

# St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1196

Thursday, February 1, 2024

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## The Beauty of Winter



The winter weather that brought snow and cold weather to St. Marys in January is now gone, replaced by rain and above-zero temperatures as we head into February. Photo by Wendy Lamond

## St. Marys council approves nearly \$106,000 in 2024 community grant requests

By Galen Simmons

At the same meeting in which St. Marys council approved its 2024 budget, councillors also gave their seal of approval to nearly \$106,000 in 2024 community grants as recommended by town staff and St. Marys' strategic priorities committee.

In total, town staff received 11 applications to St. Marys' 2024 com-

munity grants program in addition to more than \$76,500 in standing grants – previously approved multi-year grant funding – for seven organizations.

Those standing grants include a little more than \$11,000 for the United Way Perth-Huron (\$1.50 per resident), \$1,500 for a St. Marys DCVI

Continued on page 3

## St. Marys council approves modest 2024 budget with nearly 5.9-per-cent levy increase

By Galen Simmons

St. Marys council has approved the town's 2024 budget with a nearly \$14.9-million tax levy, roughly 5.9 per cent or nearly \$828,000 more taxes than what was collected from property owners last year.

The budget, which was approved at council's Jan. 23 meeting, includes a nearly \$28.8-million operating budget and a nearly \$5.9-million capital budget – which is funded through town reserves, grants and other sources and does not have an impact on the annual tax levy – with a total of 62 capital projects planned for the year.

"The gist of the (budget) bylaw tonight is we require \$827,000 and some change in extra tax revenue in 2024 to basically run the town and provide the services that we want to provide," said town corporate services director André Morin at the Jan. 23 council meeting. "That is a 5.88 per cent increase over the previous year. When we factor in our growth and adjusted levy, that's where the actual average person will see an increase of about 4.11 per cent, and that's for a residential, commercial or industrial property in town.


"... That'll average out to about \$141 (more in taxes) for the year for our average residential dwelling. Depending on the size of that dwelling, that might go up or down."

Water and sewer bills are expected to increase by 2.3 per cent or \$21 over the course of the year.


The town relied on public input to help determine

Continued on page 2

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# COMMUNITY

## St. Marys council approves modest 2024 budget

Continued from page 1

how funds should be allocated in 2024. Input on the budget was solicited from residents during two Coffee with Council events in 2023.

Housing emerged as one of the community's top concerns through that process. In response, an additional \$25,000 has been allocated to the town's Community Improvement Plan, which will soon include a new grant for attainable housing projects. An additional \$50,000 will also go to

support the initiatives of the town's Opening Doors housing action plan.

The budget includes funding for several other projects that will further St. Marys' strategic goals including:

- repairs to the HVAC system in the pool area at the Pyramid Recreation Centre;
- reconstruction of Wellington Street South from Park Street to St. Maria Street;
- support for the PC Connect transit system;

upgraded washrooms and an accessible dock at Milt Dunnell Field;

- additional funding for tree planting and walking trail improvements; and
- level 2 electric-vehicle chargers in the Pyramid Recreation Centre and Jones Street parking lots.

Morin said he will bring forward a tax policy bylaw – the bylaw that dictates how the property tax burden is shared between the different property classes – for council's consideration at a future meeting.

ating a budget did exactly as council asked," Mayor Al Strathdee said. "It's important to say it was a team effort and I can solidly say we have been responsible and we have put together a budget that many, many municipalities would be envious of, actually. I think we continue to have strong growth, we continue to work with staff to maintain services and to keep costs reasonable. So, thank you for your work."

A copy of the 2024 budget is available at [townofstmarys.com/budget](http://townofstmarys.com/budget).

"I can confidently say I think that the staff who were tasked with cre-

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## COMMUNITY

# St. Marys council approves nearly \$106,000 in 2024 community grant requests

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commencement scholarship, \$750 for a St. Michael Catholic Secondary School scholarship, \$2,000 for St. Marys' annual Canada Day Parade, \$1,200 for an annual community dinner at a local church, \$10,000 for St. Marys Station Gallery's annual operating grant, and \$50,000 to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation for staff recruitment and retention initiatives.

Based on the recommendation of staff and the strategic priorities committee, council voted to deny an additional \$2,500 in rent relief requested by the St. Marys Station Gallery.

St. Marys council approved nearly \$30,000 in community grant fund-

ing to organizations that applied for one-time funding this year.

Among those approved for grant funding this year are the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, which will receive \$5,000 plus \$500 of in-kind support toward its June induction ceremony and other events this year; the St. Marys Kinsmen, which will get \$5,000 plus \$2,000 of in-kind support for Summerfest 2024; and the St. Marys Legion Branch 235, which will get \$5,000 toward a kitchen renovation.

Council also approved \$5,000 plus \$2,000 of in-kind support for the St. Marys Ringette Association's Return to Sport program, \$5,000 for the St. Marys Imagination Library's book-gifting program, and \$5,000 for the St. Marys Lincolns' three-

hour hall rentals at the end of the 2023 season and beginning of the 2024 season.

The goal of the town's community grant program is to provide a small amount of funds to eligible groups that plan to organize an activity, project or program in St. Marys that supports one of four areas of strategic focus: culture and recreation, balanced growth, economic development, and housing.

The following are guidelines as to how community grant applications are considered and approved by the town and council:

- Funds are not intended to provide day-to-day operating support for an organization;
- The town and the grant program

should not be considered the only source of funding for a project;

- The guideline for cash funding requests is up to 25 per cent of the project budget or \$5,000, whichever is the lesser amount;

- The guideline for in-kind funding requests is a maximum of \$2,000 per applicant;

- Council may waive the 25 per cent granting cap and approve grant funds up to \$5,000. The community grant policy dictates that this is only to occur in situations of unique financial need, and/or if 25 per cent of an applicant's budget is less than \$5,000; and

- Building and planning fees are not eligible to be waived.

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# COMMUNITY

## Decade decisions

By Stewart Grant

I turned 50 recently. It seems hard to believe. How did this happen already?

I know that for some, age is just a number. However, it's my nature to make a big deal out of numbers – I guess that's why accounting was a natural career choice for me before I got into newspapers.

Ten years ago, upon turning age 40, the accountant (or actuary) in me couldn't help but notice that I was roughly halfway through the expected life span of a Canadian male. Perhaps this is a morbid thought, but I did the math.

It's probably not a coincidence that 2014 was the year that I decided to start making myself very busy – most notably by buying the St. Marys Independent while continuing to do my full-time U.S. based accounting job. I was inspired to do things and have interesting experiences. As it turned out, it's been a hell of a decade.

Fortunately, I was able to quit my accounting job in 2022 to go full-time as an entrepreneur. As a result, the last 18 months have been wild as we've been expanding the newspaper business at a time when other media companies have been shrinking. However, my old accounting job came calling recently, with an attractive

offer to rejoin them that roughly coincided with my 50th birthday.

This was a decision that I wrestled with for quite awhile but ultimately, I turned it down. I thought about what the last decade had brought, and how I've had to make choices about how I've spent my 168 hours each week.

My 40's were very busy, trying to juggle my different jobs while still being there for my family. One thing that I didn't prioritize in my limited schedule was my health and fitness – and I've got the depressing Fitbit graphs to prove it.

Turning 50 really helped me decide what I wanted to do for the next 10 years... and what I didn't want to do. Life's too short.

As I look ahead at the next 10 years, I want to continue to build on what we've started here with the St. Marys Independent. Amidst all the doom and gloom about the media industry, this wonderful town has proven that local news is still viable – not just here, but in other nearby communities. My goal in the next ten years is to see how far we can go in terms of strengthening community journalism in this part of the world.

And yes, this decade I also need to become a regular at the YMCA.

## Bravo

We have 1 Bravo this week.

1) The St Marys Hospital, may we never take for granted the hard work and dedication of the doctors, nurses and all staff of our hospital. You are the Best! And we thank you.



## Boo

We have 1 Boo this week.

1) To all the people that park in the handicap spots in town that do not have stickers. It makes it hard for the people that need it. 3 young men used the handicap spot and got their lunch at the grocery store and then sat in their truck and ate it while being parked at the handicapped spot.



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

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

## Quote of the Week

*"Well you'd be hard pressed to convince me that's anything but an aircraft, for one, and two, that it's not Amelia's aircraft. There's no other known crashes in the area, and certainly not of that era in that kind of design with the tail that you see clearly in the image."*

- Tony Romeo, founder of Deep Sea Vision, reported this week that his company's underwater drones may have located Amelia Earhart's plane that went missing in 1937.

## St. Marys Independent

36 Water St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2  
info@stmarys-independent.com  
Phone: 519.284.0041

### Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

### Regional Editor

Galen Simmons • galen@granthaven.com

### Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Tyler Carruthers • info@stmarys-independent.com

### Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

### Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

### Administrative Assistant

Wendy Lamond • wendylamond74@gmail.com

### Contributors

June Grant, Nancy Bickell, Mary Smith, Nancy Abra, Lauren Eedy,  
Spencer Seymour, Sarah Cairns, Paul Knowles, Jake Grant



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## The St. Marys Independent

THOUGHTS  
OF THE WEEK

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## Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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I'll bet there's never been a February with 5 editions of the Independent before.

Looks like E. Jean Carroll just grabbed Trump by the wallet.

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

# COMMUNITY

## Arlene Callender's birthday wish



Arlene (Harris) Callender is celebrating her 75th birthday by giving back to the community. She is looking to donate money to the United Way in honour of all people who are turning 75 in 2024. Especially to those "kids" who were with Arlene at St. Marys D.C.V.I from 1963 to 1968-69. So, to the people in that category, whether in St. Marys now or in another part of Canada, please consider making a donation big or small to the United Way Perth-Huron 32 Erie St. Stratford N5A 2M4. All proceeds will go to an outreach program for the St. Marys homeless. Just mark the donation as 75 Birthday event. (Contributed photo)

A colorful poster for the "Cystic Fibrosis Valentine's Gala" on February 10th, 2024. The poster features a red ribbon graphic and lists ticket prices: \$50 for Regular Seating and \$75 for VIP Seating (with a note that it must be for a full table of 8). It also mentions "FOOD, DRINKS, AUCTION, FUN" and "LIVE MUSIC BY UPSIDE OF MAYBE". Logos for Kin Canada District 1, Black Angus Bakery &amp; Catering, VanAllen Insurance Inc., and LiUNA 1059 are included. A QR code is in the bottom left, and a note says "Tickets available online using QR code or Black Angus Bakery".

# STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



### CRAFTY TALES

2nd Fri. monthly, 9:30 AM | Library

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[www.townofstmarys.com/library](http://www.townofstmarys.com/library) or 226-374-6544

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Feb. 2, 8 AM - 5 PM | Pyramid Centre

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### Contact us

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## Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Arlene Callender. Arlene just turned 75 on January 26th. She was born in Stratford. Kingston, Toronto and St. Marys are places that she has called home over the years. She was married to Jack who passed away in 2006. Arlene has two children and one step child and four grandchildren. She belongs to the Legion and volunteers for the Hospital Auxiliary. In her spare time Arlene enjoys horticulture, going on lots of walks and loves watching the news.

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

## Weekend Quiz

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1. What is the most populated city in the world?
2. How long does it take for sunlight to reach earth?
3. What kind of reptile are leatherbacks and ridleys?
4. How many times did Ross get divorced on Friends?
5. In what country is Bethlehem located?
6. What year did Pluto become a dwarf planet?
7. How many Super Bowls have the Detroit Lions won?
8. What day is Groundhog Day?
9. According to Malcolm Gladwell, how many hours does it take to master a skill?
10. What does UV light stand for?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

## COMMUNITY

# Community Housing Consultation coming to St. Marys

By St. Marys Independent staff

The Town of St. Marys and City of Stratford are joining forces to address an issue that transcends municipal boundaries – housing and homelessness.

On Feb. 15, the two municipalities will host a community housing consultation from 5-8 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The event is an opportunity for residents to learn about local efforts around housing and homelessness.

The consultation will include a presentation from Stratford's social services department with a specific focus on the supports available in St. Marys. Attendees will also have the chance to share input about housing and homelessness and chat with local service providers.

St. Marys' community outreach worker, Brittany

Petrie, hopes residents will take this opportunity to gain insight on the complex issue of housing and homelessness.

"There is no simple cause or solution for the housing and homelessness issue currently facing our community," Petrie said in a press release issued by the town. "This event will help build awareness about what is being done to address these challenges and gather insights to inform future efforts."

The event is free and open to all residents. Advance registration is not required and light refreshments will be provided.

For more information about the event, contact Brittany Petrie at 226-261-0098 or [bpetrie@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:bpetrie@town.stmarys.on.ca). To learn more about local housing and homelessness services, visit [www.townofstmarys.com/stonetownsupports](http://www.townofstmarys.com/stonetownsupports).



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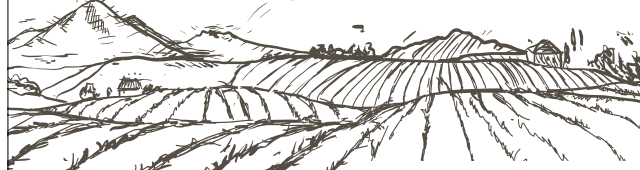
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**COMMUNITY**

# Perth County launches next phase of public engagement for new official plan

By Wendy Lamond

Perth County's draft official plan is ready for public feedback and once passed by county council, will determine how land uses are managed across the county.

To solicit feedback from residents, open houses will be held in each of the county's four lower-tier municipalities.

Perth County manager of planning Andrea Hachler said county staff is looking forward to discussing the draft official plan with residents, businesses and organizations in Perth County. This phase of the plan's development offers an opportunity for the public to review the draft document.

In accordance with the planning act, the public must be given the opportunity to review the draft and all supporting information and materials including the Perth County comprehensive review, the new official plan policy directions report, the Perth natural heritage systems study and the Perth natural heritage systems update.

The county is in need of a new policy document that reflects current

concerns, priorities and values. It will also act as a guidance document for municipalities across the county to facilitate more advanced land-use and social policies.

Each open house will run from 4:30-8:30 p.m. with presentations beginning at 5:30 p.m. West Perth's open house will take place in Mitchell Feb. 7, North Perth will host an open house in Listowel Feb. 8, Perth East's will be in Milverton Feb. 15 and the Perth South open house will be Feb. 12 in St. Pauls.

There will also be a virtual meeting option on Feb. 7 for those who can't attend in person. To register for the virtual meeting, email [newofficialplan@perthcounty.ca](mailto:newofficialplan@perthcounty.ca).

For more information on the open houses and the Perth County draft official plan, visit [www.perthcounty.ca/NewOP](http://www.perthcounty.ca/NewOP)

Written comments about the official plan can also be mailed to Perth County Planning and Development at 1 Huron Street, Stratford ON N5A 5S4.

# Harris-Greig supports the Hospital Foundation



Harris-Greig Automotive were pleased to present a cheque for \$1,500 to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation. \$500 was the proceeds from their logo clothing sales and the additional \$1,000 was in support of the foundation. Pictured L to R front row: Teddy Bilyea, Cindy Bilyea, Candice Harris, Judy Greig, Bryan (Bib) Greig, Ryan Harris, Nathan Mills. Back row: Aaron McCauley, Greg Dunseith, Jeff Sass, Jack Dixon, Brody Peaker, Jake Graham. (Nancy Bickell photo)

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## COMMUNITY

# Hope for Haiti St. Marys chapter comes to an end



Murray Mitchell performs a magic show for children in Uganda. Contributed photos

By Wendy Lamond

A longstanding St. Marys group has made the difficult decision to disband.

Hope for Haiti is a nonprofit organization that was originally founded in Naples, Fla. in 1989. The mission of the organization is to improve the quality of life for the Haitian people, particularly children, through education, healthcare, water, infrastructure and economy. Murray Mitchell launched the St. Marys chapter in 1995.

At that point, Mitchell had already been involved in at least six trips in other countries. Rayjon Share Care is based out of Sarnia and is a charity that works with Hope for Haiti. They chose to focus on Haiti as it was one of the poorest nations on earth. Murray and a member of Rayjon became the leaders of the St. Marys Hope for Haiti chapter.

Prior to disbanding, the club had about 25 active members. Some were members since the beginning, some went on many of the trips, and some only travelled with the group a couple

times.

The club completed many projects over the years. One of the major projects the group was proud to have a hand in was the establishment of a clinic in the Haitian town of Gilbert in memory of Mitchell's late wife, Grace.

Mitchell went on more than 40 international trips with the goals of providing shelter, medical supplies and medication to communities in need. His philosophy is that change will come through education, especially for girls in male-dominated countries. He has a puppet named Gramps that he takes on every trip, with which he performs in magic shows for the children.

In Haiti, the group installed solar power in Gilbert, built schools, repaired homes and built a clinic that operated for 19 years and served 15,000 people. The group also undertook a number of projects in Africa, including donations of goats and goat housing for orphans, the drilling of 16 wells and the provision of funding for eight more, the construction of a science block at



Longtime member Val Tkaczuk paints the clinic in Gilbert, Haiti.

a rural secondary school and the donation of bedding and a birthing table to a rural hospital.

Val Thomson joined the group in 2007 and has never regretted it. Her first trip took her to Uganda to work on building a secondary school.

"I knew I was on the same planet but in a totally different world. It was exhilarating, exciting, adventurous but mostly humbling. I returned home a different person with an altered perspective on life, and I was eager to do more," she said.

And she did do more. Thomson went on eight more trips over the next 12 years. When asked for some of the highlights, she said it's nearly impossible to put it all into words. However, there were a few moments that have stood out to her over the years.

There was a young Honduran woman who tearfully thanked them for helping build her 20-foot-by-24-foot home, which she described as her dream come true.

She attended an outdoor mass with

hundreds of people, at which she watched a woman come forward during collection to offer a single egg.

Thomson also reflected on the joy of working alongside people of any race, creed, or religion. They were all just human beings helping each other, she said.

Her trips to Chile and Trinidad were very special as she had her nephew, Jeff, along with her.

The last build the group did was in 2019 north of Warton, Ont. at Neyaashiinigiing, which was formerly Cape Croker. This was a Habitat for Humanity project building homes.

In 2020, when all travel was halted because of the pandemic, the only project the group took on was a fundraising golf tournament at River Valley. It was at this point the group felt it was ready to disband. They felt that age had caught up to them and though they are sad it is coming to an end, they are so proud and thankful for their accomplishments and unforgettable moments over the years.



Val Thomson and her nephew Jeff Marshall on the work site in Chile.



Ann Bryan bringing water from a spring to the worksite in El Salvador.



**COMMUNITY**

# Nearly one-third of all emergency calls for St. Marys firefighters in 2023 due to false alarms

By Galen Simmons

Of the 122 total emergency calls St. Marys volunteer firefighters responded to last year, nearly one third of those calls were a result of false alarms.

At a recent St. Marys council meeting, town fire Chief Richard Anderson presented year-in-review statistics for the volunteer fire department. While the number of emergency calls the department responded to was down slightly from 131 in 2022, the number of automatic-alarm or false alarm calls the department responded to was almost double the number of motor-vehicle collisions local firefighters attended – 22, which was an increase over the previous year – and more than double the number of carbon-monoxide alarm calls they responded to, 18.

“Our call volume was pretty much average when compared to at least the last five years or so. We’re on pace there,” Anderson told councillors. “With emergency responses ... automatic alarms are generally the higher one, but motor-vehicle collisions were high. We had more than 20 motor-vehicle collisions for the year. I never have a real answer as to why (the number) goes one way or another.

“ ... Automatic alarms is something that we can’t prevent. A lot of them are accidental, right. Automatic alarms; sometimes personal houses have (security) systems and such and they get looped into this as well.”

Last year, the department also responded to four water-and-ice rescues – which were assisted by the department’s 2023 purchase of a rapid deployment watercraft – 12 fires in the St. Marys area and nearby communities that have mutual-aid agreements in place with the St. Marys fire department, 12 calls to assess pre-fire conditions, five unauthorized open-air burnings, 12 medical responses where vital signs were absent (VSA), and one lift assist – when a patient calls emergency services for helping getting up or mobilizing but receives no medical treatment at the scene and

refuses transportation to hospital.

“Lift assists are down, but we’re getting a lot more calls for medical response with VSAs,” Anderson said in response to a question from Mayor Al Strathdee about whether firefighters are being called into assist with more medical calls because of a lack of available ambulances locally.

To that point, Anderson said the increase isn’t as much to do with a lack of available ambulances, but more to do with a reclassification of how those calls are recorded and when firefighters are required to attend medical calls.

“I think more this year, firefighters have actively been involved in VSAs, performing CPR, actually riding in ambulances to hospital more than other years I’ve been here,” Anderson said.

Anderson said he was pleased with his department’s average response time last year, which was a little more than five and a half minutes – up slightly from just over four minutes

in 2022, but down from nearly six and a half minutes in 2021 and almost eight minutes in 2020.

Also of note from last year’s statistics, Anderson said the department had a tough year when it came to retirements.

“If you look over personnel, we really took a hit. When I calculated it with our former deputy fire chief, Brent Dundas, it was 137 years experience lost,” Anderson said, referring to the retirements of a deputy fire chief and three firefighters, each with between 20 and 30 years experience under their belts. “That’s a lot for us, however that’s the way things go, and we hired four new firefighters. They will be the future of our department.”

In addition to the rapid deployment watercraft, the department also celebrated the arrival of a new enclosed-cab pumper truck and purchased a fire blanket for electric battery fires, an inflatable fire safety house for public education, and vehicle extrication tools in 2023.



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## ARTS & CULTURE

# Sculptures in Glass and Stone

By James Giles, edited by Alice Rixson

A St. Marys resident since 1984 with extraordinary artistic talents, Peter Allan Rice conceives unique sculptures that are housed in collections throughout North America and Europe.

Over the last two decades, his works have been regularly represented at the Algonquin Arts Centre along with many of Canada's foremost wildlife and landscape artists.

"I'm inspired by the landscapes and pines of Algonquin, Muskoka, Georgian Bay and Temagami. Personal experiences and stories shared with me by others are also a great inspiration," Rice said.

Also among his recognitions is the honour of being chosen one of the top-ten artists at the prestigious McMichael Gallery Autumn Art Show in Kleinburg, Ont. for three consecutive years. In addition, his art was judged "best in show" in 2019 from among the submitted work of 50 artists from across Canada.

Born in Toronto in 1955, Rice started crafting non-permanent sculptural creations from scraps of lumber at the age of three. He would work for hours fashioning elaborate towers twice his height.

"I remember when my Grade 3 class was painting autumn trees in the 1960s. Most of the students painted a stick with an orange or red ball on top, but I added the finest branches, bark detail and individual leaves with my paintbrush."

His teacher was so impressed that she ran down to the staff room to share



Sculpture "Lake of Two Rivers" 2018

Rice's creation with her colleagues.

"That moment has stuck with me and even though it may seem trivial, it turned out to be a pivotal moment in my art life," he said.

Rice spent his childhood in rural locations across the Canadian Shield, a broad geological region of Precambrian rock that is part of the North American Craton – an ancient formation that dates back 4.5 billion years. This divergent Northern Ontario landscape inspired the famed 1900s Canadian artists, the Group of Seven, who were the first to be recognized as having captured this distinctive scenery on canvas.

Rice's interactions with his surroundings would greatly impact his art. These influences are reflected in

many of his glass and stone pieces, and his particular interpretation adds another dimension.

Rice earned a degree in visual arts at the University of Guelph in 1977. There, under the guidance of educators such as artist Walter Bachinski and sculptor John Fillion, he was able to study and experiment with all variations of artistic expression in his search for his ideal medium.

Later in life, Rice decided to explore the possibilities of three-dimensional works with flat glass. In the early 1980s, he enrolled in a course where traditional stained-glass-composition approaches were taught. After absorbing the basics of these conventional methods, the artist explored with his own sculptural ideas and techniques,

which lead to innovative approaches that he continues to expand on to this day.

As a self-taught artist in his uncommon style of expression, Rice continues to experiment with unconventional approaches. He employs unique techniques using tools such as a jeweler's saw for intricate cuts in copper sheet and soldering irons to create shapes with copper wire. Stained glass is incorporated to capture picturesque settings with individualized touches. Combining earth's natural aggregates such as granite and quartz forms bases for his work, anchoring swirls of glass and metal to create sculptural landscapes. Rice designs his own distinctive images of pines and waterways that played a big part in his formidable years.

When creating a commissioned piece to commemorate a life's milestone, one of Rice's principal objectives is to share his talents with clients. When the desired end result is to pay tribute in a memorial sculpture, he confers with his clients to glean emotions and fond memories. This also enables him to weave a poetic, written description to accompany his sculpture, which serves as a lasting testimony.

Currently, Rice is working on a number of transom windows, all based on the shores of Lake Huron. He is also designing a new, large panel for the Algonquin Art Centre on the theme of "Reflections" for the 2024 season.

To view a partial of Rice's portfolio, visit [www.peterallanrice.com](http://www.peterallanrice.com).

Please send comments and propose topics for Arts & Culture articles to [smindependentarts@gmail.com](mailto:smindependentarts@gmail.com).

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## COMMUNITY

# TaylorHR provides much-needed services for growing businesses

By Stewart Grant

Many businesses don't think about finding human-resources expertise until they really need to. Unfortunately, by that point, they might already be in trouble.

"I love to work proactive companies and help them grow," says Bev Taylor, who is proprietor of TaylorHR, a new company based out of Innerkip that provides customizable human resources ("HR") services in Oxford County and Southern Ontario.

Taylor has been working in the HR field for more than 20 years, dating back to Edmonton where she got her start.

"HR found me," she recalled. "I started working at a facility and had extra time on my hands and offered to help. My manager needed help with recruiting, vacation tracking, and a variety of HR tasks. We then got bought out and the acquiring company wanted me to continue [in the HR department]."

In the years that followed, Taylor deepened her knowledge in the field by gaining a post-secondary education while at the same time working in the industry on a full-time basis. She graduated from Grant MacEwan College in 2007 with a HR Diploma, and earned her Bachelor degree in Business Management from Athabasca University in 2015.

Ten years ago, Taylor moved to Ontario for family



Bev Taylor

reasons and found a job working in the HR department of a large manufacturing firm with several offices.

"Last year, I made the decision that I wanted to reduce my time on the road," said Taylor, deciding that the time was right to go out on her own. She says her employer was very supportive, and she's stayed with them over the past several months to oversee the introduction of their new HR manager.

As of Feb. 1, Taylor will be working at her own business, TaylorHR, on a full-time basis.

One of TaylorHR's new clients is our media company. Like many of the businesses that come to her, I wanted our firm to "do things right" from an HR perspective, but until meeting Bev I wasn't sure where to go for answers.

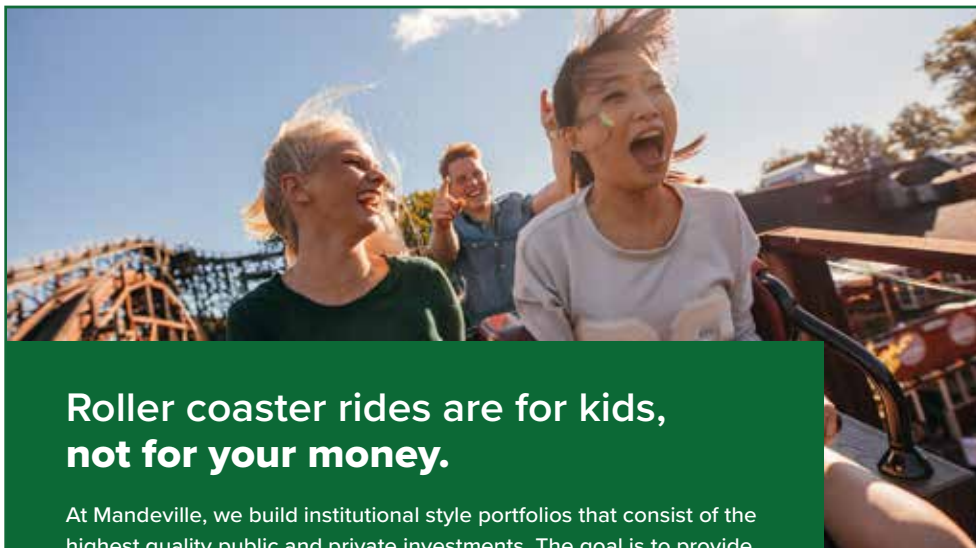
During our introductory meeting where she asked questions to understand our operations, we were able to identify several actions to take to improve the way that we do things.

"It protects you," says Taylor of proper human resource policies and procedures. "Let's design things now even if you are a small business, and then you've got things in place as you grow."

TaylorHR's services are customizable for each customer. Some clients have her firm on retainer, while others request services on an hourly or as-needed basis. In our case, our first step was having an introductory meeting, and we were able to determine the best way to go forward from there.

"I don't want to just be a contractor that ticks off the boxes," says Taylor. Her company's mission is to work alongside management to build, grow and retain strong teams, and to keep organizations safe and compliant with their ever-changing workplaces.

To contact Taylor at TaylorHR, give her a call at 519-807-4195 or email bev@taylorhr.ca. For more information, please visit her website at taylorhr.ca.



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## NOTICE OF ANNUAL AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF TRADITION MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY

TAKE NOTICE that the Annual and a Special General Meeting of the Members of Tradition Mutual Insurance Company will be held at Downie Optimist Community Centre (3185 Road 122, St Pauls, ON, NOK 1V0), on March 27, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. to:

1. Approve the Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting
2. To receive the Annual Statements and Auditors' Report for the year ending December 31, 2023;
3. To appoint Auditors for the 2024 fiscal year and authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration.
4. To elect three directors for a three-year term. The terms of the following directors are expiring: Leslie Showers, Gerald Weersink and Bob Debrabandere. All are eligible to be reelected, and are seeking re-election.

Be advised that any policyholder wishing to run for director, must state their intentions in writing to the Corporate Secretary at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Election forms may be obtained by contacting Don Evans, Corporate Secretary, at devans@traditionmutual.com. Candidates choosing to stand for election will be invited to complete an interview process.

5. To consider and if thought fit, to adopt, with such amendments as may be made at the Meeting, By-law 1 - 2024 passed by the Board of Directors January 10, 2024 which replaces By-law 2003-1 as the Company's General By-law relating to the transaction of its business and affairs of the Company. A complete text of the By-law # 1 - 2024 showing the substantive amendments to By-law 1-2003 is available for review by all members at the head office during regular business hours, or will be provided upon request. The substantive amendments are:

- Addition of requirement that directors have clear criminal record check
- Addition of director nomination procedure
- Addition of sections permitting virtual or hybrid meetings of members and directors, and amendments to the number of directors, reflecting changes to the Corporations Act.

**NOTE: The Annual Statements for the Company for the year ending December 31, 2023 may be viewed on the Company's Web Site at [www.traditionmutual.com](http://www.traditionmutual.com) on or after February 12, 2024. A Member may obtain a copy of the Annual Statements by sending a written notice to the Company's head office at least 14 days before the Meeting.**

Leslie Showers  
Chair of the Board

Don Evans  
Corporate Secretary

# COMMUNITY

## Stratford Winter Film Festival announces film lineup

By Lisa Chester

The inaugural lineup of the Stratford Winter Film Festival (SWFF) has been announced and promises to bring light to an otherwise dark time in February.

There are nine films, five venues, one pass to access it all. The event takes place Friday Feb 9 to Feb 11. Event space includes Grayson Mills, first and second floor, Factory 163, Revival House and Avondale Church. Little Prince Micro-Cinema will be doing some adjacent, "secret" stuff.

"We are planning something that we are keeping quiet, but it is something that is extremely interesting adjacent to our core film theatres that is on top of SWFF, so off-SWFF, kind of like off-Broadway," teased Craig Sangster, SWFF co-founder.

The films featured were curated collaboratively through sending out letters to people that have been helpful in the creation of the event, with great response.

"We sent a letter and said we are curating the films now and each film fits in the category of food, music or history; you tell us what would be super interesting for this festival in our inaugural year. We got all these responses back so part of what you'll see is derived from that. There's also things we thought were interesting and other people suggested," said Sangster.

They wanted a mix that was interesting enough but not what would be



(L-R) Leslie Marsh, Craig Sangster and Bruce MacInnis are the trio bringing the new Stratford Winter Film Festival to Stratford.

consumed on a regular basis. Some old, some new, but nothing too esoteric. Based on the theme of food, music and history, there is something for every taste and style.

"This is really about community, and getting out of our house, and something to do collectively," said Bruce MacInnis, SWFF co-founder.

"We think our films are super interesting, we've had a super response. Here's a lovely collection built by peo-

ple who really care about the experience. It's the whole experience thing," adds Sangster.

The themes have been developed using both documentary style and feature films. They are intended to encompass things that everyone cares about. What they thought made sense for the festival is having very universal, not exclusionary, appeal.

In the music category, the organizers bring 'Mr. Jimmy', '32 Sounds' and

'Have you got it yet'.

"These films have just been released, so for our first outing to have these, we have done well. They have been short-listed (for awards)," said Lesley Marsh, third of the trio of co-founders. "We're really excited. We have a bit of a vibe to have something sort of exclusive."

In the food category is 'The Truffle Hunters', 'Ottolenghi and the Cakes of Versailles' and 'Percy'. In the history category is 'All is true', 'The Last Vermeer' and 'The End of Time.' Previews of each of the films can be viewed at stratfordwinterfilmfestival.ca.

There will be intentional collaborations within local business relating to each of the films that will hopefully drive audience members into accommodations, restaurants and coffee shops while attending the festival. For example, Revival House will continue to serve while the festival is ongoing and through introductions to films, local opportunity to cross-promote will be enjoyed.

Passes are available for \$99 each and are valid for all nine films. They are available online at stratfordwinterfilmfestival.ca and offers the choice of six different itineraries. Festival goers are encouraged to visit the site.

Volunteers are also sought for the event. They are actively seeking ten or twelve more volunteers to act as ushers, merch table, and greeters, for example. Those interested can contact info@stratfordwinterfilmfestival.ca

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## SPORTS

# Lincs win back-to-back as race for first heats up

By Spencer Seymour

With a pair of victories last weekend, the St. Marys Lincolns made the race for top spot in the Western Conference even tighter.

Heading into this week, the Lincolns were tied with the LaSalle Vipers for second place in the West, both just one behind the London Nationals.

A double-header on home ice began last Friday against a team that's had the Lincolns' number in recent memory, the Chatham Maroons. Head coach Jeff Bradley acknowledged the strong admiration he has for the Maroons and why picking up the win over Chatham was especially significant for the Lincolns.

"Historically, while I've been here, we've always seemed to have a tough time against Chatham. They pose a different threat than other teams," Bradley told the Independent. "They are incredibly hard to play against, they are very skilled and they pressure you to play a different, tougher game than you might be used to. We really respect that organization because every time we play them, it's a tough game. We had to overcome some demons against that team so holding them off late in the game was really important for us."

Both teams were firing right from the word go with the first goal of the game coming just nine seconds into the first period when Luca Spagnolo pounced on a loose puck and scored on the first shot of the game. Jaden Lee and James Sigmon picked up the assists. Spagnolo and Lee, along with linemate Owen Voortman, received high praise from their head coach after the win.

"That line is such a reliable, great line for us. We love sending that line out to start the game because the pace they play at really sets the tone for our team. Scoring 10 seconds in was huge for us but at the same time, in Owen's case, his point totals don't reflect how important he is to our team."

Spagnolo's goal snapped a seven-game scoreless drought. Just 26 seconds later, the Maroons tied the game at one apiece with Braeden Burke finding the back of the net. Later in the first, Aiden Edwards tipped a shot by Owen Kalp to make it 2-1 on a powerplay. However, before the period was out and with the Lincs on the man advantage, Spagnolo brought the game back to even with his second of the night. Maddox Callens and Billy VanSumeren picked up the assists.

Less than two minutes into the second, a pinballing puck bounced off Cohen Bidgood before going past Chatham netminder Kaleb Papineau. For the second time in the game though, the Maroons tied the game up less than a minute later on a goal by Cale Marontate. The back-and-forth affair continued until the final few minutes of the middle frame when Callens made an incredible solo effort



Ryan Hodkinson battles for a loose puck during the St. Marys Lincolns' game last Saturday against the St. Thomas Stars. Hodkinson earned Player of the Game honours for a two-goal performance including the game-winner against the Stars. Photo by McGinny Photography

to put the Lincolns back in the lead heading into the third.

In the third, a powerplay goal by Lee gave the Milton native goals in five of his last games. Lee is now also riding a six-game point streak. However, an inappropriate gesture following the goal resulted in Lee receiving a gross misconduct and, later, a two-game suspension. Once again, it

took less than a minute for the Maroons to respond, this time on another powerplay as Graydon Jones flung a point shot into the top right corner of the net.

Late in the third, a big shot block by VanSumeren sent the puck into centre ice and Spagnolo managed to fire it into an empty net to seal the hat-trick and the 6-4 win.

Bradley said he was thrilled with how his team rose to meet the challenge of the visiting Maroons.

"We displayed a lot of habits that we need to have in order to have a successful season. Both teams were missing key guys. That gave opportunities to other guys to step up and they did. It gave other guys a chance on the powerplay, and we tried a few different experiments with guys in different positions and they all did well. We stepped up when we needed to step up. We got good, timely goal-scoring. The powerplay was great. Just overall, we were very happy with how we played."

## Gassed Lincs find a way by Stars

Following their 4-2 victory over the St. Thomas Stars just one day after beating Chatham, Bradley admitted that while it wasn't the team's best performance technically and structurally, his group still found a way to get the two points.

"We gave up 16 shots which was good, but I thought we got outworked on every single powerplay we got. It wasn't the performance we wanted, but at this time of the season, a win is a win and we need the points. Thankfully, Brandon [Abbott] played the way he did and he deserved a lot of credit not just for [Saturday night] but for the whole weekend."

Bradley added that he felt exhaustion was an element in the group not turning in their most complete effort last Saturday.

"It's a tough point in the season when we're playing a lot of hockey, we've got quite a few guys hurt, we've got guys in different positions. We're trying to do the right things and sometimes you just don't have it and that was a night when we didn't have it. But we still found a way to win, and I think that says that we have both first-year guys like Ryan and Cohen and veterans like Maddox and Billy who can step up. Depth is really important because when your top guys have an off night, you need others to step up and luckily for us, they did."

Goaltender Brandon Abbott backstopped the Lincolns to both victories last weekend despite playing with an illness, a feat that did not go unheralded by his teammates and the bench boss.

"Brandon [Abbott] was sick as a dog this weekend but with Colby [Booth-Housego] gone to the MacPherson Tournament, Brandon had to play both games for us. He stepped up and was an absolute warrior. Blake [Elzinga] played defence to fill a hole when we needed him to and Chase [MacQueen-Spence] played centre to fill a hole when we needed him to. All of our

defencemen were outstanding, especially considering how banged up we are back there. There was a lot of good to take away from that game."

"We challenged him a couple of weeks ago and asked him to step up and since then, he has been undefeated," Bradley continued. "He has played unbelievably well. We all feel it when we're sick. It's tough to get to the rink and be mentally there but he showed he was made of special stuff this weekend. For a guy playing the most important position feeling the way he felt, it was massive for us and we certainly appreciated it."

A breakdown allowed former Lincoln Wesley Wilding to get a breakaway on which he was hooked up, resulting in a penalty shot. Wilding managed to narrowly squeak the puck by Lincs' goalie Bran-

*Continued on page 16*



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## SPORTS

# Harris tandem gearing up for tractor-pulling season

By Spencer Seymour

While most people are champing at the bit for spring to arrive, one local father-and-son tractor-pulling team from St. Marys doesn't want it to come too fast.

Spring may seem a long way off but it's going to take every spare minute for the team of Brian and Tanner Harris to accomplish all they have planned for updates to their 1968 Allis Chalmers 180 tractor. Since purchasing the tractor from a farmer in Quebec, this pair, along with good friend and head mechanic Dave Armstrong, have worked many long hours improving the performance of their 58 hp tractor.

"The amount of money and time it takes to run one of these tractors and be competitive can vary from finding a relic in the barn to the point where you get it running," Brian Harris told the Independent. "Just like that, you're in the tractor-pulling game and we did it that way for years and we really enjoyed it."

Brian and Tanner's long list of improvements includes bigger tires on the rear, smaller tires up front, an added turbo-charger, a bigger fuel pump, added weight brackets and a lengthy list of other performance modifications. According to Brian Harris, the various changes to their tractor would never have been possible without the generous support of their many sponsors and friends.



Pictured is Tanner Harris participating in one of many tractor-pulling competitions that he and his father Brian took part in last year. (Contributed photo)

"The problem is that, once you get bit by the tractor-pulling bug, you start seeing some of these tractors going 25-30 mph down the track and you want to go that fast too," he said. "We are a long way from going that speed but now we are pulling at 14 mph which is pretty incredible considering we started at just 1-3 mph."

Last season, their first year pulling full-time with the Ontario Vintage Tractor Pulling Association (OVTPA), Brian and Tanner attended 12 events

and claimed a full range of results including first, second and fourth places. The list of locales in which they competed stretched from Niagara Falls to Petrolia.

The elder member of the father-son tandem further explained that what makes the experience of tractor-pulling so fulfilling is not measured in dollars and cents, but rather stories and memories shared between them and their cohorts.

"Tanner pulled in the 7,700 lb class, meaning the tractor could not weigh more than 7,700 lbs, and I pulled in the 6,700 lb. There isn't much money won in this club, but the friendships and laughs we have together are payment enough, not to mention bragging rights for the season.

"This year, Tanner and I are going back to defend our titles, but we know the other guys aren't going to see us have a repeat season if they can help it. I already know of one competitor making many improvements to his machine so we definitely have to be at our absolute best."

Brian and Tanner Harris added that they are "very fortunate" to have sponsors that have helped them get to where they are. Those sponsors include:

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# SPORTS

## U15 C Girls take Bronze at Orangeville Sweetheart tourney

By Spencer Seymour

The Home Hardware Building Centre U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock returned home from the Orangeville Tigers' 44th Annual Sweetheart Tournament this past weekend with a bronze medal after a 2-1 win over Saugeen Shores.

Head coach Kelly Linton told the Independent following the team's bronze-medal victory that contributions from every corner of the lineup were key to getting the win.

"They played pretty darn well," Linton said. "They all played well from our first line to our third line and every defence pair. Every line was finding a

way to get scoring opportunities. They were doing what we asked them to do. The score was 2-1 but we definitely controlled most of the game."

Marci Linton got the icebreaker midway through the first period on a goal assisted by Kayla Visneskie. In the second, Ella Frayne extended the lead to two with the lone assist going to Kacie Storey. Frayne's goal went on to be the game-winner as Saugeen Shores got one back in the third but couldn't find a game-tying tally. Ramona Graham once again was strong in net for the Rock to earn the victory.

After falling 5-2 in their first game of the tournament to the eventual silver

medalists from Stittsville, the Rock stormed back to win their next two round-robin games by a combined score of 12-1. Linton was very happy with how his group bounced back after a tough loss in their tournament opener.

"They responded really well. After the first game, we told the group that, to get to where we wanted to go in the tournament, we had to win our next two games and do so in pretty convincing fashion to give us a better goal differential. They went out and did exactly what we needed them to do."

According to coach Linton, the team

entered the tournament with confidence in their ability to compete for a medal, and while it wasn't the one they initially set out for, the Rock still had a net-positive weekend bringing up the bronze.

"We had really high expectations going into the tournament and looking at the stronger teams in the tournament and felt we could compete with everyone it. In the first game, we had a couple of rough periods and that all but put us out of contention for the gold-medal game but the girls came back hard the rest of the way and ultimately, they got rewarded with the bronze."

## Lincs win back-to-back as race for first heats up

Continued from page 14

don Abbott. However, like the Maroons did three times the night previously, St. Marys responded less than a minute later thanks to a point shot by Adam Barkley finding a way through the legs of Stars' netminder Trenten Bennett.

Assists on Barkley's goal went to Spagnolo and Sigmon, the latter of whom is now riding a four-game point streak.

After a powerplay goal by Quinn Gavin-White early in the second stanza put the Stars ahead by one, Callens made it four straight games on home ice when he ripped a quick shot in the high slot past Bennett. Just over five minutes later, Ryan Hodkinson flew up the ice on a shorthanded two-on-one and, with the passing lane cut off, took the shot and buried the go-ahead goal. Hodkinson, the eventual Player of the Game, was one of several players who Bradley was happy with.

"Cohen [Bidgood] doesn't care who we're playing against or when we're playing, he just wants to show up, play and play hard. Ryan [Hodkinson] stepped up big time for us too. We needed a performance out of somebody and Cohen and Ryan definitely were examples of guys stepping up, as well as Maddox [Callens] and Billy [VanSumeren] who made some big plays for us."

Hodkinson then tallied the only goal of the third

period en route to a 4-2 win.

"Ryan wants to take jobs. He wants to be on the penalty kill. We put him on the wing last night and he's not a natural winger, but he does what we ask as best as he can. Earlier in the season, we asked him to be more engaged physically and he's not shying away from that at all. He's starting to use his body more and, as he matures physically, he's only going to get better at doing that. He's an incredibly smart player, he's got a great stick and he makes very good plays."

The Lincs are back in action this Friday beginning their final pair of interconference games of the regular season by taking on the Elmira Sugar Kings. They then go on the road to visit the Pelham Panthers on Sunday. This Friday's game is Jersey Night where everyone wearing any kind of jersey will be entered into a draw for some prizes.

### Western Conference Standings (as of Jan. 30)

Rank	Team	Record	PTS	GF	GA
1	London Nationals	27-10-1-1	41	159	114
2	LaSalle Vipers	27-11-1-0	41	167	108
3	St. Marys Lincolns	25-9-4-1	41	162	101
4	Strathroy Rockets	24-9-3-2	38	152	114
5	Chatham Maroons	21-16-2-0	44	154	145
6	Sarnia Legionnaires	14-20-3-2	33	137	188
7	St. Thomas Stars	14-22-1-1	30	116	160
8	Komoka Kings	5-34-0-0	10	76	191

### St. Marys Lincolns 2023-24 Stats (as of Jan. 30)

Rank	Player	GP	G	A	PTS
1	Cohen Bidgood	41	17	24	41
2	Luca Spagnolo	34	14	22	36
T-3	Jaden Lee	36	13	21	32
	Chase MacQueen-Spence	38	17	15	32
	Ethan Weir	23	14	18	32
T-6	Noah VandenBrink	37	8	19	27
	Billy VanSumeren	30	7	20	27
T-8	Matt Prendergast	34	13	8	21
	Ryan Cornfield	37	11	10	21
	Ryan Hodkinson	35	7	14	21
T-11	Adam Barkley	33	8	11	19
	Josh Cornfield	26	4	15	19
T-13	Owen Voortman	39	6	10	16
	James Sigmon	31	1	15	16
15	Luke Bogart	38	4	11	15
16	Blake Elzinga	31	7	6	13
T-17	Ryder Livermore	39	1	10	11
	Jacob Montesi	34	0	11	11
19	Maddox Callens	5	5	2	7
20	Marcus Dashevsky	13	3	3	6
21	Jaden Shiell	24	1	4	5
22	Ethan Sullivan	0	0	0	0
#	Goalies	GP	GAA	SV-%	Wins
1	Colby Booth-Housego	21	1.96	0.927	14
29	Brandon Abbott	10	2.51	0.908	6

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# SPORTS



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## MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



Franklin Anderson sprawls out to make a save during the Dunny's Source For Sports U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock game last Wednesday.



Elliot Wilhelm tees up a slap-shot during last Wednesday's Home Hardware Building Centre U13 C Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Evelyn Borg pushes the ring into the slot during the U14 St. Marys Snipers game at the PRC last Saturday.



Brody Cox speeds in on a breakaway during this past Sunday's Ashton Tire Service U15 LL Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Hayden Wright tucks home a backhand goal during the A.N.A.F. U15 A Boys St. Marys Rock game last Thursday.



Emily Deighton flings a shot on goal during last Saturday's U19 St. Marys Snipers game. (Photos by Spencer Seymour)

# SPORTS

## U18 B Girls open playoffs with win, tie

By Spencer Seymour

The Hubbard Pharmacy U18 B Girls St. Marys Rock went unbeaten in their first two playoff games this past weekend, including a 4-3 victory over the Chatham-Kent Crush last Saturday.

Head coach Nathan Brown said about the Rock's win against Chatham-Kent that his team was firing on all cylinders for the majority of the contest.

"They played hard. They were absolutely awesome for two and three-quarter periods, roughly. We had a few minutes when we missed some defensive assignments which let the other team back in it, but our girls played with grit and they never quit on each other. They just kept playing for each other and got the win because of it."

Delanie McKay and Sophie Richardson got the Rock on the board in the first before Marin Chateauvert jumped in with two goals in the second frame, the second of which went on to be recorded as the game-winner.

Brown said that his team's puck movement and drive to get pucks on goal were critical to coming away with the victory.

"They were passing the puck very well. They were making sure that they were hitting passes at full speed through the neutral zone. One thing we've struggled with at times this year is getting pucks to the net and



Ally Wheal battles for a loose puck in front of the net during the Hubbard Pharmacy U18 B Girls St. Marys Rock playoff game last Saturday. Photo by Spencer Seymour

I thought we did a great job of that in the first and second periods. They did well keeping the pressure on. We knew Chatham was going to play heavy and our girls don't mind playing like that."

Chatham-Kent's hard-nosed style was on full display and Brown felt his team did a great job handling such a tough opponent.

"They matched very well. When they use their legs and use their speed to get in around the other team, it can be frustrating for the opponent. They

proved again that if they're flying and they're getting the puck in deep, they can make it incredibly tough on the opposing team to get going offensively."

Before the game against Chatham-Kent, Brown says the team talked about the need to find another gear to rise to the occasion of playoff hockey, a challenge he felt his team more than met.

"Before the game, we talked about this being the time to find another gear because it's playoff hockey now.

It's U18 B Girls playoff hockey. It's such a high calibre of hockey. Scrap the regular season because you get into playoff hockey and you're starting undefeated all over again, but you have to find another gear and our girls did exactly that."

One day later, the U18 B Girls were on the road for their second playoff game, this time against the St. Thomas Panthers. Brown described the game as "a wide-open affair" with both teams surpassing 30 shots and credited the team's goaltender as coming up with a massive performance.

"Marta Rintoul was excellent for us. We had some trouble with zone exits in the first period, but we figured it out by the second and we dominated that period. In the third, it was back-and-forth all period long. It was pretty exciting but pretty nerve-wracking at the same time. Thankfully, we're confident getting into goaltender's duel with Marta back there. She is a great communicator so even when we do get in trouble defensively, she communicates very well with the girls in front of her and lets them know what's going on which helps calm down the defenders in front of her."

Rintoul was also recently named an All-Star along with teammates Kylie Fifield on defence and forwards Marin Chateauvert and Maddie Brown.

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# SPORTS

## St. Marys bowlers compete at Provincials



Pictured are Coach Chris Collins, Tyler Sims, Nate Sims, and Landon Ball. The team representing the St. Marys Bowling Lanes competed at the Boys' Provincial Triples last Sunday, Jan. 21 at Mike's Lanes in Stratford. They placed 12th with 20 points over average and it marked the first experience for the boys at the provincial level. (Contributed photo)

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# COMMUNITY

## Water main break causes water restriction for residents of Jones Street West

By St. Marys Independent staff

A repair crew was on site on Jones Street West in St. Marys Jan. 30 after a water main break restricted water service for residents of the street between Thomas Street and Ontario Street.

According to town staff, water-main breaks like this one are common and can be caused by a number of factors including frost, ground movements and the age and type of the pipes.

Town staff said the water-main break had been repaired by 1 p.m. Jan. 30 and water service was restored for affected residents.



A repair crew was onsite on Jones Street West Jan. 30 repairing a water-main break that resulted in restricted water service for residents on the street from Thomas Street to Ontario Street for part of the day. Photo by Wendy Lamond

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# HISTORY

## HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Well-planned, Agreeable Houses

By Mary Smith

The Canada Farmer was a journal, launched in Toronto on Jan. 15, 1864, intended for farmers and their families. Published twice a month, it contained practical advice on all aspects of rural life, showing ways to be successful in the business of farming. George Brown, the publisher, and W. F. Clark, the editor, also believed that the quality of life in rural Canada could be improved through a number of measures, some as straightforward as planting flowers and shrubs to beautify the farmstead.

But more dramatically, the buildings where farm families lived and worked could also be improved by paying attention to some basic architectural principles.

George Brown arranged for James Avon Smith, “a successful and rising architect of Toronto,” to contribute articles for the architectural department of The Canada Farmer. Born in Scotland in 1832, Smith came with his family to Canada as a young man, apprenticed with a Toronto architect and had established his own practice by 1860. He later formed the architectural firm, Smith and Gemmell, a partnership responsible for designing many churches, industrial buildings and homes in Toronto and throughout Ontario.

By 1864, when Smith wrote his first column for The Canada Farmer, he had definite opinions about the state of rural architecture. He began by stating, “Architecture is, perhaps, a complimentary word when used in reference to most of the structures which have been erected upon the farms of Canada.”

Smith admitted there were exceptions.

“Excellent farm residences which, in accommodation, form, proportion, picturesqueness, colour, light and shade, are all that can be desired.”

However, as was to be expected in a comparatively new country, “the style of building in general is such that leaves vast room for improvement.”

In his contributions to The Canada Farmer, Smith hoped that he could provide examples of plans and elevations that rural homeowners would follow. He insisted: “A well-planned, agreeable looking edifice costs no more than an unsightly, unplanned one.”

The Canada Farmer’s advice on architecture was timely. By the 1860s, many farmers had been in business long enough to have cleared much of their land and built good barns for their livestock. They were at last in a position to upgrade their own residences.

Rural architecture had been receiving attention in Britain, part of the movement to improve conditions for working people. In the States, pattern books were being published showing cost estimates, plans and elevations for houses ranging from grand, urban mansions to modest country cottages. Smith was aware of these models and used them as reference. However, for many of his readers, the house plans presented in The Canada Farmer were the first they had seen.

The plans caught on, probably because Smith worked to present houses that were affordable as well as practical and aesthetically pleasing.

Builders in St. Marys and area were among those using these plans. Larry Pfaff, an authority on heritage architecture, believes there are a number of



Front elevation for a farm house from The Canada Farmer, Nov. 15, 1864. The architect did not use “cheap” as a negative term. He meant that this design was affordable as well as attractive.

local examples of houses built in the 19th century following plans from the early issues of The Canada Farmer. In the issue of Feb. 15, 1894, for example, Smith shows a front elevation and the floor plan for a “Small Gothic Cottage.” The main rooms formed a simple square with a kitchen wing at the back. There was a central hall and a gable over the entrance. Two windows were placed symmetrically, one on either side of the entrance.

Smith suggested building in red brick, using white brick at the corners as an attractive contrast. In 1864, such a cottage could be built for under \$1,000.

“If built in timber and boarded perpendicularly, or rough-casted on the outside, the cost would be about \$750.”

In 1880, Joseph Humphris, a young man just beginning his career as a contractor, built a brick cottage as a home for his widowed mother and his younger siblings, still standing at 257 Thomas Street. It has a simple hipped roof without a gable over the front door but, otherwise, it looks very much like the small cottage that Smith presented in The Canada Farmer. It also is built of red brick with contrasting white brick, not only at the corners but also for the door and window lintels.

It is not hard to find other examples of this style of cottage – 191 Jones Street West, for example, built in 1872, and several cottages on the south side of Elizabeth Street, near Peel Street, built in the 1870s and 1880s by property owner William Garner. Certainly, there are similar cottages that pre-date 1864.

Smith was not claiming this plan was original. He was showing that a house following this standard plan could be made attractive by including such details as dichromatic brick, well-designed sills and lintels, and simple ornamentation in the gable trim or with brackets under the eaves.

“A house tastefully built so that every part will bear the impress of refined judgement will afford quite as much pleasure, in its way, as a spacious mansion.”

The Nov. 15 issue also contained plans for a “Cheap Farm House.” It was similar in design to the gothic cottage but a storey-and-a-half with four bedrooms

on the second level. A window in the gable over the entrance provided light to the upstairs hallway.

For economy, Smith recommended a board and batten exterior – less costly than clapboard. He also suggested setting the window and door frames to accommodate exterior plaster when the owner could afford it. A kitchen wing at the back was optional, depending on the builder’s budget.

The description also included some interior details.

“The stairs are to be of the common dog-leg shape: the treads to be 10 inches wide and the risers 7¾ inches.”

This house could be built for as little as \$800 and the plan was very popular, accommodating large farm families. Today, many of the original timber farm houses from that period have vanished, but many of the same design, built of brick or stone, have survived. The brick farm house at 5592 Perth Line 6 in Perth South is a good example. The field-stone house at 465 Widder St. E. is another.

Smith suggested economical houses because he wanted to encourage people to build more attractive homes, to think in advance about what they needed, and to plan carefully. He was also aware that there were prosperous farmers who could afford to build “in a superior style.”

On May 16, 1864, he provided the front elevation and floor plans for a “Suburban Villa or Farm House.” This one-and-a-half storey house was L-shaped with the main entrance contained in a large veranda. Bay windows and ornamental tracery in the gables were other features. Larry Pfaff believes that Leon Clench used this plan in 1875 when he built his family home at 96 Robinson St., now Riverview Bed and Breakfast.

Clench modified the plan in The Canada Farmer in some places to suit his own taste. For example, he added a balcony over the veranda with a door leading from the second level. The balcony gave the Clenches another vantage point to enjoy their view over the Thames River.

When Robert Barbour built Westover Park for the two wealthy Hutton brothers in 1867, he also followed the basic plans and elevations for the Suburban Villa found in The Canada Farmer. However, the building was enlarged to a full two storeys high and extra gables were added to the roofline. Smith suggested in his instructions that if an attached greenhouse were built, it “would add much to the beauty and comfort of the house.”

The Huttons agreed, but added a large conservatory wing instead of a greenhouse attached at the south of their home. Greatly modified, this wing is now used as a conference or reception room at Westover Inn.

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# Thorndale News

A section within the  
St. Marys Independent

The Thorndale Fair board Presents  
**"Appearing this Evening..."**  
A murder mystery by Anthony Keenleyside  
It takes place at the Thorndale Lions Centre & runs  
Feb 17, 18 (brunch) 21 (play only) 23, & 24 (sold out)  
**\$50.00** for dinner & play | **\$25.00** for the play only  
Tickets are available at Thorndale Ace Hardware.  
(cash or cheque only) or at [www.frontdoor.plus](http://www.frontdoor.plus).

## Thames Centre at Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference

By Nancy Abra

A rural municipality in Ontario is considered any municipality outside the census of metropolitan areas. These rural municipalities cover 96 per cent of Ontario's land area. According to Rural Ontario Institute fact sheet of 2021, there are 469 municipalities that account for only 17 per cent or almost 2.5 million of Ontario's total population.

The 2024 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference was held Jan. 21-23 in Toronto with delegates from rural municipalities, including two from Thames Centre, attending. In Ontario's large urban centres, the issues

and concerns are well-known and studied and, in most circumstances, different in a rural context. This conference is an opportunity for leaders of rural Ontario to come together to meet and engage with provincial elected officials, and network with other rural leaders across the province.

This conference was a valuable opportunity for rural municipal leaders to create connections, share innovative ideas, access cost-effective services and products, and personally connect with provincial elected officials or their parliamentary assistants. These activities support the development and retention

of Ontario's rural municipal workforce and promote the economic development that attracts community builders of the future through collaboration with key partners including those in agriculture, tourism, forestry and mining to address shared issues facing rural communities.

Thames Centre Mayor Sharron McMillan and CAO Dave Barrick attended this conference. McMillan met with Ontario Minister of Infrastructure Kinga Suma.

"This conference was valuable in attempting to secure infrastructure grants since these delegations really just help us to plead our case," McMillan said. "But there are no guarantees we will

be awarded the funding. It's extremely competitive with all sorts of municipalities after the same funding."

Following her brief meeting with Trevor Jones, parliamentary assistant to the minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs, McMillan voiced the value of and need to protect agricultural lands.

"These meetings were brief, only 15 minutes, but very important. We have to be thorough and to the point with our questions and comments. It was also good to touch base with our local MPP, Rob Flack, as well at this conference," McMillan said.

## Thorndale Lions Community Breakfast

By Nancy Abra

The annual Winter Community Breakfast hosted by the Thorndale Lions Club has been well attended for over three decades. Besides a delicious full breakfast cooked by the Lions members, this community event is a wonderful way to connect with friends and neighbours.

Lions member Ryan Jary, who oversees this fundraising event, said, "What a great turnout; almost 400 people including children. We greatly appreciate the community's support."

The Winter Community Breakfast is the first event for 2024 hosted by the Thorndale Lions Club and they have a lineup of events planned for this year. There will be a Valentine's Bingo on Feb. 12, and an Easter Bingo scheduled for March 4. Also coming in March is the Lions' Social Gaming Night March 23, an evening of fun, games, food and music.

The Thorndale Lions are currently fundraising for two major commitments.



The Thorndale Lions Club recently hosted its first event of the year, the annual Winter Community Breakfast, with nearly 400 people in attendance. Photo by Nancy Abra

One is for the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation in the amount of \$50,000 over the course of five years. The other is \$7,500 for the naming rights of the new dog park being established in Thorndale. Besides these two substantial donations, the Thorndale Lions Club supports numerous other local organizations and initiatives in the community.

## What's at the Thorndale Library for February

By Thorndale Library staff

Happy February! Whether you celebrate Valentine's Day, Galentine's Day or simply give a shout out to yourself this month, the library is sending love your way. And we have some LOVE-ly programs this month.

Let's Get Graphic is our teen program that runs Feb. 2 at 11:30 a.m. Come dressed in full or partial cosplay to share or swap cosplay ideas, comics and your favourite graphic books. Registration is required.

Gather and Quilt meets Feb. 23 at noon and provides an opportunity for all levels of quilters to bring in their projects (and necessary supplies) and work on their quilting or piecing projects together. Don't Worry Be Crafty will meet Feb. 28 at 6 p.m. Blend the rules, paint mistakes and get crafty at our adult

paint night. Registration is required.

To register for these special activities, please visit [library.middlesex.ca/events](http://library.middlesex.ca/events) or contact library staff at 519-461-1150.

Our drop-in programs continue again this month. Storytime is the place to be for little ones and their caregivers on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. School-aged children are invited to Afterschool Hangout on Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. for a different craft or game each week.

Middlesex County Library's inspiration for February: read a romance or love story starring Asian characters. And as always, feel free to drop in, call us at 519-461-1150 or email us at [thorndale\\_staff@middlesex.ca](mailto:thorndale_staff@middlesex.ca) with any questions or to register for upcoming programs. We hope to see you at the library!

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# COLUMN

## HOSTING UKRAINE: Understanding a newcomer's reason for leaving home

By VJ Knutson

"What made you decide to leave Ukraine when you did?"

I asked that question to our dinner guest Saturday night. Svitlana, our newest Ukrainian to be hosted in St. Marys, holds a Master's degree in Pedagogy (education) and remained in her hometown of Ternopil until just over a month ago. She is a delightful woman, and I admire her courage.

"The war is not going away," she replied through Google translate.

I asked her about teaching during war time and she said it is not possible. Sirens every day mean hiding in bomb shelters. The children, she added, are quite happy to elude their studies. Not all children like to learn.

"That is universal," we all laughed.

"Why Canada?" Ric asked.

"Canadians are very nice people and are willing to help. Not all countries want us."

We do have the third largest population of Ukrainians in the world. "Many of my friends have Ukrainian ancestry," I explained.

Since her arrival in St. Marys, Svitlana has been actively seeking employment. She is anxious to start earning her own keep. She has been attending English language classes and is happy to discover that we have such a welcoming community with many Ukrainians already in our midst.

In Ukraine, Svitlana taught Ukrainian and German classes at the high school level. She also has experience working with special-needs children. Her preference, she shared with me, is to work with young children.

Like many of us paying our way through university, Svitlana worked in fast food as a cook. She has experience making pizza dough, salads, cooking hamburgers and fried chicken.

As a fellow language teacher, I can appreciate Svitlana's quick grasp of English. She is conscious of past,



Ukrainian newcomers and their host families in St. Marys and Stratford were recently invited to have lunch at Social Thirty-One in St. Marys. Contributed photo

present and future tenses, and thoughtfully reaches for the correct conjugation of each verb. She says she just started learning two months ago, and Ric and I have noticed a vast improvement in her English in mere weeks. She is also eager to learn French.

What else is happening? Thanks to a generous benefactor, a few hosts and guests from St. Marys and Stratford were treated to lunch at Social Thirty-One last weekend. It was so heartwarming to see new connections being made and, given the liveliness of conversation at all three tables, I'd say it was a great success. I know Ric and I were very grateful to be part of the festivities.

As always, I'm busy weighing needs and possibilities. Joining forces with a few hosts and volunteers

in Stratford, we are hoping to build some strong community support like we have here in St. Marys. I know I sound like a broken record (aging myself there), but in times like these, especially for our newcomers, personal connections mean everything.

There is much anxiety amongst the Ukrainians about what the future holds, here in Canada and back at home. While I have no answers, Ric and I try to keep informed and be supportive. We pray for everyone's success.

Please reach out to me at english.knutson@gmail.com if you have a question, idea, or can help in any way. I love hearing from you.

Until next time.

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COLUMN

# FROM THE GARDEN: Beating the Mid-winter Blahs



**By Nancy Abra**

Winter is the season that many people see differently. It has been weeks – or at least it seems that way – since we’ve had any substantial sunshine. For some people, the lack of sunshine has a significant impact on them, sapping their energy and making them feel moody or sad. A planned escape to the sunny south and warmer temperatures is a great way to beat those sad days of mid-winter.

The Ancient Celts celebrated Imbolc, a mid-winter pagan holiday on Feb. 1 or 2 to mark the return of the

sun and the longer hours of daylight. Originating in pre-Christian Ireland, this celebration was the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox in Neolithic Ireland and Scotland. Imbolc celebrated the return of light after winter’s darkness and the coming of spring.

Fast forward to modern times, Groundhog Day on Feb. 2 has many similarities to that of the ancient Imbolc holiday. For almost 150 years, Punxsutawney, Penn. has been celebrating Groundhog Day which has spread to other cities in the United States and here in Canada. In Warton, Ont., thousands gather Feb. 2 to witness and roar in cheers when a white rodent emerges from his den to predict the coming of spring. Local followers of Warton Willie claim his prognostic powers are accurate 90 per cent of the time, though scientists have estimated Willie’s accu-

racy at 25 per cent. Whether correct or not, everyone celebrates the idea that spring is just a few weeks away.

For gardeners, winter is an important season. Many native plants such as milkweed produce seeds that must go through a period of freezing temperatures in order to germinate in the spring. The freezing temperatures also give our soils a period of rest that help conserve organic matter and improve soil health. Herbaceous plants that die back to the ground return their carbon to the soil in the form of dead plant matter. The layer of snow, when it comes and stays, acts as an insulating blanket for our perennial gardens and helps to conserve soil moisture. Once temperatures rise and the snow melts, it adds more moisture to our gardens.

Mid-winter blahs also hit many of us gardeners. We need a green fix. A trip to our



local nursery or greenhouse always seems to brighten those dull damp cold days of winter. Or maybe it is a visit to your favourite florist shoppe for a bouquet of tulips, another great way to brighten your day and beat those mid-winter blahs.

As our gardens are at rest, many of us take this time of the year to relax and get caught up on some garden books and magazines we have been saving for a winter’s day of reading. It is also

the time to reflect on last year’s gardens. Whether it is reviewing the photos you took or the notes you made throughout the summer, now is the time to go over what was successful or what was disappointing in your gardens. This will help you to start to plan for this upcoming growing season, and nothing cheers up a gardener more than the arrival of those colourful and enticing seed catalogues. We usually have a want list more than what our gardens can physically have room for.

Whether we are waiting for Warton Willie’s prediction to come true or checking off the days on the calendar to spring, many of us have our own ritual to beat the mid-winter blahs. Mine starts with a cup of herbal tea, a stack of catalogs and strategizing what I can grow this summer. The first step to a great garden starts with a dream.

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# Riddles

- What driver doesn't have a license?
- A screwdriver**
- What did the guitar say to the rock star?
- Quit picking on me**
- Why did the tree see the dentist?
- To get a root canal**
- What did the beach say when the tide came in?
- Long time no sea**
- What has ears but can't hear?"
- Corn**
- What has arms but can't hug?"
- A chair**
- What has a head and a foot but no body?"
- A bed**
- When is a car not a car?"
- When it turns into a driveway**
- What is the best year for a kangaroo?
- A leap year**
- Why did the police arrest the bird?
- Because he was a robin**
- What bird never goes to a barber?"
- A bald eagle**

## - Word Search -

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### JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

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

### Word List

- New Year
- Japan earthquake
- Red Sea attacks
- Nikki Haley
- Donald Trump
- Polar bear
- E Jean Carroll
- Texas border dispute
- Hockey Canada
- KC Chiefs
- SF Forty-Niners



### The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

Did you know that dogs can't operate an MRI machine?



But cats can!

Levi Garniss (7)

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

## TONS OF FUN FOR KIDS EVERY WEEK!

### PET OF THE WEEK

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



Our Pet of the Week is Cruz who just had his 7th birthday. Cruz is a king shepherd, a mere 118 pounds. He spends his day looking out the kitchen window growling and barking at anyone that gets close to his property! He looks big and mean but is actually a marshmallow. His favourite pastime is car rides in our Volkswagen bug, sticking his head out of the sunroof to observe the countryside. Cruz resides in beautiful downtown Embro with the Hayward family.



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

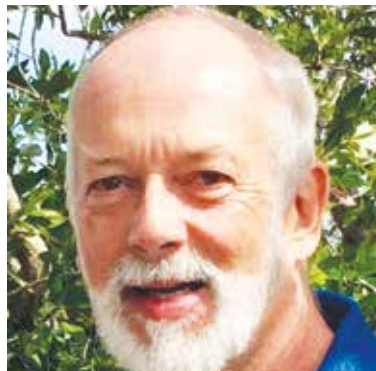
#### ~TICK TALK~

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## COLUMN

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Getting up close and intrigued by rescued sea turtles



By Paul Knowles

The story of Ida the sea turtle was one of those end-of-news-cast happy items a week or so ago.

Ida, a 200-pound adult loggerhead sea turtle, was rescued after she was found entangled in a lobster trap buoy line. There's a neat Canadian connection; the folks who found her and notified the authorities were a Canadian couple from New Brunswick. Ida Short and her husband were boating in the Atlantic Ocean off Marathon in the Florida Keys.

That was fortunate because Marathon is home to The Turtle Hospital, an amazing place that draws scads of tourists. But while the staff at The Turtle Hospital are very hospitable to human guests, their real passion is for the turtles.

I was interested in the story for

two reasons. First, because we had the opportunity to visit The Turtle Hospital a few months ago, getting an up-close-and-personal education about the important work that institution does. And second, I've been intrigued by sea turtles ever since I was nipped on the lip by one of these enormous beasts while swimming in the ocean off Barbados.

But that's another story. (The turtle wasn't aiming for me, by the way, but for some chum in the water the crew of the catamaran had tossed in to attract the turtles)

When the Shorts discovered Ida, they notified the coast guard and The Turtle Hospital, which carried out the rescue. That was just one of up to 200 sea-turtle rescues done by the team at the hospital every year. The staff is ready to launch a rescue at any time – there is a small fleet of ambulances parked outside the hospital's front door.

During our visit, we learned that the facility was founded by a conservationist named Richie Moretti in 1986. The staff estimates that more than 2,000 turtles have been saved since then. The original building – still part of the hospital – was a motel repurposed by Moretti to care for wounded or sick

sea turtles. Today, you can visit the operating room where necessary surgeries are done, and, out back, an array of tanks where turtles are kept, many permanently, because they have suffered injuries that prevent their return to the ocean.

Typically, the turtles' injuries are caused by boat propellers that have damaged their shells. The swimming-pool-sized tanks are home to a number of turtles that have flotation devices attached to their shells to allow them function – and not drown – in their watery homes.

Ida, the recently rescued turtle, was one of the lucky ones. Within a few days of her rescue she had received wound care, broad-spectrum antibiotics, fluids, vitamins and an anti-inflammatory, and was released back into the ocean to the delight of a small crowd of well-wishers.

There are dozens of turtles who will never leave the hospital facility, but that too is a good-news story under the circumstances. Good news for the turtles because they are incapable of surviving in the wild. Good news for visitors like me because I get the pleasure of seeing these amazing creatures and the privilege of learning all about them.



Visitors get up close and personal – and a trifle damp – during a meet and greet with a sea turtle at The Turtle Hospital. (All photos by Paul Knowles)

There are seven species of sea turtles in the world. Five of those species can be found in the Florida Keys. In the wild, the animals' lifespan is between 50 and 100 years.

The bad news – you knew there would be bad news, didn't you? – is that all seven species are rated as threatened or endangered.

Most common in the waters around Marathon are Green turtles, a threatened species that can weigh up to 500 lbs, and Loggerhead turtles like Ida, which top out at around 300 lbs.

The three local, endangered species include the smaller (150 lb) Hawksbill, the giant Leatherback that can weigh up to 2,000 lbs, and the Kemps Ridley turtle, which our guide at the Turtle Hospital says is the most seriously endangered of the five species.

It's not surprising that almost all the threats to sea turtles start with humans. Fishing line entanglement, rope-and-net entanglement, boat hits, oil spills, ingesting plastic bags and cigarette filters, and development near the beaches where turtles have tradition-

ally nested are all threatening these turtles' existence.

So given our human culpability in the threats facing these amazing animals, it is encouraging to be able to visit a place that is trying to undo some of that damage.

During our visit, we got personally involved, feeding a number of them, including one blind turtle that had nonetheless precisely figured out the feeding process.

There is always a wide variety of things to keep visitors busy and entertained in the Florida Keys, but I would strongly recommend that you put a visit to The Turtle Hospital near the top of your list.

And by the way: unless you are dumb enough to swim in the midst of a floating stew of chum, there is no chance you are going to be bitten by a sea turtle. Not at The Turtle Hospital, anyway.

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



Ambulances are always at the ready to initiate one of up to 200 sea turtle rescues that happen every year.



A plush toy sits on the operating table where real turtles undergo life-saving surgeries.

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February 14, 2024

Wilmot Recreation Centre, Room A

10:00 a.m. presentation

Doors open 30 mins. before presentation



## ST. MARYS EVENT

February 15, 2024

Pyramid Recreation Centre, End Zone

1:30 p.m. presentation

Doors open 30 mins. before presentation

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Please RSVP for either the St. Marys or New Hamburg events by emailing [stew@stonetowntravel.com](mailto:stew@stonetowntravel.com) or by calling our office.

## OBITUARY

### Flanagan



Tina Marie Flanagan (Longeway) passed away surrounded by family on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. She is survived by her loving fiancé who brought so much joy to our mom's life, Wayne Crinklaw and his daughter Andrea (Ben) and her children Rowan and Alder; and her loving daughters: Ju-

dith Marie (Charles) Dobson, Rebecca Suzanne (TJ) Flanagan, and Bridget Kathleen Flanagan; her three grandchildren, who she adored: Brian Christopher, Emma Josephine, and Violet Jean.

She is also survived by her wonderful siblings Suzanne Christine (Glen) Hawkins, Timothy John (Janice) Longeway, her twin Tomas Scot (Arden) Longeway, and Lisa Jerraldine (Shane) Moran; along with her sister-in-law Elizabeth Ann Longeway. Tina is also survived by John (Kathleen) Flanagan and Julia (Frank) Hastie. Along with close family friends, Betty (Kirby) Baker, John (Jane, 2023) Schutz, and Jacqueline (Brian) Hibbert; and her close cousin Rosemary Regan. As well as twenty nieces and nephews; and several great-nieces and great-nephews; and extended family and friends. Her cat, Stella, will miss her greatly.

Tina is predeceased by her parents: Louis Jerrald (1984) and Judith Hughena (Whaley) (1969) Longeway. At the pearly white gates, her two older brothers await: Michael John Longeway (1986) and Charles Jerrald Longeway (2024), and her older sister Deborah Ann Martin (2023). She's also united with cats: Sammy, Salem, and Felix.

Tina was a nurse for over 40 years. She enjoyed her time working in the psych ward at London's Psych Hospital before becoming a stay-at-home mom for her daughters; and providing care to the people she knew growing up at Kingsway Lodge. Tina was a proud mother of all her daughters. She enjoyed life, always enjoyed her family, and threw incredible dinner parties where loved ones would gather and laugh. Tina made sure everyone close to her knew they were loved. Most importantly, Tina made sure her daughters knew they were loved, adored, and Tina made sacrifices to ensure her daughters had a great life.

The family would like to thank Dr. Gilmor, Dr. Hepburn, and the nurses on duty at St. Marys Hospital; along with the paramedics on duty on the evening of January 13th. The family would also like to thank the University Hospital of London, Ontario for the incredible care they gave Tina in her final month and her final days. The family would lastly thank, all who sent a prayer up to God, who crossed their fingers and toes, who maintained our mom's privacy, and who visited our mom in her final days. Family was everything to Tina and is one of the many things she instilled in her daughters; along with faith. Forgive quickly, always say "Love you", enjoy family, and to remember that God is always there.

The Memorial Service was conducted at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home on January 29, 2024. Memorial donations may be made to London Children's Health Foundation, London Health Sciences Foundation, St. Marys Healthcare Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## OBITUARY

### Petrie



Emily Rebecca Petrie passed away peacefully at Stratford General Hospital on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 on her 39th birthday.

She was the beloved daughter of Eleanor Monteith and Rod (Kim) Petrie. She is survived by her sisters Tina (Joe) Robson and Rachel Petrie, and nephew and niece Ben and

Ellen. Emily is also survived by her grandmother, Rena Wilson and many aunts, uncles and cousins. Predeceased by her grandparents Glenn and Evelyn Monteith and Archie Petrie.

Emily was a fun loving sweet and sassy young woman who gave the best hugs in town. Emily enjoyed her many adventures with all of her friends from Community Living St. Marys. Family, friends and neighbours are welcome to drop in on Wednesday, February 7th any time between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Community Living facility; James Purdue Centre, 300 Elgin Street East, St. Marys.

Memorial donations may be made to Community Living St. Marys and Area. A special thank you to Dr. Komorowski for the care Emily received over the years and Dr. Schiedel and the ER Nurses at St. Marys Memorial Hospital and the ICU team at Stratford General Hospital. Memorial donations may be made to Community Living St. Marys and Area. Onlin condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## OBITUARY

### Kittmer



Gwendolyn Connie Kittmer passed away peacefully at Cedarcroft Place Retirement Home on January 24, 2024 at the age of 94. Predeceased by her husband Burns (1987). She leaves behind her sons Larry (Cecilia) and Terry (Francine), grandchildren, great grandchildren and sister-in-law Anna Mitchell. She also

leaves very dear friends Julian and Rose Piwowarski, Doug and Colleen Gregory.

Special thanks to Jennifer and Doug Auger.

Connie and Burns owned and operated Circle K Dance Hall near Uniondale. She and her husband were mail carriers. They belonged to the Ontario Farms Vacations. Many people stayed at their Bed and Breakfast home. She was a member of Embro Rebecca's, Lakeside UCW and the Gypsy Campers.

Cremation has taken place. At Connie's request there will be no visitation or service. Memorial donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the charity of one's choice would be appreciated. Arrangements entrusted to the W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford. [www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com](http://www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com)

## OBITUARY

### Spearin



George Mills Spearin passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family, on January 25, 2024 at the age of 85 at his home in Blanshard Twp. in the very room he was born in.

Beloved husband of Ann (nee Zupal), married 57 years. Father of Kim Spearin (Rob), and Derek Spearin. Brother of Dave Spearin (Marilyn),

and Glen Spearin. Also survived by nieces, nephews and extended family members. Predeceased by his parents Fred Spearin and Velma (nee Mills) (Spearin) Bayne.

George spent his whole life farming in Blanshard Twp and also drove for Murphy Bus Lines for 32 years. Cremation has taken place with a Celebration of Life to be held at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to Diabetes Canada. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## OBITUARY

### Proudlove



Donald "Don" James Proudlove passed away suddenly at home on January 26, 2024 at the age of 85. Beloved husband of 63 years to Viola "Vi" (Cote).

Father of Nancy Vermeire (Marc), David, and Julie Phillips (Jeff). Grandfather of Stacy Vermeire, Brian Vermeire (Alex Lesnikowski) and Cole

Phillips (Tess Ruscica). Great-grandfather of Madisyn, Taylor, Dryden and Caroline. Special dad to Tammy Murray (deceased 2020) and Carol Enghardt (Tim) and their children Kristen (Nick Skyring) and their children Kenan, Reece and Aurora; and Sarah and Nick. Brother of the late Lorne Proudlove and survived by sister-in-law Sarah Proudlove (Hislop). Predeceased by his parents Bill and Beatrice (Bailey). Will be missed by many nieces, nephews and extended family members.

Special family friend to Chuck and Cindy Firman. Don started out as a mink rancher in high school, farmed cattle and hobby farmed, later selling farm equipment for 20 years then snowmobiles and then owned and operated Southco Trailers.

"A deal is only good when a friend is made." Don helped so many people over the years. The door was always open for someone needing a place to stay.

A Celebration of Life Open House will be held in the Community Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, 317 James St. S. St. Marys, on February 10, 2024 from 2 - 4 pm with words of remembrance at 3 pm. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the St. Marys United Church or the Stratford Perth Humane Society. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## OBITUARY

### Arthur



Mary E. Arthur, eldest daughter of the late Bob (Robert) Arthur and the late Jean (Brown) Arthur, passed away peacefully January 16, 2024 at Wildwood Care Centre in her 86th year.

Mary is survived by her siblings, David Arthur (Evelyn), Nancy Arthur-Ische (late Al Ische), Catherine Bruce (late

Ian), John Arthur (Elaine) and Peggy Arthur (Diane Boulanger) along with nieces and nephews, Steve Arthur (Tina), Karen Arthur (Neil Little), Andrea Spicer (Chris), Patrick McCormack (Jane), Mark Stevens (Darlene Stewart) and Michal Lowthorpe (Steve).

Mary had a keen interest in caring for others and getting to know them. She had a particular fondness for children, who always brought joy to her life. Whenever a child entered the room, all the adults disappeared from her focus. Mary worked for 40 years in different roles, including as a telephone switchboard operator in Medina, working with young children in Hazelton, B.C., at a seniors' residence at Alma College and finally, in home care in the local community.

Mary was also passionate about photography, especially capturing the architectural details of St Marys. She enjoyed road trips, spending time with family and friends, singing in choirs and playing her keyboard at various functions.

The family extends their deep appreciation to all the staff at Wildwood Care Centre for their compassionate and professional care of our sister, Mary. A private celebration for immediate family will be held at a future date. Memorial donations may be made to a charity of your choosing. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## OBITUARY

### Newman

Donald Earl Newman in his 73rd year, passed peacefully at Kingsway Lodge on January 22, 2024. Born in St. Marys to the late William John Newman and Grace Mildred (nee Cole).

Don will be missed by his wife of 37 years Deborah "Jane" (nee Merner). Brother of Ruth-Anne Marzinka (Walter), David Newman, deceased (Judy) and brother-in-law of Chris Merner, and Allen Merner (Leanna). Also remembered by many nieces and nephews.

An avid lover of music, Don enjoyed playing the violin, banjo, guitar and harmonica. He was a community and heritage enthusiast. Don could tell a story like no one else. He would always leave saying "Be good and be careful."

Visitation took place at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home on January 30, 2024. Private family interment in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the St. Marys Friendship Centre, St. Marys and Area Mobility Service or Browns Coffee Club. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

## OBITUARY

### Murray



Robert (Bob) Murray passed away peacefully after a very lengthy illness with his wife of 62 years, Carol (née Stewart) by his side. He is survived by his 4 sisters Betty Barber (Doug), Ruth Booth (Ron), Sharon Graef (Werner) Janet Patterson (Keith), and his brother Rae. Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his numerous nieces and nephews.

Bob grew up in St. Marys Ontario and went on to attend teachers college in Stratford, Ontario. He began his teaching career at Frank Casey Public School in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario in 1958. Bob was an avid duck hunter and also built their cottage on the island as well as their home on the Veuve River. Bob spent numerous hours on Lake Nipissing. He and his wife loved to travel. In his later years they loved traveling to different casinos.

As per his wishes, cremation has taken place. Funeral arrangements in care of the Theoret-Bourgeois Funeral Home, Sturgeon Falls. Donations to the North Bay Kidney Clinic at the North Bay Regional Health Centre would be greatly appreciated.

## THANK YOU

### Greene

As Sean Greene's family we wish to express our sincere thanks for the outpouring of love and support during Sean's illness and after his passing.

A huge thanks to our neighbours, friends, family, community, teachers, medical teams and even strangers who provided endless kindnesses through support, help with the kids, meals, kind words, check ins, gifts, cards, prayers, hugs and showing up for us in some way every day. All of you made it possible to provide the best care for Sean while also ensuring we were surrounded by love, safe and cared for during this long journey.

We can't thank my parents enough for moving in and ensuring we were well loved and cared for. Without this support our house of cards would have fallen.

Thank you to Andrew Hodges Funeral Home and Reverend Diana Boland for your gentle and thoughtful care during this fragile time.

We also want to give a special thanks to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth where Sean had an unexpected extended stay and we got to know this amazing team so well. Their exceptional care provided such comfort and we were able to find many beautiful moments in our last months together.

We have truly been overwhelmed with love and thoughtfulness. You are all the rainbow in our cloud. Thank you!

Laura, Gage, Charlie and Katie Greene

## LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

### Life-saving sister

25 years ago (1999)

Pete Inquest, a local rock band, is playing at the Creamery Pub on Jan. 30. The band consists of Riley O'Connor, Kyle Noble, Ben Aarts and Pete Winter.

If you're fed up with the public-school system, particularly in these days of education turmoil, or simply want something different for your children, there is a viable alternative – homeschooling. Lisa and Mark Mischenko of St. Marys are parents who decided to take their child out of the public-school system and teach her at home. So far, it's a decision they couldn't be more pleased about.

Normal Hill gave the traditional Gaelic address to the haggis at the annual Robbie Burns dinner at the Presbyterian church last Friday night. Leading the parade through the hall with bag pipes was Mark Fletcher as Don Webb carried the haggis.

50 years ago (1974)

A number of complaints have been heard concerning the rough condition of Thomas Street. The road is tentatively scheduled for curb, gutter and asphalt later this year.

Contrary to popular opinion, a recent study at Guelph University studying the new lean pork being produced in Ontario has less fat, fewer calories and more protein than other meat. Gone are the days when somebody can be described as fat as a pig.

A map designating the extent of all floodplain land in St. Marys along the banks of the Thames River and Trout Creek is expected in town shortly. This information should be of great help in determining where building might or might not be allowed by UTRCA in the future.

75 years ago (1949)

When C.N. Express Agent A.R. McLelland found a purse on the roadway on Queen Street East yesterday, he phoned the Journal Argus office. A short time later Miss Gladys Brine walked into the J.A. office with a look of worried anxiety on her face. It all changed to smiles shortly however, for it was her purse. It contained three hundred dollars.

Two little girls stuck by each other and one's life may have been saved. On Saturday afternoon, Doreen and Margaret Stanyon, 10 and 7, were playing near the edge of the Trout Creek wall adjacent to Wellington Street when the younger girl, Margaret, slipped off the wall and into the water. Before she could be carried away her sister quickly leaned over the wall and grasped her by both arms and managed to safely lift her to dry land.

100 years ago (1924)

The members of the Highland Mary Camp S.O.S. got down to business during the past week and worked up a social evening and euchre drive, which was staged on Friday (Burns' Night) in the Club Rooms on Water Street. Despite the icy blasts of old man winter, some thirty-five hardy sons and daughters of the heather hills and dales attended and made the night merry with good old fashioned Scottish fellowship.

Marion, the young daughter of Mrs. Wm. Gilpin, was badly bruised about the face when she was struck by a cutter at the corner of Queen and Church Streets on Monday.

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Tokyo, Japan   | 6. 2006         |
| 2. 8 mins 20 secs | 7. Zero         |
| 3. Turtles        | 8. Feb. 2       |
| 4. 3 times        | 9. 10,000 hours |
| 5. Palestine      | 10. Ultraviolet |

## SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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

Thorndale Library February events - see Page 23

### Friday, February 2

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog/sausage lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 pm
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Elmira Sugar Kings at the PRC - 7:30 pm

### Saturday, February 3

- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 pm

### Sunday, February 4

- Purple Hill Country Opry performance - 2 pm
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Pelham Panthers at Pelham Accipiter Arena - 2:45 pm

### Wednesday, February 7

- St. Marys Lincolns vs LaSalle Vipers at Vollmer Culture Rec Centre - 7 pm

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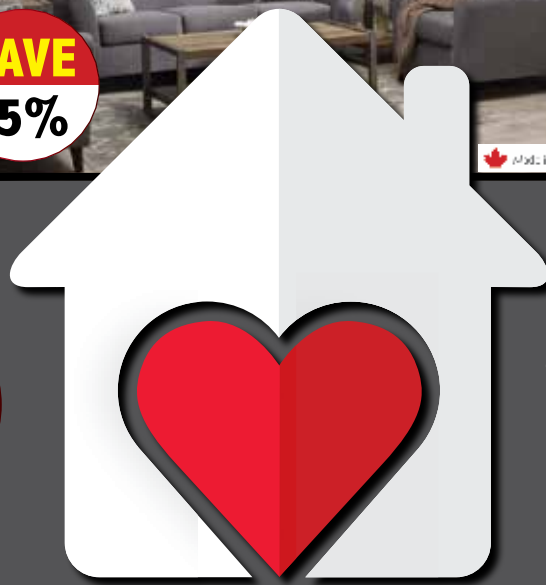
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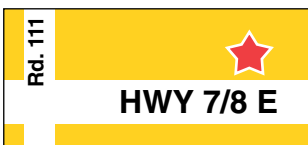
**QUEEN BED \$949 TAX IN**

**ALL PIECES KING BED \$1,139 TAX IN**

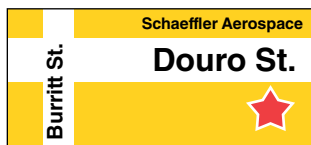


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