

# St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1214

Thursday, June 6, 2024

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Town of St. Marys employees Kenny Hutton, Alex Taylor, and John Hahn were at work early in the morning on Friday, May 31 installing colourful Pride banners on light stands throughout the downtown. Approximately 30 banners have been installed again this year in recognition of Pride Month. Photo by Stewart Grant

## St. Marys council approves additional \$70,000 contingency for Mercury Theatre renovations

By Galen Simmons

After addressing unforeseen structural challenges during renovations of the old Mercury Theatre building in St. Marys, council has approved a staff request for an additional \$70,000 in contingency funds as contractors embark on the second phase of the project.

As part of an overall effort to make better use of town buildings in downtown St. Marys, the town recently began work on structural upgrades to the interior of the building at 14 Church St. N, which included demolition of the building's interior and the eventual construction of a second

Continued on page 7

## St. Marys Community Players wins 'Show Must Go On' award from WODL

By Emily Stewart

A technical difficulty during the adjudication performance of Norm Foster's Opening Night led to a victory for the St. Marys Community Players (SMCP).

The community theatre group won the Western Ontario Drama League's (WODL) The Show Must Go On award for the 2023/2024 season. SMCP ran their production of Opening Night from Oct. 26 to Nov. 5, 2023.

The WODL award honoured the crew behind the production and the greater St. Marys community rallying together and getting a new speaker when the sound system failure occurred 10 minutes before the show was set to start, and the performance had to be delayed.

Lianne Gregory-Sterritt, vice president of SMCP, said the adjudicator was familiar with the Foster comedy and certain sounds were critical to advance some plot points. The cast and crew looked for people to contact to resolve the problem.

"We knew that we had a whole bunch of other resources who would jump to our aid," she said. "Sure enough, there was a whole bunch of people that were willing to do that. It just felt great. I mean, that's part of living in a community that cares about each other, right? You know you can ask. You're not cornered with trepidation like, 'Oh no, I don't want to bother somebody.' You know that they're right with you and that they're going to deliver right."

Marie Stevens, a member of SMCP's board of directors, said SMCP acquired a speaker from the Front Porch Show, a live talk show filmed in front of an

Continued on page 2

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**MLS**



# COMMUNITY

## Perth South residents can still access Stratford Public Library's resources - just with a \$120 non-resident card

By Connor Luczka

Perth South residents can still access the Stratford Public Library (SPL)'s resources with their municipality picking up the tab.

On May 14, following the St. Marys Public Library ending service with the Township of Perth South, the SPL board voted to offer Perth South residents a non-resident library card for the remainder of 2024.

The non-resident card costs \$120, with the township footing the bill so residents will not be out of pocket.

The cards allow non-residents to access resources owned by the SPL, but not the collections owned by the Perth County Information Network (PCIN)'s partners.

"Residents have been grateful to regain some access to library services

and have voiced to us that they are hopeful Perth South will properly invest in full, local-library access for 2025," Krista Robinson, CEO of SPL, said in an emailed statement. "The loss of downloadLibrary, our main ebook and audiobook collection, as well as access to library materials ... outside of our library has been very disappointing for many Perth South residents."

During its 2024 municipal budget deliberations, Perth South council cut the budget for allocating library services nearly in half, going from a budget of \$126,052 in 2023 to \$65,000 in 2024, initiating a review of their library services, which were provided by SPL, St. Marys Public Library and Huron County Library.

According to a release posted on the municipality's Facebook page, St. Marys had a "significant difference in

cost" compared to SPL and the Huron County Library. St. Marys Public Library was priced at \$297.45 per user, whereas both Stratford and Huron County were priced at a little over \$225, \$227.40 and \$225.32 respectively.

The municipality asked the St. Marys board to send a revised budget for consideration, but the board declined and ended service for Perth South residents, citing the fact that St. Marys residents already subsidized library services for their neighbours in Perth South.

In light of that decision, Stratford declined to renew its contract unless a contract with St. Marys was also renewed.

"Perth South residents have been able to access library services in Kirkton, St. Marys and Stratford for more than

fifteen years," Jim Aitcheson, mayor of Perth South, said in that same release. "Council felt a review was required based on St. Marys' submission for 2024. We apologize for the disruption this review has caused."

"We are encouraging Perth South residents to speak to their Perth South council about how an investment in full library service is important to them and their community," Robinson said. "We are hopeful we can reach an agreement to be able to offer full library service to Perth South residents in 2025."

Perth South residents can still use both libraries' space, internet and browse resources inside the buildings free of charge.

Aitcheson is asking residents to be patient as the municipality works through the transition.

## Community Players wins 'Show Must Go On' award

Continued from page 1

audience in lawn chairs in Cadzow Park, to get the show back on track. One of the producers also drove to

Long and McQuade in Stratford to find equipment. Stevens said the audience wouldn't have known the delay happened unless they were told.

"It was a real community effort and that's what community theatre is all about," Stevens said.

SMCP's next production will be the musical The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee from Oct. 17 to Nov. 3. The community theatre group

will return to St. Marys Town Hall, which has been closed for renovations, just in time for the production commemorating the 50th anniversary of SMCP.

"The sound system better work well," Gregory-Sterritt laughed.

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# COMMUNITY

## New dock to enhance river access in St. Marys

By St. Marys Independent staff

More people can now access the Thames River in St. Marys, thanks to a Government of Canada investment, through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), and a generous community donation.

This week, the town installed a new, accessible dock in a section of the river near the north end of Milt Dunnell Field.

“The dock is a wonderful addition to our community that will significantly improve access to the Thames,” said Mayor Al Strathdee in a press release. “We are grateful for the support from Community Living, the Government of Canada and the Upper Thames Conservation Authority.”

The need for an accessible dock was noted by residents and visitors during a survey the town conducted about revitalizing Milt Dunnell Field. River usage has increased significantly since 2020 and following the launch of the town’s free kayak loan program, the lack of an accessible dock



Blair Leduc, a new St. Marys resident, was eager to try out the recently installed kayak launch at the north end of the Flats. Photo by Murray Grant

remained a barrier for those with mobility issues.

The new dock has several features designed to facilitate easy and safe

access for paddlers. These include a stable and secure platform, a kayak launch assist mechanism, handrails, grab bars and transfer benches, which

allow paddlers to move safely from a wheelchair or the dock to their kayak.

The placement of the dock was approved by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority with the condition that it be removed in the off season and any time there is a risk of flooding. The cost is being covered through a donation from Community Living St. Marys & Area and a \$250,000, non-repayable contribution from FedDev Ontario.

The addition of the dock is just one part of a project to enhance Milt Dunnell Field. Other improvements include paving the parking lot, adding new accessible washrooms and revitalizing the lawn-bowling building and playing field.

Questions about the new dock can be directed to Kelly Deeks-Johnson, tourism and economic development manager, at 519-284-2340 ext. 272 or [kdeeks@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:kdeeks@town.stmarys.on.ca). Additional information about accessing the river and the town’s kayak rental program can be found at [www.discoverstmarys.ca](http://www.discoverstmarys.ca).



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## EDITORIAL

# A decade in the newspaper business

By Stewart Grant

Ten years ago, on June 1, 2014, this accountant decided to buy a fledging newspaper in his hometown. Believe me, I did not have high expectations. I was well aware of the continued growth of the internet (in fact, my web design company built the Independent's first website in 2012), and I thought maybe we could last another five to seven years and it would be an interesting life experience.

Back in 2014, I never could have guessed that I'd end up quitting my full-time insurance accounting job and dive into newspapers full time. Nor could I imagine that, ten years later, our St. Marys Independent would have more weekly local news coverage in it than many Canadian cities have in their newspapers.

There have been some major challenges along the way, and there were times, particularly in the early years, when I didn't know if the Independent would survive. St. Marys is a pretty small town for two newspapers, and we had to run things on a shoe-string budget just to break even.

Frank Doyle had started the Independent in 2000 following Torstar's 1999 purchase of the St. Marys Journal Argus. One of the many things Frank understood from the beginning was that St. Marys' news source should be locally owned. We learned just how true this was on Monday, November 27, 2017, when Torstar and Postmedia completed a transaction that resulted in the closure of dozens of Canadian community newspapers including the 164-year-old St. Marys Journal-Argus.

The lesson: big conglomerates might have fancy slogans such as "connected to your community" but ultimately, their big-city ownership has proven time and time again through their actions that they really don't give a crap about journalism in small towns like St. Marys. It's up to us in St. Marys to take care of it ourselves.

We tried to do our part by making the Independent the best paper we could. We knew that the death of the Journal-Argus left a huge void, and therefore we strived to take the best elements from both newspapers to create a new Independent. Sports reporter Pat Payton and historian Mary Smith, both legends in their fields, were key additions during that time. And since then, it's been so exciting to continue to grow what I call our "all-star team".

I think life is all about interesting experiences, and certainly the newspaper industry has provided many of those. In recent years, I've really enjoyed starting newspapers in other communities and, in doing so, I always talk with pride about how the community of St. Marys supports our paper. It really is amazing that each week we have about 32 pages of local coverage in our small town of 8,000 people - particularly when there are cities with populations over 100,000 in this province (i.e. Guelph) that don't even have a print newspaper anymore.

For much of the country, the last 10 years in the newspaper industry have been brutal. But not so here in the Stonetown where together we have proven that local news still works.

## Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week.

1) Bravo to the 1st St Marys Guides, who visited the Stratford animal shelter last week. They very generously made and donated some toys for our animals, and also donated some food. They were a pleasure to have in the shelter and so kind to all our animals. Big bravo to them, and their wonderful leaders for a great visit!

2) Bravo to Natalie and Jamie at Moore Creative Consulting for helping us at the Independent launch our new website. Check out the Independent online at stmarysindy.com or access all of our publications at granthaven.com.

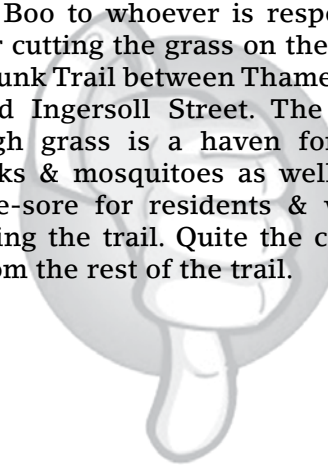


## Boo

We have 2 Boos this week.

1) Boo to the people who park on the north eastern side of James Street N and Glass Street in the empty parking lot. You block any sort of view of the incoming traffic when trying to go west off of Glass Street. Go park at your dwelling.

2) Boo to whoever is responsible for cutting the grass on the Grand Trunk Trail between Thames Road and Ingersoll Street. The waist-high grass is a haven for fleas, ticks & mosquitoes as well as an eye-sore for residents & visitors using the trail. Quite the contrast from the rest of the trail.



\*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

*"We're a Canadian team, we've got great Canadian fans, and it feels good to maybe unite the country a little bit and have something to bring people together."*

**Captain Connor McDavid on his team the Edmonton Oilers going to the Stanley Cup finals.**

## Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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It is finally June, teachers have started the countdown

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

Either email them to us at [info@stmarys-independent.com](mailto:info@stmarys-independent.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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# STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news  
from the Town of St. Marys



## STONETOWN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

This year's Stonetown Heritage Festival takes place on July 12 to 14 and features family-friendly activities, a heritage walking tour, vendor's market, downtown street festival and a fireworks show.

[townofstmarys.com/festival](http://townofstmarys.com/festival)

## RECREATION FAIR

June 7, 4 - 8 PM | Pyramid Centre

Looking for more information on all recreation and leisure activities available in Town? Join us for the first ever Recreation Fair for a variety of different engaging booths and interactive demonstrations.

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## THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: PLANNING YOUR FUNERAL

Attend a free presentation by funeral director Andrew Hodges from Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home at the Pyramid Recreation Centre on June 19 at 7 PM.

[libraryinfo@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:libraryinfo@town.stmarys.on.ca) or 519-284-3346

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## Senior of the Week



Our Seniors of the Week are Doug and Betty Barber, pictured here on their wedding day 70 years ago on June 5, 1954. Betty trained as a school teacher but became a stay-at-home mom once they started a family. Doug worked for George White Farm Equipment for 30 years but left to establish his own business, DFK Farm Equipment, in 1982. Doug and Betty have four children, nine grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. Congratulations, Doug and Betty! 70 years married is quite an accomplishment.

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

## Weekend Quiz

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1. AC/DC's first album was named what?
2. How many stars are on the China flag?
3. Who was the lead actress in Pretty Woman?
4. The Tudors ruled in which European country?
5. Who painted the Mona Lisa?
6. What are fish eggs also known as?
7. What is the tallest mountain in the world?
8. How many planets are in our solar system?
9. What color are Smurfs?
10. How many phases of the moon are there?

This week's answers are found on pg. 39

## COMMUNITY

# Untravelled portion of St. Marys road allowance identified as potential future site for attainable or affordable housing

By Galen Simmons

A portion of the Grahlyn Avenue road allowance, immediately east of Pelissier Street, will officially be stopped up, closed and declared surplus to unlock the 0.3-acre, town-owned property's potential as a future site for attainable and affordable housing.

Identified by town surveyors first as a portion of the Jones Street West road allowance in town plans going as far back as 1857, the property sits between two residential homes directly across Pelissier Street from the travelled portion of Grahlyn Avenue. As part of the Town of St. Marys' Opening Doors housing action plan, staff were recently tasked with reviewing municipally owned land that could be used to leverage, include, or incorporate affordable and attainable housing.

"We were given the direction at the staff level to look at a number of properties that might be able to be activate for affordable housing," town CAO Brent Kittmer said at the May 28 council meeting. "This was one property that was short listed. We're

not saying today that we have any sort of sale or development offers on the table, but it is a necessary step to stop up and close and declare surplus this parcel of land so it is ready for us to throw around if we ever have the opportunity in the future."

In accordance with the town's brand-new land-sale bylaw, council has the option to stop up, close and sell a portion of a public road if it is not required for current or future use by the town and it is not required for public access to water. The bylaw also notes that stopping up, closing and selling public roads is given preference over splitting that land between abutting landowners.

Kittmer told council this property, which is now known as 37 Pelissier St., meets all the conditions listed in the land-sale bylaw. Prior to bringing this report to council, Kittmer also noted that staff conducted a survey of the property and found that it has no encumbrances that might hinder the town from selling it for the purpose of affordable and attainable housing development.



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Due to slow ticket sales, the Legion Fish Fry on June 9th has been cancelled. The supplier needed a minimum order of 200 by May 31st and we did not reach it. Anyone who has tickets that are paid for, may be reimbursed at the Legion. Thank you to all who did purchase tickets.

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**COMMUNITY**

# St. Marys council approves additional \$70,000 contingency for Mercury Theatre renovations

*Continued from page 1*

floor to add structural strength to the walls.

“During the demolition phase and during part of the rebuild phase, we noticed some challenges that we didn’t like during that time,” said town director of building and planning Grant Brouwer at council’s May 28 meeting. “They identified that the main-floor structure wasn’t attached to the outside wall. There was excessive moisture within the basement area. So ... we wanted to make sure we installed a drainage layer with drainage tile, removed a number of concrete walls – non-supporting walls – within the basement area – and help clean that up because the floor was mainly unlevel, and then some of the work around not being attached to the surrounding superstructure caused us some concern as well.”

After consultation with the project engineer, BM Ross, town staff had the construction contractor remove the entire first floor, additional areas of the basement floor and interior basement walls. The contractor also installed a drainage layer inside the basement wall and removed roughly two-thirds of the existing concrete floor. Additional structural steel fram-

ing, the first floor, and stud walls inside the foundation wall to support the first floor were then installed.

In response to a question from Coun. Jim Craigmile, Brouwer said the decision to remove the entire first floor will likely result in cost savings when it comes time for installing new electrical wiring and ductwork.

As a result of the extra work, which Brouwer said was covered by the project’s original \$80,000 contingency fund, plans to strap down the building’s ceiling and install blown-in insulation above the ceiling were removed from the overall project scope with the notion of re-examining those items once the second floor is installed and the current condition of the ceiling is better understood.

“As it sits today, we still have \$30,000 in that contingency. The reason we’re asking for more is ... we’re unsure what will happen with (the reconstruction of the north block wall),” Brouwer said. “One of the things we want to avoid having to do is come back to council at that time to cause any delays to the process.

“If we do find something that is unsound that we need to fix, we’d just like a bit more of a buffer there in the contingency.”

# 20th anniversary Create a Smile walkathon



On Sunday, June 2, the 20th Anniversary Create a Smile five-kilometre Walkathon in association with Community Living St. Marys & Area was held at Milt Dunnell Field. The event included a silent auction, food truck, selfie station and of course, the 5km walk for Create a Smile. It was a wonderful event attended by many people and their families and raised approximately \$27,500. Photo by Nancy Bickell

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## COMMUNITY

# St. Marys Family Chiropractic opens doors to new clinic in Perth South

By Stew Slater

After 21 years of practicing in the Opera House block, Dr. Paul Battler of St. Marys Family Chiropractic has moved his clinic – offering acupuncture, chiropractic and rehabilitation services – to his family's home at Red Mill Farm.

It's located at 2379 Perth Rd. 133 in the Township of Perth South, a five-minute drive north on Emily Street out of St. Marys.

Red Mill Farm is situated on a hillside looking out in one direction across the Thames River towards Science Hill Golf Course and, in the other direction, across a meadow of pasture, creek bed, gardens and naturalized spaces that Dr. Battler and his wife, Ingrid Vanderschot, have lovingly nurtured since moving to the property.

St. Marys Family Chiropractic – now set to expand its offerings thanks to the addition, on a part-time basis, of Dr. Paul Rankin to the practice – welcomes the community to an open-house celebration on Saturday, June 8. Dr. Battler explained recently that he has already been seeing regular patients in a newly created clinic constructed during the past few months within the historic Red Mill building.

"(The patients) really love this space and this location," he said. "Already, I have had so much positive feedback about the land and the clinic, particularly about how it feels very healing."

The Red Mill – a landmark for those who frequently drive north out of St. Marys on Emily Street (the "east river road") – dates back to the 1930s. Constructed by the Enright family, the mill was a gathering place for the community from the outset. Not only did they bring their crops there for grinding into livestock feed, the Enright business was also home to state-of-the-art Buckeye egg incubators, which are still in place in the basement of the building. Area residents would bring their fertilized eggs there to be hatched.

Dr. John Pook eventually purchased the building and constructed an event hall upstairs in the mill and a dog-boarding kennel in another building.

The farm was subsequently purchased by the Stam family and operated as Stambourne Farm, offering yoga classes in the hall and dog-boarding in the kennel.

"When we became stewards of this land, we continued to host events," said Dr. Battler, noting those events include healing retreats, concerts, film screenings and learning workshops. Events are posted on the Red Mill Farm Facebook page.

During the COVID-19 slowdown, Dr. Battler and Vanderschot created a bed and breakfast to, in Dr. Battler's words, "share the land and give people a chance to reconnect and recharge by interacting with nature."

Since opening the bed and breakfast, he adds, "We've had a lot of people from large cities coming out to enjoy the green space."

Dr. Battler and Vanderschot take their stewardship of the land very seriously.

"We've put a lot of effort into ecological restoration," Dr. Battler says.

This includes planting more than 3,000 trees, overseeing the installation of a water-retention pond and incorporating a range of food and herb plants into the property's landscaping. From these plants and other natural sources on the property, Vanderschot creates a fantastic array of herbal-based products including salves and soaps that she sells on a regular basis at the St. Marys Farmers' Market.

All of this contributes to what Dr. Battler says is a wonderfully healing environment into which he can now welcome his patients.

"As stewards of the land, it's so nice that we can now offer this space to the rest of the community," he said.

St. Marys Family Chiropractic welcomes the community to an open house on Saturday, June 8 from 1-4 p.m. Open for viewing during the event will be the St. Marys Family Chiropractic clinic, the Red Mill Countryside Retreat guest suite, the Event Hall and Vanderschot's herbal botanical products.

Visitors will also have the opportunity to meet Dr. Rankin, who incorporates the use of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and formulas, tuina massage and various other tools in his approach to patient care. For more information about Dr. Rankin, visit [drpaulrankin.com](http://drpaulrankin.com).

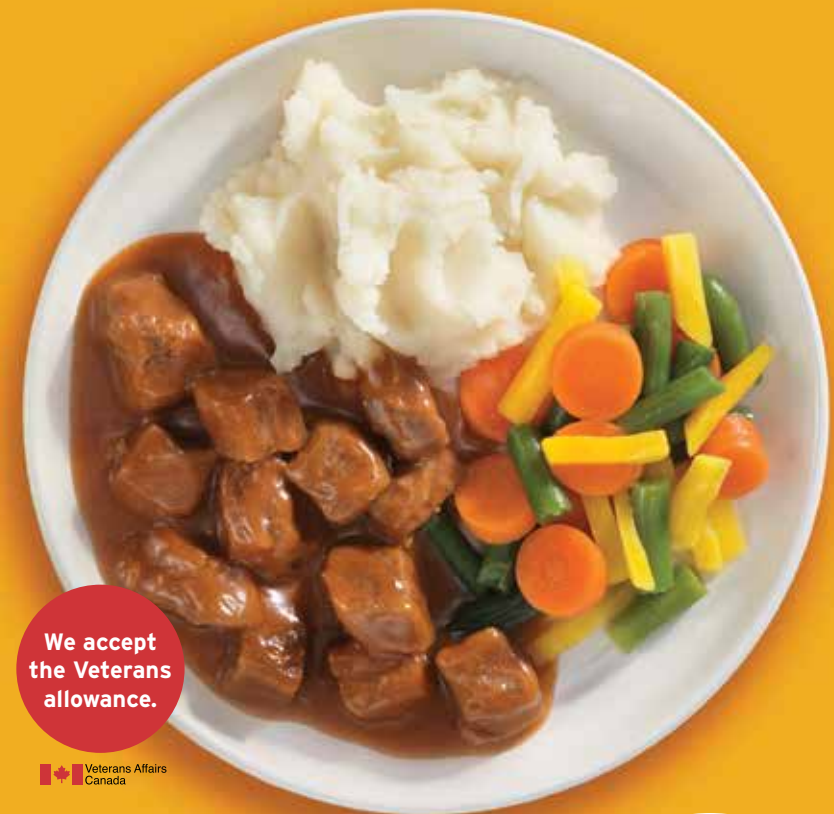
To contact St. Marys Family Chiropractic call 519-284-4200 or email [drpaulbattler@gmail.com](mailto:drpaulbattler@gmail.com)



Ingrid Vanderschot and Dr. Paul Battler welcome the community to the new location of St. Marys Family Chiropractic on Red Mill Farm in Perth South. Contributed photo

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**COMMUNITY**

# Huron Perth Catholic District School Board will fly new, inclusive flag at high schools, not the Pride Flag, during June

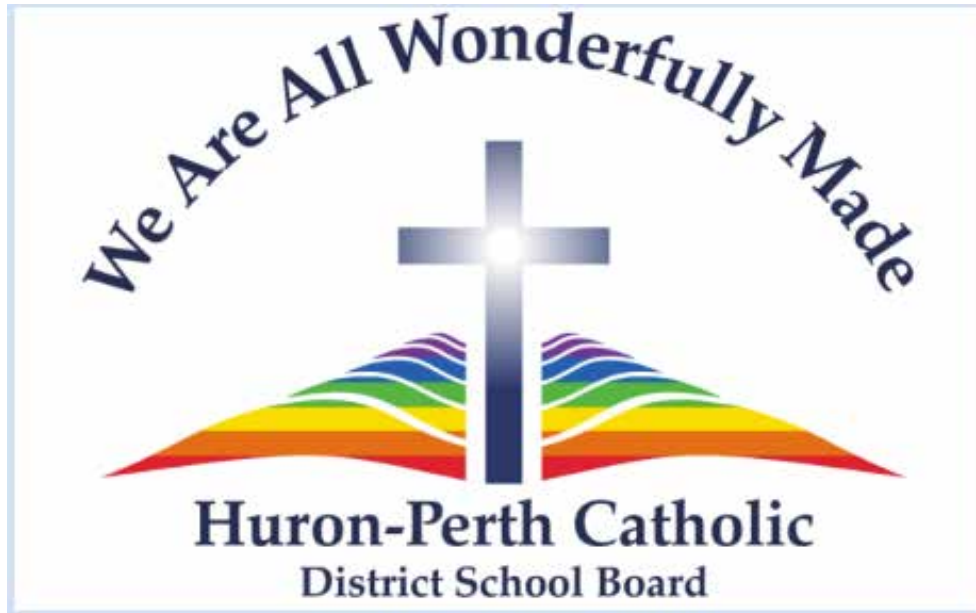
By Galen Simmons

The Pride Flag will not be flown at schools across the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board during Pride Month in June according to updates to the board's flag protocol policy approved by the board of trustees Monday.

Instead and as part of the updated policy, a new, inclusive flag will be flown at both of the board's high schools, St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford and St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton, and at the Catholic Education Centre.

In an email, director of education Chris Roehrig said neither himself nor board of trustees chair Mary Helen Van Loon were available to speak with media about the updated policy, which was developed after a year of consultation with the community, however the board did release a statement about the new inclusive flag.

"Our Catholic schools are grounded



This new, board-approved inclusionary flag will be flown at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford, St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton and the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board Catholic Education Centre. Contributed image

in Gospel values," the statement says. "This inclusionary flag is not a state-

ment about diverging from the teachings of the Catholic Church. Rather this flag is a symbol that recognizes and respects the dignity and value of each person and that our schools are safe places of inclusion. We are all called to love one another as we journey together toward the Father.

"As Catholic communities, we share a deep concern for the marginalized and their particular needs which affect their sense of safety, wellbeing and self-esteem."

In addition to permitting the board-approved inclusionary flag to be flown during June, the updated flag-protocol policy now ensures that the Flag of Canada remains flying at all times and in a prominent position relative to other flags, and permits other tertiary flags to be flown at both high schools and the Catholic Education Centre including the Papal Flag and the Flag of the Province of Ontario.



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Working for Seniors

[ontario.ca/SeniorsMonth](http://ontario.ca/SeniorsMonth) Ontario

# For half a century, the St. Marys Friendship Centre has offered social, educational, recreational and support programming for seniors

By Galen Simmons

The St. Marys Friendship Centre has been a unique resource for seniors in town for the past 50 years.

Unlike in other places, the friendship centre offers a mix of programming and services aimed at meeting a wide range of needs, from helping to support seniors at home to ensuring they remain healthy, active and connected with the community.

"The Friendship Centre offers a variety of recreational, leisure, educational, social and community support services for this community," said St. Marys senior services manager Jenny Mikita. "We're the active living centre for St. Marys and we're also the community support services provider for St. Marys. So, we're a little unique because if you were to go to a different community, you might find your seniors centre in

a different facility and your Meals On Wheels in a separate facility. We're all under the same umbrella here."

From music programming including the Friendship Centre Choir to community dining programs, different levels of fitness programming, speciality programs like ballroom dancing, line dancing, zumba and everything in between, Mikita says staff is constantly looking for new ways to support seniors based on suggestions from the community, funding received that is geared toward specific programming and trends in seniors programming.

"This morning, for example, we had a Level 2 seated fitness program in our space, we had a Knit and Chat program, we had quilting, we had pickleball, we had a music program called Jamboree, which attracts musicians and partici-

*Continued on page 11*



The St. Marys Friendship Centre offers plenty of recreational activities like this scrapbooking session that are geared toward specific hobbies and interests. Contributed photo

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**ontario.ca/seniors | #VibrantSeniors**

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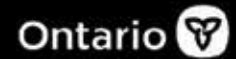




# June is Seniors Month

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*Continued from page 10*

pants not just from St. Marys but from the surrounding area to come jam. We're setting up for a dinner, we had chair yoga, we have a genealogy program tonight, you name it. ... There's something for everyone."

The idea behind providing programming and services for seniors under one roof at the Pyramid Recreation Centre is to reduce social isolation among the older-adult population by giving them the chance to meet others and stay connected with the community.

"There are a lot of new residents in St. Marys who we've met throughout the pandemic and after, and this is where they're coming to meet their social needs," Mikita said. "They're making their friends here, they're learning new things, they're becoming active. Activity and reduction in social isolation are so good for mental health. If you're

busy, you're mentally healthier, physically healthier and, overall, wellness is high. We see a lot of happiness here.

"This is their home away from home, or this is where they spend every Tuesday, or they come here three times a week."

Mikita says the friendship centre wouldn't be able to offer the programming and services it does without the help of its more than 230 volunteers. Volunteers help lead the programming, they organize events, they help out in the kitchen and they support town staff in so many other ways.

"We would not have the level of programming that we have without the volunteer support that we have," Mikita said. "Everything we do is touched by a volunteer at the end of the day. Meals On Wheels are delivered because we have Meals On Wheels volunteers. Our fitness classes are available as often as they are because we have highly skilled volunteers who are interested

in continuing their learning and they teach fitness. For our Jamboree that's happening right now, we have volunteers who are organizing musicians and welcoming people at the door. We've got volunteers setting tables for dinner tonight and volunteers in the kitchen helping to cook the meal. Everything we do is supported by our awesome volunteers."

While the friendship centre does charge membership fees, seniors don't need to be members to participate in programming. And while various programs and services do have costs associated with them, the Town of St. Marys' Access to Recreation grant provides financial support to help residents who can't afford to otherwise participate in recreation, leisure, arts and culture programming, including everything offered through the friendship centre.

The best way to find out about all the programs and services offered through the friendship centre is to

visit [www.townofstmarys.com/en/recreation-and-culture/Friendship-Centre.aspx](http://www.townofstmarys.com/en/recreation-and-culture/Friendship-Centre.aspx) and sign up for the monthly newsletter. The friendship centre also has an email-subscription list with weekly email blasts about upcoming programs and services and a Facebook page with updates and information about programs and services.

For those who are unsure about whether there is anything for them happening at the friendship centre, Mikita urges them to call 519-284-3272 to arrange a private tour of the centre and speak to staff about what programs or services might be a good fit.

This year, the St. Marys Friendship Centre is celebrating its 50th anniversary and is inviting the community to celebrate that milestone with a piece of cake during a friendship centre open house between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. June 19 – another great opportunity to see what the centre has to offer.

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Ontario

# Library's cognitive kits assisting adults with memory loss

By Emily Stewart

Accessing activities to strengthen motor skills, dexterity and other cognitive skills can be as simple as visiting St. Marys' local library.

The St. Marys Public Library has two toolkits available to help adults experiencing memory loss, dementia, Alzheimer's, or side effects from a stroke.

The library's cognitive kits are filled with engaging activities such as puzzles and sensory tools to help those at all stages of memory loss. Each kit has a fidget/sensory blanket, markers and colouring sheets, and a copy of the book *Alzheimer's, Dementia, and Memory Loss: A helpful guide for caregivers* by Angela Gentile.

Though both kits have puzzles and games, the activities in each kit are different. The first kit has three jigsaw puzzles with varying

puzzle-piece sizes, a wooden tangram puzzle with different levels of difficulty and a tile-matching game with varying levels of difficulty. The second kit has a marble maze, a game of Tic Tac Toe and a large-piece jigsaw puzzle.

"These kits promote developing fine motor skills, dexterity and brain training," said Kate Long, acquisitions and cataloguing library technician. "Most importantly, it isn't about finishing the puzzle or how long it takes to match the cards, it is about spending time with loved ones and doing something together."

The kits are available to sign out at the St. Marys Public Library for up to three weeks at a time. The items can be renewed for a longer period if there aren't other patrons waiting for a kit. To reserve a kit, visit <https://tinyurl.com/librarycognitivekits>.



The St. Marys Public Library has two cognitive kits available to borrow. Each kit contains activities to help those with memory loss, dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, or stroke side effects. Photo courtesy of Kate Long



## JUNE IS SENIORS MONTH

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# Thank You!

This Seniors Month, I wish to acknowledge the contributions and wisdom of all seniors in our communities.





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# Social Thirty-One part of Dining in Perth County fundraiser for One Care

By Emily Stewart

Social Thirty-One and the St. Marys Golf and Country Club will be giving back to an organization supporting seniors in Perth and Huron Counties.

The restaurant, part of the golf and country club at 769 Queen St. E, will be donating 10 per cent of its proceeds from sharables, appetizers, handhelds and burgers purchased on June 8 and 9 towards One Care Home and Community Support Services.

Jen Dong, restaurant and beverage manager, said the golf course will donate five per cent of its green fees towards the organization.

“One Care is a great organization to work with,” Dong said. “They take care of our community, so it’s nice to give back to our community as well. ... If you’re going out to eat anyways, you might as well go out somewhere you know your money is going to be donated back to the community.”

One Care is a non-profit organization providing supportive care to families living in Huron and Perth counties. The Social Thirty-One fundraiser is part of the Shop for Seniors One Care fundraiser. Regional businesses participating in Shop for Seniors will donate a portion of the proceeds towards One Care services including personal support, transportation and adult day programs.

“We started this campaign during the pandemic when many businesses were seeing a decrease in customers. We know that as a community we are stronger together, so we thought, why not come together to encourage our neighbours to shop locally, while also supporting seniors who need support living right here in our community,” said Hilary Marshall, One Care com-



**Social Thirty-One Restaurant in St. Marys is proud to be participating in One Care Home and Community Support Services’ Shop for Seniors fundraiser this month. Photo courtesy of One Care**

munications specialist. “The St. Marys Golf Course and Social Thirty-One team has always been keen to support One Care through our Shop for Seniors campaign. They’ve been participating in this campaign since it began, and they continue to be eager to help us advance our mission.”

Throughout the month of June, local retail businesses, golf courses, and restaurants across Huron and Perth counties will be running a special promotion and generously donating a portion of their proceeds to One Care. New this year, One Care has introduced a passport, giving local shoppers the chance to win a cash prize just for

shopping locally. Visit a participating business and make a qualifying purchase or make a donation to receive a passport sticker. Four stickers earn a chance to win \$100 cash. Passports are available at all participating businesses.

Alley Cat Café and Demetre’s Family Eatery in Stratford, among others, are also participating in Shop for Seniors.

One Care works to ensure cost is not a barrier to receiving the programs and services clients rely on. Many of these programs and services must charge fees but One Care offers subsidy so that those with financial needs are still able to get the services they need. Funds raised go towards clients in need of financial subsidy, and the purchase and maintenance of essential program equipment and facilities such as accessible vans.

More information about the Shop for Seniors fundraiser and participating businesses can be found by visiting [www.onecaresupport.ca/shopforseniors](http://www.onecaresupport.ca/shopforseniors).

One Care is a community based, charitable, not-for-profit health organization local to Huron and Perth counties. One Care offers a wide range of essential services to improve quality of life for seniors and older adults with health challenges, as well as caregiver relief. Programs include adult-day programs, assessments and care planning, assisted living, day/overnight respite, friendly visiting, foot care, home at last, home help, in-home personal support, Let’s go Home, Lifeline emergency response, Meals on Wheels, social work, telephone reassurance, transportation and Whirlpool bathing.

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# Muscle is magical: The importance of staying active as we age



To keep your muscles active at home, the use of something as simple as a can of food can take the place of dumbbells in daily exercise. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold



Using one's bodyweight to keep muscles strong is also effective. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold



Wall pushups are a great starting point for seniors looking to improve and maintain their muscle strength. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold

By Mercedes Kay Gold

Active ageing is the name of the game. Longevity is the goal, but with quality of life. Feeling strong physically is the key to maintaining independence. You can't sit on the couch and expect to live your best life.

Sarcopenia, the age-related decrease in muscle mass, is normal due to nutrition, hormones, activity level and

other factors. Being active is key for helping preserve lean body mass. Strength training is non-negotiable, or you can expect to lose four to six pounds of muscle per decade. Move it or lose it!

Muscle strength is linked to everyday life and simple activities such as walking, household chores, lawncare and even getting dressed or tying one's shoes will be utterly impossi-

ble without maintaining muscle mass. Inactivity is normal when recovering from an illness or injury, and muscle will atrophy, leaving you in a vulnerable position. Balance is connected to overall muscle strength, but strong legs are your link to preventing dangerous slips and falls.

Strength training at least two days a week is beneficial overall. Blood-sugar control and slowing down bone loss are advantageous as the number of candles on the cake increases. Speaking of dessert, muscle mass is linked to a higher basal metabolic rate. Muscle burns more calories at rest than body fat.

Building muscle through resistance training is a super way to manage chronic conditions such as arthritis, back pain and heart disease, to name a few. Functional training unilaterally supports cognitive health. Sharpening thinking skills while lifting weights is an epic win.

It's never too late to start building a stronger fit body. If you have a chronic condition, check with your doctor or naturopath before starting. Join a community class, local gym, follow along on YouTube or hire a trainer one-on-one to come to the house, but

love yourself enough to start.

Step out of your comfort zone and embrace uneasiness, either solo or with a buddy. Start by warming up with a brisk walk outside or on a treadmill followed by a few simple in-home exercises. Everyone has to start somewhere, and one's body weight, a simple can of food or light dumbbells is a beautiful beginning. Choose an option heavy enough to tire your muscles after 12-15 repetitions. Once easy breezy, increase to two sets of 12-15, three sets, and then it's time to add weight or increase the weight used.

Strength training equals functional life and freedom. Three simple exercises you can start today in the privacy of your home. Sitting down and standing from a sturdy chair or a modified squat allows you to rise and sit from the toilet without a handrail. Bicep curls increase arm strength helping you carry groceries in. Push-ups on the wall use your own body weight, but still target key muscles such as the chest, arms and shoulders.

Anthony Douglas Williams said it best. "Don't let your age control your life. Let your life control your age."

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# June is Seniors Month

Working for Seniors

ontario.ca/SeniorsMonth

Ontario 

## Grip strength leads to longevity

By Mercedes Kay Gold

Aging is inevitable, but the rate is up to you.

This is not the time to sit down. It is imperative to keep on moving and grooving. Strength training is more important than ever. Besides staying active, there's increasing evidence that grip strength is an indication of overall health. Stop passing the pickle jar and start increasing the force you personally generate and pop the top.

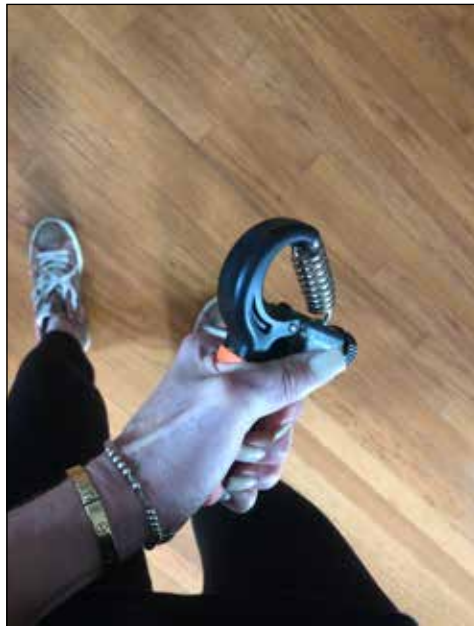
Grip strength is correlated to overall strength. Sarcopenia or losing lean muscle mass is common with aging. With decreasing mobility and endurance, sitting at home is more comfortable but muscle atrophies. It doesn't take long before lost muscle is replaced with fat and strength plummets. Losing grip strength explains one's quality of life. Are you thriving? Muscle strength also sheds light on current health issues, and it's a predictor of health issues to come.

Grip strength is linked to coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, heart failure, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and all cause mortality. Low grip strength is also associated with dementia and an increased risk of cognitive decline.

Determining one's grip strength is simple and easy to measure using a handheld device called a dynamometer. Simply squeeze the device as hard as possible.

A Canadian study used a large, healthy, nationally representative sample to determine reference values that correspond to age, sex, height and weight in regards to grip strength. The study found men between the ages of 60 and 79 ranged from 40.1 to 42.3 kilograms while women of the same age group had a grip strength range from 23.7 to 24.7 kilograms. How well would you fare?

A journal published by the Gerontological Society of America classified 26-32 kilograms as intermediate and less than 26 kilograms as weak. In women, a grip strength of 16-20 kilograms was intermediate and less than 16 kilograms as weak. Is it time to test your grip strength?



**Grip strength is a good indicator of current and future health in seniors. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold**

Improving grip strength is possible at any age. Using a racquetball or squash ball, simply squeeze, switch hands and aim for ten minutes twice a day. Skip squishy balls as the resistance is wrong for working the forearm enough to make gains.

A handheld device is another option for daily use. Match your starting point, anywhere from approximately 11 to 132 pounds of resistance, adjusting the resistance as strength increases. The handheld device is portable, user friendly and the ergonomic handle is suitable for all hand sizes and can be used by both men and women.

The benefits of improving grip strength can be seen in functional life. From in the kitchen with a manual lemon squeezer and garlic press, playing piano and a strong serve in tennis to an even better score in a round of golf. Grip training supports a speedy recovery from hand injuries, arthritis and carpal tunnel.

Overall muscle weakness leads to loss of independence. Get active! It's never too early or too late to improve muscle strength, cardiovascular health, flexibility and, in-turn, grip strength.

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# One Care relies on community support to care for seniors at home and in the communities across Huron-Perth

By Galen Simmons

The broad range of at-home and community-based health-care services offered by One Care and its partners is helping seniors across Huron and Perth county remain at home and live independent lives longer.

Formed in 2011 when three local support organizations merged into one, One Care Home and Community Support Services is a charitable, not-for-profit health organization that provides supportive care to

families across both counties.

“Our vision is really about delivering that broad range of services because as people age or face health challenges, there are so many different things they may need,” said One Care executive director Kathy Scanlon.

“What will support you in your life with your particular issues? So we try to deliver that really broad range of services, everything from health prevention services like wellness exercise to things for people who have a fairly high level of need like

assisted living where you’re supported in your home with those services that help you to be at home, or some of our adult-day programs that are increasingly providing services for people with more complex needs, and everything in between.

“In a rural area, rides are so important, so our transportation services, whether that be an accessible van or a volunteer driver, we have that range of those sorts of services.”

Whether someone needs support as they transition from hospital to home

or their abilities to those everyday things like cooking and cleaning are diminishing as they age, One Care works with other organizations in communities across both counties to develop plans for support and connect locals with the services they need when they need them.

As the lead agency of the community support services network, locals can call 1-877-502-8277 to access any of the services delivered by community support services throughout Huron and Perth counties.

*Continued on page 19*



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# One Care relies on community support to care for seniors at home and in the communities across Huron-Perth

*Continued from page 18*

"We're trying to make it easier for people to get the services they need," Scanlon said. "... By calling one number, you can get that service as opposed to having to call and figure out, 'Who in my area does this?'"

One Care also works with other partners in the health-care sector. The organization is involved with the local Ontario Health Team and works closely with all area hospitals and long-term-care homes to provide better support.

Recently, that close, working relationship resulted in a new program called Let's Go Home aimed at helping people with the transition from hospital to home.

"For hospitals, that's a big concern. How do we move people out of hospital, but as a person that's needing to move from hospital to home, there are so many things that's new and you're wanting to ensure you get right," Scanlon said. "Sometimes you don't know what to expect if you go through this process.

"So, we have a community nurse who supports the person ... in hospital and then supports the person and their family as they're going home, and then follows up in the home to ensure they get settled. They also coordinate services like home health or meals or a ride back to the doctor for a follow-up."

Not only does this program support the person leaving hospitals, but it also supports the caregivers by putting in place a support-services plan and reducing that caregiver burden as much as possible. Scanlon said One Care works with client advisors to help the organization continue to develop and improve on the services offered through Let's Go Home and ensure it is meeting every need it can.

As home and community support services have been identified as having the potential to reduce the system-wide strain on hospitals and long-term-care homes, Scanlon said it's important that One Care has the support to help it deliver those services to everyone who needs them.

"At One Care we deliver both community-support services ... (and)

home care ... and we do social work and personal support. There's so much need for that (home-care service). ... One of the things I've seen over the years is there are just as many if not more people who need that service, but it's been a service that's not as available as it needs to be as our system changes," Scanlon said.

"And there's a whole lot of complex reasons why that is the case including enough human resources or personnel whether that be nurses or personal support workers to be able to carry out that role. So that is one of the things we are really looking at internal to One Care is, 'Are there different things we could do with our community-support programs that may cover some of that gap that is happening?' People don't know where to go. They need that help at home. If there's anything that's going to help our system as it changes, it's more investment in our community (support services) because that's what keeps people out of hospital."

And since investment from the province may not be where it needs to be yet, Scanlon says support from the communities One Care serves is crucial to its mission.

This month, residents of Huron and Perth counties can support the work One Care does for seniors by participating in its Shop for Seniors campaign. Throughout June, participating businesses across both counties will be running special promotions with proceeds going to support the organization.

For a full listing of participating businesses, which include Social Thirty-One Restaurant in St. Marys, Demetre's Family Eatery in Stratford and Olive and Rose Flower Studio in Goderich, visit [www.onecaresupport.ca/shopforseniors](http://www.onecaresupport.ca/shopforseniors).

One Care is also running its Senior Smile Photo Contest in June in which locals can pay \$20 to submit their favourite photo of a senior and encourage their friends and family to vote for their photos at a cost of \$1 per vote with a five-vote minimum. The top three photos will win their photographers a Visa gift card each. More information on that fundraiser can be found on the Shop For Seniors webpage.



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## SPORTS

# DCVI senior boys claim WOSSAA Bronze

By Spencer Seymour

Though they won't be fulfilling their ultimate goal of returning to OFSAA, the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Soccer Team captured a prize at WOSSAA in the form of a bronze medal, which they earned with a 5-2 win over South Huron District High School May 29 in St. Marys.

Head coach Richard Farmer told the Independent his team was able to bounce back well after a disappointing semi-final loss to Woodstock Collegiate Institute (WCI).

"I think they shook off the loss in the semis pretty well," said Farmer. "They were good. They know it happens. I got a good number of them that play soccer enough to know that you don't always get the wins you want and, at the end of the day, they just want to win. It doesn't matter what the game is for; they play to win."

Peyton Lobb got the offence started for DCVI when, after a shot right on the doorstep of the South Huron net was stopped by the keeper, he knocked home a rebound opportunity. Before the first half came to an end, Myles Clinton rocketed a long-range shot into the South Huron goal.

Carson Brock scored a pair of goals in the second half with Ryan Hodkinson rounding out the St. Marys scoring.

Farmer added he was concerned his squad would be too dejected to play



**Peyton Lobb scores a goal off a rebound during the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Soccer Team's game against South Huron District High School. The Salukis, who hosted WOSSAA, defeated South Huron 5-2 to win the bronze medal. Photo by Spencer Seymour**

the way they needed to take the bronze, but he was pleasantly surprised with the Salukis' dominant performance against South Huron.

"I felt we were the better team so, to me, we should have won that game. To be honest, I was a little worried about the boys not having the heart for (the Bronze Medal game) because we had planned and set our sights on getting to OFSAA. We went there last year, and we had mostly the same players,

but sometimes the soccer gods aren't on your side."

Earlier in the day, St. Marys battled Woodstock in a spirited and well-played contest by both sides. The game remained scoreless until the last 10 minutes of the second half when an unfortunate bounce resulted in the ball rolling into the St. Marys net.

According to Farmer, the Salukis couldn't find a way to crack WCI's in-

credibly stingy defensive shield.

"Woodstock played a very good defensive formation. They didn't give us any openings, which was frustrating. They were really good. I saw their record and I knew they had only given up one goal all season, so I knew they were going to be really tight defensively. They only gave up one goal all season.

"As soon as any of our guys in the attacking end got the ball, there were three of them on us. They didn't give us any room to breathe. It didn't matter if we were playing wide or through the middle; they were there. Their coach clearly played defence first and offense second, and we couldn't break that down. They're just really hard to beat."

Despite the team coming up short in their goal to reach OFSAA, Farmer still felt this season held plenty of positives for his squad.

"Overall, I'm happy with the season. We had a couple of days that weren't great, and the players would admit that, for whatever reason, things just didn't play out the way they wanted them to, but I think, as a whole, I think we were pretty similar in terms of strength as we were last year. We just didn't get the breaks when we needed them this year. I think I've got a large chunk of these boys coming back next year, so hopefully we'll be right back in the hunt."

## U14-BT3 Storm begins season with dominant win

By Spencer Seymour

The U14 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm kicked off their season with a high-flying start on May 29, posting a 7-0 win over Clinton.

Head coach Matt Simons told the Independent it was a great, all-around performance by his squad.

"I thought the boys played really well, especially for their first outing," said

Simons. "The boys' positioning was good considering it was many of the younger kids' first time playing 11 versus.

11. Defensively, the boys took away space early to not allow many opportunities against our net, Fin (McCutcheon) and Jack (Brockman) - who shared the shutout."

Brayden Wheeler turned in an exceptional effort, scoring five of the team's

goals. Owen Muir and Daniel Boakes also scored for the Storm.

Simons added he is optimistic about the group's ability to build on their high-scoring start to the season.

"That game definitely gave the group some confidence, which will hopefully set a good tone for the rest of the year," Simons said. "The older kids on the team are used to the field size and have played against older and

same-age kids last year, so they get to dictate the pace of the game more. I think they also help the younger kids who, for them, it's a bigger field this year, so there is more space but the opponents are faster and stronger.

"They are a good group of kids that really get along well, so I think they have a good team chemistry already for so early in the year."

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## SPORTS

## Six inductees selected for 2024 Sports Wall of Fame

By St. Marys Independent staff

Three athletes, two builders and one team will be inducted as part of the inaugural class for the St. Marys Sports Wall of Fame.

The six inductees will be celebrated this fall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, the site of the new Sports Wall of Fame. The recreation and leisure advisory committee selected the six inductees at their meeting on May 29 and noted that, in the future, each induction class would feature a maximum of three inductees per year.

"This group of inductees was selected to highlight the calibre of their achievements and dedication to promoting sport participation and appreciation in the town," town recreation manager Joannah Campbell said. "We are very fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated sporting community and look forward to expanding this recognition program to celebrate other deserving nominees in the years to come."

Riley Hern leads off the athlete category. Hern secured four Stanley Cups with the Montreal Wanderers in 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1910. Additionally, Hern was part of the Western Professional Hockey League (WPHL) All-Star Team in 1902 and earned recognition as the International Hockey League (IHL) First-Team All-Star in 1905 and IHL Second-Team All-Star in 1906. In 1963, Hern was posthumously inducted into the Hockey Hall



of Fame.

Mark Bell was also selected as an athlete inductee. Bell's hockey journey began with minor hockey in St. Marys before, in 1996, Bell was drafted 15th overall in the first round of the OHL priority selection by the Ottawa 67's, with whom he won a Memorial Cup in the 1998-99 season. The NHL's Chicago Blackhawks used the eighth overall selection on Bell in 1998 and went on to score 87 goals and 182 points in 450 NHL games.

Dale Levy rounds out the athlete category. Levy played baseball in St. Marys for 20 years and competed for Team Canada in the International Softball Federation Championships, culminating with a bronze medal. He won three world championships

at the Men's International Softball Championship (ISC) level with the Hill United Chiefs in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Two individuals will be inducted in the builder category, including the late Ferris Stewart. Stewart's involvement in the St. Marys sports community was wide ranging, including being an athlete, coach, manager and supporter of minor hockey and competitive teams for more than three decades.

Legendary sports reporter Pat Payton completes the builder portion. Payton spent 40 years working as the pre-eminent sports reporter in and around St. Marys, working for the Journal Argus and St. Marys Independent Newspaper. Payton's news-

paper career also featured multiple sports-journalism awards.

Completing the 2024 class are the 1988 St. Marys Creamery Juniors, who are going in as part of the team category. In 1988, the Creamery Juniors ascended to great heights, being declared both the Canadian Junior Men's Fastball Champions and the Ontario Junior Men's Fastball Champions.

Campbell described how the recreation and leisure advisory committee came to the decision that this was the right class to kick off the Sports Wall of Fame's existence.

"The committee was delighted to receive a robust collection of nominations for the first year of the recognition program," said Campbell. "Many deserving potential recipients were brought forward and countless others that we hope to receive in future submission periods. The committee used the criteria established in the nomination application as the focus of this decision. There was a lot of great discussion about the tremendous impact these folks have had on sports in St. Marys and the lasting impression they have made within their respective sports communities."

The Sports Wall of Fame is expected to be installed at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in the coming months. The inductees will be celebrated this fall, and detailed biographies and memorabilia will be on display at the Sports Wall of Fame.

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# SPORTS

## Eight SKC students win medals at Kitchener tourney

By Spencer Seymour

The Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) brought back a plethora of hardware from the Karate Maynia XLV tournament May 4 at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium.

Sensei Jalyne Lorentz, competing in the 15-17-year-old black-belt division, captured the gold medal in traditional forms and traditional weapons. She also added a bronze medal in open/creative forms.

In the 13-14 junior black belt category, Fox Houston earned a pair of silvers in traditional weapons and creative weapons and a bronze in open/creative forms.

Morgan Houston, Lisa Sheldon and Shannon Campbell earned a trio of first-place finishes. Houston took the gold in traditional forms in the women's 35+ novice bracket. Sheldon captured the top spot in 42+ women's black belt point sparring. Campbell, in the 35+ women's advanced group, won gold in point sparring.

Two bronze medals were scored by Sophia Bordman and Marieke van Lierop. Bordman, competing in the 9-10 advanced division, took bronze in traditional weapons. In 15-17 advanced traditional weapons, van Lierop also earned the bronze medal.

Isabelle Lariviere nabbed three medals, including a gold in 18+ women's black belt open/creative forms. In the same division, Lariviere also won the bronze in traditional forms and traditional weapons.



Pictured from left to right are Fox Houston, Sensei Jalyne Lorentz, Morgan Houston, Lisa Sheldon, Shannon Campbell, Isabelle Lariviere, Sophia Bordman and Marieke van Lierop. The eight Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) students combined for 14 medals at the Karate Maynia XLV tournament held May 4 in Kitchener. Contributed photo

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## MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



Edwin Walsh dashes to first base after getting a hit during the St. Marys Building Centre U9 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game this past Monday.



Lachlan Thistle launches the ball towards the outfield during last Thursday's Veterinary Purchasing U11 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game.



Evan Ballantyne rockets a pitch during the Happy Valley Health Team U16 OBA St. Marys Rockies game last Friday.



Sianna Sicilia dashes after the ball to get a scoring chance during this past Sunday's U11 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm game.



Brooke Hahn kicks a shot on goal during the U14 Girls Tier Three St. Marys Storm 'B' game last Thursday.



Colton Cubberley lines up a shot during last Tuesday's U12 Boys Tier Two St. Marys Storm game. All photos by Spencer Seymour



# SPORTS

## U13 HP Blue Rockies win season opener

By Spencer Seymour

The Stonetown Electric U13 HP Blue St. Marys Rockies won their first game of the season convincingly on May 29 with a 20-3 victory over the visiting Wilmot Thunder.

Head coach Erin Holliday was very happy with the team's season-opening performance.

"This was an excellent first game for us," Haines told the Independent. "The girls played solid

defensively, quickly managing any hits that came into play. The game was a great opportunity to

use the fundamentals that we have been working on in practice."

Haines added the team has already been making progress in their early season practices, which was demonstrated by their well-rounded game against Wilmot.

"All the U13 girls get to practice together during the week, which has allowed them to learn from each other further. Completing drills during

practice has helped them become more aware of their roles in each position and allows them to react more quickly when the ball is in play, as we saw on Wednesday."

As impressive as the team's poise in the batter's box was to put up almost two dozen runs, St. Marys enjoyed stellar pitching all game. Tealya Thistle started the game and pitched three strong innings before Violet Holliday took over in the fourth and continued where Thistle left off.

Haines noted that the top-notch pitching was a highlight for the team when reviewing the first game of the season.

It was really great to start off the year with such strong pitching. Tealya is a second-year U13 player and she definitely set the tone for our first-year player, Violet. We have a few other girls who have been working toward pitching in games, so this was a great opportunity for them to see great examples, which will hopefully help further motivate them as they practice and get ready to make their pitching debuts."



Tesla Thistle slides into third base during the Stonetown Electric U13 HP Blue St. Marys Rockies win over Wilmot on May 29. Thistle played a big role in the win as the starting pitcher and three stellar innings on the mound. Photo by Spencer Seymour

## DCVI sending nine athletes to OFSAA track & field final in Windsor

By Spencer Seymour

Nine members of the St. Marys DCVI Track and Field Team qualified for the provincewide championship at OFSAA West May 31 to June 1 in Windsor.

The Salukis' slate of OFSAA qualifications included Charlie Bender, who took first place in both the novice boys 1,500-metre and 3,000-metre runs. Abe Bender also captured the top spot in the novice boys 800-metre run.

Donovan McGregor earned a spot at OFSAA by placing third in the novice boys shotput event, while Payton Blight took third in the junior girls discuss throw. Charlotte Clinton placed third in the open girls steeple-

chase and fourth in the senior girls 3,000-metre run.

Vaughn Barr and Kaleb Dingman rounded out the contingent of Salukis who earned a spot at OFSAA with a top-four finish, with Dingman finishing fourth in the junior boys 3,000-metre run and Barr taking fourth in the novice boys pole vault.

Though they took fifth in their respective events, since the West Region is hosting OFSAA, any events that are not full can be filled by West Region athletes. This benefitted two DCVI athletes who will compete at OFSAA, including Holly Black and Zach Larmer, with Black taking fifth in the novice girls pole vault and Larmer finishing fifth in the novice boys pole vault.

Coach Nathan Good noted the school's success this year has been unprecedented in his time as part of the track-and-field coaching staff.

"It's very exciting for our team," Good told the Independent. "This is the greatest number of athletes to OFSAA in my 10 years as coach, but possibly much longer than that. It is well known that OFSAA West is the strongest of the 6 regions, so qualifying for OFSAA is a huge accomplishment for these athletes."

Good has observed throughout the season the DCVI athletes being a very tight-knit team, even in a largely individual sport, with athletes cheering each other on during their events and supporting one another before, during and after. Good said he be-

lieves the strong connection amongst teammates helped the Salukis reach this point of qualifying for the all-Ontario meet.

"There's no doubt having such great support of their teammates helps the athletes. Not only are they cheering each other on, but they are also offering technical advice or emotional support. This is especially important in track and field where many athletes are competing simultaneously at different locations and coaches can't be with everyone all of them all the time."

The provincial OFSAA final takes place June 6-8 in London at Western University's Alumni Stadium.

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 36 Church St N  
 395 Elizabeth St  
 41 Salina St N  
 49 St George St S  
 321 Emily St  
 50 Edison St

111 Water St S  
 286 Church St S  
 331 Elgin St W  
 66 Stoneridge Blvd  
 160 Hooper S  
 180 Church St S  
 31 Waterloo St S  
 395 Widder St E  
 306 Church St S

60 Ann St  
 257 Thomas St  
 163 Waterloo St S  
 21 Dunsford Cres  
 382 Elgin St E  
 41 Trillium Cres  
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 147 Thamesview Cres



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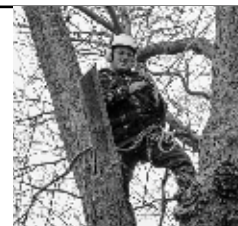


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## Ask the Arborist



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

*Dear Arborist,*

I have a large pine tree. My neighbour wants to trim it as he claims it's messy. We are not on the best of terms. You know the kind... Rather Difficult.

*Sincerely*

*Rather Difficult*

*Dear... Rather Difficult?*

Normally, the rule is the tree can be cut back to the property line. However that is not always in the best interest of the tree. When it comes to legality, I would recommend talking to a lawyer.

As a rule I try to avoid property disputes, one time (before I worked for myself) I was trimming a small dead branch out of an oak tree for a homeowner when the neighbour told

me to get out of the tree or he would shoot me. The homeowner called the police. Of course, it turned out the neighbour did not have ownership of the tree nor the house he was living in, as he was just renting. The police also found a pellet gun close by him.

This incident happened in a rather large city. Thankfully, St Marys is normally a quiet, polite town, which makes for a much nicer working environment. But I would recommend speaking to your lawyer if this tree dispute escalates.

*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*

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# COMMUNITY

## Downie Optimists host another successful bike rodeo



Left to Right Optimist Terry Heinbuch, Emmett Barter and Optimist Lloyd Barter were busy cooking hotdogs at the bike rodeo.

By Wendy Lamond

On June 1, the Optimist Club of Downie held its annual bike rodeo at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC).

The many kids who attended learned all about road safety, intersection etiquette and obstacle avoidance. As always, the Downie Optimists put on

a great event that included hot dogs and refreshments, gift cards, prize draws and helmet inspections.

Also on site for the rodeo were Rob and Sharon Staffen, whose charity, Brain and Mind Matters Community Fund, provides free helmets to those whose helmets have been damaged in



BAMM charity founder Rob Staffen and volunteer Deb Munro get a helmet ready for a young rider. Contributed photos

any way, making them poor fitting or unsafe for the wearer. Since 2015, the charity has given away over 225 bike helmets.

The Staffens work with the OPP and Stratford Police at four bike rodeos each year in Perth County. The charity, registered with the Stratford Perth

Community Foundation, has also donated \$169,950 in grants since 2015 to Perth County charities focused on traumatic brain injuries and mental health.

All the kids who attended got to ride their bikes around the course while learning about safety.

## Music Sweet Music performed by the Friendship Centre Choir

By Wendy Lamond

On Wednesday, May 29, the Friendship Centre Choir entertained a full audience with their musical talents.

There were 130 tickets sold for the choir's end-of-season concert. The music performed was a variety of genres and styles keeping the interest of all who attended. They sang everything from Broadway songs to more contemporary choices.

The Friendship Centre provided some yummy treats and light refreshments to the crowd after the concert. The choir has 29 adults who get together on a weekly basis for rehearsals and perform at various venues throughout the year. They are currently looking for new members to join when they start back up in September and, according to choir leader Lanny Hoare, members don't necessarily need to be able to read music to be involved, though it does help. All that's required is a love of singing and the will-

ingness to learn.

Hoare has been leading the choir for five years and loves seeing the choir develop from season to season. The choir has a range of members with some having sung on the professional stage and others who were involved in musical theatre.

"I try to have a diverse portfolio while bearing in mind the strengths of (our) members," Hoare said.

He also mentioned the choir is quite mixed and very talented.

"My favourite part about singing in the choir is the different range of music we sing and also the new friendships made at choir," said choir member Phyllis Spearin.

All the proceeds from the concert will go towards purchasing supplies for the choir.

If anyone is interested in more information or joining, contact the Friendship Centre at 519-284-3272.



Concert attendees were treated to some delicious treats and refreshments by the Friendship Centre.



The Friendship Centre Choir sings to a packed room at their end-of-season concert. Contributed photos



COMMUNITY

# Friendship Centre marks 50 years in the community

Celebration to take place on June 19, 2024

In honor of 50 years, the Friendship Centre will host a drop-in celebration on Wednesday, June 19 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will include cake and provide an opportunity for those attending to reconnect with friends, both old and new.

The St. Marys Friendship Centre was first established in February 1974 at 217 Park St. The current Friendship

Centre, as we recognize it today, was officially opened on June 18, 2004, at its current location within the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 317 James St. S.

"We are thrilled to be celebrating 50 years in the community," says Town of St. Marys Senior Services Manager Jenny Mikita. "This milestone is a testament to the dedication and hard

work of our staff, volunteers, and community members."

Mikita continues, "Over the years we have strived to provide essential services and create meaningful programs that enhance the quality of life for our seniors. From fitness classes and social events to educational workshops and support groups, our goal has always been to foster a sense of belong-

ing and well-being."

Everyone is welcome to attend this celebration at the Friendship Centre (317 James St. S).

Additional information about the Friendship Centre can be found at [www.townofstmarys.com/friendship-centre](http://www.townofstmarys.com/friendship-centre).

# Reflections on 10 years at the St. Marys Independent



By Tyler Carruthers

When I agreed to do a high school co-op placement in 2012 with Evolution Web Management, I had no idea where it would take me. After completing two semesters of my co-op placement with Stewart Grant's then

website company (and quickly learning websites weren't for me), Stew threw the idea out to me of buying the local newspaper and needing a graphic designer. I was prepared to go to college in the fall of 2014 but for the spring/summer I worked with him while he took over ownership of the St. Marys Independent from Frank Doyle. I remember wrapping up my last couple weeks before going off to school and part of me didn't even want to go anymore.

It was a dream job from the beginning. After a year of school, I quickly realized I missed it. I'll never forget being out for dinner one night stressing about where I was going to work after I was done school in spring of 2015 and my mom said, "why don't you give Stew a call? I'm sure he misses you

as much as you miss working there!" One phone call later and I was back that following Monday.

Things have evolved quite a bit since the early days. For most of my first few years it was a small operation consisting of just Stew, June, Frank, Dan Rankin and myself. For a few years, most days consisted of just me, Frank and Dan in the office together.

We dabbled in a few different adventures throughout the years, but something clicked in 2020 when Stew decided to buy the Tavistock Gazette. It took a few years, but we figured out the formula to small-town newspapers. If there's one thing you should know about Stew, it's that he has endless ideas and they almost always come to fruition (sooner than later as

well).

Fast forward 10 years later and we have a full-blown media operation that has evolved from one small town newspaper to five, as well as three farm publications, a print job division, multiple special projects including junior hockey team programs, visitors guides and a handful of employees to 20+. I've lived and worked in four different towns/cities all while doing the same job. Growing up in the social media/digital era some of my generation will ask me, "are you going to do this forever? Don't you think newspapers are going to die soon?" I say we're just getting started!

I like to consider myself the 'day one guy' here and couldn't be prouder of where things have come in 10 years.



By June Grant

I had been retired for about one and a half years when my son Stewart announced that he was purchasing the local paper, the St. Marys Independent. Stewart's job at the time was primarily in the U.S. so he asked if I could be of some help while he was away. "Sure," I said. "No problem".

Frank Doyle, who had established the St. Marys Independent in 2000, would stay on as editor and was soon

joined by Dan Rankin, our chief reporter. Graphic design was handled by Kyle Harkes and Ellyse Hodgson. Tyler Carruthers, our co-op student, was eager to take on any task handed to him. It was a small, tight-knit group that worked well together.

Spring forward ten years. That single newspaper has now evolved into five community publications and three farm papers, with more than 20 employees on staff plus numerous contributors and commissioned

salespeople. I believe that Stew would get these expansion ideas and brainstorm with Tyler first. I was the one who would try to get him to slow down so was usually the last to know about his next venture.

The one thing that has remained constant is that people love local news whether it's a photo of their grandchild playing hockey or an article about upcoming events in their community.



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# COMMUNITY

## The Optimist Club of Downie donates \$32,000 to hospital foundation

By Manny Puetz and Jeff Bell, Optimist Club of Downie

Two years ago, Ken McCutcheon from the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation's Building for Tomorrow campaign gave a presentation to the Optimist Club of Downie regarding the fundraiser.

This presentation resulted in a minimum \$25,000 commitment from the club to the campaign.

The Optimist Club of Downie decided to raise the funds by holding three smoked pork chop drive-through dinners. These dinners were highly successful and, with the totals from all of them, the club has been able to donate an amazing \$32,000 to the Building for Tomorrow campaign.

Every event, no matter how big or small, requires the help of many people behind the scenes. The club would like to

applaud their suppliers: the fantastic pork chops cooked by the Perth County Pork Producers, the yummy coleslaw and beans by Janice's Fine Country Catering, the delicious cake by Black Angus, the fabulous fresh rolls from Sassy's of Thorndale, Murray's Produce for the perfect potatoes and Stonetown Supply Services for sourcing our biodegradable supplies.

We also would like to thank Cascades for the free supply of takeout boxes.

As a club, we also cannot thank enough Cindy Bilyea and Bernice DeDecker for their support and encouragement. Lastly, the Optimist Club of Downie and the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation Building for Tomorrow campaign would like to thank all the ticket purchasers. Without you, this does not happen.



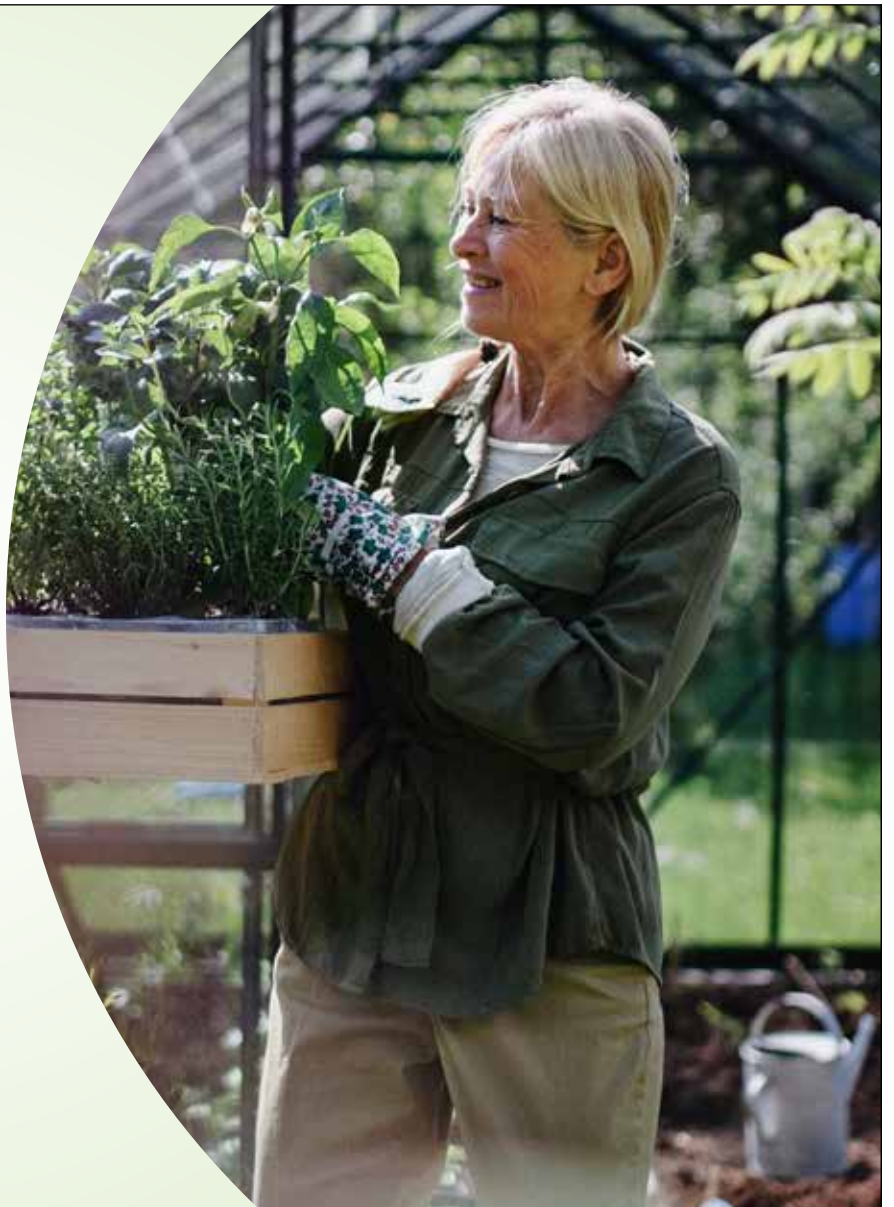
The Optimist Club of Downie made a \$32,000 donation to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation recently. Many Downie Optimist members were present for the occasion. Also present for the donation and photo were healthcare foundation communications and fundraising coordinator Bernice De Decker, foundation chair Cindy Bilyea, past board director Ken McCutcheon and St. Marys Memorial Hospital manager of outpatient clinics Arlene Lanting. Photo by Nancy Bickell

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# COMMUNITY

## St. Marys residents reminded to follow open-air burning rules

By St. Marys Independent staff

The St. Marys Fire Department is reminding residents about the steps that must be taken before having a backyard campfire.

An open-air-burn permit is required for all open-air burning in town, including backyard campfires and outdoor fireplaces. Residents can apply online at [www.townofstmarys.com/burnpermit](http://www.townofstmarys.com/burnpermit) or in person at the Municipal Operations Centre (408 James St. S). The fee is \$25.

The permit requirement is part of the Open Air Burning bylaw, which was enacted by council in 2017. The bylaw provides guidelines for when open-air fires can be set, how big fires can be, what materials can be burned and how far fires must be from structures, like houses and sheds.



The by-law also authorizes the fire chief or a delegate to issue an order to discontinue activity and an

order to extinguish.

“The bylaw exists to strike a balance between public safety and common courtesy,” said St. Marys Fire Chief Richard “Andy” Anderson in a press release. “It’s nice to have a small campfire for recreational use and warmth. However, we should always be considerate of neighbours that may have an increased sensitivity to smoke and smells in the air.”

The fire department reminds residents to never leave a fire unattended, never burn when it is windy and always have a source of water available to extinguish the flames.

Visit [www.townofstmarys.com/burnpermit](http://www.townofstmarys.com/burnpermit) or call the Fire Chief at 519-284-2340, ext. 201 for more information about open air burning.

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## HISTORY

## HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The Shand Sisters

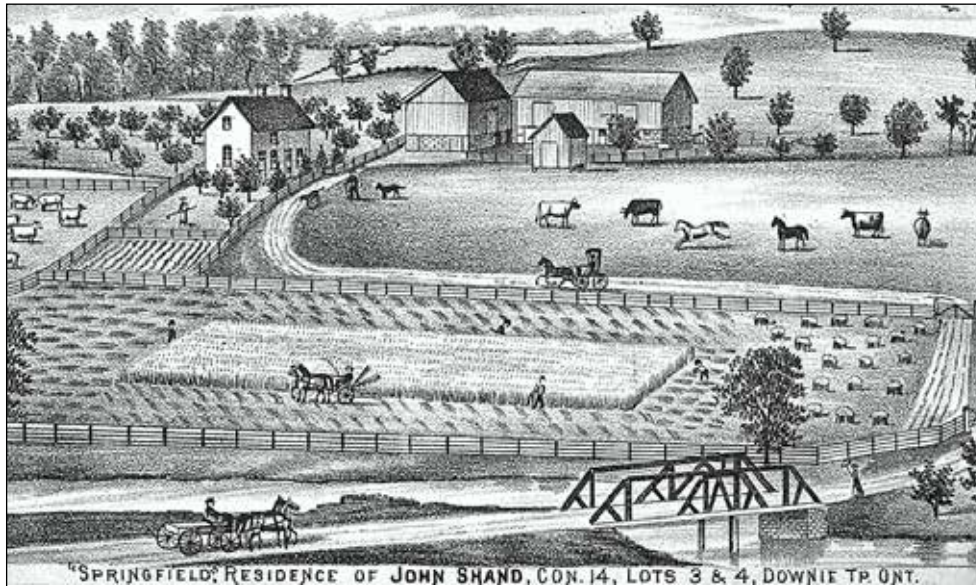
By Mary Smith

The picture shown with this week's column is a view of Springfield, the residence of the John Shand family at Concession 14, Lots 3 and 4, Downie Township. It is one of the illustrations in the 1879 Belden Historical Atlas of Perth County, reprinted in 1972. It is a charming picture of a late 19th century farmstead, stylized, of course, to highlight all the positive features – snug farmhouse, good barns, healthy livestock, perfect fences. The picture is filled with human activity. Men are working in the grain field or leisurely driving by. A woman with a hoe is about to tackle her garden while another, carrying a parasol, is out for a stroll over the bridge.

Some 40 years ago, this illustration appealed to Elsie Willard Turnbull, partly for its content but also because it showed the home of one of the families that she was researching. John Shand was the great-grandfather of her husband, Douglas Turnbull. Elsie's research led her to conclude that Shand's three daughters, Elizabeth (Douglas's mother), Margaret and Sarah, were all remarkable women. Her 35-page typescript exploring their life stories is part of the Willard/Turnbull archival material in the R. Lorne Eedy Archives at the St. Marys Museum.

John Shand was born in 1807 at Burn End Farm, near Keith in Banffshire, Scotland, the oldest child of John and Margaret (Murray) Shand. In October 1832, he and two younger sisters, Margaret and Ann, left Scotland aboard the Arkwright, their destination Upper Canada (Ontario) by way of New York. John took up land in Durham County near Port Hope. In 1842, when he was 34, he married the daughter of neighbours, Sarah Boland, 20 years of age. While they were in eastern Ontario, the Shands had two children: Elizabeth, born in 1843, and Thomas, born in 1846.

In 1853, perhaps looking for greater opportunities in a less-settled area, John Shand moved his family to Downie Township. He purchased farm property that had been laid out within the Huron Tract by Canada Company surveyors. The previous owner had cleared some of the land but the Shands still had to do a great deal of work to make a profitable farm and a comfortable home. John and Sarah had two more daughters, both born in Downie Township: Margaret (Maggie) in 1853 and Sarah in 1857. The farm did prosper and John Shand took his



This illustration of John Shand's farm was published in the 1879 Belden Historical Atlas of Perth County. There are copies of this atlas at the St. Marys Museum and the St. Marys Public Library.

place in the community, serving for many years as a Justice of the Peace. The Shands were strict Presbyterians, members of the church on Widder Street in St. Marys. Perhaps their religion helped them cope when they suffered a sad loss. In 1867, their only son, Thomas, died at the age of 21.

As Elsie Turnbull pointed out in her story of the sisters, they grew up after "the first arduous struggle of pioneering had passed." Still, they all learned how to work hard and to help with daily, weekly and seasonal chores: milking cows, churning butter, gardening, preserving fruit and vegetables, managing poultry. They grew up to be confident, efficient women. At a time when women's career choices were very limited, girls were expected to marry and raise a family. As Elsie wrote: "The Shand girls followed this course but, not content to be submissive, they left a decided impact on their posterity."

Elizabeth Shand was older than her youngest sibling, Sarah, by 14 years, a respected older sister. Apparently Maggie and Sarah frequently turned to her for advice. In December 1869, at the age of 26, she married a widower, James Douglas Moore, whose baby daughter was living with his parents in North Dumfries Township. J. D. Moore had moved to St. Marys in 1866 to start up a produce dealership. He purchased eggs and butter from area farmers, stored and preserved them, and sold them on when the price was right. He built a "Cold Store," a frame building on James Street, where blocks of ice kept eggs and butter cool in the summer until they could be shipped. He also made

use of new methods of preserving eggs in pickling vats so that they were preserved longer and could even be shipped overseas.

Elizabeth Moore gave birth to a still-born son in March 1871. A healthy baby girl, "Little Lizzie," was born in July 1873. There were no more children, and Elizabeth Moore, needing to be busy, became involved in her husband's business. As Elsie Turnbull wrote, she showed "a shrewdness and competence that was very helpful." In 1878, when her daughter was just five years old, Elizabeth travelled alone to Great Britain on behalf of the business. She successfully initiated shipping of eggs and butter to Scottish and English dealers, a profitable market for her husband into the 1890s. Four years later, she travelled west and invested in several large parcels of land in Manitoba. Back in St. Marys, she could frequently be seen driving her rig to check on one of J. D. Moore's workplaces, which now included an oatmeal mill on the Thames River and a planing mill on Trout Creek. She bought local property, purchasing a large brick house on Jones Street East for the family home.

These activities were unusual for a woman. Even more unusual, during her later years, Elizabeth demanded financial recognition for her contributions to her husband's success, threatening litigation unless he agreed. There was finally a settlement and reconciliation but this bitter dispute was hard on the health of both parties and must have raised great concern within their family. J. D. Moore died in 1902. In 1908, Elizabeth moved, for her health, to California where she

died in 1911, age 68.

Margaret Shand, the second oldest sister, married Robert McConkey in 1876 when she was 23. His family had emigrated from Ireland in the 1840s, settling in Zorra Township near Embro. At the time of his marriage, Robert was a farmer in Arran Township, Bruce County. Horses were Robert's great passion and he bred them both to show and to race. Maggie's passion was education for her children – sons James, John and Oswald, and a daughter, Florence. Even when money was tight she made sure they were sent to the best schools available. In the economic depression of the 1890s, the McConkeys moved to a smaller farm near Crumlin, Ontario. John Shand had died in 1884. Eventually, Maggie McConkey returned with her three sons to run Springfield Farm. Her daughter, Florence, stayed in Crumlin to keep house for her father.

In the early 1900s, the two older McConkey boys went west and purchased land in Alberta. Their father packed his household effects into a railway car and, with four horses, went west to join them in the High River area. In 1905, Maggie and her youngest son, 14-year-old Oswald, left Downie Township and also went to Alberta to join the family. Oswald was not yet finished high school. He returned each term to St. Marys to complete his secondary studies at the collegiate. When he graduated, he found a homestead of his own on the prairies of eastern Alberta where he tried to teach himself how to raise crops in dry conditions.

A bequest from his aunt Elizabeth Moore in 1911 allowed Oswald to return east to study at the Ontario Agriculture College in Guelph. He continued to homestead in the summers. However, in 1917 when he graduated, he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and went overseas. He returned to his studies, earning postgraduate degrees from the University of Illinois and Cambridge. Dr. McConkey eventually became a well-loved professor of field husbandry at OAC and a world-renown advisor on plant breeding and conservation. His father, Robert, continued to breed and race fine horses. He died in 1924. Margaret survived her husband by 15 years, loved by friends and family and valued for her good sense and judgement.

The story of the third sister, Sarah Shand, deserves – and will get – a column of its own.



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## Thorndale Area farmer inducted to the Agricultural Hall of Fame

By Nancy Abra

A Thorndale area farmer is being recognized for his contributions to agriculture in Middlesex County.

Established in 2000, the Middlesex County Agricultural Hall of Fame, located at the Western Fair District, recognizes the history and tradition of agriculture in Middlesex County. Its primary objective is to honour individuals who have made unselfish achievements within the realm of agriculture and service to the rural community in Middlesex County and beyond. To date, there are over ninety individuals who have been recognized for their contributions. See all inductees at <https://westernfairdistrict.com/agricultural-hall-fame>.

On June 2, an induction ceremony took place in the Agriplex lobby at the Western Fair District to add three more names with their portraits to this Agriculture Hall of Fame gallery. One of these nominees was James (Jim) Edward Duffin from the Thorndale area.

Duffin spent his life in the Thorndale area. After graduating from the Ontario Agricultural College in 1955, he married Sheila (Ramsay) in 1957 and, in their 64 years together, raised four children – Kathie, Doug, Barb and Darcy. Duffin was a people person, a successful farmer and was very involved in his community and beyond, serving on numerous boards.

Duffin made many contributions to agriculture, locally and beyond this region as an innovator with visionary concepts in egg production, feed-handling systems and the beef industry. He was a member of Egg Farmers of Ontario and was named Farmer of the Year in 1979 by the London Chamber of Commerce.

Duffin served on West Nissouri council from 1960-1968 as both deputy reeve and reeve during that time. From 1958-1968, he was a director of the Thorndale Agricultural Society and served a two-year term as this organization's president in 1963-1964. In the '60s, he chaired the agricultural committee of Middlesex County council. From 1969-1985, Duffin served on the Middlesex County board of education as a trustee and was this board's first chair. He was also a member of the Hall-Dennis Commission, a provincial royal commission on education.

From 1988-2001, Duffin served as a director at Oxford Mutual Insurance as well as its president in 1997. He was also an Honorary Companion of the University of Guelph and an active member of his local church.

Duffin passed away in 2021, but his family attended the induction ceremony last Sunday at the Western Fair District and greatly appreciate the honour in the acknowledgment of his contributions to Middlesex County during his lifetime.



Thorndale area farmer and politician Jim Duffin was recently inducted into the Middle Sex County Agriculture Wall of Fame. Pictured from left are Duffin's son, Darcy Duffin, his wife, Sheila Duffin, and his son, Doug Duffin. Contributed photo

## Thorndale Optimist Bike Rodeo well attended despite the weather

By Nancy Abra

For more than 40 years, the Thorndale Optimist Club has hosted an annual bike rodeo for the children of the community.

Last Sunday, June 2, there were 38 children from toddler size to age 14 who attended this event despite the damp weather.

Members of the Optimist Club and community policing member, Mike Olds, were on hand to inspect each bike for the proper safety equipment, as well as riders for a proper helmet. After a brief safety lesson, the children, one at a time, were directed through a course to prove

their riding skills from manoeuvring around pylons, stopping, turning and using the proper hand signals. As a token for completing the course, each child received a safety item for their bicycle.

The bike rodeo event concluded with a draw of two bicycles for two children in attendance which were purchased by the Thorndale Optimist Club with the proceeds from the Catch the Ace fundraiser.

"The Optimist Club of Thorndale was very pleased to have such a great turnout despite the weather," said Optimist member Michael Fernando. "We also want to thank all the volunteers and participants and their parents who turned up despite the rain."



Pictured at the Thorndale Optimist Bike Rodeo June 2 are Sinead Fernando and Optimist members Don Phillips and Greg Morris. Photo by Michael Fernando

## Kick off summer with carnival in Thorndale

By Nancy Abra

With the month of June here, children are counting down the days to the end of the school year, and what better way to welcome the summer than with a carnival

val to kick off the summer holidays.

On Saturday, June 8 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre, BGC is hosting a Summer Kick-off Carnival. It is open to area youth in

grades six through nine. This free event is intended to engage the youth of the community and to reveal activities and programs available for them this summer in Thorndale.

Some fun activities at this Summer Kick-off Carnival will include carnival games, a photo booth and interactive group challenges with snacks available. Registration is required. To register, visit <https://form.jotform.com/BGCL/tdale-carnival>.



# COLUMN

## FROM THE GARDEN: Live the Garden Life



**By Nancy Abra**

Gardens Canada is an initiative led by Canadian Garden Council. Its purpose is to inspire and inform Canadians about the health aspects, economic and environmental benefits that gardens provide. Since they designated the 'Year of the Canadian Garden' in 2022, Gardens Canada have implemented the 'Live the Garden Life' public campaign.

'Live the Garden Life' is a program developed by Gardens Canada to educate and inspire Canadians about the vital impact gardens and gardening have on the quality of life at home, in communities and across Canada. It is also an informative campaign of

showcasing Canada's rich horticultural heritage and vibrant garden culture.

Many of us have our reasons as to why we garden. For some it is a beloved hobby - the joy of planting, nurturing, and witnessing the beauty of plants through our hard work and passion. For others, it is being creative, and self-expression growing certain plants or collection of cultivars that reflect our taste and preferences. There are many of us who concentrate their gardening skills to growing food, which has the benefits of being both cost-effective and nutritious. And speaking of health benefits, gardening provides many advantages in the form of exercise, a stress reliever and engaging our senses of nature around us.

The concept of 'Live the Garden Life' takes the act of gardening further. Gardeners love to share. What better way to share, either plants or our knowledge, by connecting with fellow garden enthusiasts in horticultural societies and garden clubs.

These groups also focus on education, so members are more informed and improve their skills and knowledge to be better gardeners.

As gardeners, we embrace the garden life to make a difference. It may be with the focus on the environment, choosing eco-friendly and sustainable practices by planting trees or building a rain garden to help conserve water. Or another aspect is to inspire the next generation to take up a trowel and plant. Many of us are motivated to grow more native plants, to create a welcoming habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Even though many gardeners are busy with their own landscapes, they volunteer their time and their skills to help beautify their villages and towns or in gardens to grow food for their communities.

Besides working in our own gardens or help tending to our community gardens, 'Live the Garden Life' extends past the physical act of growing, weeding, and watering. It is



discovering the numerous public and private gardens in our region and beyond across Canada. And what better way to celebrate Canada's rich garden culture on June 16, National Garden Day. This special day is to commemorate the role and contribu-

tion of gardens to our quality of life, climate action goals and community well-being as well as to celebrate 'Live the Garden Life'.

Source: <https://livethegardenlife.gardenscanada.ca/>

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Solutions on page 39

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- Steal its chair.** A cartoon.
- How do you make an egg laugh? How do you fix a broken gorilla?
- Tell it a yolk.** With a monkey wrench
- What did the mother broom say to the baby broom? What did the dog say to the little child pulling his tail?
- It's time to go to sweep.** This is the end of me.
- What do bees do with their honey? What happens to the duck who flies upside down?
- They cell it.** He quacks up
- Why was Cinderella thrown off the basketball team? What horse never goes out in the day time?
- She ran away from the ball.** A night mare
- What do you call a pig that does karate? Why don't pigs drive cars?
- A pork chop.** They would hog the road
- What do you call

## - Word Search -

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

### Word List

- Firefighter breakfast
- Bruins beat Leafs
- All Wheels Park
- Lincs make finals
- Aurora Borealis
- Kendrick vs Drake
- Palestine
- Victoria Day
- High school sports
- Downtown patios
- Trump guilty



## The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

Where does a unicorn gallop off to after the thunderstorm?



Somewhere over the rainbow!

Emma Borgijink (5)

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

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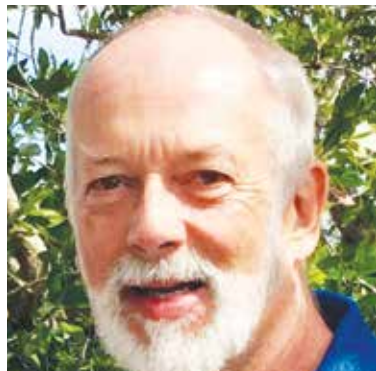
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## COLUMN

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Stonehammer - discover a billion years of stories



By Paul Knowles

Did you know the famous Reversing Falls in Saint John, N.B. aren't called that anymore? No, neither did I, but the folks in St. John have gone with a somewhat more-accurate description, and the phenomenon – which has not changed – is now called the Reversing Falls Rapids.

If you have been there, you will know there never has been a very obvious waterfall, but that what they call “nature's tug of war” does produce some pretty spectacular sights here where water flowing from the Saint John River – sometimes called by its Indigenous name, the Wolastoq – meets the incoming tide from the famed Bay of Fundy.

What I also didn't know is the Reversing Falls Rapids are part of a much-larger and highly significant feature of the Saint John area, the Stonehammer Unesco Global Geopark – one of the largest and most diverse geoparks in the world.

Wanda Hughes, the owner of the Inside Out Nature Centre located in Rockwood Park,

took us on an extensive tour of some of the many sites that make up this unique destination. While the Reversing Falls Rapids are one popular feature within the geopark, she told us the real justification for this global designation.

“Our geology is so diverse. ... We cover every geological era except one.”

So it's not surprising that Stonehammer's tagline is, “A billion years of stories.”

Let's point out right now that this is not a park in the sense there is a single entrance and an obviously defined area. The geopark includes a total of 60 sites in and around Saint John. It's one of the largest in the world.

So, a good idea is to load up with information before you start what will be a fascinating tour of some of the locations. There is a Stonehammer information centre at the Container Village – a collection of brilliantly coloured shops, restaurants and performances places all in reconstituted sea cans on the Saint John Harbour. You can also find lots of information online.

Armed with such information, plan to spend at least half a day discovering some of the most interesting sites in New Brunswick.

The majority of the 60 sites are not accessible, largely because Stonehammer is the location of a lot of ongoing scientific research.

“Scientists have been coming

here since the early 1800s.”

Wanda told us there are some sites that include fossils dating back 800 million years.

But a dozen of the sites are open to visitors, including the 2,200-acre Rockwood Park, which includes 10 lakes and 55 trails, all within the boundaries of the city of Saint John. The Irving Nature Park, which covers 600 acres on the west side of the city, includes large swaths of salt marshes and a beautiful, unspoiled beach on the Bay of Fundy. And of course, there are the Reversing Falls Rapids, where visitors will want to spend more than a few minutes as the waterscape changes dramatically as the Bay of Fundy tidal waters battle the river current. The tide fluctuates between 25 and 29 feet; the Bay of Fundy is famous for having the highest tides in the world.

A less obvious Stonehammer site is a highly significant, unique spot you might not notice without advance warning. It's a place where you can discover the remnants of three continents as they were before continental drift tore them apart and they moved over millions of years to form the global configuration we know today. In Saint John, you can stand in North America, and touch bits left behind when South America and Africa moved to their new locations.

Wanda announces dramatically, “Continents collided right here!”



A beach on the Bay of Fundy, part of the Stonehammer Unesco Global Geopark. Photos by Paul Knowles

In addition to billions of years of history, Stonehammer also encompasses six different ecosystems: the Bay of Fundy, salt marshes, bogs, forest, fungi and mosses. The various sites that form the geopark make for excellent bird watching, walking and hiking, canoeing and kayaking, swimming and even – in Rockwood – golf.

The accreditation of Stonehammer as a Unesco Global Geopark occurred in 2010. Wanda was part of the team that made the original application 15 years ago, which led to Stonehammer becoming the first recognized geopark in North America. But it is not a done deal. Every four years, Unesco experts come and re-evaluate the accreditation.

I asked Wanda why she has

devoted all these years to this project. She was quick to answer.

“I love rocks and the geopark is good for tourism.”

So, when you visit Saint John – which offers lots of other great tourist attractions beyond Stonehammer – be sure to schedule time to explore this unique site for the science and the history, sure, but also for the beauty. The beach on the Bay of Fundy, the lake-front at Rockwood Park, and the Reversing Falls Rapids are all gorgeous attractions in their own right.

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](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).



The famous Reversing Falls Rapids in Saint John.

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## OBITUARY

### Blackler

Gregg Kenneth Blackler, resident of the St. Marys area, passed away on Friday May 24, 2024, at the age of 49 after a long and determined battle against treatment-resistant depression and chronic pain. Cherished son of Joanne Blackler and the late Kenneth Blackler (2013). Beloved brother of Maureen Blackler & Stephen Hill of Toronto and Andrea Blackler & Tim Marshall, also of Toronto. Adored uncle of Adam Hill and Zoe Marshall. He will be greatly missed by his loving aunts, uncles, cousins, and countless friends. Gregg made a positive contribution to the lives of many students through his dedicated work as a teacher, coach, volunteer, and mentor within the St. Marys and Stratford communities. Arrangements will be announced through [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## CELEBRATION OF LIFE

### Campbell

#### Celebration of Life for Doug Campbell

Saturday, June 8th

Interment at 1:00 p.m.

Avonbank Cemetery

Coffee to follow downtown Avonbank

## THANK YOU

### Kittmer

The family of Donna Kittmer, would like to express our deepest appreciation for everyone's sympathy as we mourn our Mom's loss. The shared memories from all of you at her funeral, along with the flowers, cards, phone calls, gifts of food, and words of condolence meant a great deal to us all.

We would especially like to thank Andrew Hodges Funeral Home, for their professional and caring arrangements. Rev. Dr. Pirie Mitchell for performing a beautiful service to honor Mom's life. Thank you also, to Lyrics Flowers, and The United Church for providing a very delicious Lunch, following the service. For all of you who played a special part that day, it will always be remembered.

Special thank you to Stratford Rotary Hospice, your care for our Mom in her final days was exceptional, and the thoughtfulness and compassion shown to all of us will never be forgotten. Thank you to Dr. Sara Haig, and Dr. Gatfield, for the great care given to our Mom over the years. Thank you to Stratford General Hospital, 2nd & 3rd floor.

To everyone who reached out to us during our time of mourning, we are grateful for your continued support and love during our time of need.

Our Mom will be missed dearly by us all.

We will remember you in spring when the lilacs bloom. "With delicate colored blossoms, and heart shaped leaves of rich green".

**Cindy, Nancy & John, Jamie & Rose Marie, Lori & Chris & families**

## NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS TO DESTROY WEEDS

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The co-operation of all citizens is earnestly solicited.

*Marvin Smith, Weed Inspector*

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**COMMUNITY**

# St. Marys Horticultural 24th annual Garden fair



The St. Marys Horticultural Society held their 24th annual garden fair Saturday, June 1, 2024 at Milt Dunnell field. The well attended event had many wonderful things for sale, including lots of flowers and plants, garden supplies, and home decor. Pictured, from left, Joan Robinson and Dorothy Elliott who are members of the Horticultural Society. Photo by Nancy Bickell

# LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

## 20 minute parking

25 years ago (1999)

Kelly McCarthy is the lone DCVI athlete heading to the OFSAA track and field championships this weekend in Etobicoke. McCarthy placed a strong third in the girls 100-metre dash at the OFSAA West Regionals in Sarnia this past weekend.

Blue Circle Cement's St. Marys plant recently received a 1998 Safety Award from the Portland Cement Association. The Major Safety Improvement Award, presented during a special ceremony at the Cement Industry's 41st conference in Virginia, recognizes the plant for a 50 to 75 percent incidence rate improvement.

At the annual St. Marys DCVI athletic awards last night, master of ceremonies Bob Ellison informed the audience that the school's athletes put in 10,000 hours of practice time. OAC student Robin Mikita was named the school's most outstanding graduating athlete.

50 years ago (1974)

Another Indigo Bunting has been spotted by Mrs. Irwin Aldridge of King Street North. She noticed, in particular, the beautiful blue colouring on this rare bird.

Carp watching became a popular pastime recently as the big fish engaged in spawning activities along the Thames below and in the vicinity of the Queen Street bridge.

75 years ago (1949)

Heavy frost, which visited the district again on Tuesday night, finished the job begun last week of destroying tomato plants and early potatoes of many garden owners.

Superstition still abounds among the younger set. Not one high school student dares venture under a ladder which was propped against Dobson's garage one day last week.

Mrs. W.N. Harrison and Miss E. Fraleigh were very surprised last Friday morning to see a large snapping turtle on the front lawn of their St. Andrew Street home. The turtle proved to be a tough one and snapped viciously as several boys tried to devise ways of picking it up to remove it. It was finally placed in a box and was carried away.

100 years ago (1924)

Councillor Stanley, in introducing a by-law to close all the garages and oil stations but one on Sunday, said the garagemen held a meeting recently and reached an agreement by which they would take turns at keeping open on Sundays.

A by-law to regulate the parking of cars was passed at Council this week. It limits the length of time a car can be parked or repaired in front of a garage to 20 minutes, makes it compulsory to park 20 feet from hydrants and intersections, and restrains parking on the business section of Queen and Water Streets on Saturdays to 20 minutes.

Mrs. Charles Webster, wife of Dr. Webster, medical missionary in Beirut, Syria, died suddenly on Sunday. Their daughter, Miss Marjorie, returned to Beirut from Canada last year, having completed a course in bacteriology at Toronto University. She is now a member of the University staff at Beirut.

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**QUIZ ANSWERS**

1. High Voltage
2. Five
3. Julia Roberts
4. England
5. Leonardo da Vinci
6. Caviar or Roe
7. Mount Everest
8. Eight
9. Blue
10. Eight

**COLUMN**

**Straight from the Shelves**

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Join us on Wednesday, June 19 at 7 p.m. in the 2/3rd Hall of the Pyramid Recreation Centre for an insightful presentation on planning your own funeral. "Things to Know Before You Go" will be presented by Andrew Hodges, licensed funeral director and the owner of Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home in St. Marys. Mr. Hodges will cover the importance of funeral pre-arrangement, various arrangement options, what happens at the time of death, and funeral services in general. To sign-up for this free program, visit <https://tinyurl.com/SMPL-Bookings>.

**This Week's Recommendation**

Our perception of time is a funny thing. When we're young, it seems to drag on and on, but as we age, it feels like everything slips by too fast. An animal frequently associated with time is the turtle, a creature with ancestry as ancient as the dinosaurs and a life span that can exceed 200 years. Despite their historical and individual longevity, turtles the world over are greatly threatened by environmental changes and human interaction. Fortunately,

people such as those at the Turtle Rescue League are a force for change and hope as they work to preserve and protect the shelled beauties in their care. Learn more about turtle rehabilitation and the nature of time itself by picking up Sy Montgomery's novel "Of Time and Turtles: Mending the World, Shell by Shattered Shell", available to borrow as a book, an eBook, and an eAudiobook.

**Up This Week**

- Friday, June 7: Movies in the Park: Barbie^ (Dusk)
- Saturday, June 8: Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Monday, June 10: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 11: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 12: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong Intro (1-2 p.m., 6-6:30 p.m.), Mahjong! (2-4 p.m., 6:30-8 p.m.), Scrabble (6-8 p.m.), Books and Brews\*~ (7 p.m.)
- Thursday, June 13: FOL Social (6:30 p.m.)

\*Registration Required

^Cadzow Park (177 Church St., St. Marys)

~ Held at Broken Rail Brewery (480 Glass St., St. Marys)



**Community Liaison Committee**

The next Community Liaison Committee Meeting will be held on June 14th at 10am at the St Marys Municipal Operations Center. Members of the public who wish to observe are welcome to attend.

Residents who wish to speak in front of the Committee may submit a detailed request in writing at least 3 days prior to the meeting in writing to the Committee. The request will be considered by the Committee and approved prior to the meeting. Please submit all requests, questions, and concerns for the meeting to [kara.terpstra@vcimentos.com](mailto:kara.terpstra@vcimentos.com) by June 12, 2024.

**SUDOKU ANSWERS**

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

**THE WEEK AHEAD**



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

St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 39

**Friday, Jun 7**

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog/sausage lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- Victory worship service at the Friendship Centre - 7 p.m.
- St. Marys Public Library movie night at Cadzow Park - begins at dusk

**Saturday, June 8**

- St. Marys town wide yard sale - See address listing on Page 27
- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon
- Ontario Senior Games pickleball tournament at the PRC - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Doug Campbell celebration of life at Avonbank Cemetery - Interment at 1 p.m.
- Red Mill Farm open house at 2379 Road 133, St. Marys - 1 to 4 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.
- Summer kick-off carnival at Thorndale Lions Community Centre - 5:30-8:30 p.m.





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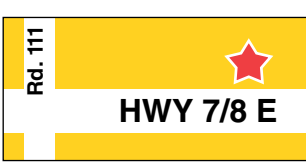
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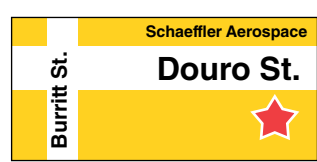
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