km of trails, an arboretum and nature sanctuaries. The Royal Botanical Garden boast a full-day experience for garden and nature lovers. There is an admission fee but offers free parking at their main facility.

The Toronto Botanical Garden's mandate is 'connecting people to plants'. It is designed to educate and inspire visitors with 2 hectares of 17 beautiful award-winning themed gardens, with a diverse collection of plants. This garden is also linked to walking trails through Toronto's ravine, and offers an array of educational programs, tours, events, and experiences. The Toronto Botanical Gardens are open daily from dawn until

dusk and admission is free but there is a cost for parking. Adjacent to the Toronto Botanical Gardens is Edwards Gardens, which is not part of the botanical gardens, but a park owned and administered by the City of Toronto. Edwards Gardens offers manicured floral displays and scenic trails and there is no admission charge.

The Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens was established in 1936. It spans 40 hectares of meticulous landscapes, award-winning gardens of vibrant seasonal blooms and lush greenery. It is another must-visit destination for garden enthusiasts and admission for this garden is also free.

While in this area, the Niagara Parks Floral Showhouse is just a short walk from the Horseshow Falls. With three main display houses, it is a haven of tropical plants and a stunning collection of orchids and succulents. New this summer is their whimsical topiary-like living sculptures methodically crafted with thousands of plants. This unique display of imaginative characters will delight the whole family. Admission is included with the Floral Showhouse.

If you haven't been to Whis-



ting Gardens in Wilsonville, Norfolk County, perhaps this summer you will get the opportunity. Set in 8 hectares, it is a horticultural paradise featuring over 4,500 plant species, including North America's largest peony and conifer collections. These gardens also include man-made streams, ponds, cascades as well as their formal gardens and European influenced architecture. Their 'Festival of Fountains and Night Garden' is an amazing

visual and moving experience of colourful lights, dancing water and beautiful music which runs each Saturday night from mid-August to mid-September. There is an admission fee for this private garden.

Besides these gardens, there are many more in Southern Ontario and beyond to visit, check out <https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca/articles/botanical-gardens-and-arbore-tums-ontario>

Master Gardener Native Plant Sale a huge success

LESLYE GLOVER, MASTER GARDENER

Contributed Article

The Tri-County Master Gardeners (Huron, Oxford, Perth) held their annual sale of native trees, shrubs and perennials on Saturday, June 14, in Stratford. Thanks to widespread support from native plant enthusiasts, all stock was sold quite quickly.

Master gardeners promote planting native species to add to the biodiversity of the area, support pollinators, provide food and habitat for birds and small mammals, and to mitigate climate change. We also supply gardening advice of all kinds. We are pleased to work with other organizations with similar goals and appreciate

their backing.

The master gardeners are already making plans for next June's sale, and we promise to supply high-quality native plants in greater quantities. We are sorry some customers were disappointed to find their favourite plants were sold out.

The Tri-County Master Gardeners are hoping to have a native plant pop-up sale in the fall. Our Facebook page will have details. Is autumn a good time to plant perennials and shrubs? Absolutely! Stay tuned for an in-depth article with all the excellent reasons to do so.

In the meantime, how should you care for the native (or any) plants you may have purchased recently?

1. Plant them in the correct place. If you have a Lady

Fern for example, it needs to live in a shady, moist area, not in the bright sun. For specific information about plants that you bought at our sale, visit tricontymastergardeners.ca/native-plant-sale.

2. Make sure your new plants have adequate water. Native species are tough plants that don't need a lot of care – once they are established. They need to be watered throughout their first summer in your garden particularly in drought conditions and high temperatures.

3. Native plants don't need fertilizing.

4. Keep the space around your new plants free of weeds. Ensuring your native plant doesn't have competition for at least their first year will help ensure they can grow into a strong and healthy plant.

Visit the Tri-County Master Gardeners' website for gardening information. You can submit questions to us by visiting tricontymastergardeners.ca.

Thanks to everyone who supported our native plant sale!



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Riddles

- Did you hear about the fire at the circus?
It was in tents
- What did the fisherman say to the card magician?
Pick a cod, any cod
- What is the Karate experts favorite beverage?
Kara-tea
- What caused the airline to go bankrupt?
Runway inflation
- Where do Floridians wash their clothes?
In Fort Lauderdale
- What's a frog's favorite drink?
Croaka Cola
- What is the moon worth?
\$1, because it has 4 quarters
- What grows when it eats, but dies when it drinks?
A candle
- Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was
the highest mountain on Earth?
Mt. Everest
- Why does the statue of liberty stand in New York
harbour?
Because it can't sit down
- What was Camelot?
A place where people parked their camels
- What kind of lighting did Noah use for the ark?
Floodlights

- Word Search -



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STONETOWN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

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- Businesses
- Community groups
- Showcase
- Downtown
- Local pride
- Vendor Village
- Artisans
- Crafters
- Authors
- Pottery demo
- Tattooing
- Food trucks
- Eateries
- Licensed patios
- Live music



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK

What stays where
it is when it goes
off?



An alarm clock!

Riley King (1)

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



If you plan on taking your pet on vacation, pack essentials like food, water, bowls, waste bags, a leash, toys, a pet first-aid kit, and any medications your pet needs. A familiar blanket or bed can also help your pet feel more at home. Keep Your Pet Safe: If you're driving, use a pet seatbelt, harness, or crate to keep your pet secure.



BOBBI

Our Pet of the Week is Bobbi, a soon to be five-year-old Bernese Mountain dog. Bobbi has accomplished a lot over those five years mostly to please her human mom, Donna Mikita. Bobbi earned her championship in the show ring at an early age and since then has earned titles in carting, rally, obedience and scenting. On her rest days, she enjoys sitting on a chair on the veranda watching the world go by. Bobbi is a great representative of her breed.





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Thorndale News

A section within the St. Marys Independent

Municipality of Thames Centre hosts information meeting on King Street upgrades



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THAMES CENTRE)

The Municipality of Thames Centre hosted an information meeting June 26 to provide Thorndale and area residents with details on the 2026 King Street urbanization design project from Nissouri Road to the Wye Creek Bridge.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

On June 26 at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre, the Municipality of Thames Centre held an information session regarding the King Street urbanization design project.

Pending council's approval, the project set for April 2026 includes the reconstruction of King Street from Nissouri Road to Wye Creek bridge with upgraded storm sewers and drain connections to each private property. The project also includes new curbs and gutters, 1.5-metre wide sidewalks, a turning lane, and a pedestrian crosswalk at

Brooker Trail and Aspen Circle.

The presentation on June 26 also included a section for discussion about Middlesex county's acceptable traffic-calming measures between Wye Creek and Harrison Street as part of this project.

After the official presentations, residents were invited to ask questions and share their concerns with municipal staff, county staff and the engineers who are designing the project.

For more information, visit www.thamescentre.on.ca/202526-king-street-storm-sewer-upgrade-and-road-urbanization-pending-council-approval.

Thorndale Lions continue to enhance the community



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE THORNDALE LIONS CLUB)

Thorndale Lions Club members install solar lights along the pathway at the Foxborough pond.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

For more than 10 years, the Thorndale Lions Club and the Municipality of Thames Centre have partnered to enhance the town.

It began with the Lions Park in Wye Creek subdivision. The goal was to add amenities to the pond area to make it more enjoyable for area residents. Through a cost-sharing agreement, the Lions added items such as benches, lighting, bird houses and a gazebo.

In 2022, the Thorndale Lions began the Thorndale Heritage Sign project. As people are choosing to make Thorndale their home, the Lions felt it was import-

ant to showcase the history of this town. Last September, the club members installed nine signs depicting historical information of early settlers, churches, schools, sports and recreation throughout Thorndale.

As the Thorndale Lions continue to improve public areas in the community, they installed two metal benches at the Foxborough subdivision pond last September. Recently, a team of club members installed nine tall, solar lights along the pathway at the Foxborough pond. The Lions received money through the Thames Centre Community Grant program, with the club covering the rest of the cost for these solar lights.

Thorndale resident continues to collect donations for South Sudan

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

For the past several years, Stu McCutcheon has been collecting clothing, household and other items with the goal of filling a large container and shipping them to South Sudan.

Now, after filling his first container with donations, McCutcheon is beginning work on a second container.

"Thank you to all who gave items to

help fill the container for South Sudan, September 2024," McCutcheon said. "After many delays, the container reached our school outside of Juba South Sudan in early May 2025. Also, a big thanks to Doug Betteridge for the many bikes he has brought, all repaired and ready to go."

Items needed now are clothing and shoes for all ages, especially for children and youth, as well as school supplies for the orphans. Widows and fam-

ilies are always in need of cooking and serving dishes, bedding, towels and fabric to make items for their home.

Building supplies such as lumber, roof steel and t-bar posts are needed for more secure construction and to waterproof homes.

"If you are cleaning out closets, garages, or sheds and if someone in your area is having a garage or yard sale and have items or clothing that didn't sell, consider donating them for my next

container for South Sudan," McCutcheon said.

South Sudan, located in northern Africa, received its independence in 2011 and is one of the poorest countries in the world. Anyone with items to donate can contact McCutcheon at mcchol100@gmail.com or 519-878-9417 to arrange drop-off at 17231 Plovers Mills Rd. or to arrange for a pickup.

Town seeking input on development of Cemetery Master Plan

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT
Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is developing a Cemetery Master Plan to guide the future of the St. Marys Cemetery over the next 25 years.

This initiative will ensure the cemetery continues to meet the evolving needs of the community while preserving its historical significance and enhancing operational sustainability.



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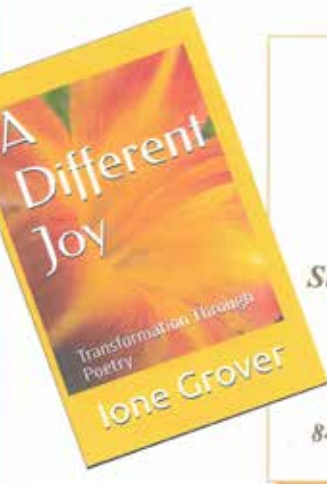


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The money received from the sale of this book will be donated to The Coyote Nature School a St Marys Program dedicated to educating children in all aspects of nature and wildlife.

In collaboration with consultants and incorporating public feedback, this plan aims to assess the current condition and capacity of the cemetery, formulate strategies for long-term sustainability, explore options for interment, green burials and cremation services, as well as evaluate software solutions for record-keeping.

“It is important to receive feedback from the public on what the next 25 years of the cemetery will look like,” said director of public works Jed Kelly. “We will continue to prioritize meeting the evolving needs of the community in such a meaningful space for many.”

Following the collection of public feedback, council will make a decision on approval of the proposed final master plan.

Residents are invited to share their feedback through a survey that can be accessed online at www.townofstmarys.com/cemeteryplan. Print copies are also available at town hall, the St. Marys Public Library, Friendship Centre, St. Marys Museum and Municipal Operations Centre. The survey will remain open until Friday, July 11 at midnight.

For more information, visit www.townofstmarys.com/cemeteryplan or contact the public works department at 519-284-2340 ext. 213 or publicworks@town.stmarys.on.ca.

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Solutions on page 31

LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Homecoming 2000

25 years ago (2000)
Claudia Baldwin, daughter of Lois Baldwin, was home all the way from Australia to take part in the homecoming festivities.

Gladys Smith may spend many summer weekends at her cottage in Bayfield, taking her regular dips in the nearby Lake Huron, but this weekend the 101-year-old St. Marys resident was here in her hometown, playing an integral role in the Homecoming 2000 celebration. Smith led the opening ceremonies.

50 years ago (1975)
The new sidewalk now going down along Wellington Street North will be extended to the wide width as far as the Army, Navy and Air Force building. From this point to the bridge it will be curb and gutter with boulevard.

The price of beer at the St. Marys Fair will be higher this year, a Kinsmen Club member has informed the Journal-Argus. The rental price of both tents and outdoor toilets has skyrocketed.

A church in miniature is replacing the Bethesda United Church in West Nissouri along the Plover Mills Road. The original church was removed last year.

75 years ago (1950)
The St. Marys quarry is perhaps enjoying the most popular summer in its history now that improvements to the swimming area have made it more attractive to the younger people. Recreational Director Bill Hare has pointed out that the rates charged for swimming at the quarry are the same for rural children. All youngsters living in the St. Marys high school district are charged only 25 cents per season. All other children or adults are required to pay \$2 per season.

George Ulliyott found a peculiar stone one day the past week on the bank of the Thames two miles south of St. Marys. The twenty-pound chunk appears to be a portion of a meteorite which may have plunged from the heavens.

100 years ago (1925)
“It certainly is a hard task to stir up enthusiasm in this town” said a local fisherman when he viewed with consternation the large crowd (three people) who attended the organization meeting of the proposed St. Marys chapter of the Western Ontario Fish and Game Protective Association in town hall on Friday night. The sponsor of the meeting, Mr. F.R. Chappell had gone to a lot of trouble arranging for the speakers from London and personally inviting a score or two of local sportsmen, many of whom assured him they would be there, but it was all of little avail.

George Hedley, brother of the late James Hedley, who is staying with his brother’s family on Thomas Street met with a nasty accident on Monday when a team he was driving ran away. Mr. Hedley was dragged some distance and sustained severe scratches about the head and had one ear partly severed. He is suffering from shock, but no bones were broken.

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Wanted

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc.
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5	3	1	9	7	8	6	4	2
2	8	6	5	4	1	3	9	7
1	7	9	4	2	6	8	3	5
3	2	8	1	5	9	7	6	4
6	5	4	8	3	7	2	1	9

OBITUARY

Leonhardt



Alvin Leonhardt, age 96, of Brodhagen passed away peacefully at the Greenwood Court Long Term Care Facility in Stratford on Wednesday, June 25, 2025.

Beloved husband of the late Velma Leonhardt (Anderson). Loving father of Kathryn Leonhardt (Allan James) of Ottawa

and Leslie Leonhardt (Chris Vaughan) of Stratford. Predeceased by his siblings Mervin Leonhardt (Enid), Lester Leonhardt (Betty) and Laurie Smith (John). He will be remembered by Velma's siblings Audrey Lambourn, George Anderson, Lloyd Anderson and his many friends.

As per Alvin's wishes, no funeral service will take place. In his memory, donations to a charity of choice would be appreciated.

OBITUARY

Bragg



Allen Laverne Bragg passed away at University Hospital on June 25, 2025 at the age of 75.

Predeceased by his wife Pearl (nee Bugg, 2005). Loving father of Luke and Joshua. Also surviving are his brothers Rodney (Susan), James

(Lynn), and Anthony. One niece and nephews, and great nieces and nephews. Allen is predeceased by his parents Carman and Clara, his brothers Rob, Ken, and sister-in-law Carolyn. He was a faithful member of Bethal Pentecostal Church.

Family and friends are invited to the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, 47 Wellington St. S. St. Marys, on Wednesday, July 2, 2025 for visiting from 1 pm until the time of the funeral service at 2 pm. Interment following in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations can be made to the Bethal Pentecostal Church. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

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THE WEEK AHEAD

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PRC & Friendship Centre events – See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5
St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 22

Friday, July 4

- Royal Canadian Legion “hot dogs and more” lunch at Noon
- Tool sale at 347 Church Street S – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Kinsmen Summerfest – Midway opens 4 p.m., Refreshment tent 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Live entertainment – 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.

Saturday, July 5

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Kinsmen Summerfest – Midway opens at Noon, Refreshment tent 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Open Mic with Steph Martin – 1-5 p.m., Live entertainment – 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.

Sunday, July 6

- Legion bingo – Doors open 11:30 a.m., Early bird 12:45, Games 1-4 p.m.
- Kinsmen Summerfest – Midway opens at Noon
- Lone Grover book launch & signing of “A Different Joy” at Riverwalk Commons – 2-4 p.m.

Wednesday, July 9

- Station Gallery “Summer art for Kids” – Ages 6-12, 9 a.m. to Noon, Ages 13+, 1-4 p.m. Call 519-274-1074 to reserve a spot
- Friends of the Library social at the library – 6:30-8 p.m.

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Mon. June 23 - Ryan Sager, St. Marys	\$50.00
Tues. June 24 - Dale Simpson, St. Marys	\$50.00
Wed. June 25 - Tom Kittmer, Embro	\$50.00
Thur. June 26 - Adrian Bossors, Stratford	\$50.00
Fri. June 27 - Dan Dunsmore, Stratford	\$50.00
Sat. June 28 - Rich De Wetering, Stratford	\$200.00
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