

St. Marys Independent

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POSING FOR GRINCHY PHOTOS AT MERCHANT OPEN HOUSE (NANCY BICKELL PHOTO) Chantel Lynch, the owner of Hyggeligt Fabrics, poses with the Grinch at the selfie station on Queen Street during this year's Downtown Merchants Open House. See more photos on Page 14.

Friends and political colleagues remember Perth South Mayor Jim Aitcheson

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Fond memories and words of remembrance about his no-nonsense, practical approach to municipal politics are pouring in following the recent passing of Perth South Mayor and former Perth County warden Jim Aitcheson.

According to his obituary posted to the W.G. Young Funeral Home website, Aitcheson passed away on Nov. 21 after a brief battle with cancer. He had been on leave from his duties as Perth South mayor and Perth County councillor since early October.

"I had the pleasure of working with Jim as a fellow member of county council and had the fortunate opportunity to work alongside him as deputy warden during his time as warden of Perth County," said Perth County Warden Rhonda Ehgoetz in a press release from the county announcing Aitcheson's passing. "It has been an honour to work alongside him and his voice and presence will be greatly missed around the council table."

Other members of county council who served alongside Aitcheson said they will miss his presence and leadership around the county council table, and reminisced about his passion for local politics and his ability to tell a story that illustrated any point he was trying to make.

"He was protective of our rural farmlands," said West Perth Mayor and county councillor Walter McKenzie, who worked closely with Aitcheson when McKenzie was warden and

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

St. Marys council agrees to include \$125,000 for local hospital foundations in 2025 budget

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

St. Marys council has agreed to include \$125,000 in the town's draft 2025 budget to support funding requests from two local hospital foundations.

During council's Nov. 19 budget meeting, councillors heard from representatives of the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation who

appeared before council as a delegation requesting \$100,000 from the town next year. The money, explained foundation board chair Amanda McCurdy and St. Marys Dr. Josh Burley, represents an increase of \$50,000 over previous years – the first increase in funding to the foundation requested of the town in 14 years.

"These funds would support the foundation

CONTINUED TO PAGE 6

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COMMUNITY

Friends and political colleagues remember Perth South Mayor Jim Aitcheson

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Aitcheson was deputy warden. “He was a straight shooter and you never had to guess what he was thinking. He would get a twinkle in his eye and a smile would appear on his face, and you knew that there was going to be one of Jim’s one-liner statements about to be heard.”

North Perth Mayor Todd Kasenberg, who also worked closely with Aitcheson as a fellow member of county council, described Aitcheson as “passionately fair, stalwart in what was important and possessing a rare mix of humour, wisdom and kindness.”

“As warden, he oversaw with grace and skill some rather difficult times during the pandemic. It may be in that service that we owe him our biggest gratitude. He was part curmudgeon and part storyteller, and I enjoyed every minute of our public and behind-the-scenes work together. A call with Jim was always a treat because he called it straight and was very reassuring. You knew where he stood and why he stood there.”

Aitcheson was first elected as councillor for the Downie Ward in the Township of Perth South in 2006. He served as Downie Ward councillor until 2022 when he was elected mayor of the Township of Perth South.

Aitcheson spent a total of 13 years serving on Perth County council. He was elected warden of Perth County for three years spanning from 2019-2022. In his time as warden, he led the county through the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Aitcheson was a tireless advocate for rural life and served on many committees of council.

“Jim was never afraid to speak his mind,” Perth South acting Mayor Sue Orr said. “He was very good at asking the hard questions and, at times, had to make hard decisions. His decision making was based on facts and good, long-term business sense not only for Perth South but also for Perth County. Jim would always pick up the phone to talk and to listen. He was an advocate for responsible farm-house severances, mental-health issues, Woodland Towers, Spruce Lodge Long Term Care and, most importantly, he genuinely cared about them all. He also cared about the farming community, best land-use practices, the Optimist Club and, most importantly, his family. He

was fiercely proud of his wife, Lori, and of all his children, especially their work ethics.”

Aitcheson also worked closely with his counterparts in neighbouring Stratford and St. Marys on issues of importance like paramedic services, long-term care, public-health services and regional transit.

“I appreciated his style of leadership, which was very direct, however (he was) always able to see the total picture,” said Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma, who attended high school with Aitcheson at what was then Stratford Northwestern Secondary School (now Stratford District Secondary School). “His love of agriculture and his passion for farming and the preservation of our valuable farmland certainly resonated with me. ... I know that Mayor Aitcheson’s work will continue to bear fruits well into the future.”

“I was fortunate to work closely with Jim during the pandemic during his time as warden,” said St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee. “He offered a very cooperative and strong public front during a difficult time. I was grateful for his leadership in strong support of public-health measures. Jim was also a very dedicated member of the St. Marys and Area Mobility Service. His advocacy for seniors and those in need of medical transportation will be missed. ... Never one to shy away from a good laugh, it was always fun to be around Jim. Even in very stressful and serious situations, he had an uncanny ability to lighten the mood.”

Flags at municipal buildings across Stratford, St. Marys, Perth County and Perth South were lowered last week in recognition of Aitcheson’s passing.

Perth-Wellington’s provincial and federal representatives spoke fondly of Aitcheson’s political ability and his dedication to serving the people of his township and his county.

“Jim was a dedicated leader both in the community and on council,” Perth-Wellington MP John Nater said. “During his three terms as warden of Perth County, Jim navigated some of the most turbulent times in the county’s history and earned the respect and friendship of all who worked with him. Over 13 years in municipal government and many decades of volunteer service, he demonstrated strong leadership through his hard work, wise



(PHOTO COURTESY OF PERTH COUNTY)

Perth South Mayor and former Perth County warden Jim Aitcheson died Nov. 21 after a brief battle with cancer.

words and sound judgement. No matter the challenge, he was ready to help. I will miss his no-nonsense advice and his deep commitment to those he served.”

“During my time working with Jim, I knew him to be a devoted public servant always having the interests of the community at heart,” Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae said. “From rural broadband to community infrastructure investments, it was always a pleasure working with Jim to improve our rural communities. Jim was also a proud husband, fa-

ther and grandfather. I always appreciated his frankness and I know that he will be missed by myself and many others in Perth County and across Ontario.”

Outside of politics, Aitcheson was a loyal Downie Optimist from the day he first joined in November 1981. Aitcheson was active as the club treasurer from 1995 until 2010. In 2014, he received Life Member status for his distinguished service as treasurer.

According to his obituary, Aitcheson’s favourite pastime was telling anyone and everyone about his children and grandchildren. He wanted everyone to know how proud he was about their various accomplishments and how well everyone was doing.

Aitcheson’s family thanks the dedicated staff and volunteers at the Rotary Hospice Stratford-Perth and the Perth County Paramedic Service, as well as all of his friends and family who visited to keep him up to date on everything that was happening in the community.

A celebration of life will be held for Aitcheson at Downie Optimist Community Centre (3185 Perth Road 122, St. Pauls) on Wednesday, Dec. 4 from 1-4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Rotary Hospice Stratford-Perth, St. Marys and Area Mobility Service or the Downie Optimist Club through W. G. Young Funeral Home (430 Huron St., Stratford) or online at www.wyoungfuneralhome.com.



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Sun/cloud	Sun/cloud	Flurries	Mainly cloudy	Light snow	Flurries	Mainly cloudy
2°C	0°C	0°C	-2°C	-3°C	-2°C	-3°C
Feels Like -2	Feels Like -4	Feels Like -6	Feels Like -8	Feels Like -7	Feels Like -5	Feels Like -8

St. Marys Community Players' 2025 season features heartwarming family comedies

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Two heartfelt comedies about families, relationships and unconditional love will take the stage during the St. Marys Community Players' (SMCP) 51st season in 2025.

SMCP announced on Nov. 19 that *Over the River* and *Through the Woods* and *Hilda's Yard* will be the productions for their upcoming season. The two productions will explore family, relationships and unconditional love.

"It probably speaks to where people's mindsets are at the moment – love and community and openness – and that's kind of what we want," said Jake Petrie, head of SMCP's reading committee.

Petrie made six recommendations to the board of directors before the two productions were picked. *Over the River* and *Through the Woods*, by John DiPietro, is about a single American-Italian man whose grandparents pressure him to settle down and get married, and set



him up on blind dates convincing him to stay instead of leaving town for his dream job. Petrie said it was one of the best scripts he and the committee read this year.

"It really stood out to us head and shoulders above a lot of the other things that we reviewed," he said. "It's very well written. It's funny but heartfelt. I think there's something in it for every-

one."

Over the River and *Through the Woods* will have its run in spring 2025 from April 24 to May 10.

In the fall, between Oct. 15 and Nov. 2, SMCP will present *Hilda's Yard* by community theatre favourite Norm Foster. The Foster comedy will introduce the Fluck family, which navigates life as the adult children move back home.

"They're fun characters and it's a fun story," Petrie said. "But again, it has a certain level of heartfelt; that next layer that just goes beyond being funny."

The SMCP just had a successful return to St. Marys town hall with their fall production, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Due to renovations, the SMCP held their spring productions in Riverwalk Commons, which featured Colleen Neuman's *Bothered* and *Riverview Tape #23* as well as Foster's *My Narrator* and *Death of Me*. Both of the 2025 productions will be held at the town hall theatre. Petrie said the committee is happy to have larger productions back in the town hall.

"Riverwalk was a really nice alternative when Town Hall Theatre was under construction," Petrie said. "But there's no place like home."

More information about the upcoming season, including how to get involved in either production, can be found online by visiting stmaryscommunityplayers.ca.

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EDITORIAL

Anyone else on Bluesky yet?

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

The plethora of social media apps out there today provide such a wide variety of ways for people to interact with their close community or with the broader world.

What are your top social media apps? I tried this question with my family members recently and we all gave quite different answers. For years, my favourite has been Reddit with side dishes of Facebook and Twitter, while my wife is a regular on Instagram and Facebook (and Pinterest when needed) while the kids prefer Snapchat and TikTok. It's also a dynamic question that changes over time.

I recently heard about X (Twitter) users migrating to a new app called Bluesky, so I decided to take a look over there. In short, I like it because it reminds me of the way that Twitter used to be. The feed is based on my interests and the comments to posts are actually relevant to the topic – something that has been lacking at X in recent times.

Bluesky Social originated as a side project within Twitter in 2019 but became independent when Elon Musk bought Twitter in Oct. 2022. It launched as an invite-only social app in Feb. 2023, and only opened to the public in Feb. 2024. Since February, it has grown from three million us-



ers to 20 million users. Currently, it's number one in the Apple App Store, ahead of ChatGPT and Threads, and is adding seven new users a second.

For me, Bluesky is feeling like a fresh start. Because it's not full of ads (yet), I'm easily able to follow major news headlines, sports updates and people whose opinions I'm interested in. Not everyone is over there yet, but I see new additions each day. For example, on the sports side of things, I'm following The Athletic, the NHL (mirroring the NHL's Twitter account), Sean McIndoe (Down Goes Brown), Pierre LeBrun and Steve Dangle. This allows me to quickly see what's going on in sports without having to sift through all the other stuff that's in my X feed.

If you are disenchanted with X these days, or are simply looking for another social media option, you may want to give Bluesky a try.

Bravo

We have 3 Bravos this week.

1) Bravo to Jay at Lyric Flowers and Wendy at Green Haven Garden Designs for the Christmas inserts in the large planters on Queen Street as well as the urns in strategic spots. They are really lovely and really add such a festive touch to the downtown at this time of year.

2) Bravo to the store owners for their amazing Christmas window displays as well as many with charming window boxes and urns. Walking through the downtown is a delightful experience. Well done!

3) A big bravo goes to Dwight Bennett who spent four chilly hours on both Saturday and Sunday to provide horse-drawn wagon rides for visitors to the Merchants Open House.

*Please note all Boos and Bravos must be signed in order to be considered.

Boo

We have no Boos this week.

Bravos and Boos are submitted by community members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent.

Quote of the Week

"Thank you, St. Marys for another successful Merchant's Open House this year! All of the downtown businesses cannot thank you enough for your support! Shopping local is more important now than ever before. ... We are so very lucky, all of us, to live in such a warm and supportive community! We hope to see everyone downtown throughout the season. Our doors are still open for all of your holiday shopping, daily needs and special services!"

- Lisa Fewster from the Business Improvement Area (BIA) on a very successful downtown Merchant's Open House

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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I bake with wine, sometimes I even add it to the food.

Christmas tree decorating, a cat's favourite time of year.

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

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

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

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

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A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.

We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails.

Never stop having hope. Miracles happen every day.

Sometimes having fun with friends is all the therapy you need.

The 2024 holiday celebration in St. Marys continues



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The fabulous WinterLights display will be lit nightly from 5-11 p.m. until Jan. 1, 2025.

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

St. Marys is buzzing with holiday cheer and festive fun!

The Holiday Light Tour, launching on Friday, Nov. 29, features St. Marys best-dressed homes. Download and print the map at www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays. Hard copies of the map are available at municipal facilities. The self-guided tour runs until Jan. 1, 2025.

The wonderful WinterLights continue every evening from 5-11 p.m. at Milt Dunnell Field. The ever-popular horse-and-wagon rides will return on Dec. 6 and 7 from 5-8 p.m., and Dec. 14, 21 and 24 from 6-8 p.m. This beloved tradition is being offered at no charge thanks to the generosity of the town's WinterLights sponsors. Residents can contribute to the WinterLights using the town's convenient online form at www.townofstmarys.com/winterlights.

The festive WinterLights Night Market, showcasing local vendors and artisans at Milt Dunnell Field, will take place from 5-8 p.m. on Dec. 6 and 7. Enjoy holiday music, free horse-and-wagon rides, and warm up by the fire.

For indoor fun, check out the St. Marys Museum Open House on Sunday, Dec. 1

from 2-4 p.m. which includes children's crafts, festive treats, door prizes and music. Admission is free, but donations are always welcome. Browse the Museum's "O Tannenbaum" exhibit running until Monday, Jan. 13, 2025. Explore the history of Christmas tree decorations, including historic ornaments in the museum's collection.

The Pyramid Recreation Centre is also offering free skates throughout the holiday season thanks to sponsorships from the Downie Optimist Club, Friends of the St. Marys Public Library and Quadro Communications. Pre-registration is recommended. For specific dates and times, visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays.

For all those holiday shopping finds, visit St. Marys local shops and services. Local merchants look forward to welcoming everyone in search of the perfect gift! Patrons can also give the gift of shopping local by buying St. Marys Money. Visit <https://forms.townofstmarys.com/Request-St-Marys-Money> for more information.

Enjoy the holiday season and be sure to follow the Town of St. Marys' Facebook, Instagram and X accounts for any updates and reminders.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



ST. MARYS MUSEUM HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Dec. 1, 2 - 4 PM | St. Marys Museum

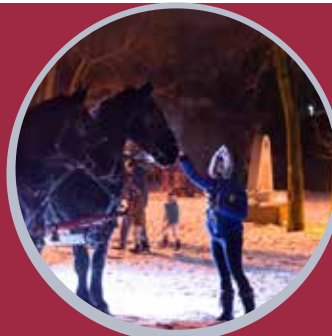
Kick off the holiday season at the St. Marys Museum with a delightful array of children's crafts, festive treats, exciting door prizes, and music.

townofstmarys.com/museum or 519-284-3556

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PASS 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET ON DEC. 10, 2024

Notice is given that the Council will consider a by-law to pass the 2025 budget on Dec. 10, 2024, at 6 PM. The draft 2025 budget can be viewed online or in-person at the Municipal Operations Centre.

townofstmarys.com/budget or 519-284-2340



WINTERLIGHTS NIGHT MARKET

Dec. 6 & 7, 5 - 8 PM | Milt Dunnell Field

Join the WinterLights Night Market for twinkling displays, a cozy market with local vendors and artisans, plus FREE horse and wagon rides around the loop road!

discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

November 15, 2024 to January 1, 2025

Celebrate the season in St. Marys! Join us for a merry lineup of festive fun and activities all through November and December. Let the celebrations begin!

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Pyramid Centre

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Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is John McIntosh. John owned and operated Moy Hall Dairy Farms and Avonbank Farm Equipment. John is an avid supporter of his community through the milk committee, mutual insurance, hospital foundation, plowing matches and Thamesview United Church. He enjoys old pickup trucks, old tractors, curling and golfing. John married Mary 55 years ago and they have three children and eight grandchildren.

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

Weekend Quiz

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- 1) What year was the first S&P 500 mutual index launched?
- 2) What was Justin Bieber's first billboard hit?
- 3) What was the other name for Chutes and Ladders game?
- 4) Who was the 32nd President of the U.S?
- 5) Dementors appear in what movie franchise?
- 6) The only desert in Canada is located in what province?
- 7) What animal has the biggest eyeballs?
- 8) A Geiger counter is used to measure what?
- 9) When you obtain 5 of the same suit in poker it is called a ____?
- 10) What is cardiology the study of?

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

St. Marys council agrees to include \$125,000 for local hospital foundations in 2025 budget

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

in the retention and recruitment of doctors for the Happy Valley (Family) Health Team and would, in turn, support the St. Marys Memorial Hospital," McCurdy said.

"I was the last physician recruited here and it was nice to receive some funds directly from the recruitment and retention board," Burley added. "So, it certainly helped my decision to come here and begin working in St. Marys."

As some local doctors retire or prepare to retire, McCurdy said St. Marys needs to remain competitive with its physician-recruitment program to ensure the health team and hospital continues to attract the best-available medical practitioners. She also noted that replacing older doctors who traditionally have more patients built up over the course of their careers often requires two or more younger doctors to take on those caseloads.

At another recent council meeting, representatives from the Stratford General Hospital Foundation asked the town to support its ongoing \$30-million In Our Hands capital campaign to the tune of \$300,000 over 10 years. As St. Marys residents represent roughly 15 per cent of those treated at the Stratford hospital, the Stratford hospital foundation requested support from the town to help fund a new cancer and medical-care clinic and co-located pharmacy, new and replacement medical equipment, and lab improvements among other capital upgrades.

"There's no legislation that says municipalities or the public will fund X amount (for local hospitals)," St. Marys director of corporate services André Morin told councillors later in the Nov. 19 budget meeting. "My understanding is the policies the province has, or at least the ministries have, is in order to provide certain funding, they require a local contribution and that local contribution in the past was by donors."

"... It obviously is a lot easier to come to the municipality and, again, get one lump sum from all of the residents of the municipality, and that's certainly something that's been ongoing for some time."

In addressing the two hospital-foundation requests, Morin said council had two questions to answer. First, does council continue to provide direct, annual support to the hospital foundations; and second, how should they go about doing that?

Nearly every councillor seated around the table expressed the importance of supporting the local hospital foundations. While they agreed neither request was outside the range of reasonability given the needs of both hospitals, the seemingly last-minute increase in funding requested by the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation was a difficult pill to swallow for councillors during a budget-deliberation process that has and will see many other budget requests coming forward.

"I have no problem with the foundation because, despite it being a provincial mandate, what they're asking is that the money we're providing invites doctors and says, 'Let us help you become part of this community,' and that's how I see it from that point of view," Coun. Rob Edney said. "It's there not just to entice, but to make the whole thing easier and to show them what type of community we are, so I'm all for that."

"And when I saw their number ... and I thought about (how) it's been 14 years since that number was raised, if we compounded the cost of living over that period of time, it probably works out to \$100,000 and what they should be given. I don't think we need to make that big of a jump right now, but we should be doing something a little more."

Other than deputy mayor Brogan Aylward, who expressed concern with the \$300,000 ask from the Stratford

General Hospital Foundation and indicated he wanted to see more justification for that contribution, the majority of council seemed to be in support of contributing that amount to the In Our Hands capital campaign, especially since it only represents one per cent of the total \$30-million goal.

Ultimately, council voted to set aside a total of \$125,000 in the 2025 draft budget to, at least partially, accommodate both requests – a number council can change during future budget deliberations depending on retention and recruitment or capital needs of the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation.

Instead of the \$100,000 requested by the St. Marys foundation, council approved a pledge of \$75,000 in 2025. Council also voted to have the St. Marys foundation report on its expenditures each year during budget presentations so councillors have a better idea how the town's money is being spent.

As for the Stratford hospital foundation request, council voted to pledge \$50,000 annually over the next six years for a total of \$300,000.

St. Marys council to consider draft-budget approval at Dec. 10 meeting

Following the Nov. 19 budget meeting, the Town of St. Marys announced council will consider a bylaw to adopt the 2025 budget on Dec. 10 at its regular 6 p.m. meeting in town hall council chambers (175 Queen St. E).

The draft 2025 budget can be viewed online at www.townofstmarys.com/en/town-services/Annual-Budget.aspx or in person at the municipal operation centre (408 James St. S).

Council held public meetings to deliberate the budget on Oct. 15 and Nov. 19. Another budget meeting is scheduled for Dec. 3 at 9 a.m. in council chambers.

All meetings will be livestreamed on the town's YouTube channel and are available for viewing. Anyone may attend the meetings and/or make written or verbal statements about the budget. Written statements can be sent to amorin@town.stmarys.on.ca.



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Who is the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary?



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY)

St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary members Deb Ford and Mary Woods.

JANIS FREAD

St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

Meet St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary members Deb Ford and Mary Woods.

Woods is a traveller! She has a home in St. Marys to be near her son and daughter-in-law but must travel back and forth between Canada and the United States as part of her visa application.

Woods joined the auxiliary in 2022 as a way to meet people and chose to support this group due to her past excellent experiences with family members in various hospitals. When she's in town, she actively participates in the auxiliary's fundraising events because she believes "it's wonderful to have a hospital here and for a small town, it's a big deal!"

Ford was introduced to the auxiliary when she stopped by the group's booth at the Heritage Festival in 2018. She had recently retired and liked that the group offered a few different ways to become involved to support the hospital. Ford works in the hospital boutique, bakes up a storm for the group's bake sales and participates in the patient-support pro-

gram visiting them in hospital.

Just in time for Christmas, the hospital boutique is carrying a selection of one-of-a-kind bejeweled clips made by a Stratford artist and unique, handmade silk-tie mini handbags. The boutique has extended its hours and is now open Monday to Friday, 1-4 p.m.

The auxiliary and the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation have partnered to promote Giving Tuesday on Dec. 3. Anyone who makes a donation to the auxiliary and/or the foundation on Dec. 3 will have their name entered into a draw to win two tickets to the foundation's 2025 gala or a \$100 shopping spree in the auxiliary's boutique.

Donations can be made in person at the hospital boutique or at the foundation's office from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 3, or online at stmaryshealthcare.foundation. Funds raised on Dec. 3 will be directed to a special Christmas treat for the hospital staff.

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

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St. Marys area farmer receives highest recognition from Perth County ag. federation



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

St. Marys egg and pullet farmer Scott Graham thanks area farmers for the Agricultural Recognition Award presented to him at the recent Perth County Federation of Agriculture Gala in Stratford over the weekend.

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

A St. Marys egg and pullet farmer has been recognized with the 2024 Agricultural Recognition Award presented on the weekend at the Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) Gala in Stratford.

Scott Graham is not only a farmer, but is an alumnus of the St. Marys Lincolns hockey team. He comes with a wide and varied resumé of contributions to agriculture and his greater community.

These contributions and leadership positions span from his local area to international development work in agriculture. A graduate from one of the

early advanced-agricultural leadership programs, Graham has used those skills for the advancement of his industry and agriculture in general.

He was elected to represent Egg Farmers of Ontario as board chair for a total of eight years and also served as chair of the president's council, a group of 42 commodity organization presidents.

He also served as a director on the agricultural adaptation council for 10 years.

Graham is currently a board member of the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation and has coached various hockey teams over the years, including this year.

He is past president of the St. Marys Minor Hockey Association and has



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Scott Graham is congratulated by Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma for receiving the 2024 Agricultural Recognition Award from the PCFA at their annual gala.

been involved with the St. Marys Lincolns hockey organization for years. Internationally, he has worked extensively with Egg Farmers of Canada in the area of international development through the Project Canaan program in Eswatini in southern Africa.

Through the program, in 2015, two egg barns were built to provide food and lasting jobs in the community.

Not only a strong proponent of the program, he has also travelled to the area to see the community firsthand and to offer his support and knowledge.

This outstanding St. Marys area farmer owns and operates Graham Farms Ltd. with his wife, Laurie, his son, Brett, and daughter-in-law, Jess.

He also managed a successful Red Angus herd of beef cattle for a number of years and organized the autumn colours Red Angus sale.

In 2006, he purchased a section and a half of pasture land in Saskatchewan, where 60 head of the cattle were shipped and they still have cattle there today.

Graham was nominated by the Perth-Waterloo Egg Farmers, who would like to congratulate him on winning the 2024 Perth County Federation of Agriculture Recognition Award and all his work to better this great farming industry here at home and around the world.

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A magical Christmas concert in support of the St. Marys Library Pantry

JULIA PAUL

Independent Reporter

On Friday, Dec. 13, Harmony of Friends will perform in a cinematic Christmas concert with all proceeds going directly to the St. Marys Library Pantry.

No Room at The Inn is a multimedia concert with music, singing, videography and acting. The concert revolves around the perspectives of Joseph, Mary and the Innkeeper of one of the most popular Christmas stories of all time.

“We guarantee that by the end of the evening, everyone will be in the Christmas spirit,” said Tom Donati, band member with Harmony of Friends. For the night to be a successful one, we need a great attendance and generosity.”

Last year, Harmony of Friends performed a similar concert and raised over \$2,000 for the St. Marys Library Pantry. This year, they are hoping to be just as or even more successful with the support of the community.

The St. Marys Library Pantry was started in 2022 when it became apparent homelessness and food insecurity were



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Harmony of Friends will be performing No Room at the Inn at the St. Marys Presbyterian Church Dec. 13. Pictured from left to right are Nicole Malcho on keyboards and vocals, Mary Stanamen on mandolin and vocals, Christina Costanzo on vocals, Nicholas Donati on percussion, Tom Donati on guitar and vocals, Lana Coghill on bass guitar and vocals, Joan Smith on keyboard and vocals, and Bob Poirier on guitar and vocals.

increasing issues for the people of St. Marys. The pantry has evolved over the years to meet the needs of the community. From snack items to bags of groceries and gift cards, feminine hygiene

products and incontinence products, the St. Marys Library Pantry provides free access to items some people cannot afford.

“We’re mostly asking for smaller

snack items or 10 of an item,” said Rebecca Webb, services coordinator with the St. Marys Library. “We will still take individual items, but what we are asking for are a box of granola bars that has 10 in it, or apple sauces or things like lunch snacks. We also give out gift cards. We find that there is a real immediate need for folks who are hungry in the moment, and so they are looking to find some food that they can find to eat now, so that’s part of why we ask for those snack items. But we are also giving out gift cards and we are asking for donations of gift cards in the amount of about \$15 so that those folks can actually walk over to Tim Hortons or McDonalds or they can go to Foodland and get a few things to eat now to feed that hunger that’s immediate.”

To help support the St. Marys Library Pantry, join the Harmony of Friends Christmas concert on Friday, Dec. 13 at 8 p.m. at the St. Marys Presbyterian Church to make a financial donation and get in the Christmas spirit. Food donations are also accepted and encouraged at the St. Marys Library.

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Grey-Bruce-Perth-Huron-Simcoe's living wage increases to \$23.05

JULIA PAUL

Independent Reporter

The United Way Perth-Huron has been a longstanding partner with the Ontario Living Wage Network because they believe that solving poverty comes down to making sure people have enough money.

While the current minimum wage is \$17.20, the living wage in the Grey-Bruce-Perth-Huron-Simcoe region has increased to \$23.05.

“Solving poverty comes down to making sure people have enough money, income and housing,” said Ryan Erb, executive director of the United Way.

“What we need to understand is that the minimum wage isn’t enough. A person simply can’t make ends meet when they’re paid minimum wage. But the difference between the minimum wage and the living wage is \$6 an hour. That is a lot of money.”

The living wage increase is primarily driven by housing and food costs. The reason it didn’t increase more is due to federal policies on the \$10-a-day daycare. Though the \$10-a-day daycare policy is not yet available for everyone, it has had some influence on the updated living wage.

The living wage is calculated by considering housing, transportation, child care, food and other expenses such as internet access, a modest annual vaca-



(PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED WAY PERTH-HURON) Pictured from left to right are Bill Boon, Nathalia Salas and Sophie Vanstone from Aisin Canada Inc. in Stratford. Aisin is a Certified Living Wage Employer.

tion and clothing. These expenses are weighed against federal subsidies, government taxes, transfers and benefits to calculate the final living-wage amount.

Two of the most prominent social determinants of health are income and housing. United Way works on policy issues to make sure people have the in-

come they need to make a living.

Employers will wonder how they can pay a living wage when they are struggling, but the United Way and Ontario Living Wage Network are here to support businesses that want to provide a living wage.

“Local employers continue to tell us that actually paying a living wage has increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover,” said Erb. “In the end, a number of our certified employers tell us that it actually improves their bottom line. So, there is a business case for a living wage beside the humanity case.”

The Ontario Living Wage Network will work with any employer to put them on a path towards paying a living wage to their employees. Once a business is paying a living wage, they can apply and will be certified within two weeks.

“Some small businesses are struggling,” said Erb. “We understand that here at the United Way. But we also understand that we have to, as a society, find a way to help everyone get to an income level they can manage, whether it is because of federal policy or because of increased wages – it can happen from either direction and both is probably the answer.”

To become a certified living wage employer, visit ontariolivingwage.ca and click certify.

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“A Village Christmas” with London Pro Musica Choir



IAN DAVIES

London Pro Musica Choir

London Pro Musica Choir invites you to step back in time and experience the magic of a traditional village Christmas. Their upcoming concert, "A Village Christmas," will take place on Sunday, Dec. 1 at 3 p.m. at the historic St. Marys United Church.

This enchanting performance will transport audiences to a bygone era, filled with heartwarming carols and festive cheer. The choir, recipient of

this year's Forest City London Music Award for Best Classical Choir, will present a captivating program of traditional Christmas music, including beloved classics and lesser-known gems. The varied program includes everything from beloved ancient carols like the Coventry Carol, to favourites like Ding Dong Merrily on High, to works by southwestern Ontario composers.

"We're excited to share the joy of a traditional Christmas with the St. Marys community," said Paul Grambo, Artistic Director of London Pro Musica Choir.

"This concert is a celebration of the season, filled with nostalgia, meaning, and beautiful music."

Whether you are seeking a moment of tranquility or a festive celebration, "A Village Christmas" is the perfect way to embrace the spirit of the season. Join London Pro Musica Choir for an afternoon of musical magic and holiday cheer.

Concert Details:

- Date: Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024
- Time: 3 p.m. (Doors at 2:30 p.m.)
- Location: St. Marys United Church, 85 Church St. S., St. Marys, ON
- Tickets \$25: Available online at <https://www.ticketscene.ca/events/49378/> or at the door.

For more information about London Pro Musica Choir and their upcoming concerts, please visit <https://londonpromusica.ca/>.

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Dedicated St. Marys volunteer receives Sovereign's Medal



(VAL THOMSON PHOTO)

St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee (left), friend Tom Slade (centre) and Murray Mitchell (right) after Mitchell was presented with the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers at River Valley Golf Course.



(VAL THOMSON PHOTO)

Mayor Al Strathdee presenting Murray with his medal.

VAL THOMSON

Contributed

Murray Mitchell, one of the most well-known residents of St. Marys, was the worthy recipient of the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers at a recent ceremony at River Valley Golf Course.

Mayor Al Strathdee presented the medal to Mitchell in front of a good-sized gathering of friends and family. The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers is a Canadian medal intended to honour volunteers who have made a significant and continual contribution to their community, either in Canada or abroad. Mitchell established the Hope For Haiti group that has helped build homes, schools, wells, feeding stations

and clinics not only in Haiti but in many other countries as well. Mitchell himself went on over 40 such trips over the years.

The impact his work has had is immeasurable. Countless lives have benefited from improved shelter, nutrition, education and health. All the ripple effects of these improvements will never be known but they assuredly exist. It is not only about improving quality of life, but the fact hundreds of people felt cared about because a group of ordinary Canadian folks, led by a kindly and compassionate man, came to help as best they could.

It is a remarkable achievement that Mitchell has been recognized for, even though he is not a man who seeks the

spotlight.

London resident and longtime friend, Tom Slade, who first went on a trip to Haiti with Mitchell back in 1999, was the one who submitted his name as a candidate for the award.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to be members of Hope For Haiti can attest to all the qualities that makes Mitchell an exceptional person and volunteer. He is a good leader, very practical, an extremely talented carpenter and builder, patient, wise and generous. He was very attentive to the dynamics of the group and went out of his way to ensure everyone felt safe, comfortable and valued. He is a good storyteller and has a great sense of humour.

On most trips, even though he would

put in long, hard days, he would find time to entertain the children with his magic tricks and his puppet, Gramps, who the children always got a kick out of.

For me personally, I will always be grateful and feel blessed to have such a friend as Mitchell. By encouraging me to become part of Hope For Haiti, he helped me to see the world through a whole new lens. He believed in me and enabled me to do things I never thought I would or could do. Judging by all the emotional and heartfelt words spoken at the medal ceremony, I know we all have tremendous respect, admiration and love for this man. His selfless, giving ways have set a fine example and have made the world a better place.

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Downtown Merchants Open House held last weekend



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Santa and Mrs. Claus greeted visitors to the Downtown Merchants Open House.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Sisters, Lori Currah and Tammy Maddock, look very festive and had a busy weekend at Lyric Flowers.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Caite O'Connor stands in front of the live, 12-foot Christmas tree on display in her parents' store, The Flower Shop and More.



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

Stone Home Creatives, under the ownership of Sue Griffiths, has been in business for over 20 years but unfortunately, this will be the last Christmas at this store location. Over the years, Griffiths has provided workshops, a venue for children's birthday parties as well as the go-to place for gifts. Griffiths will continue her candle making business out of her home in the near future. Pictured, from left, Deb Atkinson, Shannon Campbell, Sue Griffiths and Leanne Keeler.



(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

The Flower Shop and More was beautifully decorated for the Merchants Open House.



(MURRAY GRANT PHOTO)

Reminiscent of Christmas past, Dwight Bennett and his horse drawn wagon provided rides for all to enjoy the downtown area decorated for the Merchants' Open House on Saturday and Sunday.



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(Doors at 2:30 pm)
\$25 General Admission



Naina's Indian Kitchen to celebrate one-year anniversary with community gala

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It's hard to believe just one year has gone by since the team at Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill first opened its doors.

Since then, owner Prahlad Meena has been ecstatic with the community support for his restaurant – St. Marys' only Indian eatery – and he hopes to continue bringing locals through his door to get a taste of what his home country has to offer.

"My first anniversary is Nov. 29, 2024," Meena said proudly. "Business was very good when I opened last year. It's a small town, but very good. ... Everybody knows me by name and sometimes we get people who come in from out of town."

Meena hails from the state of Rajasthan in northern India, which is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. His attractive home city is Udaipur, which has a population of about 500,000 and is known as the City of Lakes.

He first came to Canada in 2007 when an opportunity arose in Alberta to help setup a new Indian restaurant. He worked there as a sous chef until moving to Niagara Falls in 2016 to help establish another Indian restaurant (Virsa Fine In-



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Owner Prahlad Meena is celebrating the one-year anniversary of Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill with a special anniversary gala dinner Nov. 29 from 4-9 p.m.

dian Cuisine) and to perform the role of head chef.

With 26 years of experience preparing fine Indian cuisine both in India and in Canada, Meena felt the time was right to start his own restaurant and was fortunate to learn of the space for rent at 202 Queen St. E in St. Marys.

He decided to call his new restaurant Naina's after his wife, who immigrated to Canada shortly after the business opened a year ago.

Together with their team, the Meenas cook and serve popular Indian dishes including butter chicken, chana masala, chicken tikka, vegetable pakora, fresh-

made naan and so much more. Because his restaurant is in St. Marys, Meena says he makes sure the dishes aren't too spicy for his Canadian customers, some of whom might not be as familiar with the flavour palettes of his home.

To celebrate one year of being part of the downtown St. Marys business community, Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill is hosting an anniversary gala at the restaurant from 4-9 p.m. Nov. 29. Those who attend will have the opportunity to enjoy a buffet-style dinner featuring both on- and off-menu dishes like rara paneer, butter chicken, lamb curry, chicken saag, potato and chickpea curry, chicken tikka, cauliflower and potato curry and traditional Indian sweets for dessert.

The gala will also include North American favourites like chicken wings and chicken tenders for those who want to celebrate with Naina's but aren't ready to jump headfirst into Indian cuisine.

"Me and my wife have been in St. Marys for one year and we've had very good support from people," Meena said. "We want to do a gala dinner because it's special and almost like a Christmas party with the buffet. It's just to celebrate."

Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill is open Wednesday to Monday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. for dine-in and takeout.



Expires January 31st 2025



November 29th is Our 1 Year Anniversary!

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Lincs hit roadblock as road trip continues



(MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Ryder Livermore clears the front of the net while Nico Armellin battles through the screen during the St. Marys Lincolns' game against the Listowel Cyclones on Nov. 22.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincolns find themselves in the midst of their rockiest patch of the season so far after losing two straight games.

However, the losses could not have been more different with the Lincolns' 2-1 defeat at the hands of the Listowel Cyclones being a strong effort going unrewarded, while the 4-2 loss to the Elmira Sugar Kings being arguably the Lincs' worst performance of the year.

The Lincolns travelled to the Listowel on Nov. 22, where St. Marys narrowly fell due to an unlucky bounce late in the third lifting the Cyclones to a 2-1 win.

Head coach Jeff Bradley told the Independent he was very happy with his team's showing against Listowel despite not coming away with the win.

"I thought both teams were great," Bradley said. "The game-winning goal was obviously unfortunate, but our guys played their guts out and played the right way. I've got zero issues with our game at all. It was another playoff-type game where you could really see the animosity out there, certainly not between the coaching staffs, but between the players on both sides of the ice."

Much of the first period remained scoreless until Jaden Lee buried his 12th goal of the season to put the Lincolns

ahead 1-0 with just one minute and 19 seconds left in the opening period. Luca Spagnolo and Rowan Reid picked up the assists.

Reid, who hadn't played since Nov. 13, was one of several young players who Bradley credited for their mature, confident play.

"Rowan (Reid) came back into the lineup and looked really good," Bradley said. "He was out of the lineup for a couple of games in a row there and it's tough to come back in when there's that pressure of needing to perform, and I thought he did a great job. He used his attributes well. He's got really good feet and he's a smart player. He moved the puck with speed and he defended well."

"Nico (Armellin) was great in net for us. Zander (Kechego) and Chase (McDougall) both looked really good. I'm sure the lack of scoring is frustrating for both of them, but they are very reliable, trustworthy players. They both play the right way and are taking major steps in the right direction. It's tough for rookies to earn a coach's trust, especially this quickly, but they've done that. They have been fantastic."

Armellin stopped 27 of 29 Listowel shots in the Lincolns' crease.

The game stayed tied at one apiece until late in the third period when the puck bounced off the stanchion unexpectedly when Armellin left the net to play the



(MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Chase McDougall fights for positioning against Carter Coombs during the St. Marys Lincolns' game against the Listowel Cyclones on Nov. 22.

puck, which resulted in Jordan Visneskie backhanding the puck over Armellin for the eventual game-winner.

The feisty affair was widely viewed as having a playoff-like atmosphere, which Bradley noted gave the team a taste of what will be needed in the post-season.

"There's a ton of value in playing a game like that. It shows how well we can play with emotion and when the stakes are a bit higher. I think that atmosphere brings the best out of us and it brings the best out of Listowel as well. Everybody was good. We got contributions from all four lines and three pairings for a full 60 minutes."

Bradley added the team's gameplan was implemented very well but acknowledged the resiliency of the Cyclones to find a way to take advantage of their chances a tiny bit better than St. Marys could.

"We only allowed two goals and gave up 30 shots. Although you're not going to win many games scoring one goal, I don't think it's common that we'll score just once a game. When you look at why they won and why we lost, I don't think it's what we did wrong, but more of what Listowel did right. Listowel executed well, we executed well and they capitalized on a bounce and that is to their ultimate credit."

Wheels fall off as Sugar Kings win 4-2

Just 48 hours later, one might be forgiven for thinking it was an entirely different team wearing the Lincolns' jerseys when they visited the Elmira Sugar Kings.

Bradley said the team will be working hard to be much better than they were on Nov. 24 ahead of their back-to-back games against Sarnia and London.

"We weren't very good. We didn't seem overly engaged. It's a different story than the rest of our games this season. In a 50-game season, it's impossible to be engaged every night and every team in the world goes through these things, but that doesn't mean it's acceptable, so we have a practice (on Tuesday, Nov. 26), and that will be a hard one, and we have to correct what went wrong."

Eight minutes and four seconds into the first, Joey Martin opened the scoring with a powerplay goal for the Sugar Kings. Just under 10 minutes later, Chase MacQueen-Spence snapped a five-game goal drought to tie the game at one apiece.

Though they didn't have a great first 20 minutes, St. Marys managed to enter the second period tied. However, Elmira finally broke through with goals by Martin and Baeddan Pollett just 64 seconds apart to go up 3-1. The newly reacquired Cohen Bidgood buried his first goal since rejoining the Lincolns before

Bidgood back, Oletic enters as Lincs toughen forward group



(MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Cohen Bidgood, left, and Tyler Oletic, right, were added to the St. Marys Lincolns' lineup after a pair of moves late last week.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincolns just got a lot harder to play against.

General manager Pat Powers finalized a pair of transactions on Nov. 22 and 23 that saw the OHL's London Knights return forward Cohen Bidgood to the Lincolns. St. Marys then added hulking forward Tyler Oletic from the OJHL's Haliburton County Huskies.

Bidgood, who turns 18 years old in January, was acquired by St. Marys midway through last season and scored 12 goals and 27 points in 33 games with the Lincolns. The Peterborough native added seven goals and 15 points in 24

playoff games to help the Lincs win the Western Conference Championship and advance to the Sutherland Cup Final.

According to Powers, Bidgood's return is a huge boost to the team's offence.

"Cohen is a great teammate and competitor who not only adds scoring touch to our forward group, but he makes us a much harder team to play against," Powers told the Independent. "Getting him back balances out our lineup really well."

Bidgood also rejoins the Lincolns' lineup with an easy transition given his familiarity with head coach Jeff Bradley, who called the reacquisition of the gritty winger "fantastic."

"We know exactly what Cohen is

and many other teams probably dislike him because of how hard he is to play against," Bradley said. "Cohen only cares about his team. He doesn't care about his physical wellbeing. He cares about doing what's best for his team and the guys certainly are certainly very excited to have him back."

Just 24 hours later, the Lincolns completed another roster move which saw them acquire Oletic. The six-foot-three, 205-pound forward native of Toronto played 13 games with the Huskies this year and had two goals and one assist. Last season, Oletic posted five goals and 10 points in 44 games with the OJHL's Aurora Tigers.

"Tyler adds a huge body and a physical

presence along with some sneaky offensive skill," said Powers. "I think Tyler will be a fan favourite with his north-south style of play and his willingness to play a physical brand of hockey."

Powers explained how he expects the additions to help the Lincolns in the incredibly deep western conference.

"Our conference is full of really strong teams that play playoff-style hockey, and those games require that kind of presence to overcome, and these two help with that. These two moves give us significantly more forward depth, which we lacked a bit on our playoff push last year."

Lincs hit roadblock as road trip continues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

the second frame was done to get the game within one heading into the third.

A quick shot by Ian Speiran at the 13:22 mark of the third found the five-hole on Colby Booth-Housego to restore Elmira's two-goal lead.

With the Lincolns trailing 3-1 and 4-2 during the game, they trailed by two goals more often on Nov. 24 than the rest of their season combined.

Bradley didn't mince words when discussing what went wrong for the Lincolns.

"We're in a very difficult conference. We are playing awesome hockey teams night in and night out. If you don't bring it in this conference, you're going to get

your butt kicked, and that's what Elmira did to us. They absolutely kicked our butts. They out-hit us. They outworked us. They wanted it more, and we got what we deserved.

"We just can't allow that to happen," Bradley continued. "We can't be passengers when the guys on the bench see a line get manhandled. They have to get a little mad about it and inflict that on the next line. We allowed them to bark at our bench and try to embarrass us, and we didn't have a response. We are a proud team who has accomplished a lot in the last couple of years, so we have to respond better than that."

Bradley stated the very clear response he wants from the group as they suit up

for back-to-back games against the Sarnia Legionnaires on Nov. 28 and London Nationals on Nov. 29.

"I want to see us win. I want to see us win on Thursday, I want to see us win on Friday and there's just no excuse. We

have to do whatever we can to win, and that's the bottom line. These guys know how to win. They know what it takes to win. I don't have to tell them what it takes to win. We just have to go out and do it."



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U14 A boys grit their way to win over Norfolk

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

It may not have been easy, but the St. Marys Fire Department U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock were content to earn a gritty 3-1 win over the visiting Norfolk Knights Nov. 20.

Head coach Sean Porter was happy with his team's showing, which he felt was a good bounce-back after coming up empty handed at their recent Silver Stick tournament.

"I thought they played really well," Porter told the Independent. "We all were at Silver Stick (last weekend) and they had a couple of games against some top teams, so we just want to keep reminding them, 'As long as we stay competitive in these games, don't get down on each other and have good body language.' That's all we can control. We play in a tough league, so we always have to keep fighting."

The Rock opened the scoring with just under four minutes left in the first period when Adrian Bes scored the ice-breaker with assists by Ben Graham and Landon McDonald. Luke Showers extended the Rock's lead to 2-0 when he jammed home a loose puck four minutes and six seconds into the second period. Evan Wolfkamp and Jacob Savile recorded the assists.

After Norfolk got one back with a goal

just over three minutes into the third frame, St. Marys restored their two-goal lead on a goal by Owen Pletsch, assisted by Nate Hern and Elliott Hudson.

According to Porter, the team's victory was thanks in large part to their strong compete level.

"I think (tonight's win) comes down to the boys' hard work and commitment to each other. We had a couple of AP players up helping us out – Adriaan (Bes) and Lukas (Francis) – because we were missing a couple of our top-line players due to injury. So, they looked at each other before the game and went to work like we wanted them to."

Porter added the win should serve as a boost as the team begins a crucial leg of their season.

"It was good to get this win. Our upcoming schedule includes a bunch of close teams, so we know that those games will be hard-fought and that these are important points to us. Because of that, getting this win was a good confidence builder for the boys."

"They are starting to find their footing," continued Porter. "They don't mind getting into those hardnosed battles, and that's what it's going to take to win. We've been working on a lot in practice and getting them used to engaging in those battles so, hopefully, that is going to keep paying off as it did in this one."



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Owen Pletsch celebrates his goal during the St. Marys Fire Department U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock game on Nov. 20.

U15 C girls blank Sabres in one-goal shutout

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The Veterinary Purchasing U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock showed continued growth on Nov. 23 when they earned a 1-0 shutout over the South Huron Sabres.

Head coach Dave Bailey told the Independent, even though it didn't result in a ton of goals, he was happy with the execution of his squad's hardnosed gameplan.

"I thought we played really well and, honestly, we were dominant," said Bailey. "We're still struggling a little bit from an offensive standpoint and putting pucks in the net, but I think we're making progress and we're going in the right direction. We're starting to see some of the efforts we've been putting in during our practices show up in our games."

The only goal of the game came in the first period when a long-range shot by Tealya Thistle led to a rebound that Isabelle Williams banged into the net. Goaltender Lexi Flax stopped all 11 South Huron shots to earn the shutout in goal. Flex was also the team's first star



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Isabelle Williams scores the only goal of the Veterinary Purchasing U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock's 1-0 win on Nov. 23.

two nights later in a 1-1 tie against the third-place Mitchell Meteors.

Bailey credited his goaltender and the team as a whole for their excellent goal prevention.

"Our defenders are very strong and they move the puck well. They're just so solid. They're learning to use their advantage on the physical side of the game better. Our forwards work hard at help-

ing out in the defensive end. And our goaltender, Lexi (Flax), has been really good all year. She isn't the biggest goalie in stature, but she always makes the saves when we need her to."

With the team approximately a month away from their Silver Stick tournament, Bailey explained why the team's offensive production could increase if they continue executing their aggressive offensive zone system.

"We've been trying to emphasize a hard, aggressive 2-1-2 forecheck, and we started to see progress made with that. Our third forwards are starting to understand what they're looking for when they're hanging high. Our defenders did a great job pinching down the wall and keeping pucks in."

"We created a lot of opportunities," Bailey continued. "We talked a lot about getting rebounds and greasy goals. The pretty ones are nice, but the ones that usually materialize and win hockey games are the ones off of rebounds or gritty battles. I was happy that we were going where we needed to go to create those opportunities, and if we keep doing that, I think we can capitalize on those chances a bit more in the future."

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Max Bilyea launches the puck on net during the Finnbilt Construction U9 MD Boys St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Ivy Smith slides a wrist shot on goal during last Saturday's St. Marys Kinsmen U9 C Girls St. Marys Rock game.



Alannah Maxwell takes a backhand shot during the Harris-Greig Automotive U9 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Kyle Johnson scores with a shot after falling during last Wednesday's St. Marys Buick-GMC U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Lyla Habermehl skates through the offensive zone with the ring during the U14 St. Marys Snipers (Habermehl) game last Saturday.



Payton Blight releases a shot on net during last Saturday's U19 St. Marys Snipers game.

(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)



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St. Marys bowlers finish top-10 at Youth Challenge



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Tyler Sims, Rory Brockman, and Nathan McKeen. At the Ontario Five-Pin Bowling Association Youth Challenge, held at Victoria Lanes in Kitchener on Nov. 24, Brockman and McKeen earned spots on the Grand River Zone team that will head to the Provincial Championships at Echo Bowl in Brantford on Jan. 12. Brockman placed fifth with an average of 191 over five games to earn a spot on the ladies team heading to Provincials. McKeen placed ninth with an average of 189 and will be an alternate for the men's team. Sims tied for the 10th position with an average of 187.



Call for Nominations Thames Centre Sports Wall of Fame

The Thames Centre Sports Wall of Fame is dedicated to honouring the rich history of the many athletes who have achieved honour and recognition through sport from our community.

Athletes, who are nominated and subsequently inducted, will be recognized with a plaque on the Thames Centre Sports Wall of Fame, which is located in the lobby of the FlightExec Centre. To qualify for consideration, nominees must compete or have competed at the Olympic and/or professional level.

The Sports Wall of Fame is administered by the Thames Centre Sports Wall of Fame Committee and makes its recommendations to Council.

Nomination forms are available on the Thames Centre Sports Wall of Fame Committee page found on the Municipal website (www.thamescentre.on.ca) or at the Thames Centre Municipal Office, 4305 Hamilton Road, Dorchester, ON.

Please forward completed nomination forms by Friday, January 31, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. to the attention of:

Chair, Thames Centre Sports Wall of Fame Committee
c/o Municipality of Thames Centre
4305 Hamilton Road
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SKC students capture 15 medals at Orangeville tourney

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Five Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) students combined to win 15 medals, 11 of which were golds, at the Orangeville Open Martial Arts Championship at the Athlete Institute in Mono, Ont. Nov. 16.

Sensei Jalyne Lorentz, who competed in the 15-17-year-old girls' black belt division, captured five of the St. Marys contingent's haul of gold medals. Lorentz took the top spot in Okinawan forms, traditional forms, traditional weapons, creative weapons and open forms. Lorentz also captured an overall division title, taking the top spot as the Overall Juniors Grand Champion.

In the 15-17 girls advanced category, Marieke Van Lierop added a pair of first-place prizes to the SKC's cache of hardware, taking the gold in traditional kata and traditional weapons, along with a bronze medal in point sparring.

Morgan Houston won the 35+ women's intermediate group's gold medals

in both traditional-kata and traditional-weapons competitions.

Shannon Campbell, competing in the 35+ women's advanced bracket, earned the gold in traditional forms, as well as a third-place finish in the point-sparring event.

Fox Houston picked up a trio of medals, including silvers in both traditional kata and traditional weapons and a bronze in creative weapons.

Sensei Jeremy Lorentz praised his students for yet another strong slate of results.

"Despite the high level of skill and intensity, our team rose to the challenge and showed remarkable focus, sportsmanship and determination," said Jeremy Lorentz. "I'm incredibly proud of our students' outstanding performances. Bringing home 15 top-three medals and a grand-champion title is a testament to their hard work, dedication and their embodiment of the spirit of karate. Stonetown Karate is honoured to celebrate their success."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) had five students earn top-three finishes at the Orangeville Open Martial Arts Championship at the Athlete Institute in Mono, Ont. Nov. 16. Pictured kneeling in front is Sensei Jalyne Lorentz. In the back row, from left to right, are Shannon Campbell, Fox Houston, Morgan Houston and Marieke Van Lierop.

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Nater refutes claims of hypocrisy as Poilievre vows to scrap Housing Accelerator Fund

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As federal Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre continues to speak out against the Liberal government’s Housing Accelerator Fund – a program he has vowed to scrap if elected Prime Minister – Perth-Wellington MP John Nater is clapping back against claims of hypocrisy related to his supposed support of the program.

In late October, Poilievre announced plans to scrap the \$4.4-billion Housing Accelerator Fund, a program that gives money to towns and cities that commit to reducing red tape to build more homes. At the time, the Conservative leader called the program overly bureaucratic and said he intends to use part of the funding from the Housing Accelerator Fund to support his plan to eliminate GST on the sales of newly built homes with a price tag of less than \$1 million.

“In Ontario today, one-third of the cost of every new home is direct taxes,” Poilievre said during the Oct. 28 press conference in Ottawa. “... When you buy a new home today, more of the money you spend goes to bureaucrats than goes to the carpenters, electricians and plumbers who actually build the house.

“... The GST was not meant to apply to the basic necessities of food and housing; that’s why the exemption existed in the first place. It is also why today I am announcing that a Pierre Poilievre led common sense Conservative government will axe the sales tax on new homes under \$1 million. ... Getting rid of the GST on new homes will stimu-

late 30,000 new homes built every single year. ... We’re going to cut two programs for sure and then more beyond that. One, the accelerator fund, has \$3 billion left in it. It has been a disastrous program that has led to less homebuilding and more local bureaucracies.”

In response to Poilievre’s announcement, federal Housing Minister Sean Fraser said about a dozen Conservative MPs had written to him in recent months advocating on behalf of communities in their ridings for housing support through the program. Poilievre’s office then released a list of 17 Conservative MPs who had indeed written to the federal government asking for support for housing projects in their ridings.

One of the names on that list was Nater’s, who says he wrote letters in support of local municipalities who applied to the program in the summer of 2023.

Following a recent party directive preventing Conservative MPs like Nater from advocating further for funding through the Housing Accelerator Fund, Nater says his correspondence with the government on behalf of those local communities proves the program did not deliver what it promised for residents of Perth-Wellington.

“Unfortunately, a lot of the public commentary on this Liberal program is nothing more than Liberal political spin and nonsense,” Nater said in an email. “The letters referenced are not about current applications. In my case, they were about applications that were submitted over a year ago.

“... I do this frequently in support of local organizations and municipalities.

However, each and every application from Perth-Wellington was denied. Not a single community in Perth-Wellington benefited from this program. All municipalities in Perth-Wellington that applied for funding were rejected in March of 2024. Therefore, it is false to claim that I am withdrawing support.”

At the time he wrote his letters, Nater said he shared concerns with the government about the funding-stream criteria. Nater says the fact many communities in Perth-Wellington were classified as large and urban according to the program criteria put them in direct competition for funding with cities like Toronto, Mississauga and Hamilton.

North Perth Mayor Todd Kasenberg echoed Nater’s concerns in a letter sent to Fraser on behalf of North Perth council in August 2023.

“With a population of just over 15,000, the Municipality of North Perth was required to apply to the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) under the Large/Urban stream,” Kasenberg wrote. “... Although North Perth has experienced strong growth over recent years, the municipality and our communities are still very much characterized as small and rural. North Perth does not possess the resources or amenities of our large, urban counterparts, including rapid-transit systems, financial tools, or municipal staff focused solely on grant writing.

According to Kasenberg’s letter, under the large/urban stream of the program, North Perth had to develop a Housing Action Plan with at least seven initiatives compared to the five initiatives under the small/rural/Indigenous stream.

That meant numerous municipal staff had to reprioritize their regular duties and other projects to prepare a plan that could compete with Housing Action Plans from much-larger cities.

“If it wasn’t so serious, it would be laughable to compare communities like Milverton, Listowel and Drayton with those of Toronto, Mississauga and Hamilton; but that’s what this Liberal program did,” Nater wrote in his email.

“Now that we have seen the clear failure of this Liberal program, I completely support scrapping this program. Quite frankly, it has failed to build houses. There is no hope for improving the housing crisis under the current Liberal government. Instead, our common-sense Conservative team will remove the GST from the construction of new homes under \$1 million; a tax cut which will result in the building of as many as 30,000 new homes each year and save Canadians up to \$50,000 on a new home.”

According to media reports, since Poilievre has promised to cut the Housing Accelerator Fund, the federal government has written to warn more than 100 municipalities that already have made deals to secure funding.

Some Liberal MPs have claimed the Housing Accelerator Fund will lead to the construction of more than 250,000 homes in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. Minister of Defence Bill Blair, who represents a Toronto-area riding, warned that if Poilievre cuts the program, municipalities with ongoing financial agreements could be left in the lurch.

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Van Loon elected for fifth consecutive term as HPCDSB board-of-trustees chair

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With a vote of confidence from her fellow board members and the strength of her faith behind her, Mary Helen Van Loon has agreed to serve her fifth consecutive term as chair of the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board's (HPCDSB) board of trustees.

At the annual meeting of the board Nov. 18, Van Loon was re-acclaimed to the position of chair after no other board members put their names forward for the leadership position. Van Loon was first elected as the trustee for St. Marys, Perth South and West Perth in 2017 after the previous trustee vacated the position mid-term. In 2019, she served as vice chair of the board of trustees before stepping into the chair position the following year.

"I enjoy the job; I enjoy being chair and I think since we were in the process of hiring a new director (of education), I felt it might be a good consistency to stay with the same chair (to help her) learn the process of the job rather than having everybody new," Van Loon said, referring to the school board's recent announcement that superintendent of education Karen Tigani will be promoted to director of education once current director Chris Roehrig retires in February 2025.

"I was like, 'Someone else is welcome to take (the chair position),' and they were like, 'No, no, it's good. We're happy to keep you there.' So that's great. I'm very grateful for their confidence in me leading the board."

Van Loon is excited to work with Tigani – someone she and the entire board have been working with for years

– through her transition into the director-of-education role. While she's sad to see Roehrig leave the position, she's encouraged by the opportunity to work with a new director who is already so familiar with the people, schools and policies of HPCDSB.

"(Chris) led us through some very tough times, not only in education but in the world, but Karen is one of ours'. We're very confident in having her at the helm and I think it's going to be a very good transition. They worked very well together, they worked together on our strategic plan and I'm excited about that coming up in the new year, so I think it's in good hands," Van Loon said.

The new chair of the trustee board said she is also excited to continue working with the board's new vice chair, Tina Doherty. Doherty was first elected to the board in 2014 as trustee for the Stratford

area with oversight of Jeanne Sauvé, St. Aloysius, St. Joseph's and St. Ambrose catholic elementary schools, as well as St. Michael Catholic Secondary School. Like Van Loon, she has previous experience serving in this role on the board.

"Two years ago, she was vice chair, and Tina and I are both on the St. Andre Bessette (trust fund) committee, which is a fundraiser for students in need," Van Loon said. "So, we've worked well together and it should be a good year. ... There's lots of experience on the board and thank goodness. That's really helpful when you're trying to make decisions and figuring out how you've done things in the past."

Looking ahead to the new year, Van Loon, Doherty and their colleagues on the board of trustees share Pope Francis' message of joy and hope overcoming all obstacles, whatever they may be.

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SPOTLIGHT ON ARTS & CULTURE

Ceramics: An Environmental Journey With Clay

JIM GILES

Independent Columnist
 Edited by Alice Rixson

Ceramics, from the Greek *keramos*, meaning “of or for pottery”, is one of the most ancient industries on our planet. Humans appear to have been producing ceramics for at least 26,000 years, starting with figurines for ceremonial purposes. Remnants of ancient works, created by numerous civilizations, have been found in many parts of the world. The first functional pieces were vessels for storing water and food about 12,000 years ago. The Chinese contribution to ceramic art was in every conceivable way uncontested - including technical sophistication - for the next 11,000 years.

Ceramic artists shape and mold their works from clay, frequently using a potter’s wheel and other tools. Pieces are fired once, then again after glaze is applied, in kilns, special furnaces that cure and harden the material at very high temperatures. Those working with ceramics not only require a wealth of knowledge, patience and painstaking skills, but equally important they need the perception to cope with failure because of the myriad mishaps that can occur during its processes.

Heather Ruthig loves working with her hands and learning new skills. For 25 years, she built props at the Stratford Festival. She also delved into welding, carpentry, sewing, upholstery, creating everything for the stage from furniture to masks. “My time at the Stratford Festival allowed me to learn from so many great artisans. It taught me new techniques and to be flexible to design something specific for a show,” explains Ruthig.

Ruthig grew up on a farm in Oxford County, later studying Fine Arts at the University of Guelph. She now devotes all her time to ceramics. She reflects that the skills acquired working at the Festival allowed her to accelerate her learning in clay.

For many artists working with clay can not only be a practice in patience but in learning to let go of perfectionism. Ceramic arts for others, like Ruthig, can be profoundly grounding and encourage a deeper understanding of one’s self and the world.

She feels fortunate to be part of the St. Marys’ Zenfire Pottery founded by Angela Patterson. “In five short years, Angela made a welcome home for local artists and potters to explore clay. I love working there. It keeps me in touch with the community in St. Marys,” proclaims Ruthig. Her journey with ceramics led her to a solo show in 2021 at the St. Marys Station Gallery, featuring her tarot card designs.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Ceramic artist Heather Ruthig

Ruthig lived near the Thames River in St. Marys for more than 20 years and gazed at the river every day. Water has consistently been a significance for her, she says, and has always had an awareness of ecology. Ruthig and family now live rurally near Woodham ON. Fish Creek is just down the road from their home and Ruthig frequently walks along the creek for inspiration.

Ruthig shares her excitement about being a part of an exhibition alongside 15 local artists in Stratford entitled River of Dreams, featuring creative explorations of the Avon River. She created a large, hand painted bowl for this show entitled Sentinel, featuring three brook trout of different ages in clean water, contrasting a polluted landscape on the vessel’s exterior. The bowl’s base is inspired by spores, which Ruth-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Heather Ruthig’s hand painted bowl entitled Sentinel

ig learned helps restore soil through a process called phytoremediation.

Why Sentinel for a title of her bowl? “The sentinel species, such as the brook trout, serve as environmental indicators, warning of potential hazards,” Ruthig explains. “Many area rivers, including the Avon, have suffered significant environmental damage due to the effects of industrial use and agricultural runoff. In 2013, the Upper Thames Conservation Authority (UTRCA) reintroduced brook trout from a wild source into its tributaries. I connected with Erin Carroll, an aquatic biologist from UTRCA, who invited me to observe a fish count. Notably, the presence of fish of various sizes indicated successful reproduction, reflecting the improving water quality. Local conservation efforts include remediating riverbanks and planting native flora. I was inspired by all of this!”

Ruthig’s unique functional and sculptural artwork is displayed at Zenfire Pottery in St. Marys, Our Stör(y) in Stratford and the Micak Gallery in Aurora.

Visit www.heatherruthig.com for her elaboration and ecological connection, which she says, “combines the magical meaning of plants and botanical science to create modern and thoughtful, sculptural and functional ceramic art.”

River of Dreams exhibition runs at Our Stör(y), 7 George Street West, Stratford from November 1 to November 29 (closed Mondays).

Please send comments and proposed topics for Arts articles to - smindependentarts@gmail.com



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MEAT DRAWS EVERY FRIDAY 6PM

Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent

Service medal awarded to Thames Centre firefighters



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Thames Centre Fire Chief Nick Dorken, district chief Wes Fox and district deputy chief Robert Kuenzlen.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

At the Nov. 18 Thames Centre council meeting, special medals were awarded to firefighters recipients who already have the medal for 20 years of service.

For every decade after that, a bar is added to the Provincial Exemplary Service medal, indicating further years of service.

Receiving this special recognition of service was retired Cpt. Dave Cove of Thorndale Station for his 40 years service, Rick Sage of the Dorchester Station for 40 years service and David Van-

Dyk for 30 years service, also from the Dorchester Station.

“I was very humbled,” said Thames Centre Fire Chief Nick Dorken, “to present these awards along with Mayor McMillan on behalf of the Ontario Fire Marshal to our dedicated recipients. The long-serving firefighters that we have in our municipality are a testament to the dedication that encompasses volunteer fire services throughout the province and contribute to the high standard of service the Thames Centre Fire Department provides to our municipality day in and day out.”

Special artwork enhances the Thorndale community



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are 9 & Dine and Thorndale Horticulture Society member Esther Spicer, horticulture society president MaryLou Bontje and Steve Pietens of Practical Art. On the right side of the sign are members of the Thorndale 9 & Dine golf group Joan Dymock, Liz Iglesias, John Hopkins, James Iglesias, Adam Kurn and Doug Dymock.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Thorndale 9 & Dine are a golfing group who mostly live in Thorndale and play on Friday evenings throughout the summer at River Valley Golf Course.

At their year-end golf tournament, they raised some money and wanted to do something special to enhance the streetscape in Thorndale. Together with representatives from the Thorndale Horticultural Society, members of 9 & Dine brainstormed ideas to enhance the garden by the railroad tracks along King Street.

The design that was chosen is an old-fashioned train going through a corn

field, reflecting the agriculture and heritage of Thorndale and the surrounding community. The design idea was then given to Steve Pietens and Michael McNeil, co-owners of Practical Art, outside of St. Marys.

Pietens, who also lives in Thorndale, and McNeil, who donated their time and effort creating the artwork and installing it. Marylou Bontje, president of the Thorndale Horticultural Society, worked with John DeKay, owner of the property by the garden, to make this all come together quickly.

This special artwork is another feature in Thorndale that enhances the beauty and sense of heritage in the community.

Thorndale Lions deliver proposal for local community centre

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

At the Thames Centre council meeting Nov. 18, Thorndale Lions member Norm Jary gave a presentation on behalf of the club about a proposal to expand the Thorndale Lions Community

Centre.

In his presentation, Jary explained the community centre is the heart of Thorndale and surrounding area and, as the community is growing, more space is needed to facilitate more types of both public and private gatherings. This proposed expansion to the south of

the existing community centre would include a new hall with a fixed stage, storage area, enlarged kitchen and more parking spots.

Jary also said this expansion would provide more recreation time in the existing gym and allow more social events such as church dinners, children’s summer camps, community theatre and weddings in the new hall.

As for funding for this project, there is a little more than \$480,000 left over from money generated from community fundraising and earmarked exclusively for the Thorndale Community Centre, which officially opened in September 2021.

In support of the Thorndale Community Centre expansion proposal, some

members of the Lions Club were in attendance along with stakeholders from Thorndale Optimist Club, Thorndale Agricultural Society and I Love Thorndale.

Moved by Coun. Tom Heeman and seconded by Coun. Chantel Crocket, council approved establishment of an ad-hoc committee for the expansion of the Thorndale Community Centre with the goals of consulting on a design of a future expansion that would include a new hall with a stage, expanded kitchen areas. Staff was also directed to draft terms of reference for a committee that will be brought back to council at a meeting in the new year.

THORNDALE DINNER THEATRE PRESENTS
“A Butler Did It”
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Feb 22, Feb 23 (brunch) Feb 28 and Mar 1 2025
 with a play only (no meal) on Feb 26
Tickets \$50.00 | \$25.00 Feb 26

Early ticket sale is Dec 7 from 10am - noon at the Thorndale Library.
 On that day ONLY, if you buy 11 tickets, you get a twelfth free. Tables hold 12 people.
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Thorndale Lions
 Santa Claus Parade
 Friday, December 13th
 at 7:00 PM
 For route information, go to www.thorndalelinesclub.ca
 Join us at the community centre afterwards for some holiday festivities

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: Shchedryk a symbol of Christmas that conquered the hearts of the world

OLENA OLIANINA

Independent Columnist

The Ukrainian folk Christmas carol, "Shchedryk," has captivated the hearts of people around the world for over a century. This song, deeply rooted in Ukrainian traditions, has gained international popularity due to its melodiousness, emotional depth and unique sound. It has become a true symbol of Ukrainian culture and one of the most well-known Christmas songs worldwide.

"Shchedryk" is a traditional Ukrainian carol that dates back to the 17th century, but the modern version is attributed to composer Mykola Leontovych. He created an arrangement for a male choir, which was first performed in 1916. However, the song became internationally famous only through American musicians, particularly the World Choral Community choir under the direction of Peter Wilhowski, who recorded the English version in 1936 under the title, "Carol of the Bells."

The lyrics of "Shchedryk" speak about the arrival of the new year and the desire for prosperity and abundance for the family. Over time, however, the song has gained additional symbolic meaning, particularly through its performance at festive events, especially at Christmas and New Year's celebrations.

"Shchedryk" is not only a part of Ukrainian musical heritage, but it also serves as an integral part of world Christmas culture. Thanks to its striking melody, which combines a fast rhythm with delicate harmonies, the song is able to convey the atmosphere of festive joy and warmth. Its universal sound awakens



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Ukrainian choir performing "Shchedryk" in 1922, marking one of the first public performances of the iconic carol that would go on to gain international recognition.

feelings of unity and hope, regardless of cultural or national barriers.

Moreover, the song has become an important symbol for many Ukrainians, especially during times of historical challenges. It was often performed during significant events such as national celebrations or international performances, reinforcing Ukrainian culture on the global stage.

"Shchedryk" is known for its rich arrangements and numerous variations, which include a variety of performance styles. In Ukraine, the song is typically performed by choral groups, but it can also be heard in arrangements for instru-

ments, orchestras and soloists. Mykola Leontovych created the perfect blend of folk sound and classical choral style, which made "Shchedryk" so recognizable.

One of the most famous performances of "Shchedryk" is the interpretation by the national Ukrainian choir, which often accompanies Christmas celebrations, particularly at events in the diaspora, such as in Canada. The song has become an integral part of festive programs, concerts and even national holidays. In Canada, where there is a large Ukrainian diaspora, "Shchedryk" is seen as part of the cultural heritage that is preserved and

passed down from generation to generation.

In Canada, where Ukrainians make up one of the largest ethnic communities, "Shchedryk" is extremely popular. In fact, this song was one of the first to bring Ukrainian culture to North America.

The first performance of "Carol of the Bells" in Canada took place in 1940. The song was first performed by Ukrainian choral groups, particularly in Toronto, where there was a large Ukrainian diaspora.

There are many versions of "Shchedryk" performed by Canadian choral groups, each with its unique style. The song is often performed during Christmas concerts and other festive events, making it an inseparable part of Canadian Christmas culture.

"Shchedryk" is a symbol not only of Ukrainian culture but also of unity that the whole world strives for. It brings people together through its beautiful music, regardless of their nationality or religious beliefs. In Canada, where there are many different cultures and nationalities, "Shchedryk" has become one of the most beloved songs among local residents, fostering deeper understanding and mutual respect.

Participation in the performance of this song is part of many cultural events and holidays, thus not only conveying the festive atmosphere but also reminding us of the importance of preserving cultural traditions. Therefore, "Shchedryk" continues to live on, reminding us of the beauty of Ukrainian folk music and its ability to unite people all over the world.

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO OUTDOORS: Wild game and fish can be a healthy part of the diet



JEFF HELSDON

Independent Columnist

In today's society where the majority of Canadians live in urban centres and no longer have a connection to rural areas, more is lost than just a connection to the land.

Not that long ago, many of the people living in cities were only a generation or two away from rural living. They had parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles who lived on the farm, or were hunters and anglers living in

rural areas. If they didn't know about wild game and fishing, they knew about grass-fed beef, barnyard chickens and the cycle of life.

Fast-forward a few decades and much has changed. To many today, beef, pork or chicken all comes in foam trays in the grocery store or is processed and boxed. This is also a time when eating red meat is frowned on by many health organizations due to the higher fat content, but there are alternatives.

Wild game and fish is not the same as store-bought red meat. It is lower in fat and higher in important nutrients. I also believe that wild game and grass-fed domestic livestock is what humans have eaten for centuries and our digestive systems have evolved to consider that normal.

Science has looked at this topic and backed this assertion. Bruce Watkins of Purdue University

and anthropologist Loren Cordain of Colorado State University completed a study that looked at the role of dietary fat and its nutritional analysis in modern food versus what ancient hunter-gatherer societies ate. Using detailed chemical analysis, they looked at the meat people ate 10,000 years ago and compared it to modern livestock fed a diet of oilseed-based feed. Their conclusion was wild game like venison or elk, and grass-fed beef contain fats that are healthy and can lower cholesterol and reduce chronic-disease risk.

More specifically, a healthy diet should have the right mix of Omega-6 and Omega-3 fats. In the right quantity, Omega-3 can reduce cardiovascular disease, but too much can increase stroke risk. Omega-6 is an essential fat, but too much can contribute to inflammatory reactions from chronic disease.

Watkins said the fatty acid ratio in wild ruminants is similar to the Omega-3 levels in fish that are recommended by the American Heart Association to reduce cardiovascular disease. In other research, Cordain looked at the few remaining hunter-gatherer societies that remain and found heart disease, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes are rare in those people.

Canada's Food Guide doesn't get into the detail that Cordain and Watkins' study did, but it does recommend lean cuts of meat, and mentions "most wild game, such as bison, caribou, deer, elk and moose."

Fall is the time of the year when most harvesting takes place for hunters. It's also the time that anglers may consider cooking more of the fish they have caught over the summer. Proper preparation can be more important with leaner cuts of

meat as it dries out quicker than fattier cuts. The key is not to overcook if it's on a barbecue, frying pan or in the oven.

It's hard to beat venison tenderloin, cut thin and cooked with spices on the barbecue or in a frying pan. For the more elaborate and slightly less healthy, venison tenderloins or backstrap can be treated the same as filet mignon and wrapped in bacon. This is definitely barbecue material.

A long user of Fish Crisp for fish, I discovered a superior dry breading material this summer. Taylor's One Step takes the same concept and improves on taste.

It's time to enjoy what you have harvested.

Jeff Helsdon is an award-winning outdoor writer, a columnist for Ontario Out of Doors and writes for several other outdoor publications.

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: St. Marys Post Office

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

Because the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is on strike, our local post office has been a centre of attention recently. During its 180-year history, postal service in St. Marys has had its share of public notice. In the early days, the position of postmaster was a government appointment and the political affiliation of applicants mattered. Political decisions rarely have unanimous support. But there was no disagreement about the vital importance of having an efficient, dependable postal system in place. For residents of isolated pioneer communities in the mid-1800s, the mail was the only way of keeping in contact with distant relatives and friends.

In the early 1840s, when settlers first arrived in this area, postal delivery was hit-and-miss. John Ingersoll's general store, located on Queen Street, became the unofficial post office. Many of the first residents of the village came from the Beachville area in Oxford County – an area that had been settled earlier and already had postal service. Anyone travelling from St. Marys to Beachville for supplies would take outbound mail left at Ingersoll's store to the Beachville post office. On the return trip to St. Marys, he would bring back letters that had accumulated in Beachville. Later, as roads improved, mail was brought from Stratford to St. Marys by stagecoach.

Thomas Christie was the first official postmaster for the village of St. Marys, appointed ca 1845. He was already in that position when the postal service began keeping records in 1853. Christie, who had been born in Limerick, Ireland, ca 1795, owned a farm in Blanshard Township and had served as township treasurer and clerk. He later sold his farm and bought property on the east side of Water Street in St. Marys where he built a frame building and opened a general store. In the 1851 census, he is identified as a merchant. He and his wife, Margaret, had four children – a 17-year-old son, also named Thomas, and three daughters, age 18, 15 and 11.

At that time, the postmaster operated the post office from his own business premises. The Christie family lived above their store and very likely members of his family assisted Thomas, not only in the store but also with post office service. However, on November 1, 1858, Thomas Christie died in his 63rd year. The St. Marys Argus reported that the funeral would take place from his late residence on Water Street. This left a vacancy for an attractive position that meant a reliable income and even a certain amount of prestige in the community. Thomas Christie Junior, now in his early 20s, was one of the applicants and hoped that his experience working with his father was in his favour. He had competition. On November 11 – just after the death of Thomas Senior – the Argus reported that one prominent citizen had already rushed to Toronto to be the first to submit his application. He was



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

A postcard showing the St. Marys Post Office, constructed in 1908. When the new post office opened in 1957, this building was bought by Sergio Boscarato and opened as a restaurant, Sir Joe's. It is currently Gilly's Pubhouse.

accused of "attempting to snatch the bread from the mouths of a fatherless family." But Thomas Christie Junior did get the appointment in the end.

By late 1858, the Grand Trunk Railway had begun to run train service through St. Marys, connecting the village to larger centres, such as Toronto, London and Sarnia. Local industries increased production because it was now much easier to ship and to receive goods. The population also increased as new jobs were created. As a result, there was more mail, arriving daily in GTR mail cars. This meant more pressure on the young postmaster to do his work efficiently. Certainly, Thomas would have relied on his sisters to help. His oldest sister, Anne, encountered an older man, George Weir, a civil engineer engaged in railway construction, possibly meeting him in the post office. By late 1859, they had begun to keep company, and Anne believed that he intended to marry her. Weir, however, seduced and then abandoned Anne. To preserve his sister's honour, Thomas pursued Weir to Eastern Ontario and across the border into New York State, where Weir was arrested for seduction and breach of promise.

On April 12, 1860, the St. Marys Argus noted that George Weir and Anne Christie had been married three days earlier in Buffalo, New York. However, Weir had no plans to live with Anne and certainly no intention of settling down in St. Marys. Some financial arrangement was made and the newly married couple never saw each other again. This pressure, both personal and at work, was too much for young Thomas Christie. In July 1861, he left St. Marys, absconding with as much money as he could find from the post office accounts and from his family's business. He probably departed on the Grand Trunk Railway – the indirect source of so many of his problems. His mother and sisters left St. Marys soon after and no further records

of their lives have been found.

To replace the discredited young Mr. Christie, in September 1861, the government appointed 65-year-old Arundel Hill as the next St. Marys postmaster. He served in that position until he died in May 1870. He and his wife, Frances Sophia (Fanny) Hill, also came from Limerick, Ireland, where, in fact, Thomas Christie Senior had been a friend. When they came to Canada, the Hills purchased the Christie farm in Blanshard Township west of St. Marys. Arundel Hill also took part in township affairs while Fanny opened a small general store in their home and enjoyed getting to know her neighbours. But as he got older, Arundel Hill found the rigours of farming increasingly difficult. Therefore, when he was appointed postmaster, he and Fanny were happy to move into St. Marys. Fanny was 15 years younger than her husband and assisted him in the post office duties. As Arundel's health declined, she essentially ran the post office but when he died in 1870, it

was impossible for her, as a woman, to succeed him. Fanny was a resourceful woman and managed well on her own, investing in property and establishing a business in downtown St. Marys. Later in life, she received an inheritance from an uncle in Ireland that enabled her to enjoy a secure and comfortable life before she died in 1893.

As the federal government's departments became more established in the late 19th century, the postal service also changed. Post offices were established in buildings separate from the postmasters' homes. By the start of the 20th century, impressive, government-commissioned, new federal buildings were being constructed across Canada. In 1905, the government purchased property on the east side of Water Street as the site for the St. Marys federal building. Although there were local contractors who bid on – and frequently were awarded – contracts for new post office buildings, for St. Marys the contract was awarded to Robert Cameron of Almonte, near Ottawa. At least local stone was used: the three storey, Romanesque building, shown with this week's column, was constructed of St Marys limestone with red sandstone trim. The post office occupied the ground floor, with the customs office on the second level. An apartment for the caretaker was on the third floor in rooms under the mansard roof. The building was completed in 1908 at the cost of \$40,000.

Following the official opening on June 1, 1908, the local newspapers were impressed not only with the exterior but also with the rooms inside the building: "The interior fixtures in brass and oak are exceedingly handsome as is the interior of the building throughout." The ceremonial first letter was delivered to 75-year-old Benjamin Tracy, a longtime St. Marys resident. It was his family who in 1854 had built the grand limestone house in Cadzow Park, today the St. Marys Museum. The beautiful building at 17 Water Street South remained the post office until 1957 when a new federal building opened at 35 Wellington Street South.

THE SALVATION ARMY

Kettle Volunteers Needed

November 14th-December 24th

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EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Christmas appetizers



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

Recently, I submitted a poll in my Facebook group, St. Marys Eats, asking members what dishes they'd like me to focus on in this week's column.

Christmas appetizers won by a landslide with 65 per cent of votes, closely followed by desserts and dishes to bring to the festivities. The following are all appetizers containing cheese, a product which we are locally blessed with. Fear not to lactose intolerant readers; firm cheese can be tolerated as it is very low in lactose where as soft, fresh and processed cheeses have significantly more lactose.

Afterall, it wouldn't be Christmas without cheese.

Cheddar holly crackers

Yields: Four dozen; Total Time: 2.5 hours

¾ cup unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 cups extra-sharp cheddar, grated

2 tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary

½ tsp fresh black pepper

½ tsp kosher salt

2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and levelled, plus more for working

Method:

- Beat butter and cheddar with an electric mixer on medium

speed until combined. Add the rosemary, salt and pepper. Reduce mixer speed to low and gradually beat in flour, then 1 tbsp cold water, mixing just until incorporated for 30 seconds. Add additional tbsp of water if needed.

- Roll the dough between two sheets of parchment paper to ¼-inch thickness. Refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour and up to 3 days.

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Cut out the crackers with various small, floured, holly leaf cookie cutters (or shape of your choice), transfer to baking sheets spacing 1 inch apart.

- Bake until firm and slightly golden around the edges, 8-10 minutes. Let cool on baking sheets for 1 minute and transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Serve with dip of choice, on a charcuterie board, or on their own.

Sweet and salty feta cubes

Serves: 8; Total Time: 15 minutes

Feta (block, cubed and patted dry)

Honey (local preferred)

Pistachios

Method:

- Dip cubes of feta in honey, allowing excess to drip off.

- Immediately coat with chopped pistachios.

Ham and cheese pinwheels

Serves: 8-10; Prep: 20 minutes; Total Time: 40 minutes

Cooking spray

All-purpose flour for work surface

1 sheet puff pastry, thawed

3 tbsp Dijon

4 oz thinly sliced deli ham

4 oz gruyere cheese, grated (about 1 cup)

Freshly ground black pepper

Chopped chives for garnish

Method:

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a large, parchment-lined, rimmed baking sheet.

- On a floured work surface, roll puff pastry into a 12x16-inch rectangle. Top with mustard, spreading to edges. Top with ham and then cheese. Season with pepper. Starting at short end, tightly roll up into a log. Trim and discard ends, then cut log into 20 half-inch-thick pieces. Transfer to prepared pan and freeze 5 minutes.

- Bake until golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Serve warm or room temperature, topped with chives.

Ricotta and roasted grape crostini

Makes: 12 crostini; Total Time: 30 minutes

1 lb seedless, mixed green and black grapes, stems discarded

1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

2 rosemary sprigs, plus chopped fresh rosemary for garnish

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Flaky sea salt

Pepper

3 tbsp pine nuts

Twelve ½-inch baguette slices

¾ cup fresh ricotta cheese

Honey

Finely grated lemon zest, for serving

Method:

- Preheat oven to 400°F. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, toss the grapes with vinegar, rosemary sprigs, 2 tbsp olive oil. Season with salt and



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Cheddar holly crackers

pepper, toss to coat. Roast for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until grapes soften and skin starts to pop.

- Spread pinenuts in a pie plate and roast in oven for 6-8 minutes until golden. Brush baguette slices with remaining 1 tbsp olive oil. Arrange on baking sheet and toast for about 8 minutes until golden and crisp.

- To assemble: drop 1 tbsp of ricotta onto each crostini, spoon warm grapes onto and sprinkle with pinenuts. Arrange on platter and drizzle with honey and lemon zest. Sprinkle with flaky salt and garnish with chopped rosemary.



**St Marys Legion
Breakfast With Santa**



**Sunday 15 December 2024
0800 till noon**

**Adults \$15
Kids 12 & under \$8
Kids 2 and under free**

**Advance tickets encouraged &
available at the bar**

66 Church Street North, St Marys



Community Liaison Committee

The next Community Liaison Committee Meeting will be held on **Friday December 6th at 10am** at the St Marys Municipal Operations Center. Members of the public who wish to observe are welcome to attend.

Residents who wish to speak in front of the Committee may submit a detailed request in writing at least 3 days prior to the meeting in writing to the Committee. The request will be considered by the Committee and approved prior to the meeting. Please submit all requests, questions, and concerns for the meeting to kara.pelissero@vcimentos.com by **Friday December 4th**

LONDON PRO MUSICA CHOIR PRESENTS

A Village

CHRISTMAS

✦ Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024 – 3:00 pm ✦

St. Marys United Church, 85 Church St S, St. Marys, ON

FOR TICKETS \$25.00
519-284-3016 CHURCH OFFICE
519-284-2823 GRETCHEN ROZEK

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump's presidency will widen the American wealth gap

I'm a Canadian with some early American roots (New Hampshire, 1645, New York State, 1640). My ancestors – and many others – left Europe to create a more egalitarian society. America seems to have abandoned those founding principals now.

I work in a mental-health clinic serving young adults. Far too many of our

patients – very often because of the aftereffects of difficult early lives – are precariously employed, at risk of homelessness and sometimes have to choose between paying the rent and buying food. Often the reason their childhoods were difficult is that their families struggled financially. The link between poverty and mental illness is clear and

hard to reconcile when others can afford gold-plated bathroom fixtures. I believe that Trump's leadership will worsen this situation and that the gap between the wealthy and the poor will increase, along with the side-effects of poverty.

I'm grateful for your insights into American politics, as what happens in the U.S. has such a huge impact on us

here. I agree with Kate Orland Bere – we're going to have to buckle down and fight, and an important aspect of that is a continuing public debate and free press.

Thank you for all the work you do on behalf of our community,

Susan Lavender, St. Marys

We should be free to express opinions about U.S. election

As a Canadian citizen who arrived in Toronto as an immigrant from the U.S. during the Vietnam war in the late 1960s, I have been so grateful for the culture, higher education, beauty and freedoms that Canada has offered to me all these years. One of the biggest shocks I experienced was finding out how free the Canadian press was in comparison to the highly repressed reporting in the U.S. press about the war and world events. To find out that one was not being told

the truth by one's government and news sources is quite a rude awakening.

We cannot forget that we are a community in St. Marys of many diverse cultural backgrounds from diverse parts of the world. Each of these individuals, whether they have become Canadian citizens, have dual citizenship, or are landed immigrants, as I was initially when I arrived, have a right to not experience a repression of news that reflect our backgrounds and interests, and needs.

The recent election in the U.S. impacted thousands in Canada emotionally, practically and their hopes for their future, and perhaps for friends and family still living in the U.S.

It would literally be insane, in a manner of speaking, not to write about it in our local newspaper, as Stewart Grant has done, as it has such a big impact on our lives, truly. Nothing should be censored from a free press. That was the beauty of Canada when I first moved

here. No one in this community should feel "invisible" because their local press ignores them and the issues that are important in their lives.

It was actually a relief to read Stewart Grant's reporting on the election across the border, as one needs to hear a friend or neighbour, or family member say, "I understand."

Susan Murar, St. Marys

Try the Canadian Future Party

How hopeful are you about Canadian politics these days? As a young, 13-year-old Canadian, I'm not.

Trudeau has handled the economy horribly, Poilievre ignores things like climate change and Singh has radical policies like legalized drugs. That's why I've recently joined the Canadian Future Party. This party is strongly committed

to evidenced-based, fiscally responsible public policy at home while putting democracy at the forefront abroad.

This includes strengthening alliances with our partners in NATO and the Commonwealth, combating radicalism both left and right, closing loopholes in the tax code, greater transparency by ensuring all government documents are

easily available online, continued support to Ukraine and much more.

I will likely never be able to afford my own home because of reckless mismanagement by the federal government. None of the major parties have descriptive plans to fix it. Another policy of ours supports two per-cent defense spending to meet NATO needs, however none of

the major parties, including the Conservatives, support it.

For the first time in a long time, I feel hopeful about my future in Canada. If you're interested in joining the growing number of Canadians who are creating a better country, go to thecanadianfutureparty.ca and buy a membership!

Lindsey Tate, St. Marys

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH

St. Marys Public Library

Tell a Crack from a Bam, and a Dragon from a Joker as you become a master of the tiles by learning to play Mahjong! Join Meaghan for a free, 3-week course on how to play this entertaining game of matching and strategy. The sessions run from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday nights until December 12. To sign-up, please contact

the Library at 519-284-3346.

This Week's Recommendation

Rene works long and hard to build the Café at the Edge of the Woods, a place where she can finally share her culinary creations with the world. Glumfoot is the only applicant to answer her call for waitstaff, but his creative menu styling may be just what Rene needs to appease clientele with peculiar tastes. Written

and illustrated by Mikey Please, "Rene & Glumfoot in the Café at the Edge of the Woods" is a quirky tale of compromise and collaboration. Check out this delightful picture book today!

Up This Week

Fri., Nov. 29: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sat., Nov. 30: Dungeons and Dragons (10 a.m.)

Mon., Dec. 2: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 3: TeNoWriMo* (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

Wed., Dec. 4: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Scrabble (6-8 p.m.)

Thurs., Dec. 5: Learn to Play...Mahjong!* (6-8 p.m.)

*Registration Required

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Riddles

What do you call a super hero who has lost his powers?

A super-zero.

Which mountain has never been climbed?

Mountain Dew

What is the quickest way to double your money?

Fold it in half

Why did the cow eat the tight rope walker?

Because he wanted a balanced meal

What do you call a bunny with

fleas?

Bugs Bunny.

What is a popular search engine for ghosts?

GHOULgle

What did the little light bulb say to its mum?

"I wuv you watts and watts"

Why did the man go off the cliff with his truck?

He wanted to test his air brakes.

Why did the bank robber take a bath?

So he could make a clean getaway.

- Word Search -

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PRELUDE TO CHRISTMAS

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

Word List

Santa Claus parade

Make a list

Shopping

Outdoor lights

Send cards

Baking

Christmas tree

Decorations

Garland

Invitations

Wrap gifts

Cleaning

Hang stockings



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK

Why did the princess go to the dentist?



To get her teeth crowned!

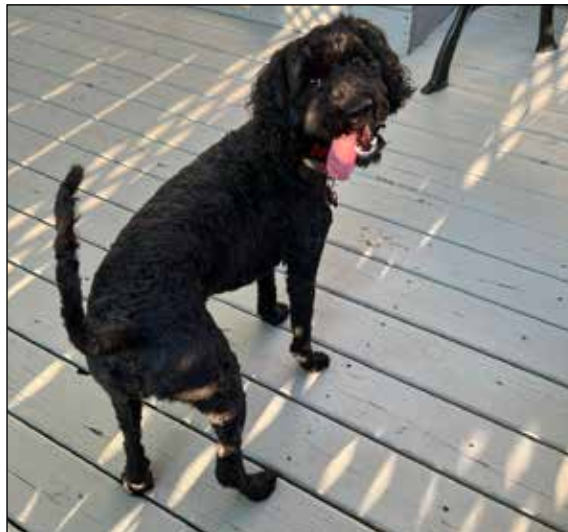
Clara Marcaccio (3)

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

TONS OF FUN FOR KIDS EVERY WEEK!

PET OF THE WEEK

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



Meet Winnie (aka Winnie the Pooh). She is a sweet, four-year-old Australian Labradoodle. She has never met a treat she didn't like (except for celery). She is the best cuddle buddy and is a firm believer that you must share your pillow and blanket but she doesn't have to share hers. Her favourite hobby is neighbour- watching and playing catch.



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

Being a pet owner is rewarding, but it also comes with a lot of responsibilities and expenses to ensure your pet's well-being. Vet bills for emergencies, accidents, and illnesses can add up, making decisions for your pet's treatments overwhelming. Pet insurance has many benefits. To get the most out of your policy, here's what you should consider:

Coverage options

When choosing which plan is best for your family, consider breed-specific conditions, your budget, and deductible.

Financial security and peace of mind

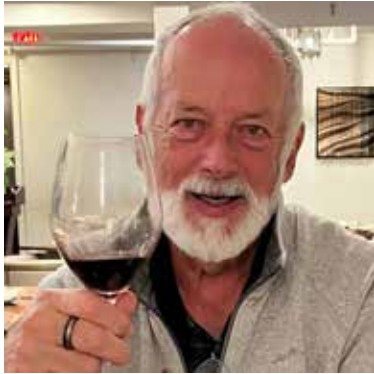
Nobody likes being caught unaware by financial emergencies, especially when you want to make sure all your vital needs are covered - including the health of your furry friends.

Unexpected emergencies

Emergencies can pop up at any time. Having pet health insurance can help take the shock out of an emergency and get your pet - and you - back to normal sooner.

500 Water Street South St. Marys
www.stmarysvetclinic.com

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Historic art restoration on public view in Amsterdam



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

I will never forget the advice my Dutch host gave me on my first visit to Amsterdam.

“If you write about the Red Light District or the coffee houses where they serve marijuana, not coffee, you won’t be invited back.”

I had no trouble following those instructions; Amsterdam is an amazing city full of art, history, culture and that complex system of canals. I fell in love with the place immediately.

My visits to Amsterdam have been filled with memorable moments – seeing Van Gogh’s sinister “Wheatfield with Crows” in the Van Gogh Museum, standing in solemn silence in the Anne Frank House, being surrounded by lemurs at the Artis Zoo, marvelling at the cuisine at De Kas restaurant. And one of the most striking experiences was my first look at Rembrandt’s famous painting, “The Night Watch,” at the Rijksmuseum.

When I have had the opportunities to see this enormous painting – its full title is “The Night Watch Militia Company of District II under the Com-

mand of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq,” so you can see why it is usually shortened – it was exhibited in a room where several other paintings of a similar theme, but by other artists, were also on display.

The impact of this was instant and astonishing. Rembrandt’s work, especially his use of light, was so strikingly more effective and dramatic that the other paintings paled to comparative insignificance.

You could sit through a three-hour lecture on Rembrandt’s use of colour and come out with less information than that first sighting of “The Night Watch” provides.

But if you visit today, you will not have quite the same experience because the gallery is now enclosed in glass. That’s because the Rijksmuseum staff are undertaking a year-long, \$4.4-million restoration of the famed work.

This is slow, careful work. The painting is immense, measuring 3.63 by 4.27 metres, weighing 337 kilograms. It’s also practically priceless; it’s owned by the City of Amsterdam and its value is estimated at \$700 million.

The normal practice of art restoration would see the painting removed from exhibition and restored in an off-limits studio somewhere, but not this time.

Rijksmuseum director Taco Dibbitts says, “The Night Watch is one of the most famous paintings in the world. It belongs to us all. That is why we have decided to conduct the restoration within the museum itself, and everyone, wherever they are, will be able to follow the process online.”

Visitors to the museum will also be able to view the painting and see the restoration team at work. This is a unique opportunity for any travellers planning to spend time in Amsterdam. More than two million visitors come to the Rijksmuseum annually.

The restoration project, dubbed Operation Night Watch, began five years ago with research and re-stretching of the painting extending over that time. According to experts at the Rijksmuseum, “Over the last five years a large team of conservators, curators, scientists and other specialists have studied ‘The Night Watch’ using the most advanced technologies from digital imaging to scientific and technical studies, and from computer science to artificial intelligence. This work has led to various breakthroughs in our understanding of the painting’s condition and the artist’s way of working.”

After five years of research, the actual removal of the varnish on the painting began on Nov. 12 of this year, and that is a very precise process.

“Our conservators are using a special type of tissue to remove the varnish layers that were applied to the painting as part of its restoration in 1975-1976. The conservators place the tissue, prepared with a solvent, against the surface of ‘The Night Watch’ for a short, limited amount of time. The varnish is solubilised and absorbed into the tissue. Then, using a microscope, they carefully remove any remnants of even older varnish with cotton swabs.”

The results may completely change art lovers’ perception of



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The team of experts working to restore “The Night Watch” to its original glory.

this iconic painting because a debate is underway as to whether Rembrandt intended the painting to be set in night time, or if it is simply generations of darkened varnish that have caused this effect. The outcome of the restoration will be historic, appropriate for a work which itself holds a unique place in the history of art. When Rembrandt painted “The Night Watch” in 1642, it was the first time a group portrait portrayed the subjects in action, rather than simply standing still.

This is not the first effort to restore the painting. There are records of at least 25 such efforts, but it is the most extensive and certainly supported by the best research. Previous restorations have been carried to repair the painting after it was attacked with a knife twice and sprayed with acid. Having survived all of these incidents

and accidents, Rembrandt’s masterpiece will be returned to its original glory and we’ll get the chance to see both the process and the result, whether we travel to Amsterdam or watch the project live online at www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/stories/operation-night-watch.

And one more thing. One of the most remarkable flash mobs I have ever seen was staged in an Amsterdam shopping mall. Instead of a musical performance, the actors invaded the mall, eventually forming a tableau of “The Night Watch.” Check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtBLJ6QuzCE.

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



The work of restoration is meticulous.



An art restorer at work on the masterpiece; art lovers can visit the work in progress, or watch it online.

OBITUARY

Aitcheson



It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of James (Jim) Kevin Aitcheson on November 21st, 2024 after a brief battle with cancer. Jim was born on March 28th, 1955 in the farming community of St. Pauls, where he would continue to live along with his wife Lorraine (Lori), to whom he married on October 6, 1979 and have been soulmates for 45 years. Together, they raised their children Kelly (Justin) Byers, Tracey (Jared) Hope and Greg (Lisa) Aitcheson. Jim was an exceptionally proud grandpa to Mason, Audrey, Bennett, Catherine, Jack, Charlie and Emma. Jim is predeceased by his parents David & Catherine (Kay) Aitcheson, his father and mother-in-law Marcel and Mildred Van Damme and brother-in-law Grant Van Damme (December 29, 1979). He will be fondly remembered by his siblings George (Tarry), Grace (Terry) and Murray (Nellie) along with his sister-in-law Michele (Paul) Myers and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

After a brief career with National Trust, Jim returned to his true passion – farming. Along with Lori, they raised their family and continued dairy farming on the Aitcheson family farm. Farming the land alongside his son Greg was one of his greatest joys as the Aitcheson Family Farm has been in Jim's family for over 131 years.

Jim devoted much of his time to the community he loved and cherished through his roles as the Mayor of Perth South and as the Perth County Warden. While on council, Jim stood strong on issues that would protect farmland, farmers rights and those that supported the long-term vision he had for his home County. He loved being engaged in political conversations and was never afraid to speak his mind, ensuring to always include a few curse words, a Jim Aitcheson trademark. During his time on council, he was actively involved in many boards and committees such as St. Mary's Mobility Bus, Spruce Lodge, Perth County Agriculture Working Group, Perth County Transportation Committee, Planning Services Review and Land Division. Jim was also an active member of the Quadro Communications Board of Directors from 1995-2004 where he helped shape the future of telecommunication services for his community.

Outside of politics, Jim was a loyal Downie Optimist from the day he first joined in November 1981. The Optimist's unwavering support of children's activities within Perth South was something he was so proud to contribute to. Jim was active as the club Treasurer from 1995 through to 2010. In 2014, he was honoured to receive Life Member status for his distinguished service as Treasurer.

Above all, Jim's favourite pastime was telling you all about his children and grandchildren. He wanted everyone to know how proud he was about their various accomplishments and how well everyone was doing. Grandpa Jim's farm tours on his various tractors, Dusty the golf cart and the side by side will be sorely missed.

Jim's family extends their thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers at the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth and the Perth County Paramedic Services. A heartfelt thank you to all of Jim's friends and family for their visits to ensure that Jim was kept up to date on all things "happening" on their farms and in the community.

In keeping with Jim's wishes a private family service will take place. A celebration of Jim's life will be held at Downie Optimist Community Centre, 3185 County Road 122, St. Pauls, on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 from 1:00 - 4:00 PM

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, St. Marys Mobility Bus or the Downie Optimist Club through the W. G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron St, Stratford, ON. www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

IN MEMORIAM

Pearson

In loving memory of my wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother Reta, who passed away 12 years ago November 29, 2012.

There will always be a heartache

And often a silent tear,

But always precious memories

Of the days when you were here.

We hold you close within our hearts

And there you will remain,

To walk with us throughout our lives

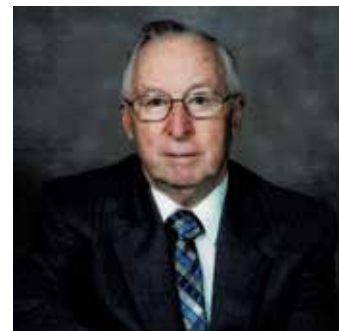
Until we meet again...

Always in our hearts.

With love, from Gord, Nancy, Cindy, Doug and families

IN MEMORIAM

Stuart Smale



In Loving Memory of Stuart Smale

December 2, 2023

Forever loved

Forever remembered

Forever missed.

Smale, Morris & Hartwick families

A Candlelight Christmas



Sunday, December

15th, 2024

@ 7:30 pm

3002 Road 154

Perth South

Avonbank Community Church

25 YEARS

Of our non-denominational community service bringing us together in friendship & fellowship to celebrate the Gifts of the Season

Music by the GeeGees

Message - Reverend Mark Wolfe

All Welcome

Avonbank Farm Equipment Parade

Nov 29 starting at Avonbank Community Church at 7:30 pm.

Keep vehicles to the right side of the parade direction because of the large equipment. It goes west on Line 16, then south on Road 140, then east on line 15, then back to the church on Road 134.

ST. JAMES ANGLICAN
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Christmas BAZAAR
November 30
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Baking | Jams | Jellies | Mincemeat
St. James Parish Hall
65 Church St. S
(Parking Lot- Peel St. S)

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ST. MARYS LEGION

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DECEMBER 1, 2024
FROM 10 AM TO 3 PM

Shop Christmas Ideas At Affordable Prices

St. Marys Legion
66 Church St.
St. Marys Ontario

FREE ADMISSION

Home-made Crafts - Vendor sales - Christmas gifts -
Local Jewelry - Woodworking - Artwork - Food

Legion

Kitchen Will Be Open Serving
Coffee-Tea- Soda as well as
Hot Food

FIRST BAPTIST CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE IS BACK!

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
10:00 AM UNTIL NOON**

First Baptist Church of St. Marys
34 Church Street South



Pack your own boxes is back!
Choose from a large selection of homemade goodies!
Cash, credit and debit accepted!
Doors open at 10am
Arrive early for best selection!

LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Down goes Downie?

25 years ago (1999)

Downie Central Public School could close after the present school year, according to a list released earlier this week by the Avon Maitland District School Board.

St. Marys Ford has once again provided funding for local minor sports programs through the proceeds of their golf tournament. Access to these funds and information about criteria can be obtained through the Parks and Recreation Department.

Approximately 23,000 coniferous trees from Wildwood are planned to be harvested in the next few months. While these trees will be sent to paper mills, the project is planned to allow for the natural regeneration of native hardwood species like maple and ash.

50 years ago (1974)

Campbell Soup Co. for years did not place a sign at the front of their plant just west of St. Marys. Recently, however, a sign, naturally very similar to that famous sign on every can of Campbell Soup, has made its appearance at the front of the big plant.

A total of 25 voters took advantage of the advanced poll for the upcoming municipal election. The advanced poll was open last Saturday.

Rapid progress is being made on the construction of the largest apartment block yet for St. Marys, the 32-unit building along Queen Street West. Occupancy is expected next June.

75 years ago (1949)

Ice formed on Trout Creek and parts of the River Thames on Monday and Tuesday night, and children already have been observed skating on the glassy surfaces.

The East Ward resident who last week spent an hour in the semi-darkness planting what he thought were tulip bulbs, found the next day that he had planted a score or more of candy pumpkins. His friend had given him the wrong bag.

The boards have been fitted to the sidewalk on the north side of Victoria Bridge. These protective boards are erected each fall and removed in the spring; a procedure started more than thirty years ago to protect pedestrians from the icy down-river blasts.

100 years ago (1924)

The chopping mill conducted by H.L. Rice was shut down since Monday this week owing to a broken water wheel, caused by the entrance of a board into the rotor. The board had been thrown into the race by some unthinking parties and was caused serious damage and loss of time to the operators. The mill is now in operation again.

For the second time in a few months, pretty 17-year-old Muriel Whitworth has left her broken-hearted father and the comfort of their newly furnished home in London. A sum of money belonging to Mr. Whitworth, who is a widower, has also disappeared.



ST. MARYS LIONS CLUB

COATS 4 KIDS TEENS & ADULTS

Are you in need of something warm to wear?
Visit us at **26 Wellington St S** and select your warm wearable outerwear for Kids, Teens & Adults.

Our Lions storefront is open **Nov 15 to Dec 14**
8 AM to 7 PM, Monday through Saturday.
Closed on Sunday

Thank you so much for your donations!

Many thanks to Marlene Forman
Cascade Cleaners



Christmas Show, Potluck Dinner & Annual Meeting

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

ST. MARYS LEGION HALL

- Christmas Flower Show Viewing - 6:00 PM
- Potluck Dinner - 6:30 PM (bring your own cutlery, plate, contribution to potluck)
- Coffee/Tea provided by St. Marys Tim Hortons
- Seasonal Entertainment
- Annual Meeting & Installation of the Board to Follow

Monetary Collection for the Salvation Army

Purchase your 2024 Membership and be entered in a draw for a beautiful poinsettia

Makes a Great Christmas Gift!!

Are You A Newcomer To The St. Marys Area?

The friends of the library has a **FREE Welcome Package** for you to pick up at the library!

- Recreation Info
- Gifts + MORE
- Local Services
- Health & Wellness
- Maps
- Coupons

St. Marys Public Library, 15 Church St. 519-284-3346

St. Marys Independent

SUBMIT YOUR MEMORIAM, THANK YOU, OBITUARY, OR ANNOUNCEMENT

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or call **519-284-0041**

BUSINESS DIRECTORY Call 519-284-0041 to inquire

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

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

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SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

LOCAL MATTERS.



Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?



Remember when **Facebook** bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?



Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?

Neither do we!

Local businesses live here. They play here. They invest here. They need our support, now more than ever.

1999 PEEWEE MEMORIES

For parents and former players of the Rob Staffen/Glenn Finnie peewee hockey team, circa 1999, a video recording of their playoff series against Mooretown is still available on YouTube. Simply type "Quest for the Cup Paul Sproat" to bring it up. Lots of good memories. Over 2 hours in length.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) 1976
- 2) One Time
- 3) Snakes and Ladders
- 4) Franklin D. Roosevelt
- 5) Harry Potter
- 6) British Columbia
- 7) The Colossal Squid
- 8) Radiation
- 9) Flush
- 10) The heart

THE WEEK AHEAD

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PRC & Friendship Centre events - See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5
St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 29

Friday, November 29

- Delta Power open house at 7061 Cobble Hills Rd - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion "hot dogs and more" lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at the PRC - 7:30 p.m.
- Avonbank farm equipment parade - Starts at Avonbank Church at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 30

- Delta Power open house at 7061 Cobble Hills Rd - 8 a.m. to Noon
- St. James Anglican Christmas bazaar at the parish hall - 9 a.m. to Noon
- Write for Rights letter writing event at St. Marys Public Library - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Naina's Indian Kitchen Bar & Grill 1 year anniversary gala - 4-9 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 1

- St. Marys Legion Christmas market - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Chain Breaker Ministry service at the Friendship Centre - 10:30 a.m.
- Stonetown Arts show and sale at Riverwalk Commons - Noon to 4 p.m.
- St. Marys Museum open house - 2-4 p.m.
- London Pro Musica Choir at St. Marys United Church - 3 p.m., \$25 admission

Monday, December 2

- Community Dinner at St. Marys United Church - 5 p.m., Sponsored by Community Living

Tuesday, December 3

- Giving Tuesday - events listed on Page 36

Wednesday, December 4

- Celebration of Life for Jim Aitchison at Downie Optimist Hall, St. Pauls - 1-4 p.m.
- St. Marys Horticultural Society Christmas show, potluck dinner and annual meeting At St. Marys Legion Hall - 6 p.m.

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ST. MARYS GIVES 2024: WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOUR?



Giving Tuesday is in one week, Tuesday, December 3, 2024!

Giving Tuesday is in one week on Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024! The following list are the Giving Tuesday events that have been shared with us. We encourage you to support these amazing initiatives. To find out more about a particular one please reach out directly to the business/organization and check their social media and the St. Marys Giving Tuesday facebook and instagram pages. We will be sharing everything that we are aware of! Drum Roll Please! A lot of giving from the heart is planned.

- **St. Marys Giving Tuesday Committee** - will be at the Scotiabank Corner from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with the Salvation Army Kettle
- **Zenfire Pottery & Mercantile** - making and selling pottery hearts for \$5 - proceeds to CMHA Huron Perth
- **1st St. Marys Sparks/Embers** - making Christmas cards and carolling at Kingsway Lodge
- **St. Marys United Church** - hosting a Community Dinner on Monday, December 2
- **Perth County Ingredients** - making no-sew blankets to donate to the Stratford Perth Humane Society
- **DCVI Salukis** - food drive for the Salvation Army, musical concert for neighbouring Elementary Schools, movie night for neighbouring Elementary Schools
- **St. Marys Friendship Centre Choir** - singing at nursing homes on Giving Tuesday
- **Friends of the Library** - hosting a free skate at the PRC on Sunday, December 8 from 1:00 to 2:00 pm
- **Holy Name of Mary Elementary School** - donating to the Salvation Army Giving Tree
- **Troyer's Spices** - accepting new teddy bears to donate to St. Marys Memorial Hospital
- **Peak Select Realty** - collecting bulk items for school lunches or snacks (ie. fruit cups, juice boxes, individually wrapped cookies) to be donated to the St. Marys Library Pantry
- **The Flower Shop and More** - collecting bulk items for school lunches or snacks (ie. fruit roll ups, fresh apples or oranges, granola bars) to be donated to the St. Marys Library Pantry
- **St. Marys Veterinary Clinic** - fundraising for the Farley Foundation (subsidizes necessary veterinary care for pets belonging to low income seniors, seniors' care facilities, persons with disabilities, Ontario Works recipients & abused women)
- **Holy Name of Mary Social Committee** - making turkey pot pies, Italian Souperole and apple crisp for people to buy and share with others
- **Stone Home Creatives** - puzzles from the Puzzle Swap have been sold by donation and on December 2nd and 3rd 25% of ornament sales will be donated to The St. Marys Salvation Army
- **Stratford Police Service** - collecting personal hygiene items that will be donated to St. Marys Salvation Army Food Bank
- **Cascade Cleaners** - a donation will be made to the St. Marys Food Bank with every dry cleaning order
- **O'Grady's Clothing & Accessories** - collecting kids lunch snacks and mittens to donate to Little Falls Public School
- **Broken Rail Brewing** - week leading up to December 3 collecting empties (beer, wine and liquor) at the brewery to donate the proceeds to Boxer Rescue Ontario
- **Stonetown Physiotherapy** - collecting non-perishable food for the St. Marys Public Library Food Pantry
- **Bruce and Nancy White** - auctioning off the chance to win one of 5 different cooking classes, proceeds will be donated to the St. Marys Foodbank
- **AllRoads Dodge Chrysler Jeep** - collecting Christmas gifts for teens and tweens to donate to the Salvation Army
- **Jackie Cousins** - 100% of her book sales will be donated to the St. Marys Food Bank (books are available at Lyric Flowers)
- **St. Marys Imagination Library** - free book gifting program - enrolled children receive a book once a month free of charge
- **Town of St. Marys** - collecting non-perishable food items donated by Town staff to donate to the St. Marys Food Bank and Food Pantry
- **St. Marys Healthcare Foundation and St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary** - donations on Giving Tuesday will go towards celebrating the dedication of hospital and clinic staff. Donors will be entered into a special draw.
- **Sam's Home Hardware** - proceeds from the sale of windshield washer fluid will be donated to United Way initiatives in St. Marys
- **Kinette Club of St. Marys** - collecting donations of highly needed items for Optimism Place in Stratford
- **St. Marys Insurance Group Inc.** - supporting the Cohen Frayne Memorial Tree by picking 15 angels off the tree and purchasing Christmas Gifts. Also making a monetary donation to the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary
- **Reflexology By Ruth at Quantum Massage** - donating the proceeds from her art cards to the St. Marys Library Food Pantry
- **Salina Street Neighbours** - collecting personal hygiene products to donate to the St. Marys Library Pantry
- **The Widder Street Noise Makers** - will be gathering at 6:30 pm on Widder Street East in front of Holy Name Church to make "noise" to show our gratitude to health care workers and collecting warm socks to donate to the St. Marys Community Outreach team and the PRC Shower Program for people who need them in our community.
- **The Local Community Food Centre** - on Friday, Nov. 27 during the market and lunch and Monday, Dec. 2 during the market and dinner we will be making "NOISE" about food insecurity. We encourage people to bring any spare change, share a meal and on the half hour we will drop the coins (bills are good too) in metal pots and make some NOISE. Proceeds will be donated to The Local Community Food Centre.
- **Bargain Beautique Sunshine for Sarah** - hosting an event with every item sold, \$5.00 would be donated to Sarah's fight against breast cancer.
- **St. Marys Bowling Lanes** - collecting items and money for the St. Marys Library Pantry
- **Jean Alice Rowcliffe** - collecting incontinence products to be donated to the St. Marys Library Pantry
- **Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum** - selling mystery bags and accepting cash donations to raise funds to bring classrooms to the Museum.
- **The Hitching Post** - with the support of Shur-Gain Trouw Nutrition we are selling raffle tickets with amazing prizes, all funds raised will be donated to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth in memory of Grandma Jean Walker
- **Vitality Health & Fitness** - collecting feminine hygiene products for various local drop offs. Each donation will be entered into a draw for a one month small group training session.
- **The Sunset Diner** - buy a Gift Card From The Heart to "pay it forward" to someone who needs a meal. When you buy a gift certificate you get a milkshake for free!
- **Veterinary Purchasing** - employees are collecting non-perishable food items to be donated to St. Marys Salvation Army Food Bank
- **Pet Valu-St. Marys** - accepting pet food donations to be donated to the Stratford Perth Humane Society
- **Country Roots Fresh Market** - collecting feminine hygiene products, baby formula and diapers to be donated to The St. Marys Salvation Army
- **Delmar Food Factory Outlet** - accepting donations of new children's mittens/gloves to donate to Little Fall's Public School
- **Honey Bee Good** - for every jar of honey ordered or bought on December 3, 100% of the proceeds will be donated to A Child's Smile
- **Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters** - donating frozen soup and baked goods to the St. Marys Salvation Army Food Bank
- **Stonetown Quilt Guild** - donating hygiene products and cash to purchase hygiene products to the St. Marys Salvation Army Food Bank
- **The Physio Nook** - 10% of sales on December 3 will be used to donate feminine hygiene products to the St. Marys Library Community Pantry
- **Harris-Greig Automotive** - hosting a silent auction of various items with all proceeds going to the ALS association and supporting Judy's sister Jane Nelson who has been recently diagnosed with ALS. Harris-Greig Automotive will match all proceeds from the silent auction.
- **Sensations Salon and Day Spa** - on Giving Tuesday a portion of sales of special products will be donated to Sarah Nairn's fight against breast cancer. Tina Bickell will also be selling her handcrafted famous socks

A very very special thank you to **The St. Marys Independent Newspaper** for partnering with the St. Marys Giving Tuesday Committee for the past three months to help promote Giving Tuesday!

It is not too late to be part of this world-wide movement! Plan something for Tuesday, December 3rd or support the events listed above! Be sure to tag St. Marys Giving Tuesday on Facebook and Instagram and we will share share share!



GIVING TUESDAY

Dec
3

For More Information Contact: jdockerjohnson@gmail.com