

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1245

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LINCS MAKE MAJOR TRADE DEAL (SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
 Lincoln Moore, pictured, played his first two games with the St. Marys Lincolns on Jan. 10 against the Kitchener-Waterloo Siskins and on Jan. 12 against the Chatham Maroons. Moore was the centrepiece of the Lincolns' trade deadline blockbuster deal with the St. Thomas Stars, alongside defencemen Ian Gedney and Evan Roach. In 20 games with St. Thomas, Moore had 19 goals and 35 points. The Lincs also reacquired high-scoring forward Kyle Morey from the QMJHL's Baie-Comeau Drakkar.

St. Marys library board approves adjusted draft 2025 budget following signing of Perth South library services agreement

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After the St. Marys library board reached a five-year agreement last month with Perth South that resulted in the reinstatement of library services for Perth South residents, the board approved a revised draft 2025 library budget to reflect additional revenue from St. Marys' neighbouring township.

According to a report presented to the library board at its Jan. 9 meeting, Perth South has agreed to pay St. Marys \$50,000 annually until 2030 for the provision of library services for township residents. In a press release following the signing of that agreement, the library board said those services include access to book lending, digital resources, programs, summer-reading initiatives and community events.

"It brings our budget in, as we've been requested to do, at (a) three per-cent (increase over 2024)," St. Marys Public Library CEO Sarah Andrews said. "... This budget incorporates the \$50,000 in revenue we will be receiving from Perth South this year and for the next five years."

"I think it's probably important, in particular

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

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Advisory committee recommends removal of 93 items from St. Marys Museum collection

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The St. Marys heritage and culture advisory committee has recommended the removal or deaccessioning of 93 items from the St. Marys Museum's collection, nearly all of which are in poor condition, are duplicates of other items in the collection, or have a lack of provenance.

At the committee's first meeting of the year Jan. 8, town cultural services manager Amy Cubberley and museum curatorial and programming assistant Izzy Mitchell presented the first third of the nearly 300 items identified for removal from the museum collection as part of a deaccession project that has been in the works for roughly a decade.

"This is our first major deaccessioning

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St. Marys library board approves adjusted draft 2025 budget following signing of Perth South library services agreement

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

for the councillors' awareness, that this budget is still a service reduction from not just 2024 but 2023 as well because we're not reinstating Saturday afternoon (operating hours)," added library board chair Dr. Cole Atlin. "... Saturday afternoon is the least-used time (at the library). ... We do get to reinstate Thursday nights, which is a huge benefit."

Early last year after Perth South CAO Fred Tranquilli informed the St. Marys library board the township would not be paying the more than \$74,000 requested by the board for the provision of library services for Perth South residents from the St. Marys library in 2024, the library board voted to reduce hours of operation, eliminating three hours from 5-8 p.m. on Thursdays and three hours from 1-4 p.m. on Saturdays to help make up the funding shortfall.

Now that an agreement for roughly \$24,000 less funding than what was requested last year has been reached between the two parties, this year's draft library budget includes an additional \$11,400 in funding for the St. Marys library to once again operate in the evenings on Thursdays. Operating hours on Saturdays, however, will remain as they were last year, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., should council approve the library's draft budget as is.

Another major change to the draft budget stemming from the new agreement with Perth South is a more than \$11,100 increase in funding for capital-book purchases. According to the draft 2025 budget, the library is now posed to spend a total of nearly \$64,700 on new books for children, teens and adults as opposed to the nearly \$53,600 proposed before the agreement with Perth South was reached. This year's capital-book-purchase funding represents a

three per-cent increase over what was originally budgeted for in 2024 – nearly \$62,800 – however the library only spent \$51,000 of that amount last year to help address the funding shortfall from Perth South.

Other reductions to the 2025 draft budget made before the agreement with Perth South was reached have also been returned to their original budgeted amounts in 2024. That has resulted in an additional \$2,160 for office supplies, furniture and equipment, an additional \$2,040 to reinstate a program that allows users to borrow mobile WiFi hotspot devices known as MiFi, and an additional \$3,500 that will allow the library to replace all six of its public computers this year.

The draft library budget now also includes an additional \$1,228 so the library can continue to purchase non-traditional equipment that provides patrons with experiences and access to services like museum passes, snowshoes and memory kits; an additional \$1,000 to support the library's participation in the inter-library loan service across the region; and an extra \$500 for travel and mileage to allow library staff to participate in in-person committee meetings including Perth County Reads, the Perth County Information Network (PCIN) management-team and board meetings, and Ontario Library Service (OLS) and South Western Ontario Library Administrators (SWOLA) meetings.

The revised draft 2025 budget includes a total tax levy of just over \$577,200, nearly 2.9 per cent higher than what was originally budgeted for in 2024.

After the library approved the amended 2025 draft budget at its Jan. 9 meeting, the draft budget was to be presented to St. Marys council for consideration at its Jan. 14 meeting, which occurred after this newspaper went to press.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The St. Marys Public Library.



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Coldest Night of the Year returns to St. Marys Feb. 22

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Help bring change to our community one wintry step at a time!

United Way Perth-Huron (UWPH) invites everyone in St. Marys to register for the fourth-annual Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) walk, a family-friendly fundraising event in support of local people experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness.

St. Marys CNOY happens on Saturday, Feb. 22, or walk any time during February. Event check-in begins at 4 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC) with opening ceremonies scheduled for 4:45 p.m. A light meal will be served at 6 p.m.

Walkers can choose a two- or five-kilometre route ending up back at the PRC. Participants raising over \$150 (\$75 for youth under 18) receive CNOY toques. To help UWPH achieve the event goal of \$68,000, visit cnoy.org and register to walk or donate. For updates, join the St. Marys Coldest Night of the Year group on Facebook and keep an eye out for the CNOY penguin popping up around St. Marys.

St. Marys CNOY participants help support the St. Marys community outreach worker and the Nourish Equal Access Food Market. The community outreach worker helps support residents in need, particularly those living in and around social housing, understands their challenges and connects people with services.

Nourish runs bi-weekly, offering fresh, nutritious, locally sourced produce and meats to residents facing food insecurity every day.

In a press release the local United Way thanked current event sponsors Ideal Supply and McDonald's St. Marys. For sponsorship opportunities, contact Chris at cshroer@perthhuron.united-way.ca or call 519-271-7730.

United Way Perth-Huron helps build a better tomorrow by working to reduce poverty, housing people, and supporting mental health and wellbeing. UWPH works with its partners and donors to ensure vulnerable people across Perth-Huron get the help they need when they need it. To volunteer or donate, call 519-271-7730 or 1-877-818-8867, mail to 32 Erie Street, Stratford, ON N5A 2M4 or visit perthhuron.united-way.ca.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED WAY PERTH-HURON)

Pictured from left to right are Coldest Night of the Year organizers Chris Schroer, Leslie Edney and Gwen Bradley.

QUADRO

9:41

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EDITORIAL

We bought a house

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For a couple of millennials just starting out together, my fiancé, Julia, and I have managed to do the unimaginable.

We bought a house.

If you had asked me a year ago whether we'd be buying a house now, I would have laughed a little too hard (and maybe a single tear would have rolled down my cheek). For my entire adult life, the idea of owning a house seemed so far out of reach, I'd stopped considering it as even a remote possibility – a feeling so many other millennials without any serious financial backing from their families are familiar with.

In fact, I don't even think we would have begun looking for a home when we did if our landlord hadn't decided to try and sell the house we're currently renting, listing it out of the blue back in October. While that was a nightmare of mine come true, I'm glad we were forced to consider purchasing our first home together as the Government of Canada's introduction of 30-year amortizations for first-time homebuyers made our monthly mortgage payments more affordable. Combined with the expectation that house prices will increase this spring, it really does feel like the right time.

It still doesn't feel real to me, but somehow between the money my grandmother left me and what Julia has managed to contribute to her RRSP over the years, as well whatever we could beg and borrow (definitely not steal) from our family members, together we had enough for a downpayment on a house in Stratford.

Now, don't get me wrong, we didn't have enough money saved to buy our dream home. The house we've purchased is at the

absolute bottom of the market. It's small – a story and a half with a little over 1,200 square feet of usable floor space and an unfinished, half-height basement – but it is in a great neighbourhood, right behind the old Grand Trunk Railway shops in downtown Stratford where the city is looking to build a community hub and develop the surrounding property.

So, we are excited about the potential for our property value to increase after shovels hit the ground, likely in 2026.

The house needs a lot of work, one, to make it livable and, two, to maximize our investment. And that's how we're looking at it, as an investment. If we do everything we're planning for this house – redoing the kitchen and upstairs bathroom, putting in a back door and maybe a deck, installing new insulation, drywall and flooring, and sealing the basement from moisture as much as possible – we're hoping that when we're ready for our next home in five or 10 years, we'll have built up enough equity to take us up to that next rung on the housing ladder.

One lesson I think Julia and I have both learned as first-time homebuyers is it's okay to settle for a home you're not entirely happy with. Throughout our house hunt, we saw the best and the worst of homes in and around the mortgage range we qualified for. From wet basements and mold to absolutely bizarre layouts and renovations, it quickly became clear that for those of us at the bottom end of the housing spectrum, this house is really just a steppingstone toward what we truly want in a home.

It'll also be a great training ground to learn all those home-reno skills my parents never taught me, so look forward to future editorials about how that goes, good and bad.

Bravo

We have 1 Bravo this week.

1) Bravo to the kind gentleman who helped me get my car battery working when it stopped in the "15 minute" parking space at the post office.

Boo

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

"Indeed, but for Mr. Trump's election and imminent return to the Presidency, the Office assessed that the admissible evidence was sufficient to obtain and sustain a conviction at trial."

- Excerpt from special counsel Jack Smith's final report on his investigation into Donald Trump's 2020 election interference, released this week

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Why does January feel like one giant Monday?

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others?

Either email them to us at info@stmarysindependent.com with the title

"Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519-284-0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

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St. Marys Independent

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**The St. Marys
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THOUGHTS
OF THE WEEK**

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Go confidently in
the direction of your
dreams.

Forget all the
reasons why it
won't work and
focus on the one
why it will.

The longer you live
in the past, the less
future you have to
enjoy.

133 Christmas dinners delivered through fourth-annual event



(PHOTO COURTESY OF RACHAEL O'NEILL)

A total of 133 turkey dinners were purchased, prepared and delivered to families in St. Marys on Christmas Eve during the fourth-annual Community Christmas Dinner initiative.

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

St. Marys resident Rachael O'Neill and her team of volunteers are thanking the community for helping them purchase, prepare and deliver 133 turkey dinners and 32 gifts from Santa to families throughout the community on Christmas Eve during their fourth-annual Community Christmas Dinner.

In an email to the Independent, O'Neill said this year's initiative saw the highest number of dinners prepared and delivered on Christmas Eve since it began.

"It simply could not happen if it wasn't for the incredible community that we live in," O'Neill said.

O'Neill expressed special thanks to

following:

- All who donated money and turkeys
- All who helped deliver on Christmas Eve
- Chad O'Leary from The Creamery
- Delmar Foods
- Joe's Diner
- Donna Horner
- Stonetown Supply Services
- Country Roots Fresh Market
- Canadian Tire
- This and That
- Dee Skeith
- INOAC Social Committee
- And a very special shout out to Heather Young who ran all over town picking up and organizing when O'Neill was unable.



STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



PLAY & BROWSE
Jan. 20, 9:30 - 11:30 AM | 65 Church St. S

Join EarlyON for a Play and Learn program at the Community Closet! Check out the closet while the children play. There is no cost to the items at the closet.

townofstmarys.com/earlyon or 226-374-6544

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SIX NATIONS BINGO HALL BUS TRIP

March 25, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Come along with the Friendship Centre on an exciting bus trip to the Six Nations Bingo Hall! The fee for members is \$49 plus tax, while non-members will pay \$59 plus tax. Register by February 18.

townofstmarys.com/activenet or 519-284-3272

LINE DANCING

Tues. and Fri. from Jan. 7 to Feb. 25

Brush off your dancing shoes this New Year! Line Dancing is returning to the Friendship Centre this winter for both Tuesday evening and Friday morning sessions. All levels welcome!

townofstmarys.com/activenet or 519-284-3272



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Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Maxine Rybka. Maxine was born and raised in Kitchener as the oldest of three children. She has been married to Tony for over 38 years. They are Godparents to seven kids. In her spare time Maxine loves to needlework, crochet, travel, read and loves animals. She graduated from the University of Waterloo in 1980 with a Bachelor of Mathematics, minor in Economics and worked in the financial sector. She is also an 11 year survivor of breast cancer. They moved to St. Marys in 2017 and love this community, the people and the wonderful variety of activities available to seniors.

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

Advocating for community and sustainability, one can at a time

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Anyone with empty drink cans can give back to the community by donating to the Kids Can! Collective.

Kids Can! is a collective started by Kimberley Davis and her children through which funds earned from returning empty cans and bottles are donated back to the community of St. Marys.

Davis, who shares a property line with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, would collect cans on the grounds and her kids ran a dollar-candy treat-bag stand. Her children sold candy bags as she ran the McDonald's free juice stand at St. Marys' Pride in the Park in June. After making \$25 from the bags, Davis suggested her kids donate the money back to St. Marys Pride.

"It went from, 'Oh my god, there's money in the beer can. We don't need the money, let's turn it into profit for something else and treat people,'" she said.

Kids Can! Collective announced on their Instagram that, in 2024, more than 5,000 alcohol beverage empties and 20 pounds of aluminum cans were returned, which raised \$750 for the community. The funds supported local festivals and the St. Marys Public Library pantry program.

Cans and bottles are either picked up from residents' homes or placed in the barrel and containers at 374 Church St. S. Pop and energy drink cans are taken to the scrapyards, and alcohol-beverage empties are returned to the Beer Store for refund.

"We put the profits back into community incentives in hopes that the community then wants to help us keep this going, just keep the money from the community in the community and just to see a happy face everywhere," Davis said.

St. Marys' organizations and businesses have also been stepping up to support the initiative. The St. Marys Kinsmen donated bags of cans and a barrel, and Joe's Diner donated empty condiment buckets for can



collecting.

"It's been really great just having a little bit of people just being like, 'We're seeing what you're doing, keep doing it,'" Davis said.

Davis enjoys going for walks and collecting cans for the initiative on backroads. As not all aluminum products are recycled right from the bin, she takes that extra step.

"When you put aluminum cans into a recycling bin, they don't always get reused properly because if that container becomes contaminated, then it needs to be wasted," Davis said.

In addition to collecting cans and bottles, Kids Can! also collects can tabs to be donated to the local Shriners' wheelchair program. It takes 5 million can tabs to create a wheelchair.

"I did get word from a gentleman that his sister received a wheelchair from the Shriners in our community," Davis said. "So, as soon as he said that, it really cemented, 'Okay, this is so important what we do, that's why we do it.'"

For more information, either visit www.instagram.com/kidscan.collective or text Davis at 519-878-9775.

Weekend Quiz

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16 Water Street South
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- 1) What U.S. state begins with a U?
- 2) What was the original business of Netflix?
- 3) How many pieces does each player have in backgammon?
- 4) What actress played the role of Stifler's Mom in the movie American Pie?
- 5) What is the only fruit that bears its seeds on the outside?
- 6) What city was formerly known as Constantinople?
- 7) What is the name of the tallest grass on earth?
- 8) Who is the governor of California?
- 9) What is the birthstone for January?
- 10) In Shakespeare's Hamlet, what is "the soul of wit"?

By Jake & Stewart Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 29



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Town announces pet-licencing contest for 2025; Residents encouraged to purchase pet tags to enter contest

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is asking residents to register their pets as part of a "purr-fectly paw-some" contest.

From Monday, Jan. 13 until Monday, March 31, each pet-licence purchase will qualify the owner for entry into a draw to win a \$50 gift card from Pet Valu. Those who have previously registered their pet for this year will automatically be entered. Owners may earn additional entries by sharing a photo of their licenced dog or cat with their name included in the comments on the town's weekly pet-licencing Facebook post.

Licences can be purchased using the town's convenient online form at townofstmarys.com/petlicences or by visiting town hall (175 Queen St. E) or the municipal operations centre (408 James St. S) during business hours. Pet tags are \$25 per year per pet until March 31, when they will increase to \$35. The tags are valid for the entire life of the pet, but annual registration fees are still required. An invoice will be sent to own-

ers each year; the balance can be paid by cash, cheque or through the online-payment form.

Pet licenses serve an essential purpose in reuniting lost pets with their owners when they are found and taken in by animal control. Additionally, the registration fees collected from pet licenses contribute to supporting the dog park and the town's ongoing animal-control program.

"We are excited to launch this contest as a fun way to encourage responsible pet ownership in our community," said St. Marys clerk Jenna McCartney. "Registering your pets not only increases the likelihood of being reunited with them if they go missing but also helps fund our local animal-control initiatives."

Additional information about pet licences, including details about how to pay your annual invoice can be found at townofstmarys.com/petlicences. Questions about pet licences can be directed to the Clerks Department at 519-284-2340 ext. 241 or clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Former Mercury Theatre renovations nearing completion



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

As renovations at the former Mercury Theatre building (14 Church St. N) near completion, St. Marys town staff shared this photo of the building's first floor with the Independent.

BARGAINS & DEALS

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Advisory committee recommends removal of 93 items from St. Marys Museum collection

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

project in my time at the museum," Cubberley said. "... We have been gearing up for this project for about 10 years with having students working on condition reports and updating all of our artifact catalogues, and doing audits. I've had several summer students and interns kind of start the project and Izzy has kind of gotten us over that hurdle of actually getting artifacts before the committee for review."

According to Mitchell, there are numerous guidelines and restrictions around how a museum goes about removing items from its collection. In reviewing the museum's collection over the last decade, staff considered several factors including the overall condition of the items, their provenance and connection to St. Marys, whether they are direct or indirect duplicates of other items in the collection, their display value at the museum, and any hazards associated with those items.

While none of the items recommended for removal were deemed hazardous, Mitchell said the museum's policy for adding items to its collection and its recordkeeping practices prior to the 1970s means many of these items lack any kind of backstory or provenance and have very little display value. On top of that, most of the items are broken or are in various states of deterioration.

"We have very limited storage space," Mitchell said of the reason for the deaccession project. "... We really only have two spaces that are up to our peak standards – humidity, temperature control, all of that – and that would be our textile room and the basement. These spaces right now are essentially overflowing.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

This commemorative Gettysburg plate has been identified for removal from the St. Marys Museum's collection because it has no display value at the museum because of its lack of provenance and relevance to the Town of St. Marys.

We have furniture in the aisles we have to kind of manoeuvre around to access the shelves, so that's a big hurdle for us. It also, due to that, limits our ability to follow best practices for artifact handling and monitoring.

"Hypothetically, we really shouldn't be stacking artifacts on top of each other, but we really don't have a choice right now."

According to Cubberley, the museum currently has about 15,000 artifacts in its collection. The nearly 300 artifacts identified for removal – the remainder of which will be brought to the committee for review in the next few months – rep-

resent roughly two per cent of the museum's collection.

Should St. Marys council approve the committee recommendation to remove the first 93 items from the collection, Mitchell said the museum will need to follow a specified process for how those items will be removed from the collection.

First, she said the museum will offer the items to other museums to potentially add them to their collections. After that, the remaining items will be offered to public and educational institutions. The museum will then work with a private auction house to sell off any leftover



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

This antique lawnmower could soon be removed from the St. Marys Museum's collection because it is rusty, broken, it has no provenance and because the museum already has two exact duplicates of this mower in its collection that are in better condition.

items, and anything that still remains in the museum's possession after that will be destroyed and disposed of.

Cubberley said the museum's goal is to keep as many of the removed items out of landfill as possible, however Mitchell noted the potentially limited appeal the items have for other museums, public and educational institutions, and private buyers because of their poor condition and lack of provenance.

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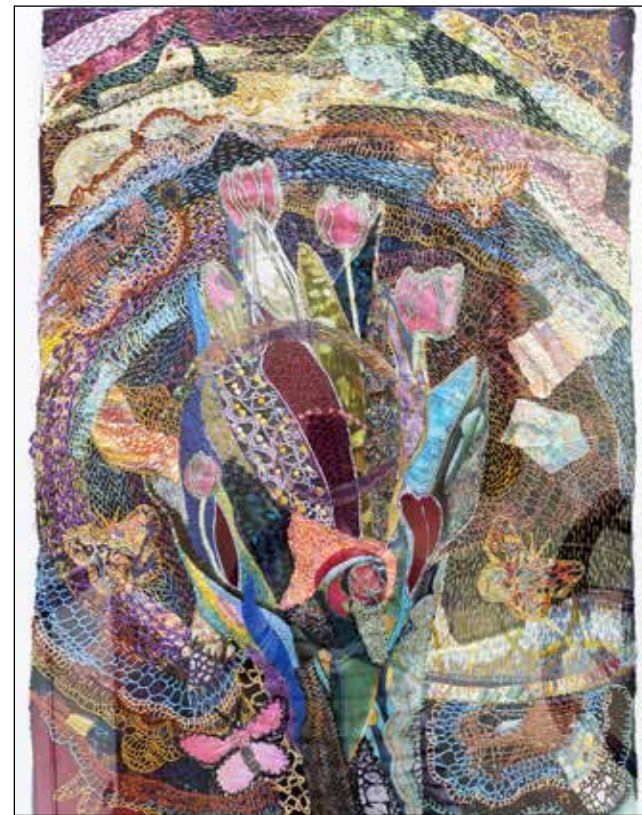
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Lines and Stitches exhibition opens at St. Marys Station Gallery



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Local textile artist Maggie Jorna stands with her favourite piece, Fledglings, on display now as part of the Lines and Stitches exhibition at St. Marys Station Gallery.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS STATION GALLERY)

Tulip Vortex, by Maggie Jorna.

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A new exhibition featuring the textile art of local artist Maggie Jorna opened last weekend at St. Marys Station Gallery.

Dubbed Lines and Stitches, the exhibition features a variety of pieces created by Jorna using a number of different techniques, all focused around the use of textiles. Jorna made the transition from painting landscapes and nature to using textile-based art techniques after joining a U.K. based stitch club, TextileArts.org, three years ago.

“Every two weeks, there’s a different workshop by a professional, international artist, so I’ve been doing a lot of these workshops and learning,” Jorna said. “Prior to this, I was doing a lot of textured, painted landscapes, so my goal is to get into that same kind of thing but with textiles. I’ve also been moving a lot more toward abstract pieces and things like that.”

Jorna studied fine arts at the University of Guelph in the ‘80s. There, she did a lot of printmaking and collage. After a 30-year career teaching art at St. Marys DCVI, she began painting with acrylics, but now she is back to printing and collaging, only this time with fabrics, a needle and a sewing machine.

“My mother, when I was a child, made

us sit and embroider because ‘we had to do something useful with our time,’ ” Jorna said with a laugh, thinking back to when she first began working with textiles. “So, I did do that when I was a child – I didn’t much care for it – and it’s kind of interesting how I’ve kind of gone full circle and I’m back to doing the stuff she made me do when I was a kid. What I’ve really liked about what I’ve learned from this textile group is this whole idea of not having to follow a pattern and just creating and embellishing and adding and painting.”

The inspiration for her work has always come from nature and her surrounding environment. Following a recent move, Jorna has found new inspiration for her artwork from the barn swallows that were nesting in her front porch to the three pines that mark the corner she passes regularly. Her favourite art pieces use hand-printed fabrics that are combined with recycled materials, found objects and stitch. She has a huge stash of random items at home because, as she puts it, “You never know when you’ll need it for your next artwork.”

Jorna says she is always on the lookout for unique pieces of fabric that can inspire new work. While she doesn’t always know what a finished piece will look like, she uses inspiration from nature and life in and around St. Marys

and Uniondale, where she now lives, to create the artistic vision she has for each piece. She then experiments with different techniques, often incorporating hand-painted or pressed fabrics and recycled items, to bring that vision to life.

This show is a combination of inde-

pendently created textile art pieces as well as textile experiments inspired by the workshop leaders from TextileArts.org. For more information about Lines and Stitches and St. Marys Station Gallery, visit www.stmarysstationgallery.ca.

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St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary celebrates the end of 2024

JANIS FREAD

St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

Auxiliary members gathered at Gilly's to celebrate the end of 2024 with a luncheon.

It was a busy year for the group, which organized bake sales, a garage sale, trunk shows at Kingsway Lodge, a Sip and Shop event and a Heritage Festival booth. We stitched comfort cushions for incoming patients and fidget aprons for dementia patients. We had a spring raffle and gathered to put together toiletry kits for new patients, plus we staffed the hospital Boutique.

One of the last projects of the year was Giving Tuesday when we partnered with the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation encouraging the community to make a donation to the auxiliary and/or the foundation on Dec. 3, and all funds collected that day would go towards recognizing the hospital and clinic staff. Well, we completely surpassed our fundraising goal! A Christmas luncheon was provided and we have plans to treat the staff in January using the remainder of the funds raised. The winner of two tickets to the foundation's 2025 gala was Diane O'Shea and the winner of the \$100 shopping spree in the auxiliary's Boutique



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY)

Members of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary celebrated the end of 2024 with a Christmas luncheon at Gilly's.

was Barbara Leavitt.

Thank you to everyone who donated on Dec. 3 to make our Giving Tuesday project so successful. Thanks are also extended to Troyer's Spices, Jackson's

Guardian Pharmacy and St. Marys Independent for partnering with us in various ways in 2024 and to the community that generously supports our fundraising efforts.

For updates on fundraising events or to become a volunteer, follow the auxiliary on Facebook at The Boutique at St. Marys Memorial Hospital or email smmhauxiliary@gmail.com.



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STRATFORD NISSAN



UTRCA announces Thames River Phosphorus Reduction program

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) recently announced the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction program.

This is a new, four-year program that offers incentives for cover crops, reducing tillage, 4R practices, manure management, as well as cost-share rates for a variety of practices. In their promotion of this program, UTRCA said there are several practices that can reduce losses of phosphorus such as using cover crops, reducing tillage to prevent soil erosion and the loss of soil bound phosphorus.

They also said applying 4R practices – right source at the right rate, right time and right place – limits excess phosphorus in the soil and confines the risk of losses. Shifting manure applications to and on the fields will also lower soil phosphorus levels. Windbreaks, riparian buffers or vegetated land area and wetlands also help to hold water on the landscape and filter nutrient runoff.

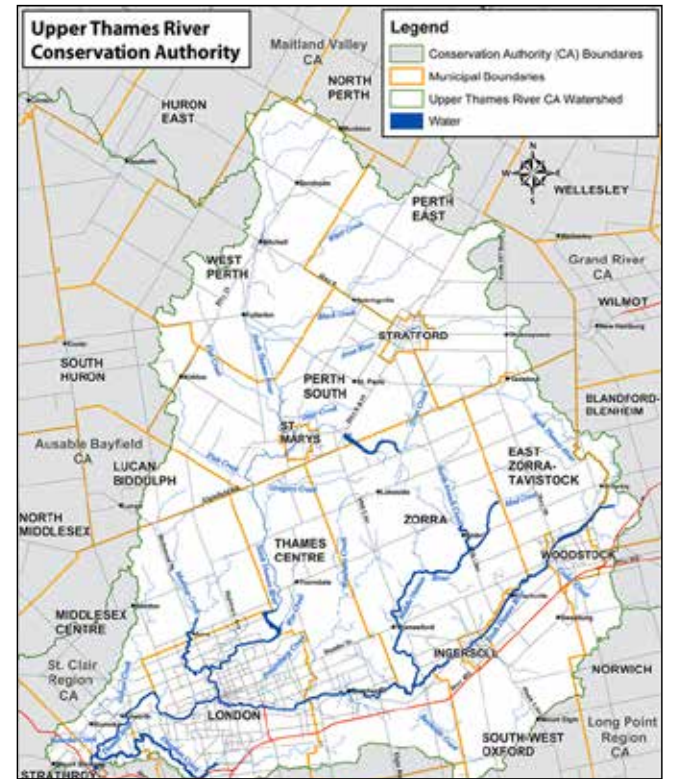
This phosphorus-reduction program encompasses the Upper Thames River watershed, an area of 3,421

square kilometres, mainly rural except for the larger urban centres of London, Stratford and Woodstock. Agriculture is the main component of this area with approximately 3,600 farms, including over 2,000 live-stock operations.

The Thames River Phosphorus Reduction program supports farmers and landowners in implementing agricultural best-management practices that reduce phosphorus runoff, enhancing water quality in the Thames River and Lake Erie while improving soil health and farm productivity.

The UTRCA is now accepting applications for projects completed in 2024 or planned for 2025 that incorporates and is included in the program guidelines. The UTRCA is especially interested in hearing from landowners and farmers in the areas with high phosphorus runoff including in the Gregory Creek area in north Thames Centre, the Reynolds Creek area near Putnam and in North Mitchell.

For more information on the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction program, visit thamesriver.on.ca/landowner-grants-stewardship/phosphorus-reduction-program/.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) recently announced a new four-year program aimed at reducing phosphorus levels in local waterways by offering incentives to area farmers for employing best-management practices to reduce runoff from their fields and farm operations.

WINTER SAVINGS WITH STRATFORD KIA'S PRE-OWNED DEALS



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<p>2020 Honda Civic LX</p>  <p>\$23,495 OR \$87/wk + HST & lic LOW KMS - 81,270 KM</p>	<p>2023 Kia Soul EX</p>  <p>\$24,995 OR \$93/wk + HST & lic LOW KMS - 30,628 KM</p>	<p>2023 Chevrolet TrailBlazer LT</p>  <p>\$28,995 OR \$107/wk + HST & lic LOW KMS - 25,500 KM</p>		
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Moore, Morey headline Lincs' blockbuster deadline haul



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Newly-acquired St. Marys Lincolns' forward Lincoln Moore skates with the puck. Moore headlined a blockbuster six-player trade deadline deal between the Lincolns and St. Thomas Stars. In 20 games with the Stars, Moore posted 19 goals and 35 points.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

A week that began with the St. Marys Lincolns losing one of the best, young defencemen ended with the team making bombshell additions to their roster ahead of the Jan. 10 Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL) trade deadline.

The headline deal came 24 hours before the deadline when, on Jan. 9, the Lincolns sent first-year skaters Zander Kehego, Julian Stubgen and Rowan Reid, along with cash considerations, to the St. Thomas Stars in exchange for forward Lincoln Moore and defencemen Ian Gedney and Evan Roach.

In a subsequent move, the Lincolns also dealt forward Tyler Oletic to the Eastern Conference's Brantford Titans.

Moore, widely regarded as one of the GOJHL's best players, has been a goal-scoring machine for the Stars this season, with 19 goals and 35 points in 20 games with St. Thomas this year. The 19-year-old from Sault Ste. Marie also played 101 Ontario Hockey League (OHL) games over the course of three seasons with the Saginaw Spirit in which he totalled 14 goals and 28 points. Additionally, Moore played 11 games during the Spirit's 2024 playoff run, which ended with the Spirit winning the Memorial Cup, and tallied five points.

Lincs' general manager Pat Powers, understandably thrilled to add an elite player to his roster, had high praise for Moore.

"Lincoln came into our league as a dominant power forward with a heavy and accurate shot," Powers told the Independent. "The all-around details in his game are impressive. He plays a smart-positional game, brings a physical presence, has the ability to score and has a deft passing game. He will gain lots of attention from the opposition and allow his linemates to have more space."

Rounding out the package from the Stars were Gedney and Roach on the blueline. Gedney started this season with the Caledonia Corvairs before moving to the Stars. In total, the native of Mississauga has two goals and seven points in 19 games with Caledonia and St. Thomas. Gedney was also drafted in the 13th round of the OHL priority selection by the Oshawa Generals.

As for Roach, also a Sault Ste. Marie product, he brings a steady, reliable presence to the Lincolns' back end, but managed to record his first point as a Lincoln in his first game with the team when he made his debut on Jan. 10 in a 7-1 win over the Kitchener-Waterloo Siskins.

Powers valued the two rearguards as much-needed depth on the Lincolns' defence, especially with solid rookie defencemen in Stubgen and Reid going the other way.

"Ian has good offensive instincts but also plays a strong defensive game. One of the keys to our success as a team will be our ability to get pucks efficiently up to our forwards, and Ian will be a big part of us doing that.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Defenceman Evan Roach was acquired by the St. Marys Lincolns in a six-player trade with the St. Thomas Stars. Roach recorded his first point as a Lincoln in his debut with the team on Jan. 10.

"Evan is a depth defender with a good amount of junior experience," Powers continued. "He is a good competitor who will play a simple game and allow our defensive group to continue to play good shut-down minutes."

Earlier in the week, the Lincolns saw a bittersweet departure for defenceman Hayden Barch, whose strong season with the Lincolns earned him an OHL standard players agreement with Saginaw, which used a 13th-round pick in 2023 to draft Barch. With the signing, Barch was also called up to the OHL squad.

"Hayden became a very reliable, puck-moving defenceman who could play with pace to his game," Powers remarked. "He could play in all situations while continuing to play a physical game. He is a very mature young man with a team-first mentality. He will be a very good OHL defender moving forward, and while we loved having him in our lineup, we're happy for Hayden that he gets to go play in the OHL."

With a Barch-sized hole on the back end, the Lincolns landed 18-year-old defenceman Jake McPherson from the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League (NOJHL)'s Soo Thunderbirds. From Edmonton, Alta., McPherson posted four goals and 16 points in 30 games with the Thunderbirds this season. McPherson debuted for the Lincolns on Jan. 10 against the Siskins and drew widespread praise for his skating and puck-handling traits that Powers highlighted as key reasons for the acquisition.

"Jake is a smooth-skating defender with IQ to his game. He effectively sees the passing and skating lanes, and has the ability to make the correct decision. He can be a distributor with the puck or an offensive option without the puck. He is primarily a gap-stick defender but engages when necessary, and I'm excited to see what he can do in our league."

Just hours before the trade deadline passed, Powers completed one final blockbuster, this time with the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League (QMJHL)'s Baie-Comeau Drakkar that brought Kyle Morey back to St. Marys. A Kitchener product, Morey played 48 games in 2021-2022 with the Lincolns and three the following season, totalling 18 goals and 47 points in 51 games in St. Marys.

Morey was a 2021 fifth-round pick of the OHL's Kitchener Rangers and, after playing two seasons in the OHL split between the Rangers and Barrie Colts, Morey joined the QMJHL's Drakkar. In 37 games with Baie-Comeau this season, Morey registered three goals and 14 points.

"Kyle returns to St. Marys with a very mature game from his time split between the OHL and QMJHL," said Powers. "He brings a very high hockey IQ and a lot of skill to our top-six forward group, and makes us an extremely tough team to match up against on the road. He adds another big-time scoring threat to our lineup."

Stonetown Karate Centre junior students earn black belts

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) celebrated two notable accomplishments recently as Marieke Van Lierop and Kaela Hymus each earned their junior black belt.

Sensei Jalyne Lorentz praised the pair for attaining their black belts and said they are pillars of the program who the SKC's younger students can look up to.

"Marieke and Kaela's achievement is not just a personal triumph but also a source of inspiration for their peers," said Lorentz. "Younger students now look up to them as role models. Their junior black belt is a significant milestone, but it's just the beginning for Marieke and Kaela. As they continue their martial-arts journey in a new leadership role, they will be helping younger students work towards their goals and excel in karate. We can't wait to see what they'll accomplish next."

Sensei Jeremy Lorentz added he is very proud of the young students reaching the black-belt level, having watched all of their hard work leading to the accolade.

"Their achievement didn't happen overnight. It involved countless hours of practice, overcoming challenges and consistently pushing their limits," Jeremy Lorentz told the Independent. "From perfecting their kicks and punches to excelling in sparring, weapons and fitness drills, Marieke and Kaela have

shown what it truly means to work hard and never give up."

Both Van Lierop and Hymus commented on attaining their black belts, with Van Lierop saying she is excited for the bigger challenges that come with the black belt.

"It feels very fulfilling to have achieved what has been a goal of mine since I started back in 2019," Van Lierop remarked. "You have to love what you are doing to be able to get better, and there was lots of dedication, extra practice at home and taking criticism to get better every day. Something I am most looking forward to is competing in a new division. Now that I will be in a more advanced division, this will motivate me to practice much more now that I know it will be more challenging to win medals with the standards being higher."

Hymus explained what earning her junior black belt means to her, especially having spent much of her young life in the sport.

"Earning my black belt was one of my most memorable and rewarding experiences," said Hymus. "It has shown me the strength and determination I've built over the years. I've grown up in karate to a degree and I've watched others earn their black belts and dreamed of earning mine. Finally reaching this goal makes me feel so accomplished and ready for the next step in my martial-arts career."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Sensei Jeremy Lorentz, Kaela Hymus, Marieke Van Lierop and Sensei Jalyne Lorentz, all of the Stonetown Karate Centre. Hymus and Van Lierop recently earned their junior black belts.



THE TOWNSHIP OF PERTH SOUTH

TAKE NOTICE that a vacancy exists on the Township of Perth South Council for one (1) Councillor. Council shall fill this vacancy by appointment through a selection process as outlined in the Appointment Procedure for Filling Vacancy on Council by Call for Nominees Policy.

The term of the position is from the date of Council appointment to November 14, 2026.

To be considered for appointment, those interested must meet the following qualifications as per The Municipal Elections Act:

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- Is a Canadian Citizen;
- Is at least 18 years old; and
- Is not prohibited from voting under Section 17 (3) of the Municipal Elections Act or otherwise by law.

Application forms are available on the Township website at www.perthsouth.ca/councilvacancy or at the Township office listed below.

Any qualified person who is interested may submit, in person, a completed application indicating the reason for your interest and any related experience by 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 24, 2025, to: Lizet Scott, Clerk | 3191 Road 122, St. Pauls, Ontario, N0K 1V0 | 519-271-0619 x224 | lscott@perthsouth.ca



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Lincs riding high as win streak hits five straight

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The afterglow of the St. Marys Lincolns' recent acquisitions helped the team pick up two impressive victories over the Kitchener-Waterloo Siskins on Jan. 10 and the Chatham Maroons on Jan. 12.

Heading into the game against the Siskins, all the talk surrounded the Lincolns' trade-deadline haul headlined by a six-player deal with the St. Thomas Stars that brought Lincoln Moore, who had 19 goals and 35 points in 20 games with the Stars, to St. Marys. Defencemen Ian Gedney and Evan Roach completed the return for the Lincolns, which sent Zander Keche-go, Julian Stubgen and Rowan Reid to St. Thomas.

The Lincolns also reacquired forward Kyle Morey, who played the first half of this season in the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League (QMJHL) with the Baie-Comeau Drakkar.

Head coach Jeff Bradley acknowledged the excitement that comes with such big moves but added it was the strong start to the season that ultimately earned the blockbuster rewards from Lincs' general manager Pat Powers.

"Obviously, as a coach, I'm excited, but I'm more excited for the players," Bradley told the Independent. "They earned this. The reason Pat did what he did was because, in addition to the obvious of making his team better, it shows our guys that we are rewarding them for the season we've had. It's to show that we believe in these guys. We have an incredibly intelligent group of players who work hard, who care about the St. Marys Lincolns and want to win for the community, the fans and each other."

The excitement was clearly felt by the players as well who roared out of the gate against the Siskins with two big body checks just seconds into the contest, first by Ethan Coups then by Jacob Montesi. The physical start led to the Lincolns' top line of Owen Voortman, Luca Spagnolo and Jaden Lee opening the scoring just 25 seconds into the first period on Voortman's 20th of the season.

"Ethan (Coups) and Jacob (Montesi) both laying big hits just seconds into the game really set the tone for us," said Bradley. "Then, to have Spagnolo, Lee and Voortman get that goal less than a minute in, it just showed that right from the drop of the puck, we were determined, organized and ready to execute, work hard and engage physically."

The early physicality also represented the fruits of a team conversation held earlier in the week.

"We had an honest meeting on Tuesday (Jan. 7) about our lack of discipline recently, and one of the things we emphasized was that even though we want to be more disciplined, that doesn't mean we have to be soft," Bradley said. "Hockey allows you to make big hits and doing that can put your opponent on their heels, but you have to be smart about it. So, to have two veterans like Ethan and Jacob go out and execute exactly what we talked about was a great lead for the rest of our team to follow."

Bradley added that he was happy with every aspect of his team's performance.

"Every facet of the game, from five-on-five to our powerplay and penalty kill, was really good. We've put a lot of work into the powerplay lately and the players are focused on executing what we've been preaching."

Just under 12 minutes after Voortman put St. Marys up 1-0, Spagnolo potted a powerplay goal assisted by Lee and Ryan Cornfield.

In the second period, despite running into penalty troubles, the Lincolns still managed to extend their lead, including two shorthanded goals just 10 seconds apart. First, after Spagnolo was stopped on a short-handed breakaway, the Lincs' captain retrieved the puck and fed it in front for Lee, who buried the second attempt. Then, just moments later, Ryan Hodkinson



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

With a five-point night against the Kitchener-Waterloo Siskins on Jan. 10 and an empty net goal on Jan. 12 against the Chatham Maroons, Luca Spagnolo, pictured, now has points in 13 straight games, the longest point streak in the entire GOJHL this season.

put home his 11th of the year which went unassisted.

Voortman scored his second of the night almost exactly seven minutes later to give the Lincolns a 5-0 lead heading into the third, the result of a brilliant solo effort by Lee before setting Voortman up for the shot. While the Thunder Bay native and his linemates were the stars of the show offensively, Bradley praised the new additions on the blueline who were in the lineup, Jake McPherson and Evan Roach, for their steady, consistent play.

"Jake can definitely play. I think he fits so well for what we've needed on defence. He skates very well. His head is up at all times. He makes good plays. He is evasive against the other team's forecheck. He's not scared to take the body. He plays on his toes and I think all of the attributes he brings fit into how we want to play.

"Evan was a bit of an unknown for us," Bradley continued, "but I think we were pleased with what he gave us. He was just a solid, stay-at-home defenceman. You might not notice him all the time, but he doesn't make many mistakes, he distributes the puck well and he defends hard. He's a very serviceable player for us."

The Lincolns got another powerplay goal in the final frame, this time off the stick of Cornfield, his eighth of the campaign. St. Marys' powerplay, according to the bench boss, found success as a result of more patience in the offensive zone and better zone entries.

"It's not just about the breakout from our end, it's also about the break-in into the other team's zone. Our guys

looked more patient and they weren't forcing things, which is important because we're emphasizing quality over quantity on the powerplay. We can only score one goal per powerplay, and it just takes one mistake by the opponent or one really good play by us, and it's in the back of the net."

Evan Klein ended goaltender Colby Booth-Housego's shutout bid with just over three and a half minutes left in regulation with his 16th goal of the season. The goal was the only blemish on an otherwise strong showing by Booth-Housego, who made 34 saves in the win.

However, just under two minutes later, Lee responded with his second of the game, assisted by Spagnolo and Voortman, restoring the Lincs' six-goal lead as they held on for a 7-1 victory.

Lincs extend win streak over Maroons

After a first period that saw the Lincolns unchar-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 15

Team	Record	PTS	GF	GA
St. Marys Lincolns	25-6-1-0	51	131	57
London Nationals	21-9-2-1	45	134	108
Stratford Warriors	21-10-3-0	45	110	79
Chatham Maroons	20-9-3-1	44	151	105
LaSalle Vipers	22-12-0-0	44	126	109
Listowel Cyclones	21-10-1-0	43	124	89
Elmira Sugar Kings	20-12-3-0	43	142	106
Strathroy Rockets	17-13-1-1	36	95	103
K-W Siskins	15-12-4-2	36	102	105
Sarnia Legionnaires	13-16-3-1	30	125	146
St. Thomas Stars	11-19-2-1	25	106	161
Komoka Kings	4-28-2-0	10	70	169

Player	GP	G	A	PTS
Jaden Lee	32	17	29	46
Luca Spagnolo	31	23	17	40
Owen Voortman	32	21	18	39
Lincoln Moore	22	19	19	38
Chase MacQueen-Spence	32	14	23	37
Ryan Hodkinson	30	11	16	27
Jacob McLellan	32	5	16	21
Ryder Livermore	32	0	18	18
Noah VandenBrink	22	5	12	17
Blake Elzinga	32	5	12	17
Ryan Cornfield	30	8	8	16
Quinn Gavin-White	31	6	6	12
Owen Kalp	31	2	7	9
Cohen Bidgood	13	3	4	7
Ian Gedney	19	2	5	7
Ethan Coups	31	0	7	7
Jacob Montesi	31	3	3	6
Chase McDougall	30	2	3	5
Evan Roach	28	0	4	4
Jake McPherson	2	0	0	0
Kyle Morey	0	0	0	0

Goalies	GP	GAA	SV-%	Wins
Colby Booth-Housego	17	1.83	0.936	13
Nico Armellin	15	1.74	0.942	12

Lincs riding high as win streak hits five straight

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

acteristically shaky defensively, they regrouped and had two dominant final periods to take a 6-2 win on the road in Chatham.

Coach Bradley noted, while the newest Lincolns once again had good games, it was always going to be a process for the team as a whole to get used to their new teammates.

“Having several new guys in the lineup, not that they hurt us at all, but you get a little bit out of sync when you’ve got multiple new guys in and everyone’s getting used to each other. I think both teams experienced that a little bit. It wasn’t just on our end. Things were a bit sloppy in the first period in particular. We had some missed assignments, but the more we spend time on the ice together, the better we will be.”

It appeared early on that Hodgkinson and Chase MacQueen-Spence were fitting well with Moore, as the trio were part of the powerplay unit that opened the scoring for the Lincolns in the first period with MacQueen-Spence burying his 13th of the season. Moore picked up one of two assists on the goal, his first point in a Lincolns’ jersey, with the other going to Ryder Livermore.

Bradley explained what about the line of Moore, MacQueen-Spence and Hodgkinson worked so well for the Lincolns.

“They did a really good job for us at five-on-five, and then their powerplay unit was really good as well, getting both the goals. We only got three powerplays and we scored twice, and both were from that unit, and those are two huge goals that won us the game.

“Adding Lincoln to Chase’s line is just tough to combat,” added Bradley. “We all know about the talent that Chase has and adding Lincoln, who has a mix of great skill but also a great intelligence, they really blend well together. Once we add Kyle (Morey), it’s going to put so many guys in positions to have even more success.”

Though Moore is still looking for his first goal with St. Marys, his high-end ability has been evident.

“Everybody gets mesmerized by his



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Nico Armellin, pictured, made 54 saves in the Lincolns’ 6-2 win over the Chatham Maroons on Jan. 12. Armellin has won six straight games.

near-goal-a-game production in St. Thomas, but Lincoln (Moore) is a kid who had to grind his teeth to make an OHL team and establish himself as a top-12 member of a forward group that won a Memorial Cup,” Bradley said. “He knows how to play at both ends of the ice, and he plays hard. I think it’s natural when you go to a new team, you want to distribute the puck a bit more, but Lincoln is a guy who needs and wants the puck on his stick, and as he gets fully settled here, I think he will be fantastic.”

After MacQueen-Spence’s icebreaker, the Maroons responded in a big way with two goals just 99 seconds apart kicked off by a point shot from Carter Gillen through a massive screen that found its way into the St. Marys net, followed by an offensive zone breakdown leading to a breakaway goal by Liam Campbell.

The two goals did little to sully the performance of goaltender Nico Armellin, though, who finished the game with 54 saves. In backstopping the Lincs to victory, Armellin also earned his sixth consecutive victory and, in eight of his last nine, the Vaughan product has post-

ed a save percentage of at least 0.903 or higher. In six of those nine games, Armellin’s save percentage has been over 0.930.

Bradley said the team did a much better job containing Chatham’s aggressive offense in the final 40 minutes than in the first, largely due to the Lincolns’ attention to detail.

“Chatham likes to send guys out, try to get them behind our defence, and a lot of guys slash horizontally through the ice, so it’s about making sure we’re on the right side of those guys. In the second and third, I thought we were picking up those assignments much better and I don’t think we gave up an odd-man rush in the final two periods.”

The Lincolns tied the game at two apiece midway through the second when, back on the powerplay, MacQueen-Spence drove toward the net from the boards. Rather than shooting, MacQueen-Spence moved to the side of the net to pass it out front to Cohen Bidgood, who swatted at it, causing the puck to bounce off a Maroons’ defender and past goaltender Gannon Hunter.

Less than three minutes later, Lee exploded for a breakaway and roofed the puck over Hunter’s arm to put the Lincolns ahead 3-2. The goal was the 50th in Lee’s Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL) career. Livermore picked up the lone assist.

One minute and 34 seconds later, a point shot by Montesi rang off the post before taking a fortuitous bounce off the back of Hunter and going into the Maroons’ net, giving the Lincolns a two-goal lead heading into the third.

With the powerplay also finding more success, the Lincolns’ other recent area for improvement – their discipline – also began trending in a more positive direction, beginning in the game against the Siskins and continuing in Chatham.

“I think two games in a row, our discipline has been much better,” said Bradley. “On Friday, we took five penalties but one of them was a too-many men call, which was my mistake on the bench, and on Sunday, we only took four penalties. It shows how much these guys care that we spoke about it last week and they were able to realize what they needed to adjust and go out and do it.”

The only goals in the third period came in the last two minutes, both being empty netters. First, Spagnolo hit the open net, extending his point streak to 13 games, which is the longest point streak of the season in the entire GOJHL.

That was followed by the second of the night for MacQueen-Spence, who scored on the empty net and, in doing so, joined Lee in reaching the 50-goal plateau as the Lincs downed the Maroons 6-2. Over the course of his 13-game point streak, Spagnolo has scored 11 goals and 22 points. Spagnolo also has goals in four straight games.

The Lincolns look to extend their five-game winning streak as they host back-to-back home games against the Listowel Cyclones and Stratford Warriors on Jan. 17 and 18, the latter of which is preceded by the Lincolns’ chicken-dinner fundraiser.



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Brockman wins silver in Provincial Youth Challenge



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured is Rory Brockman of the St. Marys Bowling Lanes who was part of the Grand River Ladies team at the Youth Challenge Provincial Round hosted at Echo Bowl in Brantford on Jan. 12. The team, which earned the silver medal, was coached by Sarah Dougall and Brockman's teammates included Raven Hamacher, April Virtue, Shelby Sheridan, and McKenna White. The team bowled seven games en route to capturing the silver. Brockman's team competed against seven other squads to represent Ontario at the Nationals in Calgary, Alta. The teams were evenly matched, with an 11-point difference between first and second place and just a one-point difference between second and third.

U10 A Boys advance to finals of Peterborough tourney

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Buick-GMC U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock had to battle through adversity to make the championship game of the Peterborough U11 Liftlock tournament, which ran from Jan. 9-12 in Peterborough.

Head coach Jaden Ropp was proud of his team's silver-medal finish.

"The kids had a fun weekend overall, despite not being able to come away with the championship," Ropp told the Independent. "We enjoyed the challenge of playing new teams from different parts of Ontario and stacked up very well against the larger centres."

After the round-robin concluded, the Rock found themselves in the finals for a rematch of their first game against the Orillia Terriers. After going down midway through the second period, Kyle Johnson responded for St. Marys, going bar-down on a breakaway to tie the game at one apiece. Ultimately, the Rock narrowly fell in the championship game by a final score of 2-1. Jack Anderson received the Rock's player-of-the-game honours on the back of a strong, defensive performance, and goaltender Ryan Pickel turned in very good showings throughout the tourna-



ment.

Ropp added the team's ability to battle back when they get knocked down has become key to the team's identity.

"I liked the resilience of our team this weekend. We were down 4-1 early in the first game with Orillia but elevated our play in the second half of the game to come away with a 5-5 tie. We rode that momentum into the second game and got the 2-1 win against a tough Northumberland Hawks squad.

"We have been down early a few times this year but have been able to dig a little deeper and make a game of it," Ropp continued. "That was no different this weekend. We are looking forward to the Rock Cup tournament in St. Marys in February, and our resilience will be key to our success the rest of the season."

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MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



Jack Becker makes a save with his stick during the Finnbilt Construction U9 MD Boys St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Elly Kittmer launches a wrist shot on goal during last Saturday's St. Marys Kinsmen U9 C Girls St. Marys Rock game.



Aliza Harlton passes the puck up the ice during the Harris-Greig Automotive U9 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Jessica Zwambag crashes the opposition's net during last Saturday's St. Marys Landscaping U11 B Girls St. Marys Rock game.



Maeve Sheldon releases a shot from the blueline during the Veterinary Purchasing U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Cortney Linton rockets a shot from the point during last Saturday's Hubbard Pharmacy U18 C Girls St. Marys Rock game.

(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)

St. Marys residents undertaking poppy project for Remembrance Day 2025



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Marianne Ferguson's poppy made for the St. Marys Poppy Project.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Stratford's Poppy Project displayed on William Hutt Bridge inspired the St. Marys Poppy Project.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Members of St. Marys Life on Facebook would have seen a new project a group of crafty women have started called the St. Marys Poppy Project.

The goal of the project is to cover the railings at the St. Marys Royal Canadian Legion in November with beautiful, red and black, hand-crocheted and knitted poppies similar to the display seen

in Stratford in recent years downtown and on the William Hutt bridge.

The group is looking for anyone with knitting or crocheting skills, and some spare time, who is willing to help with this initiative. The shades of red tend to vary from poppy to poppy, so they don't all have to match exactly.

Lynn Leslie and Deb Hutton are the main points of contact for this project, and they can be reached at lynnleslie96@yahoo.ca and debhutton3@gmail.com

with questions about patterns or the yarn.

According to Leslie, the project was started to honour local veterans and the sacrifices they made for our freedom. She had been thinking about doing a project like this for a couple of years. After retirement, she and Hutton were together discussing it and decided it was a good time.

Leslie said she is overwhelmed by the feedback she has received and even

those who don't know how to crochet or knit are wanting to get involved. She even had someone reach out saying they wanted to make 36 poppies because that was the age at which her grandfather was killed in action.

Leslie will be reaching out to the town as well, as it looks like there may be more poppies created than will fit on the Legion railings, proving the concept is bound to be successful in St. Marys.



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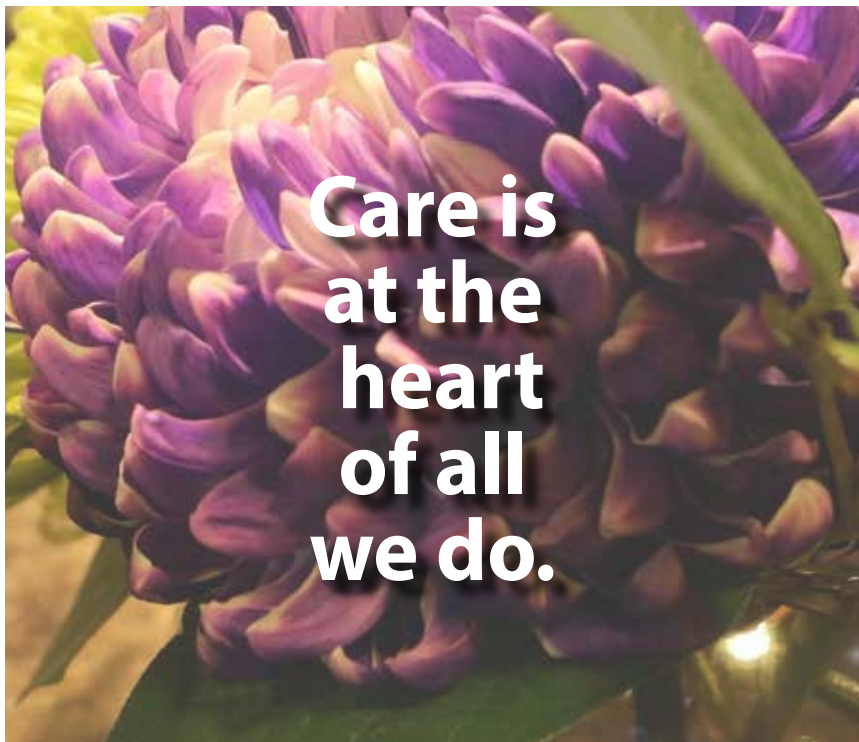
Sue Fowler, Broker/Manager and Cathie Szmon Broker of Record at Peak Select Realty Inc., brokerage are excited to welcome Tascha Freeman, Realtor® onboard the Peak Select team of agents. Tascha lives in Kirkton with her husband Zan and their two little boys Axel and Ace. Before pursuing a career in the real estate profession Tascha obtained a double major in criminology and sociology from the University of Western Ontario. Tascha and Zan owned and operated a hydroponic lettuce greenhouse and a hot air balloon company. Additionally she has worked in Social Services

for many years, assisting people to access resources and support their mental health needs.

Tascha understands the time and effort required to run a business and is fully prepared to work diligently for her clients. She possesses both the passion for real estate and the essential people skills necessary for success. Her favourite pastimes include spending time with family, the outdoors, and a fondness for donuts (remember this when she's open housing folks).

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UTRCA's Nature School programming available for upcoming PA day

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

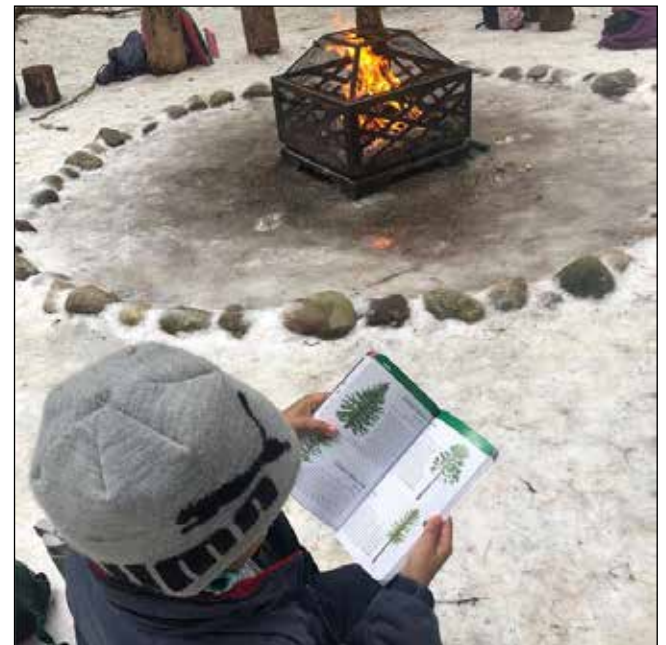
Staff Contribution

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) is launching a new PA Day program in partnership with the Stratford Perth Museum.

This fun-filled day mimics the UTRCA's Nature School program and is aimed at students between eight and 12 years old. Activities will include fire-making, printmaking and snowshoeing.

"We have some really fun indoor and outdoor activities planned with a focus on the beauty of nature and the stories of different cultures and local history," said UTRCA community education technician Matthew Marchioni in a press release. "We're really excited to partner with the Stratford Perth Museum and host the PA Day at their venue."

The program runs on Friday, Jan. 31 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with options for extended care. For more information or to register, parents and caregivers can visit <https://bit.ly/3DnoJKX>.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF UTRCA)

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) has partnered with the Stratford Perth Museum to offer a PA Day program at the museum on Jan. 31 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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COLUMNS

FROM THE GARDEN: In respect to horticultural groups...



NANCY ABRA
Independent Columnist

Since its beginning, the United Nations (UN) have designated a specific theme or subjects for that year. Topics that have been a focus in the past years were agriculture and environment to human rights, science and technology. For 2025, the United Nations has resolved for one of their themes to be the International Year of Cooperatives.

The UN decree for this year draws attention to governments for a way of promoting cooperatives and raising awareness in contribution, implementation of sustainable goals and in overall social and economic development. The capacity of cooperatives to make important global food security is also acknowledged, inviting governments to

support agriculture and food cooperatives with measures to improve access to markets and financial capital, create enabling environments and strengthen collaboration across the many initiatives in this area. <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/cooperatives/news/2025-designated-as-the-un-international-year-of-cooperatives>

You may be wondering how this UN resolution for 2025 can pertain to horticultural and garden clubs? I could be stretching this concept with some 'out of the box' thinking but here are a few aspects to consider.

By adapting a cooperative model, horticultural societies and garden clubs can foster a greater sense of community among their membership. This model encourages collaboration and mutual support to encourage members to take active roles. When members participate and share responsibilities it builds a stronger and vibrate community. Local gardeners and horticultural groups can benefit by forming or joining together as a cooperative to share resources and knowledge through collective workshops and support, enhancing the overall impact of their commu-

nity efforts.

Cooperatives often prioritize sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. Horticultural societies can share their knowledge and promote public awareness on sustainable gardening as well as the broader social and economic contributions. By participating in cooperative activities local gardeners can adapt to promote sustainable horticultural practices and contribute to environmental development. Also, horticultural groups banding together can also influence and advocate for policies and regulations for such concerns such as invasive plants or intrusive insects that have become harmful to plants and our environment.

The cooperative model can leverage collective bargaining power to secure better deals and funding opportunities. The Ontario Horticultural Association provides awards and grants. Local societies can access funding which can be vital for financing community projects. Initiatives like beautifying public spaces, conservation projects, creating pollinators gardens or tree planting undertaking can be more effective



when resources, funding and efforts are combined.

Horticultural societies in cooperation with other community organizations can work with local government and other agencies. As the cost of food and food security is a growing concern, cooperative models can transform individual efforts into a thriving community garden. With collaboration, society members and other garden-

ers with municipal support and food bank agencies can collectively decide on food crops to grow, maintenance schedules and distribution of the produce.

By adopting a cooperative model, area horticultural societies and garden clubs can achieve sustainability, resilience and a stronger sense of community, ultimately leading to thriving, green and vibrant community spaces.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH
St. Marys Public Library

If you're like most of us, your New Year's Resolutions may have already fallen by the wayside. The good news is that you can always give another go at them! If you've been wanting to learn a new skill or increase your activity levels, consider borrowing one of our Yoga Kits. The adult kit includes a mat, support cushion, a mat cleaner, and pose cards. We also have a kid and adult combo kit which includes everything found in the adult kit as well as an additional yoga mat, two yoga books for kids, and a set of children's pose cards. Borrow a Yoga Kit today!

This Week's Recommendation

Understand how yoga impacts your body with "Science of Yoga" by Ann Swanson. This detailed book explores 30 common poses from multiple angles, showcasing their effect on body mechanics such as

blood flow, respiration, and the movement of your joints. Find "Science of Yoga" (call sticker: 613.7046 Swa) in our adult non-fiction section.

Up This Week

- Fri., Jan. 17: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 - Sat., Jan. 18: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Mon., Jan. 20: Trivia Night at Gilly's Pubhouse*^ (7 p.m.)
 - Tues., Jan. 21: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 - Wed., Jan. 22: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Scrabble (6-8 p.m.), Books and Brews*~ (7 p.m.)
 - Thurs., Jan. 23: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- *Registration Required or Reservation Recommended
^Held at Gilly's Pubhouse (17 Water St. S, St. Marys)
~Held at Broken Rail Brewery (480 Glass St., St. Marys)

Ask the Arborist

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



Dear Arborist,

Is it possible to treat an elm tree after it gets the dutch elm disease? It is an American elm and it's 30% dead, to be frank.

Dear Frank,

Canada has struggled with dutch elm disease for almost 100 years. Dutch elm disease is fungal infection believed to have been introduced in 1928 from the Netherlands in infected logs. You can treat elm trees, but only prior to them getting the disease. Sometimes, they inject the elms, however, the issue is it gets expensive and has to be done every couple of years. Once an American elm tree gets dutch elm

disease it is normally always fatal.

This year, I saw quite a few elm trees die as a result of this disease. Available options are to trim out the dead wood and fertilize with high phosphorous and high potassium, then hope for the best. If neither suggestion works, unfortunately, the remaining option is removal.

Sincerely

The Arborist

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

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: HMCS Stone Town and St. Marys (Part 2)

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

HMCS Stone Town, a River Class frigate, was commissioned at Montreal on July 21, 1944. She arrived in Halifax on August 13, and in early September left for Bermuda so that the crew could have a month of training under ocean-going conditions. Finally, Stone Town returned to Canada and was assigned as Senior Officer's ship to newly formed Escort Group C-8. In the final year of World War II, Stone Town made 11 round trips between Canada and Great Britain as armed mid-ocean escort.

In St. Marys, residents continued to take their adoption of Stone Town seriously. Thanks to funds raised locally toward "comforts," when their ship left Montreal, crew members were very well supplied. With the money raised in St. Marys, the Women's Patriotic League purchased two washing machines, six toasters, six hot plates, six electric irons and four coffee percolators. Donations to the ship's crew also included decks of cards, board games and books, phonograph records, two record players and even a piano. The Women's Patriotic League later sent along a sewing machine and a large clothing press so that uniforms and other clothing could be mended on board ship. They sent drapes and two easy chairs to make the officers' quarters "homey." Members of the League reasoned that the officers had not been "showered with gifts as abundantly as their men." HMCS Stone Town's full complement was 141 men – eight officers and 133 seamen. Considering the tight quarters on a naval vessel, it must have taken great organizational skill to stow all the "comforts" so that they could be used and enjoyed.

In October 1944, the Patriotic League began to organize Christmas donations for HMCS Stone Town that would include fruit cake and other "festive fare." On November 23, the Journal Argus reported: "Christmas festivities aboard HMCS Stone Town should be well-supplied this year. The people of St. Marys have made up a bumper parcel of good things for the officers and men. There will even be provision in the parcel for those who wish to hang up their stockings according to the old custom, for one of the items is 175 pairs of socks. The other goodies include 75 pounds of Christmas cake, 100 dozen assorted cookies, two dozen decks of playing cards, 50 books, and 24 records." At their November meeting, the members of the League also decided to send Christmas cards to all the officers and men on HMCS Stone Town.

St. Marys kept in contact with the ship throughout the war. A final donation was made in July 1945 when the Women's Patriotic League shipped two packages of sweaters, cards, records, books and magazines via CNR freight to Halifax where Stone Town was being refitted for warfare in the tropics. Although Germany had surrendered on May 8, 1945, and Atlantic duties were over, Ja-



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

With St. Marys Mayor, Dr. J. G. Jose, looking on, Mrs. Caroline Hardy accepts HMCS Stone Town's ship's bell from Lieutenant Hunter, on behalf of the Women's Patriotic League, May 19, 1944. Mayor Jose holds a certificate from the Royal Canadian Navy thanking the Town of St. Marys for supporting the ship during World War II.

pan was still waging war in the Pacific. Japan announced surrender in August, and Stone Town's refit was stopped. The Royal Canadian Navy decommissioned HMCS Stone Town at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia on November 13, 1945. She was subsequently sold to the Department of Transport and modified to serve as a weather ship on Canada's west coast. Stone Town was stationed in Esquimalt as a weather ship for 15 years until she was replaced in 1967 by Canadian Government Ship Quadra, a vessel with more sophisticated weather monitoring equipment. In 1968, Stone Town was sold by the Government of Canada and records of her activities from that time onward were no longer officially kept.

But there was an event in 1947 that helped St. Marys preserve the honour of having HMCS Stone Town named for this community. At an open meeting of town council on May 19, the mayor, Dr. J. G. Jose, welcomed two naval reserve officers from HMCS Prevost, a naval training base in London, Ontario. Members of the Women's Patriotic League and representatives of other local organizations that had supported Stone Town during the war were also present at the meeting. The officers brought with them the ship's bell from HMCS Stone Town, removed when she was decommissioned. They presented the bell to St. Marys "in the hope that this piece of ship's equipment would tend to recall in future years the days when all had stood together to bring the conflict to a successful conclusion." Mrs. Caroline Hardy, the last president of the Women's Patriotic League, proudly accepted the bell on behalf of the members. She pointed out that the St. Marys branch of the League had been formed in September 1939, a few days after the declaration of war, and had disbanded in February 1946. In that span of six and a half years, these efficient and energetic women had

raised \$25,000 for the war effort and for the relief of war refugees, \$3,000 of that directed towards Stone Town. (\$25,000 in 1946 would be equivalent to more than \$400,000 in 2025.)

The bell was displayed for several weeks in the window of the Journal Argus at 142 Queen Street East while town council tried to decide on a permanent location. The paper's editor wrote: "The bell should of course be placed on display for the public for a short time. If it is left accessible for too long at time, however, it may result in some people harming it by marking or scratching. Or it even might tempt a thief. We think that most citizens will feel that it should be carefully preserved for posterity in a safe place in our municipal buildings." The bell was placed in several different locations until it finally found a permanent home in the St. Marys Museum. It hangs on a special metal stand, displaying the inscription "HMCS Stone Town 1944." Today, visitors can see it in the

Museum's military gallery.

There was a revival of interest in the ship's bell and its story when, in 1987, Lieutenant-Commander William P. Moffat, by this time retired and an elderly man, visited the St. Marys Museum. He lived in Montreal, but a married daughter lived in nearby Oxford County. He had been visiting her when the two of them came to the Museum and he was delighted to see the bell from his former ship. He had not known that it had been presented to St. Marys because he had transferred to another frigate before Stone Town was decommissioned. He did remember clearly, his journey by train from Montreal in June 1944 when Mayor White and the Naval authorities had arranged for him to visit St. Marys. He recalled meeting Mayor White and Mr. Durr and being introduced to the Quarry. His 1987 visit to the Museum and some follow-up correspondence led to more intensive research into the story of St. Marys' association with HMCS Stone Town. This interest intensified in 1995, the year that marked the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Learning about its location, several more former crew members and/or their families came to see the bell, travelling from London, Toronto, Sarnia and even one man from British Columbia. They brought with them stories and photographs and the Museum's file on HMCS Stone Town grew thicker. It is available in the R. Lorne Eedy Archives at the St. Marys Museum for anyone who is interested in learning more about this ship and about the town's efforts to support her.

There is an interesting website devoted to the Royal Canadian Navy that includes a great deal of information about HMCS Stone Town. It describes her time at sea and provides stories and photographs, some taken by crew members, giving a glimpse of life aboard the frigate during World War II. Search for HMCS Stone Town or follow this link: http://forposterityssake.ca/Navy/HMCS_STONE_TOWN_K531.htm.



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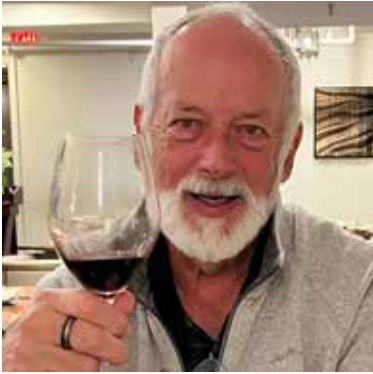


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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Amazing murals bring Sherbrooke's history to life



PAUL KNOWLES
Independent Columnist

We were to meet our guide, Chantal Turgeon, in the lobby of the Grand Hotel Times, our very temporary place of residence in Sherbrooke, Que. The plan was to do a walking tour of the unique murals located around Sherbrooke city centre.

We knew that was not going to happen – it was pouring rain, a deluge so persistent the streets were running with water and some patios had turned into small ponds.

But never underestimate the determination of a tour guide. Turgeon showed up with umbrellas and a smile, and by the end of the tour, soggy shoes, wet pantlegs and all, we were very glad she did, because the 18 Sherbrooke murals are amazing.

The murals are gigantic, genuine works of art beautifully executed, full of local detail and often painted with a lot of humour. They cover entire sides of buildings and feature the clever “trompe-l’oeil” (“to deceive the eye”) style, which creates optical illusions suggesting three dimensions.

The mural project has been ongoing for more than 20 years. The first was completed in 2002, Sherbrooke’s bicentennial. It features a scene depicting life in 1902, but perhaps the best place to start is with a mural near the Sherbrooke Tourist Information Office, a scene dating back to 1867.

The murals are not all historic in theme. There are recent and modern scenes, right up to the 2019 mural, “The Fifth Element,” a visionary, modernistic image depicting a family viewing huge symbols of fire, earth, water and air – the fifth element being the spectators themselves.

One of the murals, dubbed “Nékitotegwak,” depicts the junction of the Magog and St.-François rivers. The title means “where the rivers meet.” It’s especially appropriate because, as we discovered during our wet and wild tour, visiting the murals includes walking the dramatic, metal boardwalk along the river that surges through the city.

Visitors to Sherbrooke should pick up one of the free guides to this open-air art gallery. They recommend two possible walking routes, one a half-circuit that takes you to 11 of the murals, the other, the full circuit of all 18.

The pamphlets add to the fun of the tour, suggesting a number of items included in the murals that kids – and whimsical adults – can find as they enjoy the art.

For instance, at the “Heart, Culture and Education” mural that is a building-sized book-

shelf, visitors are invited to spot one apple, one pregnant woman, one dog, one owl, two butterflies, one blue jay, one fairy, one dragonfly, one mole, one happy face, 10 ladybugs and one grasshopper. What is not mentioned is the books on the shelves are the works of local authors, including Louise Penny, whose Inspector Gamache thrillers are situated right here in the Eastern Townships.

All of the murals are fine pieces of artistic achievement. A few of our favourites included:

- “Canada Games 2013,” a mural comprising 224 panels so full of life that the main figure, a female athlete in full motion, is leaving panels scattered in her wake.

- “Tradition and Prevention,” a commemoration of Sherbrooke’s fire-prevention history that is nonetheless filled with humour and nostalgia, from the shopper in very hip ‘60s fashions to a young boy about to wreak havoc with a garden hose.

This mural is located very close to St. Michael’s Cathedral-Basilica, a Gothic Revival masterpiece that has been very much in the news of late; it is the resting place of St. Marie-Léonie Paradis, founder of the community of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family. This local hero was canonized by Pope Francis in October 2024, a cause for huge celebration in Sherbrooke as well as in Rome. Her story, memorabilia and relics are all on display in the cathedral.

As we waded through tempo-



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The mural, “Tradition and Prevention,” was unveiled in 2007. The only figure in the photograph that is not part of the painting is our terrific guide, Chantal Turgeon.

rary ponds and unsuccessfully dodged raindrops, we soon realized that seeing the Sherbrooke murals was more than worth the effort in any weather. We were also very grateful to be accompanied by Turgeon, as well as Shanny Hallé, a Sherbrooke native who is the very hospitable, Eastern Townships’ media liaison.

Our recommendation? At the very least, get the guidebook. It includes QR codes that let you learn more on your phone. The best option, if possible, is to get a living, breathing, fast-paced human guide like Turgeon. You will appreciate the works of art that much more.

For example, we stopped at “We Are In the Movies,” and at “CHLT-TV, 50 Years Of Looking At It Our Way.” Both

murals feature a cast of local characters, a few named in the brochure, but each one was identified for us by Turgeon and Hallé, all of which made the experience of visiting Sherbrooke’s amazing murals all that more intriguing.

As you do the trek to see the murals, you will also be passing coffee shops, restaurants, boutiques, museums and more, all of which can make for a fascinating day out in this rather special capital of Québec’s Eastern Townships.

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



The “Sherbrooke 2002 Bicentennial” mural includes 23 characters from 1902.



The CHLT-TV mural depicts a cast of characters through 50 years of broadcasting history.

Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent

**New Year,
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day*
BINGO

Valentine's Day Bingo & 50/50

Monday February 3rd at 7 p.m.

Thorndale Lions Community Centre

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Two local women entrepreneurs appointed to Community Futures Middlesex board

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Community Futures Middlesex recently announced changes to its board of directors as the organization welcomes two women, Susan Judd and Roberta Fox-Lawson, to the board.

Community Futures Middlesex is a business-help centre that serves entrepreneurs and small businesses located in Middlesex County. It is staffed by business professionals to encourage entrepreneurship and the pursuit of greater economic opportunities. Their services include business consulting and counselling, community economic development, small-business financing, workshops and training, as well as various promotional programs and initiatives. This corporation is run by an experienced board of local business and community leaders who serve voluntarily.

Judd, who resides in the Thorndale area, is an award-winning entrepreneur, community leader and co-founder of Ride the Bine, a southwestern Ontario craft-beverage tour experience. She is a front-end manager at Heeman's, a family run greenhouse, garden centre, strawberry farm and mead and cidery. She also serves as the relationship manager with Farm Credit. Judd has a great passion for agritourism and is a strong advocate for rural communities.

Fox-Lawson is a former technology consultant and an accomplished leader with a strong track record in community involvement. She is a previous resident of Thorndale but still maintains strong ties to the community. Fox-Lawson has served on various boards, cham-

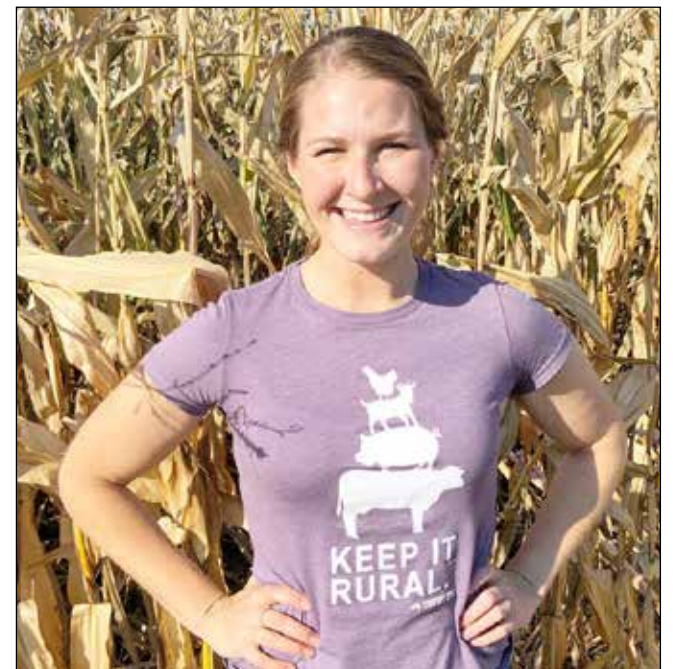


(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Roberta Fox-Lawson, a former technology consultant and accomplished business leader, has been appointed to the board of directors for Community Futures Middlesex.

pions rural entrepreneurship and played a significant role in launching Canada's 9-8-8 national suicide prevention helpline.

"With this new leadership, we are excited to continue advancing our mission and supporting the growth of



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Susan Judd, an award-winning entrepreneur and co-founder of Ride the Bine, has been appointed to the board of directors for Community Futures Middlesex.

entrepreneurs and small-business owners in our community," Community Futures Middlesex said in a press release.

For more information on Community Futures Middlesex, visit cfmiddlesex.ca.

Thorndale Optimist Club continues to support children of the community

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

By providing hope and positive vision, the Thorndale Optimist Club mission is to bring out the best in the youth and their community.

Since the club began in 1969, members have actively supported Thorndale and the greater community's youth. Over the years, they have hosted their annual bike rodeo, donated funds and supported area youth sports, the West Nissouri Public School Grade 8 class trip, and other youth programs.

In one of these school programs, the Thorndale Optimist Club donates food

for the school pantry. Recently, Optimist members Ken Quenneville and Wanda Marx dropped off fresh fruit at West Nissouri Public School for the students. This club regularly supplies granola bars, puddings and other non-perishable snacks to help keep the school-pantry cupboards full.

Also recently, the school has asked the Thorndale Optimist Club if it could help replenish the sports-ball inventory for the school gym as much of this equipment has either been lost or damaged beyond use.

"These kids at our local school are in our wheelhouse as recipients to our focussed benevolence," club member Melanie Sorensen said.

Boys & Girls Club programming in Thorndale

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Boys & Girls Club London (BGC) actively provides various programming in Thorndale for the youth of this community.

Coming soon with only a few spots available is the club's 10-week volleyball program, which will focus on the fundamentals of this sport through drills and plenty of gameplay. This program is open to kids aged nine to 13 years old. In addition to the weekly session, which start on Jan. 18, there will be a final skill showcase for these participants held at the BGC London main club, during which the

Thorndale team will get the chance to play against teams from other communities. Registration is required.

Coming on Jan. 24, the BGC Thorndale Club is hosting a Lights, Camera, Action, Movie Night at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre open to kids aged nine to 14. Participants also need to register for this event.

For BGC upcoming youth programming in Thorndale, check out www.ilovethorndale.ca/boys-girls-club-of-london. Registration for the BGC London Thorndale programs is required and links to these activities can be found at bgclondon.recdesk.com/Community/Program/Detail.

Riddles

- | | |
|---|--|
| Why did the man put his money in the freezer? | The North Poll |
| He wanted cold hard cash | What did the fireman's wife get for Christmas? |
| What do prisoners use to call each other? | A ladder in her stocking |
| Cell phones | What lies at the bottom of the sea and shivers? |
| Why don't skeletons fight each other? | A nervous wreck |
| They don't have the guts. | What do you call an American drawing? |
| What do you get from a pampered cow? | Yankee doodle |
| Spoiled milk. | Have you ever seen a man eating tiger? |
| How do you make a tissue dance? | No, but in the cafe next door I once saw a man eating chicken |
| Put a little boogie in it | What do you call it when you get struck by lightning? |
| Where do polar bears vote? | A shocking experience |

- Word Search -



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

Word List

- Ottawa
- Victoria
- Edmonton
- Regina
- Winnipeg
- Toronto
- Quebec City
- Fredericton
- Halifax
- Charlottetown
- St. John's
- Iqaluit
- Yellowknife
- Whitehorse



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

Which animal is really good at playing hockey?



A score-pion!

Chase Dundas (2)

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

TONS OF FUN FOR KIDS EVERY WEEK!

PET OF THE WEEK

Each Pet of the Week will receive a FREE treat bag from St. Marys Veterinary Clinic



Our Pet of the Week is Watson, a four-year-old Australian Shepherd. Australian Shepherds are known to be highly active and energetic and true to form, Watson loves his daily walks and enjoys spending quality time with his owners, the Everett family.



St. Marys Veterinary Clinic is pleased to be the sponsor of the PET OF THE WEEK

New Year, Fresh Start for Your Pet!

This weekly segment is on Diet:

- Cut out the table food. Our pet food is sufficient to maintain a healthy balance of calories, fats, vitamins, and minerals.
- Make changes gradually. Shifting abruptly from one diet to another can cause stomach upset, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Give treats in moderation. We all enjoy a treat and your pet is no exception, but don't overdo it. They can cause weight gain and digestive issues. You know what your pet can never get enough of? Praise and love from you.

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

Solutions on page 29

LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Glad to be 101

25 years ago (2000)

101 and, going strong! Gladys Smith is one of a very elite group of about 1000 people in Ontario who have lived in three centuries. Mrs. Smith, who was born on January 5, 1899, marked her 101st birthday quietly with family last week.

Influenza has replaced Y2K as the top “bug” these days, and St. Marys is no exception. St. Marys Memorial Hospital chief of staff Dr. Fred Jewson says the Stonetown has been hit hard by the annual bug.

50 years ago (1975)

Eight new, well-padded chairs have been placed around the Council table at Town Hall. The former chairs have been retained for use by visitors at Council sessions.

The extent of Christmas light bulb thievery has not reached the epidemic proportions this festive season that was the case here several years back. Only one instance of such thievery has been reported to local police from a home along Queen Street East during New Year’s Eve.

75 years ago (1950)

When teacher and pupils of S.S. No. 8 Blanshard in Rannoch returned to school on Monday, they found that the caretaker was in no mood for jest. The reason was that the school was littered with papers from drawers and desks, and the small portable radio, only recently purchased, was missing. Thieves had entered the building some time over the weekend.

The First Presbyterian Church Y.P.S. joined the Stratford and district Y.P.S. for a skating party on Tuesday evening. After skating they went to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and the Y.P.S. there served lunch.

100 years ago (1925)

Mr. Wilfred Zimmerman, clerk in Crosthwaite’s drug store, has just received a cheque for \$50, having won third prize in the Mentholatum Company’s contest, which closed on December 1. The prize was awarded for the largest sales of Mentholatum. Zimmerman is delighted with his \$50 cheque and feels proud to think that he came in third in the whole province.

The town is practically free from infectious diseases there being just one case of measles and one case of whooping cough now in quarantine.

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OBITUARY

Clarke



Robert Allan "Bob" Clarke of Gorrie passed away at Listowel Memorial Hospital on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024, in his 77th year after a brief courageous battle with cancer.

Beloved husband of Joan (Litt) Clarke for 50 ½ years.

Dear father of Wendy & Bev Annett of Mildmay and Rod & Krista Clarke of Fordwich.

Krista Clarke of Fordwich.

Cherished grandfather of Taylor & Avery Annett and Preston, Kyla and Sheldon Clarke.

Missed older brother of Linda Acres (Harold deceased) of Woodham, Judy & Karl Baron of Oshawa and Chris & John Bickell of Red Deer, Alberta, his Litt inlaws, Larry of Hickson, Bob & Marie of Seaforth, Nancy Knapp of Palmerston and Dianne Sheerer & Keith Arnold of Rostock, also nieces, nephews and cousins on both sides.

Predeceased by his parents Bill & Shirley (Johnson) Clarke.

Funeral services were held at Eaton Funeral Home in Listowel on Friday, December 20, 2024.

Private family interment in Gorrie Cemetery at a later date.

THANK YOU

We would like to say a big thank you to the fire department for responding so quickly to a fire on James St. North. We appreciate everything you did for us.

Dennis and Cindy

Birthday OPEN HOUSE



Come celebrate Irene's 90th birthday open house

Jan 25 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Downie optimist hall, St Paul's
Best wishes only

OBITUARY

Baird



Margaret (Peggy) McMillan Baird passed away peacefully at home, as she wished, in her 101st year, on January 5, 2025.

Peggy was from Bruce County. She graduated from the University of Western Ontario, London and Ontario Teacher's College, Toronto, taught

at Alma College, St. Thomas, and St. Marys DCVI. Peggy settled in St. Marys where she married, raised a family, and established herself within the community for more than 70 years.

Predeceased by her husband, Bob, her son Don (Donna) and son-in-law Richard Jackson (Janet). Loving mother of Janet (Julian), Kathy (Richard), and Liz. Treasured Nan of Andrew (Megan) and Adam (April) and Mandy (Colin). Great-Nan of Destiny, Addison, Ashtyn, Jaxson, William and Brooklynn. Fondly remembered by cousins and friends at the cottage in Kincardine.

Peggy was an athlete, an animal lover, especially large dogs, an avid reader, and crossword enthusiast. She loved the cottage and being a true Bruce County girl, the bagpipes. But her defining feature was her love of family. Truly a life well lived! There will be a private service.

Friends and family will be welcomed to an "Open House" reception at the St. James Masonic Lodge, 45 Thames Road, St. Marys on Sunday January 19, 2025, between 2:30pm and 4:30pm. Internment will follow in the spring at the Greenock Cemetery, Bruce County. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

THANK YOU

Cowdrey

In loving memory of a dear mother, grandmother and great-grandma, Helen, who passed away on January 3, 2025.

On behalf of the entire family, we want to thank Andrew Hodges (Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home), Reverend Pirie Mitchell, Reverend Robert Lawson and Gary Mallalieu for the beautiful memorial service as well as the UCW ladies for the wonderful food at the reception. In addition, we thank Kingsway Lodge staff for their years of care and service. Your compassion in our recent loss will long be remembered.

We thank all family and friends for your thoughts and prayers. We appreciate your kind words and support during this difficult time.

Those we love, don't go away. They walk beside us every day.

Unseen, Unheard but always near. So loved, so missed and held so dear.

Have you been affected by someone else's drinking?

Al-Anon Family Groups could help YOU! Call for time and place.

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OBITUARY

Arthur



Shirley Eileen Arthur (Miners) passed away peacefully at Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth on January 6, 2025 at the age of 82. A life-long farmer, she co-owned H&S Custom Services with Hugh Arthur, guided bus tours, loved to travel all over the world and enjoyed her many dogs.

Survived by children Kevin Arthur (Petra), Brian Arthur, Maurice Arthur (deceased), and Nita Chambers (Shawn McNaughton). Grandmother of Jeff Trull (Jade), Sarah Trull, Luke Arthur, Ryan Arthur (Lauren), Carlee Vance (Eric), Loghan Chambers (Chris), and great-grandmother of Jesse, Sawyer and Emerson. Shirley was one of nine children, daughter of the late Roy and Florence Miners.

Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at Cobble Hills Golf Club, 5714 Cobble Hills Rd, Thamesford, March 29, 2025, from 2:00pm – 5:00pm. Memorial donations may be made to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

THANK YOU

Aitcheson



"The people we love become a part of who we are"

The family of Jim Aitcheson would like to express immense gratitude for every kind word and action received by us in the loss of such a loved man. Our final days were surrounded by fiercely dedicated friends and family, thank you.

We will honour his memory with lessons learned, in love, work and friendship.

Lori, Kelly, Tracey and Greg



St. Marys Independent

SUBMIT YOUR MEMORIAM, THANK YOU, OBITUARY, OR ANNOUNCEMENT

Email us at info@stmarysindependent.com or call 519-284-0041

HELP WANTED



Radar Auto Parts has a full-time position open in our St. Marys location. Currently looking for a Full Time Counterperson. Looking for a team player. Please send resume to Radar Auto Parts, 395 Queen Street in St. Marys radarstmarys@gmail.com Attention: Shawn McNaughton, Branch Manager



Country Mills Ltd. a well-established feed business in Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford & Brant counties is looking for a

Health & Safety Coordinator

This position would start in 2025, approximately 5 days a month and could be an independent H&S Business.

Duties would include visiting our 5 locations to ensure compliance with established H&S program and monitor safety training. Assist in onboarding new employes, H&S committee members and H&S meetings.

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Applications and inquires can be sent to accounting@countrymills.ca

THE WEEK AHEAD

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

St. Marys Library events - See Page 22

Friday, January 17

- Royal Canadian Legion "hot dogs and more" lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Listowel Cyclones at the PRC - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 18

- Royal Canadian Legion Chili Cookoff - 12 p.m., Tickets \$5, Kids 10 and under eat free
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Stratford Warriors at the PRC - 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 22

- St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at Western Fair Sports Centre - 7 p.m.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Wanted

\$ Cash Paid \$ for your RECORDS and LPs. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, Fold, Soundtracks, and more. Selectively buying CDs, Cassettes, Turntables, and Stereo Equipment. For more information: Diamond Dogs Music 114 Ontario St. Stratford/ 226-972-5750

Wanted

A working camcorder that will play Hi-8 digital tapes. Phone 519-284-3774

Wanted to buy

All collectibles including sports cards, beanie babies, Funko pops and stamps. Highest prices paid. Free appraisals. Are you downsizing or need an estate clean out? We can help. Call or text Stan anytime 519-868-3814.

Wanted

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, wristwatches, pocket watches, old fruit jars - Beaver Star, Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs - Red Indian, Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

Trees

Shade trees, Fruit trees, Apple, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Sweet and Sour Cherries, Apricot, Nectarines, Blueberry, Haskopp, Black Chokeberry, Grapes etc. Lots of Spruce, Pine, Cedars for windbreaks and privacy hedges, Sizes 1 to 6+. Flowering shrubs and much more. Come check us out Mon-Sat 7:00am - 6:00pm Martin's Nursery 42661 Orangehill Road Wroxeter (1 concession north of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

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Large 3 bedroom downtown apartment in 3 story walk up, includes all utilities, wifi, laundry, parking. References required. Available February. Please call 519-697-4985

Wanted

Teenage boy looking for dog walking job in the area of Maxwell street. Call 519-276-8001



Stratford Police Service

We currently have openings for the following position:

Park Patrol

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

Completed application packages for this Park Patrol position will be accepted until January 31st, 2025 at 2:00pm.

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

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

No phone calls please. Applications will not be accepted via facsimile.

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

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