

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1198

Thursday, February 15, 2024

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Diving for the ball!



Ellen Thorup dives to keep the ball off the floor during the St. Marys DCVI Senior Girls volleyball game last Thursday. Efforts like Thorup's pictured were a big key to victory according to head coach Steve Chateauvert who was thrilled with his team's intensity and consistency. See story on pg. 14. Photo by Spencer Seymour

Perth County awarded for work in economic development, tourism

By Emily Stewart

The Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) recently recognized Perth County's tourism and economic development department with two awards at the council's 67th annual Awards of Excellence ceremony.

At the awards ceremony in Toronto Feb. 8 Perth County received the com-

munity economic development rural award for its Perth County Farms to Stratford Tables initiative, as well as the workforce development and resident attraction rural award for its Perth County Full House Tour. The county's Mystery Farm Hop Tour was also honoured as a finalist in the inclusive community-based initiative

Continued on page 3

No taxis in St. Marys: A problem without a clear solution, town CAO says

By Galen Simmons

For the past few years, residents and visitors to St. Marys have been unable to hail a cab.

Since 2021, St. Marys has been without a local taxi service after St. Marys Taxi, a small, family run business that launched during the pandemic, closed up shop. Since then, town staff has been trying to find a way to fill that local-transportation gap, however the issues at play are more complex than one might assume.

"(St. Marys Taxi) unfortunately had to close for a number of reasons," St. Marys CAO Brent Kittmer said. "... One thing they noted was, during that time period, insurers started charging more for taxis. They were paying, at that point, premiums up to \$11,000 per car. For a small taxi service in a small town, that's a lot of fares per car."

Kittmer said there have been a few upstart taxi operators that have since expressed interest in serving St. Marys however, in each of those cases, he said the sheer cost of buying a vehicle coupled with the rising cost of insurance made it cost prohibitive to launch a taxi service in town. Attracting drivers, Kittmer added, has also been a stumbling point for would-be taxi companies.

"This is all the feedback we got, and we've done a lot of research," Kittmer said. "What I'm trying to do from the town's side is understand why ... that local, door-to-door transportation doesn't exist here in St. Marys."

While the town is making progress on regional transportation through the PC Connect bus ser-

Continued on page 2

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COMMUNITY

No taxis in St. Marys: A problem without a clear solution, town CAO says

Continued from page 1

vice – a transit service funded by the province, Stratford, St. Marys, Perth County and its lower-tier municipalities – and the potential for ON-EXBUS – a privately owned transit service that recently began serving Stratford – to expand its routes to serve St. Marys, that in-town transportation many residents relied on to get to appointments, shop for groceries and visit friends and family remains nonexistent.

Initially, Kittmer said staff considered the notion that the town's taxi-licensing fees and process might have been overly burdensome on operators, however he said the feedback the town received from former and would-be taxi services was that isn't the issue. At \$100 per vehicle annually plus \$25 per driver, Kitt-

mer says the town's licensing fees are relatively low compared to other municipalities.

"What we're hearing is the pandemic plus higher insurance costs plus it being difficult to find people to drive those odd hours; those were the main barriers," he said. "We are reaching out to larger, private service providers that provide similar services, and we're just ... asking that question, 'Why not St. Marys?'"

"From what we understand, there was a fairly regular business in St. Marys. It wasn't like there was completely no market. There were people who needed rides to work, people who needed rides back and forth to appointments especially during daytime hours. In the time when the former operator was here, it was in the pandemic, so the nightlife of St.

Marys didn't really exist, but it does now. We have a wonderful brewery, wonderful downtown pubs and places people can go, so the market's even greater."

While the town has received some interest from the larger operators, Kittmer said high insurance costs are hitting even those businesses hard and the notion of adding extra cars to their fleets isn't as attractive as it might otherwise be.

The town has also contacted Uber and, within the next couple weeks, Kittmer expects he'll have the opportunity to pose the same question to that company, "Why isn't Uber here?"

"It's interesting how things have changed. Five to eight years ago when Uber really started coming

around, many municipalities were trying to find ways to protect their local taxis and basically find a way to bylaw Uber out of local market. Now, if Uber was willing to come here, we'd move very quickly to amend our taxi bylaw to make sure it can work," Kittmer said.

For now, town staff will continue knocking on every door to try and find a private taxi service that is willing and able to operate in town. While some have floated the idea of the town subsidizing such a service, Kittmer says municipalities aren't actually allowed to subsidize private, for-profit businesses.

If the town is successful in attracting a new taxi operator, Kittmer says residents will need to fully embrace it to ensure it can continue operating into the future.

Town hosting accessory apartments seminar for builders and realtors

By St. Marys Independent Staff

The Town of St. Marys is hoping to educate builders and realtors about alternative forms of housing.

On Wednesday, Feb. 21, the Town of St. Marys is hosting an event aimed at educating local realtors and builders about the benefits of accessory apartments. The seminar will run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the End Zone at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

The event will be led by the town's building and development department, which is responsible for issuing permits for residential structures, including accessory apartments. An accessory apartment is a separate dwelling unit that is located inside or on the same lot as an existing home.

The town is encouraging property owners and developers to build accessory apartments to increase St. Marys' housing stock. The move is part of the town's Opening Doors

housing action plan, which aims to add 200 rental units to St. Marys by 2027, with 30 falling into the attainable housing category.

"We see accessory apartments as a practical and progressive tool to address the local housing shortage," director of building and development Grant Brouwer said in a press release. "The seminar has been designed to equip builders and realtors with the information needed to become ambassadors for accessory apartments."

"We hope local builders and realtors will take what they learn at the event and share that information with future clients."

Residents who are not part of the building or real estate industry are welcome to attend the seminar. They can also set up a one-on-one meeting with the building and development department to ask questions and gather information about acces-

sory apartments by emailing ecoddington@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Those planning to attend the event should RSVP to ecoddington@town.stmarys.on.ca by Feb. 16. For more information about the seminar, con-

tact Brouwer at 519-284-2340, ext. 215. Further details about accessory apartments are available at www.townofstmarys.com/accessoryapartments.



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Feels Like -6	Feels Like -6	Feels Like -10	Feels Like -11	Feels Like -8	Feels Like -2	Feels Like -3

COMMUNITY

Perth County awarded for work in economic development, tourism

Continued from page 1

award category.

"Being recognized for the Perth County Farms to Stratford Tables campaign and Perth County Full House Tour is a source of immense pride for Perth County," Ashley Lansink, tourism officer for Perth County, told the Independent. "These awards from EDCO validate the hard work, dedication and collaborative efforts put forth by our division and our dedicated partners. It's a testament to the county's commitment to innovative and impactful projects that contribute not only to the local economy but also set a standard for best practices in economic development."

Lansink said receiving the awards boosts Perth County's tourism reputation in Ontario and grabs the attention of stakeholders and visitors alike.

"This recognition enhances the county's reputation and credibility, making it an attractive destination for tourists, investors and businesses," she said. "Additionally, these awards act as inspiration and motivation for continuous improvement, encouraging the county to stay innovative and dedicated to driving positive economic development outcomes."

Following the wins at EDCO's Awards of Excellence ceremony, Perth County will continue collaborative marketing strategies and build its efforts off of the award-winning projects.



Perth County's economic development and tourism team recently won the community economic development rural award and the workforce development and resident attraction rural award at the Economic Developers Council of Ontario's 67th annual Awards of Excellence ceremony in Toronto. Contributed photo

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COMMUNITY

Family Day hours for town facilities



By St. Marys Independent staff

The following hours will be in effect for Town of St. Marys facilities for Family Day (Monday, Feb. 19, 2024):

Closed:

- Administrative offices
- o Municipal Operations Centre
- o Town Hall closed for renovations until May 2024
- Adult Learning
- Before and After School Program
- Child Care Centre
- EarlyON Centre
- Friendship Centre
- Fire Hall
- Landfill
- Library
- Mobility Services offices (Rides must be booked by 12 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 16)
- Museum and Archives
- Service Ontario

- Youth Centre

Open:

- Home Support Services such as Meals on Wheels and telephone reassurance will continue.
 - The Train Station will be open; visit www.viarail.ca for train scheduling.
 - Pyramid Recreation Centre
 - o Tiny Tot skating from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
 - o Free public skating from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., sponsored by Downie Optimist Club (pre-register online)
 - o Free public swimming from 1-3 p.m., sponsored by Downie Optimist Club (pre-register online)
 - o St. Marys Lincolns game at 2:30 p.m.
 - o The canteen will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Any updates will be posted to the Town website (townofstmarys.com), Facebook page (facebook.com/stmarysontario) and X account (twitter.com/townofstmarys) as soon as they are available.

Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week.

1) Bravo to the Friends of the Library who host a monthly FOL Social for both newcomers and long-time citizens. This month the speaker gave an informative talk about Alzheimer's and the services offered in our area.

2) Bravo to the St Marys Rock U13LL boys, coaches and parents for supporting a teammate who is trying hockey for the first time and who wildly cheered for him when he scored his first ever goal this weekend!



Boo

We have no Boos this week.



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

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

Quote of the Week

"He caught me off balance, I wasn't watching. Cheap shot! That's alright, he did good. He was really coming over just to go, "Put me in, I'll score, so that's really what it was," Reid said.

- Kansas City Chief coach Andy Reid on his altercation with Travis Kelce during the Super Bowl game.

St. Marys Independent

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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 am really going to miss seeing Taylor and Travis.... said no one ever!

Robins have been sighted in St. Marys. Surely a sign of an early spring.

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

St. Marys and Stratford offering free shuttle to community housing consultation

By St. Marys Independent Staff

The Town of St. Marys and City of Stratford have arranged a free shuttle to ensure all residents can access the upcoming community housing consultation in St. Marys.

The event is happening on Feb. 15 from 5-8 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The consultation is an opportunity for residents to learn about local efforts around housing and homelessness, share ideas and chat with service providers.

The accessible shuttle – operated by St. Marys and Area Mobility Services – will run on the following schedule:

- 4 p.m.: Pick up at Sunset Diner (343 Queen St. W)
- 4:15 p.m.: Pick up at St. Marys Pres-

byterian Church (147 Widder St. E)

• 4:30 p.m.: Pick up at Town Hall (175 Queen St. E)

• 4:45 p.m.: Pick up at Dollarama (588 Queen St. E)

The shuttle will leave the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 8:15 p.m. and drop passengers off at their pickup locations.

The community housing consultation is open to all residents. Advance registration is not required for the shuttle or the event.

For more information, contact Brittany Petrie at 226-261-0098 or bpetrie@town.stmarys.on.ca. To learn more about local housing and homelessness services, visit www.townofstmarys.com/stonetownsupports.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



ADVENTURES IN WINTER BIRDING

February 17, 11 AM | Pyramid Centre

Join storm chaser, bird photographer and keynote speaker David T. Chapman at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, 2/3 Hall for The Adventures of Winter Birding!

226-374-6544

FAMILY DAY AT THE PRC

Monday, February 19 | Pyramid Centre

Thank you to the Optimist Club of Downie for sponsoring a free Family Day skate and swim! Register online for:

- Skating from 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM
- Swimming from 1 - 3 PM

townofstmarys.com/activenet or 519-284-2160



AQUATICS LEADERSHIP COURSE OPPORTUNITIES

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townofstmarys.com/activenet or 519-284-2160

CAMP PRC

Registration is now open for the following camps:

- March Break Camp (March 11 - 15)
- PA Day Camps
- Summer Camp (starting July 2)
- Specialty Summer Camps at the Quarry

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Thursdays, 9 AM - 1 PM | Pyramid Centre

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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the Week is Don Leslie who celebrated his 87th birthday on Super Bowl Sunday. Don was born and raised in St. Marys and at age 18 started working at Hinde & Dauch (now Cascades Containerboard). He worked his way up the ladder and in 1971 became the St. Marys manager. Don retired in 1993 after 37 years of service. Don has 2 children, 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. Happy Belated Birthday, Don.

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

Weekend Quiz

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1. Who won Super Bowl 58?
2. Ornithology is the study of what?
3. When was Black History Month first celebrated?
4. What killed Napoleon Bonaparte?
5. What country has the most sheep?
6. What was the name of the band formed by Maurice White?
7. Does hot or cold water freeze faster?
8. Who wrote The Paper Bag Princess?
9. What are the 4 different parks at Disney World?
10. Where does Bingo originate from?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

COMMUNITY

Gibson Merkel named Firefighter of the Month for February

By St. Marys Independent staff

The St. Marys Fire Department has named Gibson Merkel firefighter of the month for February.

Merkel started with the department in 2019 as a co-op student and was hired as a firefighter in 2022.

"Having the opportunity to work as a co-op student and receive practical training solidified that this was the job for me," Merkel said in a press release. "Being a volunteer firefighter is an amazing way to start my career, learn valuable skills, be part of a team and reap the benefits of helping this community."

Off duty, Merkel dedicates his time to maintaining peak physical health, snowboarding, cooking healthy meals and hanging out with family and friends.

"Gibson is the first person to be hired by the department after completing a co-op placement here," Fire Chief Richard "Andy" Anderson said in the press release. "He was selected as firefighter of the month for his enthusiasm and drive to complete his firefighter initial training program ahead of the two-year probationary period."

"Gibson and others like him are the future of the fire department" added Cpt. Ryan Taylor in the release. "As more of our experienced firefighters are retiring, it's time to pass the torch."



St. Marys firefighter Gibson Merkel was recently named the fire department's firefighter of the month for February. Contributed photo

WOODSTOCK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY & FAIRGROUNDS

WOODSTOCK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

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COMMUNITY

Salvation Army celebrated Kettle Campaign success in Stratford, St. Marys



Pictured at the Salvation Army volunteer reception in Stratford last week are Perth-Wellington MPP Mathew Rae, Leeta Currah of family services, manager of community and family services Jennifer Morris, and Salvation Army officer Elaine Honchersky. Photo by Gary West

By Gary West

The hundreds of volunteers that make the Salvation Army a success were honoured at a reception in Stratford last week for the countless volunteer hours put in before Christmas.

Local Salvation Army Kettle Campaign organizers said it was one of their best years, raising a total \$374,846.84 in 2023. The local Kettle Campaign ran from Nov. 14 to Dec. 23 in Stratford, Mitchell and St. Marys. In St. Marys alone, the Kettle Campaign brought in nearly \$106,600.

"The program could not operate without the caring volunteers that return year after year," said Jennifer Morris, the Salvation Army's local community

and family services manager.

She thanked everyone for manning the kettles over a total of 582 hours across various locations in all three municipalities during the Christmas season.

The money collected helps to support the Salvation Army food bank, back-to-school programs, the Christmas hamper program and the mobile food bank among others.

The Salvation Army's mission is to be an innovative partner, mobilized to share hope wherever there is hardship, building communities that are just, and know the love of Jesus.

Their Core values are hope, service, dignity and stewardship.

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys Horticultural Society: Beautifying and educating St. Marys

By Sue Hicks

The St. Marys Horticultural Society had another productive year in 2023. We held several flower shows and hosted various speakers. Master gardeners are available at our meetings to answer your gardening questions.

Our two plant auctions were successful, as were our annual Garden Fair and Garden Tour events. The many gardens that our society maintains throughout St. Marys looked great despite the shortage of rain. This is all due to our many volunteers who help us in our endeavour to assist with keeping St. Marys looking beautiful.

We hope to entice new members to join our society and even join our board so we may continue our service to our town. If you wish to support our society, please consider purchasing a membership at a cost of \$10 per person at any open meeting, from any board member, or by e-transfer to stmarys.horticulture@gmail.com.

Our sponsors offer discounts to our



Centennial Park, one of the gardens that the St. Marys Horticultural Society maintains. Contributed photo

members. We are always looking for volunteers to help with the gardens we maintain around St. Marys, or to assist at the Garden Fair or Gar-

den Tour or any other activity that we support. Please contact us at the above email address if you wish to volunteer. There's no set time com-

mitment. Just help out whenever you can. This is also a great opportunity for high school students wanting to earn some community service hours.

As well, we are looking for homeowners or businesses that may wish to be on our Garden Tour. Please email if you are interested.

Our program for 2024 includes more great speakers as well as the regular flower shows and other activities. You can see the dates on our website, on the St. Marys town calendar, or by emailing us. Our meeting schedule is set for this year, but if you have any ideas for future speakers or demonstrations, please let us know.

We look forward to the coming year. Our first events are in March. On March 4 we are hosting a workshop demonstrating how to make a note card using pressed flowers with Rose Odell, and on March 11, we're hosting a seed exchange and speaker.

We hope to see you soon. Happy gardening!



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COMMUNITY

The great pizza debate

By *The Hungry Fat Guy*

Pizza! It is the Italian cultural food icon recognized around the world. It is the last-minute grab-a-quick-bite-to-eat food. It is the favourite food for children's birthday parties. Whether you are five or 95 the odds are you like pizza.

Here in St. Marys we are blessed with a multitude of great pizza places to choose from.

One of the most frequent questions I get asked is what is your favourite pizza place?

Some people just pick one pizza place and stick with it for years. Monogamy is best for relationships and raising a family, but when it comes to pizza you need to play the field a bit.

If you are looking for a quick pizza to pick up, you can order online from one of the many traditional pizza-chain restaurants we have in town. These include Little Ceasars, New Orleans, Pizza Hut and Pizza Pizza. I frequently enjoy Little Ceasars hot and ready as it is nearest to my home when I'm in a hurry. Pizza Hut has great pan-piz-

za crust which is both light and buttery. We are fortunate to have recent newcomer Tito's join the pizza scene this fall as well. Tito's has a creamy garlic drizzle they spiral over top of the pizza, which I highly recommend.

Skippy's Pizza downtown rounds out the field of great pizza available to residents of our awesome town.

Most of these great places have a menu online and you can order from the comfort of home for pickup or delivery. You can also build a pizza however you want. Combine a great crust, a flavourful sauce and fresh, quality toppings and you end up with a custom-made meal just for you.

As you can see with all of these great places it is hard for me to pick just one, so I recently ran an online survey for Stratford pizza joints on Facebook. We are going to do a similar poll here! Starting Friday Feb. 16 I will be hosting a survey where you can vote for your favourite St. Marys pizza!

Follow The Hungry Fat Guy on Facebook for more local food reviews and spotlights.



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ARTS & CULTURE

Valuing the art of flowers at Lyric Flowers

By James Giles, edited by Alice Rixson

Flowers speak silent volumes in a unique, universal language and have been a popular focus in art for centuries.

Some of the most recognized designations are colours, which are said to bear meaningful undertones. Red, for instance, symbolizes love and passion, yellow conveys happiness and friendship, white implies purity, and green denotes good luck, optimism and rebirth.

Flower arrangements also convey diverse significances and emotions that may comprise a number of celebratory events such as births, deaths and unions. The choice of flowers and their arrangements brings beauty and comfort to our lives.

Floral design is both a decorative craft and a creative art because it demands the skill of combining plant materials and flowers to create eye-catching displays. It has much common with visual art. Floral designers often garner inspiration from other artists, be they painters, sculptors or musicians.

Lyric Flowers in St. Marys is a one-of-a-kind floral boutique, proudly owned by Lanny Hoare and Jay Harrison. Neither ever visualized a career in the floral industry.

Born in St. Marys, Hoare started working as a carry-out boy for a local grocery store. His formal education culminated with the study of music theory and composition at university.

After food-industry employment at Disney World's Epcot Center in Florida and several restaurants upon his return to Ontario, Hoare assumed the



Jay Harrison and Lanny Hoare. Contributed photo

position of music director and church organist at St. Marys Presbyterian Church, where he is still the music director. He also holds that position for the Friendship Centre Choir.

Hoare, now celebrating 12 years as a zealous architect of floral pieces of art, soon found his interest heading to flower design and he enrolled in classes. Later, both Hoare and Harrison attended a design masterclass with Karen Tran, an internationally known floral artist. As a visual artistic designer, Hoare consults with wedding couples to help them define and realize their dream. Together, he and Harrison embrace a concept and bring it to a beautiful finale.

Harrison hails from the eastern Ontario town of Napanee. After working in the retail-and-hospitality sector as a teenager, he took to photography

and, with his love of music, he also worked as a DJ. His post-secondary studies were in radio broadcasting.

As floral and visual artistic designer, Harrison has amassed 30 years of experience in floral artistry. His initiation was as a visual merchandiser in a flower shop in Napanee, creating displays, assisting in sales and service. Harrison later enrolled in a workshop with world-renowned floral artist Hitomi Gilliam. Later and unexpectedly – without any formal training – he became a full-time florist. Unadulterated talent carried him through.

Harrison relocated to the Toronto area to learn the other side of the business. As a wholesale floral manager, he interacted with growers from all over the world and sold to shops throughout Ontario. He then moved to London, Ont. where he worked as

a floral artist for two years.

These two multitasking and ambitious entrepreneurs opened Lyric Flowers in 2011 at the former location of the Lyric Theatre, after which they named their business. It moved to its current site three years later.

Lyric Flowers has been a three-time nominee for Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards and twice selected for Canada's Retailer of the Year.

Together, Hoare and Harrison have built a strong reputation based on quality, value and service, creating wedding designs across all of Ontario, including floral designs that have travelled to the Caribbean islands. Through hard work and dedication to their clientele, these two have established a friendly, ever-evolving floral destination in St. Marys.

Lyric Flowers backs local artisans by displaying their talents in the windows of the store and, through a collection of photos, annually commemorates veterans with a St. Marys connection.

Importantly, Lyric Flowers is also an ardent community campaigner. In 2019, Hoare and Harrison started an annual fundraiser for St. Marys Memorial Hospital, raising \$1,600. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted this effort, but the years 2022 and 2023 added another \$3,500 to the campaign. Hoare and Harrison are as committed to their community as they are to their floral art.

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

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COMMUNITY

Local paramedics helping the community's most vulnerable

By Wendy Lamond

A dedicated team of Perth County paramedics is out in the community working to serve the most vulnerable.

On Jan. 31, Debbie Hunter, deputy chief of Perth County Paramedic Services' mobile integrated health (MIH) team, offered an overview of the MIH team's programs and services to a small crowd gathered at the St. Marys Friendship Centre. The MIH team provides in-home care, support and helpful solutions to vulnerable residents with complex medical issues, those who need regular monitoring, and those who need access to community support groups.

This dedicated health team works closely with Huron Perth public health to help isolated people with COVID testing and other public-health initiatives. The team also works closely with the Huron Perth Palliative Care Outreach team and local physicians to provide the best care possible.

One benefit of this program is it prevents unnecessary visits to hospital emergency rooms and readmission to hospital.

"We recognize the growing needs in the communities and want to support people in getting to the established available resources," Hunter said. "We work to identify a need and fill a gap in care until such time that the care is available."

The best way to access MIH supports is through

physician referral however the team can also be reached directly at 519-271-0531 ext. 523 to answer questions regarding the program.

At her presentation, Hunter discussed specific services like wound care, medication support, vitals and clinics in the area.

Another initiative offered by Perth County Paramedic Services is the Cool-Aid program. The Cool-Aid program was launched to help in emergency situations by cutting down the time it takes to find the basic medical and prescription information for someone in distress. The program makes patients' up-to-date medical information easily accessible to paramedics so they can get them the help they need as quickly as possible.

Free of charge, the program requires patients to compile their medical information into a pamphlet and keep it up to date. The pamphlet can then be placed on their fridge as paramedics are trained to look there for medical information, keeping them from wasting time at the scene of an emergency trying to find a person's health history and medical information.

Data on the form includes personal details, emergency contact details, medical history, medication information, known allergies and a do-not-resuscitate question.

Anyone looking to acquire a pamphlet can call 519-271-0531 ext 500.



Debbie Hunter, Perth County Paramedic Services' deputy chief of the mobile integrated health team, recently provided an overview of the programs and services her team offers to vulnerable residents.

The Friendship Centre offers a variety of free educational, wellness programs. For more information on upcoming programs, contact the Friendship Centre at 519-284-3272 or email friends@town.st-marys.on.ca.

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COMMUNITY

Responding to PTSD: Local first responders speak out about post-traumatic stress disorder

By Wendy Lamond

When I met with retired paramedic Jeff Sager in November to chat about his retirement, one of the subjects we talked a lot about was post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the mental-health components of being a first responder.

It didn't take long for us to decide it required its own story given the magnitude, importance and frequency of first responders with PTSD.

Being a first responder is recognizing you will see the worst of humanity. Whether you are a paramedic, fire fighter or police officer, each person will deal with the trauma and experience in different ways. Some will carry the burden inside; others will try and talk it out, but what it comes down to is what you are dealing with in this line of work has become your new normal.

PTSD is described as a disorder that can develop after someone has experienced, witnessed or is repeatedly exposed to major trauma.

Paramedics have the highest rate of PTSD among first responders and up

to 22 per cent of all paramedics will develop PTSD at some point in their career.

Sager was diagnosed with PTSD in 2018 after responding to a horrific collision in which two children were killed. It happened 39 years into a profession that included numerous traumatic experiences and is what eventually led him towards putting his energy to helping others by becoming a pastoral chaplain and a lay pastoral minister.

It can be common for first responders to become numb to the hardships they encounter, which can in turn lead to feeling isolated and unable to share with friends and family what was witnessed.

There are many signs and symptoms of PTSD. They include but are not limited to recurrent nightmares, flashbacks, trouble sleeping, irritability and angry outbursts, and feeling like danger is lurking around every corner.

This not only affects the person with PTSD, but family, friends and coworkers as well.

Some strategies that may help include seeking the help of a therapist, joining a support group or signing up for other support services, finding a peer mentor, and meditation.

Sager says he tried to remain optimistic.

"When one door closes, another opens, but nobody tells you that the hallway is on fire."

Sager says he is definitely not the same person he was when he started his career. He's needed to rely on help from a psychologist, family and friends to view the world in a positive light again. He says his line of work gave him a better understanding of how fragile life is and how fast it can change.

Stratford Police Chief Greg Skinner sees PTSD as the cumulative effect of repeated exposure to trauma and he believes no level of training can prepare someone for the impact of those exposures.

Skinner has been a police officer for 37 years and, in that time, he's dealt with colleagues and friends killed on

the job as a result of motor-vehicle collisions, suicide and homicide.

Skinner says the worst part of the job is not knowing what awaits an officer inside a house or a car they are approaching. Anything can happen at any time and interactions with people can change on a dime.

Police officers are also often the first people to tell a family their loved one has been killed. Having families of their own, those memories stay with them. Having to stay strong and offer support can be very difficult in those instances.

Skinner said many of the traumas he has seen continue to wake him up at night, sometimes completely out of the blue with no rhyme or reason. Personally, he has never been diagnosed with PTSD, but, as with many first responders, he suffers from the symptoms.

"I fear that as the world gets more divisive and more violent with the accessibility of pain and suffering being readily available on social media and through live streaming, more people

Continued on page 13

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COMMUNITY

Service Canada to offer pop-up service centre at St. Marys library three times this year

By Galen Simmons

To help provide services that aren't currently available in St. Marys, the St. Marys Public Library is partnering with Service Canada to offer an outreach office at the library three times this year.

Service Canada will set up shop at the library on March 22, July 26 and Oct. 25, offering residents – especially those who aren't able to travel out of town to the closest Service Canada centre – the full suite of services.

"One of our strategic initiatives is to build strong community in St. Marys, and it came to our attention through the number of patrons we help at our library computer and with printing of

government forms that people are either having to go into Stratford or go into London to access Service Canada," said library CEO Sarah Andrews.

"We're so lucky in St. Marys because we have the Service Ontario here. Wouldn't it be great if some of those services were easier to access?"

When Andrews reached out to Service Canada to find out if they'd be willing to come to St. Marys, she said the federal-service provider told her it does have an outreach program and was happy to accommodate her request.

Andrews said Service Canada will offer all its usual services including passport services, employment-insurance services, employment-benefit services

and more for the full day on all three dates. At the end of this year, Andrews said both library staff and Service Canada will evaluate how successful the program was and determine if they will offer it again next year.

"We're really hopeful it's something that benefits the community and people take advantage of it," she said, adding the program will especially benefit some of St. Marys' Ukrainian and other newcomers.

"We like all of our residents to feel connected and supported. It's come to our attention through supporting the Ukrainian arrivals particularly – we host a language group here and we participated in celebrating their grad-

uation from a program at Fanshawe – not everyone has vehicles and it's a lot to navigate. If you're already in a space you trust and you're comfortable in, perhaps you'll get done the tasks you need to get done."

Andrews is also hopeful the Service Canada pop-ups will serve to get residents in the door who otherwise would not take advantage of the library and its services. Once they're there, Andrews hopes they'll see what the library has to offer, and they'll come back.

For more information on library programming and upcoming events, visit www.townofstmarys.com/en/recreation-and-culture/Library.aspx.

Responding to PTSD

Continued from page 12

will suffer from PTSD, whether firsthand or vicariously, and it will change lives for the worst," he said.

To be a first responder requires a certain type of person. They provide life-saving care to people daily. They make a positive difference, and their work is important to society. Where

would we be without them? The challenges they face in their day-to-day can increase the risk of mental-health issues.

PTSD can affect anyone at any age from first responders, military personnel, doctors and nurses, to anyone who has experienced trauma.



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SPORTS

Jr. Girls battle their way to win in straight sets

By Spencer Seymour

St. Marys DCVI's Junior Girls volleyball team may not have had a picture-perfect showing last Thursday but they never failed to keep battling and ultimately overcame it to defeat Mitchell in two straight sets, both by a score of 25-18

Head Coach Jess Chateauvert acknowledged that even though it wasn't a masterclass in every facet, she was thrilled with the way her group executed tactically which helped the group grit their way to victory.

"It may not have been our best game from an energy standpoint but they kept battling and got the job done," Chateauvert said. "We wanted to come in with energy and I think we could have had a bit more but we executed on the gameplan very well. If we had a bit more energy in what we were doing, we wouldn't have let them stay in as much."

Speaking on the energy that wasn't fully present in the team's performance, Chateauvert noted that one

key indicator of its presence or lack thereof is whether or not the team is actively communicating.

"You can hear it. When we're really playing with that energy that we want to have, it's something you can determine audibly. There were a bit of nerves playing in the big gym in front of fans so we looked a bit tentative but I think it was still really positive seeing them still able to find a way to win."

As noted, the major takeaway for Chateauvert was her team's ability to withstand momentum shifts and find a way back to taking control of the game.

"We got down in the second set but we didn't stop competing. The fact that they can battle back when they get down and avoid giving up is really good to see. They stayed calm and they didn't panic when they went down which is huge. It's important to not get down on yourselves and hopefully, this will illustrate the importance of having that energy to go with our execution and poise."



Marin Chateauvert takes flight to smack the ball back over the net during the St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls volleyball game last Thursday. St. Marys defeated Mitchell in straight sets, winning 25-18 in both sets. Photo by Spencer Seymour

Sr. Girls find intensity, consistency in two-set win

By Spencer Seymour

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Girls volleyball team won 25-17 and 25-18 to defeat Mitchell in back-to-back sets last Thursday thanks in no small part to a high-intensity showing from start to finish.

According to head coach Steve Chateauvert, the group turned in one of their most sound and consistent efforts of the year.

"We've had a pretty up-and-down season," said Chateauvert. "Although there were a few hiccups out there today, mainly related to our serving, overall I was really happy with how they played. The one thing I saw a huge improvement in our practice (last Tuesday) was our passing-off service and while it wasn't perfect today, it was much better than it's been for most of the year.

"That's something we've talked about in practice all season. We've been try-

ing to limit some of those unforced errors, and they did a much better job of that today. We stayed fairly aggressive at the net and got a few nice swings and attacks, which was good to see because at times we've been a bit hesitant to really go after the ball."

It isn't uncommon for volleyball teams to see portions of games get away from them with one team getting on a big run. However, the Salukis prevented Mitchell from having a major run of points, which Chateauvert believes was connected to the team's drive to maintain their strong play every time the ball was in play.

"It comes down to playing with intensity. They have to want the ball. That's what I've been preaching a lot this season. You can't be nervous and you have to go after the ball. Defensively, you have to get as low as possible and be willing to go after everything. We had a few really good plays today where that ball should be on the

floor, but someone dives, they swipe an arm at it and it gets over the net. Doing that gives your team the momentum in a game that is so momentum-driven."

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SPORTS

Local ringette player competing at Ontario Winter Games

By Spencer Seymour

St. Marys resident Olive Aarts is heading to Thunder Bay this weekend as part of a provincial AAA team competing in the Ontario Winter Games (OWG).

Aarts recently spoke to the Independent about her participation in the OWG and described her anticipation for the upcoming provincial tournament running Feb. 16-19.

"I'm really excited," said Aarts. "Since I've been training and getting to work with my new teammates for the last few months, it's been fun to have that new experience and I'm looking forward to playing at such a big event."

According to Aarts, one of the reasons she is looking forward to the OWG so much is the opportunity to compete in such a talented field of players.

"I'm expecting it to be a really great experience. It's really exciting to me to be in a position to get to see so many players who are at such a high level, and it'll be really fun for me to get to play with and against them."

Aarts found her passion for the sport

when she began playing ringette at the age of five in St. Marys. She now plays for U19 London Lynx and a spring tournament team called the Sundevilz.

"I've been playing it for a long time, ever since I was a little kid," Aarts explained. "I have a ton of friends in the sport and it's helped me meet a lot of great people. I'm also really competitive and ringette has been one of my favourite outlets for that competitiveness."

Last August, she tried out for the AAA program over a weekend in Ajax where all ringette players from all over Ontario are able to come and try out for the program. The AAA program consists of six teams made up from players from all over Ontario, with Aarts being a part of Team Orange.

"Obviously, it requires a lot of training, but there are also the experiences from the summer team and the tryout teams and camps. All of those help you gather information and experiences that end up helping you get to where you want to be," Aarts said.



St. Marys' Olive Aarts will compete at the Ontario Winter Games Feb. 16-19 with the AAA ringette squad, Team Orange. Contributed photo

Sr. Boys fire 24-point win over Central Huron

By Spencer Seymour

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys basketball team tasted victory last Friday when they defeated the visiting squad from Central Huron Secondary (CDSS) 59-35.

Sebastian Linares put up 23 points for the Salukis in the win while Peyton Lobb chipped in eight and Rourke McEwan scored six.

Coach Tim O'Connor told the Independent that once his team was able to neutralize CDSS' uber-skilled star player, they truly settled into the game and ultimately pulled away on the scoreboard.

"Central Huron had one player in particular whose offensive skill was giving us some fits, but in the second half, we got some different guys keyed on him and we were able to contain him a bit more," said O'Connor. "We got some really good defence from Rourke (McEwan) and Wil (Boreham). It was a nice win and had the added benefit of securing a home playoff game for us."

The playoff game O'Connor spoke of took place this past Monday when St. Marys hosted Listowel. The visitors managed to heavily disrupt the Salukis' transition game from defence to offence and it ultimately resulted in the Salukis bowing out in the quarter final. However, despite the disap-



Nathan MacDonald rises up for a shot during the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys basketball game last Friday. Photo by Spencer Seymour

pointing conclusion, O'Connor said he viewed the season as a whole through a very good lens.

"There is definitely more positive to the year than negative. For most of the year, the guys played good defence. They learned how to work hard on the defensive side of the ball. This is a great group of guys. Their commitment level is fantastic, we've had

no issues with their commitment or how hard they work in practice."

Coach Ian Moore added that the group became a stronger unit over the course of the season, especially when it came to their work in their own half of the court, which was the team's bread and butter all year long.

"They came together better as a team," Moore remarked. "As Tim said, the

defensive side is much better than it was at the start of the year and their understanding of the defence is higher. I think they also recognize that the transition to offence is crucial and if you don't have that, it can make things more difficult. Great defence can help you win games, but you also have to score buckets and I think they appreciate more the value of protecting the ball."

Moore added one of the most impressive aspects of the season was how the group was able to go further than many recent Senior Boys basketball squads at DCVI despite not being the most high-scoring, naturally offensively gifted team.

"Our team has a group of very talented athletes that have become good basketball players but have not had the exposure to the game that some other players and teams around the league have had. Throughout the season and for the players that are not returning, they have come a long way in their development, but as you go into the playoffs we are up against players and teams that have played a lot more basketball outside of the high-school environment. DCVI has not had a Senior Boys team reach the quarters in a very long time and our guys should hold their heads high with what they have accomplished this year."

SPORTS

Lincs earn massive wins over LaSalle, London

By Spencer Seymour

In perhaps their most important week of the season to date and with huge ramifications on the Western Conference standings at stake, the St. Marys Lincolns came up with just about the best possible pair of outcomes, beating two of the other top-four teams in the west including a 7-3 thrashing of the London Nationals.

Before that however, the Lincolns were on the road in LaSalle doing battle with the Vipers. The first few minutes, as noted by head coach Jeff Bradley, were not the Lincolns' best, but goaltender Brandon Abbott kept the game scoreless until the team in front of him found its footing.

"For two periods, we outplayed a tough team on the road in a tough rink to win in," Bradley told the Independent. "Things aren't always going to go right, but Brandon held us in it until we woke up midway through the first. In the second, we expected a pushback from them, and they gave it to us, but thankfully we didn't make too many huge mistakes."

With just a shade under three minutes left in the first period, Jaden Shiell finished off a strong play by Cohen Bidgood who earned the lone assist to make it 1-0. Just 65 seconds later, Maddox Callens put the Lincolns ahead by a pair with his eighth of the year assisted by Billy VanSumeren and Jacob Montesi.

According to Bradley, the major shift from the first few minutes of the game to the remainder, when the Lincs were in control, was increased focus and mental tenacity.

"They decided that they weren't losing that game and did everything they had to do to win. The guys knew how important a game it was. We've been battling with LaSalle for most of this year and this was a chance to create a bit of separation at a really important time of the year."

In addition to Josh Cornfield and Ethan Sullivan, team captain Adam Barkley also was unavailable on the back end. Despite the depleted blueline, the only blemish on Abbott and the defenders' performance was a second-period goal by Nathan Gaymes.

Bradley elaborated on the contributions of one forward line in particular, as well as from the six rearguards, all of whom the bench boss was pleased with, especially two 19-year-olds - Ryder Livermore and James Sigmon - who were charged with expanded roles as leaders.

"We were missing some really key players but guys like Ryder and James really stepped up to replace what we were missing leadership-wise and minutes-wise on the blueline. I thought the (Ryan) Cornfield, (Ryan) Hodkinson and (Matt) Prendergast line was very good as well. They were hard to play against. They didn't make any big mistakes. They trusted what they had to do to be successful at both ends of the ice and they executed on that very well."

The Lincolns closed out the game in the third, limiting the Vipers to just five shots in the final 20 minutes. Abbott made 25 saves in the victory.

Lincs dismantle Nats to win 7-3

In a game that was eerily reminiscent of the Lincolns' playoff sweep of the London Nationals in last year's playoffs, over 900 fans at the PRC watched

"We're at a point in the season when we need to start a certain way and continue on and be consistent. The learning time is over, we need to just get it, but in these games (against LaSalle and London) specifically, we played two really good periods out of three against two really good teams and won both, so you have to be happy with the results."

The game-tying goal came at the 13:47 mark of the first when Callens once again found the back of the net. With the goal, Callens has now scored in each of his last seven games. The native of Langton has also scored in every single home game he has appeared in. Linemates VanSumeren and Ethan Weir had the helpers.

Less than two minutes later, Luca Spagnolo ended a four-game scoreless stretch as he finished an excellent three-way passing play with assists going to Owen Voortman and Jaden Lee.

In the second, Spagnolo potted his second of the game assisted by Voortman and Montesi. Later in the period, Ethan Weir fired home a powerplay marker assisted by Chase MacQueen-Spence and Noah VandenBrink for his 15th of the year and the eventual game-winner.

Once the Lincolns had settled into the game, the Nationals struggled mightily to adjust to the more intense and focused attack of the Lincolns. Bradley explained how the Lincs' playing into their strengths when they have control of the puck made things so difficult on London.

"Our strength is our forecheck. Our strength is being able to create offence and get production in the offensive zone. We've got guys who can forecheck really well and when we decide we want

to do that and forecheck properly, that plays to our strengths. I think once we got back to our gameplan of putting pressure on their defenders to make plays, keep the puck out of the hands of their top scorers, and keeping the puck out of the neutral zone when we had possession, we felt that the game would turn into our favour."

Even though the Nats found a pair of goals in the third, it didn't take away from the stellar effort by Abbott in the St. Marys crease, who made 44 saves in the win. Abbott has won six of his last seven games and in each of his last three outings, has posted a save percentage of at least 0.931 or higher.

For the second straight game, Bradley was also thrilled with the trio of Cornfield, Hodkinson and

Continued on page 17



as the Lincs routed the Nats 7-3 in a win that, as of press time, moved St. Marys one point back of London for first in the Western Conference.

Similar to their game 48 hours previously, the early moments of the game saw the Lincolns get caught asleep at the wheel. The Nationals managed to capitalize with a goal by Atley Rogers just two minutes and 19 seconds into the game. Once again, St. Marys were held in the game by netminder Abbott.

"In the first period, we reverted back to some bad habits," Bradley admitted. "Stuff that we've talked about the last couple of weeks now. On the first goal against, we did exactly what we've been telling them not to do, but the nice thing was that we saw it happening and they changed the way things were going quick enough to still win the game."

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SPORTS

Lincs earn massive wins over LaSalle, London

Continued from page 16

Prendergast, who emerged as the most successful in combatting the Nats' top line centred by Lucas Chard. The 20-year-old Chard was held off the scoresheet after entering the game with at least one point in 20 of his last 21 games and 23 points in his last 10.

"We didn't want to match any line against London's top line. We wanted to give everyone a shot at them and

see who did the best and that was Cornfield, Hodkinson, and Prendergast. I thought they did an outstanding job with an incredibly tough task. Cornfield and Hodkinson came in being touted as offensive-minded players, but even as rookies in this league, they're able to pick up assignments and be responsible against 20-year-old players on top teams in the league. To me, it shows how much they care about the game as a whole and recognize that there's more to having suc-



cess than just putting up points."

The Lincolns got three more goals in the third period, including the 15th of the year for Jaden Lee assisted by Livermore which gave the player from Milton goals in five of his last six. Later on, VanSumeren tallied his eighth of the season which snapped a 10-game goal drought and a stretch with just one goal in his last 20 games. Shiell and Callens had the assists. Prendergast also broke out of a scor-

ing slump, netting his 14th of the campaign on a powerplay with Callens and Spagnolo earning the assists. Prendergast had gone seven games without finding the back of the net.

The Lincs host a rematch against London this Saturday at the PRC after a home game on Friday against the Komoka Kings. The Lincolns also host the Sarnia Legionnaires on Family Day afternoon.

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COMMUNITY

Jr. Boys pick up big win as regular season finishes

By Spencer Seymour

In one of its final regular season games last Friday, the St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys basketball team defeated Central Huron Secondary (CDSS) 58-18 on the backs of a complete teamwide showcase.

Head coach Ken French said the team played "awesome" in the team's first of two games last Friday as the group made final preparations for the play-offs.

"All of the boys got a chance to play and everyone handled themselves really well. The entire team contributed. We moved the ball well and our trap got us a bunch of extra buckets. As always, we got great leadership from Brody Higham and Justin Ropp. Turner Roth and Conner Wheeler levelled up with their best games of the year. Conner was moving the ball well and he broke open their zone defence multiple times. Turner is a unique player and he caught fire for a few minutes which was great to see."

Ropp led the charge offensively with 15 points, joined by Donovan McGregor who put up 13. Roth and Higham each tallied seven points.

This past Monday, the junior boys were

on the road for a quarter-final play-off matchup against Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) in which, to say the least, the Salukis were the ultimate underdogs against far and away the most offensively productive team in the Huron-Perth circuit.

Although the game ended with St. Marys losing 58-19 to the highly potent SDSS squad, French raved about the way his group competed as well as their season as a whole.

"The guys never gave up today in spite of us being big underdogs. The score doesn't indicate how close the game was. The whole team played hard and played awesome defence. Unfortunately, we just couldn't get the shots to fall. We have a great group of Grade 9s to build around next year and our Grade 10s will be contributing members of the senior team for years to come.

"This is an incredible group of young men that we had playing for us," French continued. "Over the course of this season, we had improved our defence and effort. The guys came together as a group with better communication and trust in one another and by doing so we rallied and put ourselves in every game."



Turner Roth puts up a shot during the St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys basketball game against Central Huron (CDSS) last Friday. Head coach Ken French praised Roth and Conner Wheeler for "levelling up with their best game of the season" in the Salukis' 58-18 win over CDSS. Photo by Spencer Seymour

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Lindsey King rockets a shot during the St. Marys Kinsmen Club U9 C Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



Charlotte Heinbuck knocks a loose puck into the net during this past Sunday's St. Marys Landscaping U11 B Girls game.



Ava Anderson passes the puck through the neutral zone during the Bickell Built Homes U13 HL Girls game this past Sunday.



Sidney Clarke gets a wrap-around scoring chance during last Thursday's Ashton Tire Service U15 LL Boys game.



Amelia Falkiner carries the puck over the opposition's blueline during the Hitching Post U11 C Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



Madison McCutcheon gets a shot on goal during this past Sunday's U12 St. Marys Snipers game. Photos by Spencer Seymour



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TOWN OF ST. MARYS NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING



TOWN OF ST. MARYS NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING DEVELOPMENT CHARGES BY-LAW AMENDMENT

On Tuesday, March 12, 2024 the Council of the Town of St. Marys will hold a public meeting, pursuant to section 12 of the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, as amended, to present and obtain public input on the municipality's proposed amendment to the Development Charges (D.C.) by-law and underlying background study.

In order that sufficient information is made available to the public, the background study is available online at the municipality's website (www.townofstmarys.com/developmentcharges). Copies of the proposed D.C. by-law and the background study are also available from the municipal Treasurer.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Public Meeting of Council and any person who attends the meeting may make representations relating to the proposed D.C. by-law amendment and background study.

The meeting is to be held in the Municipal Operations Centre Boardroom (408 James St. S) on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. It will also be streamed live on the Town's YouTube channel (www.townofstmarys.com/youtube).

Any person may attend the public meeting and/or make written or verbal representation related to development charges. Interested persons may express their comments at the public meeting or in writing, addressed to the municipal Clerk, Jenna McCartney (jmccartney@town.stmarys.on.ca) prior to 12:00 p.m. on March 12, 2024.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information about this matter, please contact Andre Morin, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer at the Town of St. Marys Municipal Operations Centre:

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P.O. Box 998

St. Marys, ON N4X 1B6

Telephone: 519-284-2340, ext. 217

Email: amorin@town.stmarys.on.ca

Please note: Comments and opinions submitted on these matters, including the originator's name and address, become part of the public record, may be viewed by the general public, may be published in Council agendas and minutes. Agendas and minutes are published on the Town of St. Marys website at www.townofstmarys.com.

DATED AT THE TOWN OF ST. MARYS THIS 13th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2024.

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HISTORY

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: A Tenuous St. Marys Connection to Fame, Part Two

By Mary Smith

Last week's column explained that the celebrated Canadian Cree artist, Kent Monkman, had been born in St. Marys. His mother, Rilla, at the time of his birth, came to stay with her parents, Lawrence and Lena Wright, who lived at 5 Huron St. N.

William Kent Monkman was born Nov. 13, 1965, at St. Marys Memorial Hospital, delivered by Dr. Joe Hackney. Rilla and her two brothers were the fourth generation of Wrights to have lived in St. Marys. Intelligent and articulate, they wrote stories about their family and about their memories growing up in this community. Some of these stories were published. The photograph with this column shows the cover of a small book, *Trout Creek Tales*, written by Gerry, Bill and Rilla Wright in 2007. The book is out of print but is available for reference at the St. Marys Museum. Bill wrote a number of other books, some containing further references to St. Marys. Gerry wrote his memoirs and shared portions of his work with the St. Marys Museum, generously answering a number of our questions about life in this community in the 1930s.

Last week's column ended with Kent Monkman's great-grandfather, Charles Clutton Wright, and his planing mill, located where the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236 stands today. Charles had previously been a partner with John Johnson in a contracting business and planing mill, but that partnership dissolved. The business and its buildings were sold to D. C. Baird who continued to run a planing mill and lumber business on that site along Station Street into the mid-20th century.

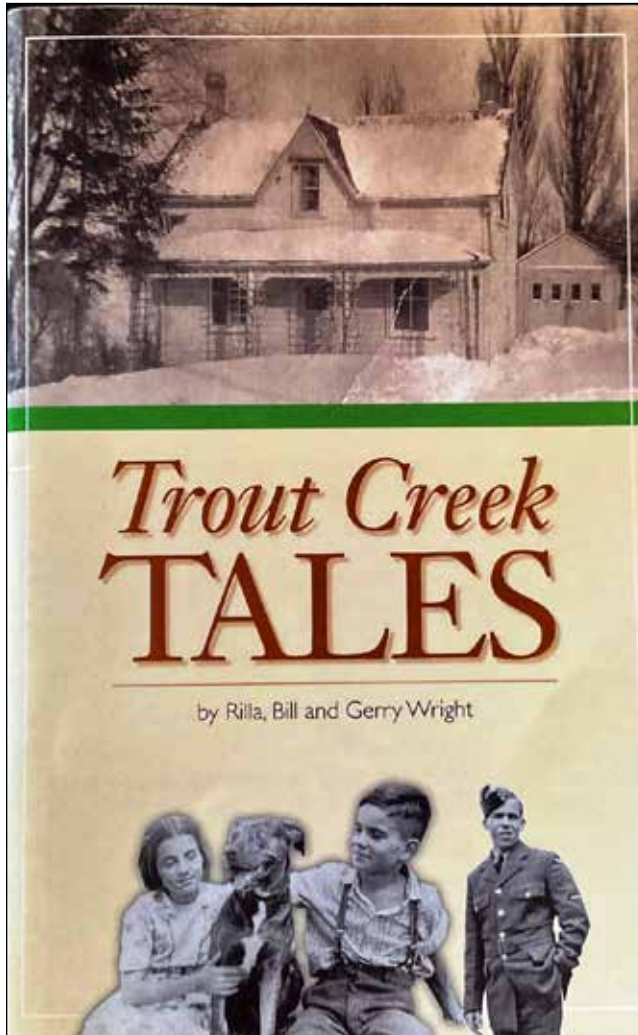
In 1907, Charles Wright purchased a nearby building on the southwest corner of Church and Station streets. It had originally been used as a warehouse for the A. Beattie & Co. general store. By this time, Charles was married to Bessie Brown (sometimes spelled Browne) whose father was a local harness-maker. Charles, Bessie and their four children, Lawrence, Alice, Nelda and Marion, made their home on Wellington Street North near the old St. Marys Collegiate.

When he was a young man, Charles Wright fell while helping to shingle a roof, breaking his hip. It didn't set properly and, for the rest of his life, he walked with a limp.

His mother received a legacy of \$500 when her mother died in England. She offered it to Charles so that he could have an operation to reset his leg. He refused and instead the money went to his younger brother, William. Twelve years younger than Charles, William was a bright student who had started high school at the age of 11. With the help of his mother's \$500 contribution and his own work as a tutor, he was able to attend university. Arthur Meighen, another young man from St. Marys working hard to make his way, was one of William's classmates and friends, both at the collegiate and in Toronto.

William Wright graduated with a BA in classics in 1896 and the following year received his Master of Arts. He taught high school in Forest before coming home to St. Marys in 1912 as principal of the St. Marys Collegiate. When the First World War broke out, William, intrigued by politics and history, felt compelled to be part of the conflict.

He was married, the father of three young children,



Front cover of the book, *Trout Creek Tales*, written in 2007 by Gerry, Bill and Nelda Wright.

and his age and occupation would have exempted him from service. But in February 1916, he asked for leave from the school board and took basic officers' training in London. He formally enlisted with the 110th Perth Battalion in May 1916. In August, he was one of a draft of officers sent overseas to the Canadian Training Depot in England. After further training, he was sent to France and joined the 19th Canadian Infantry Battalion, then served in the trenches on the Somme.

In April 1917, he was in the famous Canadian battle at Vimy Ridge. He survived Vimy but he was killed in action four months later near Lens.

A plaque commemorating the school's former principal was placed on the wall of the St. Marys Collegiate Institute after the war. Gerry, Bill and Rilla all remembered being proud of that plaque when they were high school students. But many years later, Bill reflected: "It is a grief that tens of thousands of young Canadians gave their lives in a seemingly senseless war, and that Uncle Will, then in his 40s, thought it his duty to join the army. His own son, Robert, whom I knew in my youth, grew up without a father's guidance and suffered for it."

Charles Wright's son, Lawrence, wanted to be a farmer. By the 1921 census, he was 23 years old and farming in Tosorontio Township, Simcoe County. On April 25, 1924, he married Lena Boyd from Parry Sound. On their marriage certificate, her occupation was given as "Trained Nurse," but when Lawrence met her, she was teaching in a rural school near his sharecropping farm.

Lawrence and Lena's two sons were born in Sim-

coe County in 1925 and 1926. In 1927, the Wrights left the farm and moved to St. Marys. There, Lawrence began to work for and with his father at the planing mill. Perhaps Lawrence felt that Charles, now 65 years of age, needed his help. The Wrights' third child, Rilla, was born on June 2, 1928, at Mrs. Crone's private hospital, in St. Marys. After living in rented houses for several years, the Wright family moved into their own home in the spring of 1930, the house at 5 Huron St. N., shown on the cover of *Trout Creek Tales*. It is no longer standing.

Gerry, Bill and Rilla's stories of growing up during the depression of the 1930s are a gift to researchers interested in that time period in St. Marys. From a distance of seven decades, they still remembered how, as children, they saw the world around them. They recalled fun and adventures along the banks of Trout Creek with neighbourhood children – the old lime kiln quarry, the swinging bridges, Skipper's scrap yard, the swimming hole and homemade boats and rafts. In the winter, there was tobogganing down the steep riverbank and skating on the creek. They remembered Central School and Saturday morning story time at the library. Once they were at the collegiate, Gerry and Bill were more interested in their various part-time jobs than in school. Rilla excelled in her studies.

Not all the memories were happy. Gerry was badly bullied at Central School when he was 10 years old – he does not name the bully. He became so terrified of leaving the house that he convinced his parents he had severe headaches whenever he tried to read. He stayed away from school for an entire year while his worried parents took him to specialists to try to discover the cause of the problem. His story is a startling description of a little boy's feelings of fear and total despair. Gerry did return to school the following year. By then, he was able, with the help of his friends and his own increased self-confidence, to stand up to his bully and enjoy life again.

In all their writing, the Wrights emphasize the force of religion in their family. Originally members of the United Church, Lawrence and Lena came to feel that it didn't offer enough for their children. They became founding members of the Baptist Tabernacle and were part of that congregation when it purchased and renovated the old Registry Office on Robinson Street. Gerry Wright eventually became a journalist, but he continued to be involved in mission work throughout his life. Bill became an ordained Baptist minister. He and his wife, Jessie, spent many years as missionaries in Nigeria.

Rilla became a teacher. When she graduated, she went to Manitoba to teach in rural schools. There she met Everet Monkman, Kent's father, a member of the Cree Nation. They had four children – Mark, Don, Kent and Sheila – and raised them in Winnipeg. Everet Monkman died in 1987 in a plane crash. Rilla later married John Unger, a widower, who shared her commitment to work with First Nations people in western Canada.

The fact that he was born in St. Marys has no impact on Kent Monkman's work. The stories about this town are not the stories he wants his art to tell. St. Marys has no claim on him, but the Wright family did live in St. Marys through four generations. They were influenced by local people and events and, in turn, they too mattered to St. Marys. Through the stories that they have told with such clarity, Gerry, Bill and Rilla have left our town a legacy.

Thorndale News

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Thames Centre announces District Chief for Thorndale

By Nancy Abra

A new district fire chief has been appointed for Thorndale.

Thames Centre Fire Chief Nick Dorken, Thames Centre Mayor Sharon McMillan, Coun. Tom Heeman and CAO David Barrick, officially announced firefighter Wes Fox as the new district fire chief for Thorndale at the Thorndale Fire Station Feb. 5. Fox has been a member of the Thorndale fire station since 1985 and has demonstrated a strong commitment to the department and to the welfare of the community and area.

The position of district fire chief opened in December when District Chief Ken Armstrong retired. After joining the Thorndale Volunteer Fire Department in 1976, Armstrong devoted his time to the safety of his firefighters and the well-being of the community of Thorn-

dale and area. Armstrong held the position of District Chief since 2007 with Fox as his deputy.

With the announcement of District Chief Fox, Thames Centre Chief Dorken announced firefighter Robert Kuenzlen, who has been at the Thorndale fire station since 2007, will take on the position of district deputy chief.

Chief Dorken revealed that the Thorndale fire station is interviewing 10 candidates with the goal of hiring five new recruits in the next couple of months. The process of hiring is an extensive process as these new auxiliary recruits demonstrate their dedication and commitment to being a firefighter. It is also a big investment for Thames Centre with these recruits attending the Elgin-Middlesex Regional Fire Training School.



Wes Fox has been appointed the new district fire chief for Thorndale. Pictured are District Chief Fox and Thames Centre Fire Chief Nick Dorken at the announcement of Fox's new position Feb. 5 at the Thorndale fire station. Photo courtesy of Municipality of Thames Centre

Thorndale Optimist donation to West Nissouri Grade 8s

By Nancy Abra

The Thorndale Optimist Club is reaffirming its commitment to be "a friend of the youth" with its recent donation of \$2,000 to the West Nissouri Public School Grade 8 class.

With the mandate to provide hope and a positive vision that brings out the best in youth, the Thorndale Optimist Club has been a friend of the youth for more than five decades in this community and beyond.

Over the years they have supported various youth programs in both the local public and high schools, 4H clubs, the Dorchester Food Bank, the St. Marys Salvation Army and Ronald McDonald House in London.

Club member Melanie Sorensen presented a donation of \$2,000 from the club to Grade 8 student Sylas Phan accepting on behalf of his class during a school assembly Feb. 6.



Thorndale Optimist Club member Melanie Sorensen presented a donation of \$2,000 to West Nissouri Public School Grade 8 student Sylas Phan, who accepted on behalf of his class during a school assembly Feb. 6. Photo by Nancy Abra

This is only one of the many ways the Thorndale Optimist Club supports the local youth at this school, which includes monthly food donations to the school pantry, pizza parties and support for the school's academic and sporting events.

Open public session for proposed Watson Farm development

By Nancy Abra

Thorndale and area residents had the opportunity last week to review a proposed townhouse development during a public open house at the Thorndale Lion's Community Centre.

The Watson Farm Development is a proposed 8.92-acre development consisting of 91 townhouse condominiums with the entrance off Nissouri Road.

Required by the Municipality of Thames Centre, a noise study has been completed as part of the planning and approval process. Also, an archaeological assessment of the property in compliance with the provincial guidelines in changing the land's zoning and development has been completed.

This informal public session was an opportunity for area residents to view the development plans, talk to the developer's team and ask any questions. Also on hand was Marc Bancroft, director of planning and development services for Thames Centre and Alana Kertesz, planner with the County of Middlesex.

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COLUMN

HOSTING UKRAINE: Local Ukrainians future in Canada uncertain

By VJ Knutson

Ongoing problems with paperwork and policy find Ric and I immersed in the middle of it all.

Ukrainians are being encouraged to either apply for permanent residency or to extend their Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visas by March 31. Passports, and biometrics need to be up to date in order to apply. Nothing, of course, runs smoothly. The Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) website is difficult to follow even for those of us that speak English. Ukraine has its own hurdles to pass before citizens can renew their passports. Tensions are high and it's contagious.

"Maybe you need to shift gears to advocacy," Viki Scott suggests during a three-hour phone call. She is my counsel for all issues related to new immigrants, especially those fleeing war. Frustrated by the current situation, I call on her wisdom.

"All I can see are problems," I confess. "Without Work Permits, how can families support themselves?"

Although, most new arrivals have the three-year open work or study permits, those who arrive after March 31 will only have visitor visas. With no country to return to and no way to support themselves, what happens to them? If the government has a plan, we don't know about it.

"Definitely over my head," I cringe.



Ukrainians from St Marys and Stratford attend a recent concert by Ukrainian musician Marina Krut. Photo by Nataly Shyshviska

The Rotary club has extended ESL classes for another two months. There is relief among the Ukrainians. I am grateful. A positive note in an otherwise heavy week.

Requests pour in for help. So far, some good-hearted person has stepped forward each time to help, but I fear the point when I have to turn someone away. I just posted last night about needing a room for a 25-year-old man arriving Thursday and, as I type this, an offer comes in. Bless you Christina Saunders for your willingness to help. Now I just need short-term accom-

modations for a mother who will visit her family for two months. The family lives three to a small one-bedroom, so there is no room for mom, sadly.

Tuesday night, Christina, Lesia, Svitlana and Vira drove to Mount Brydges to attend a fundraiser for Ukraine. Vira played the violin and I understand the evening was a success.

Wednesday evening, Ric, I and a few others gathered at Nataly's for a celebration of gratitude. It was a delightful reprieve. Nataly knows how to set out a feast.

All weekend, Ukrainian guests graced our dining table. Our lives have been so enriched by our new friends. Conversation is always lively, and I learn so much. This weekend, the talk is of fears of being forced to go back, often with nothing to return to. I try to reassure them, but really, without clarity from the government, who knows what can happen.

I hear about loved ones having to make heart-wrenching decisions. Mothers deciding between fleeing with their children or staying with their husbands while bombs fall around them. New parents watching the escalating tensions in Europe uncertain if they can make the journey to Canada. So much loss and terror.

"The journey to leave Ukraine is more difficult now," a friend tells me. Long lineups at the border and so many hotspots along the way means the journey is fraught with danger and uncertainty.

Every week, I think, what will I possibly write about for the upcoming issue, and every week something new happens. While I try to keep my focus on the wellbeing of our newcomers here, I cannot help but feel the greater threat to democracy this war represents. We cannot afford to let Russia win. Life as we know it is in danger.

Advocacy may indeed be needed.

Till next time. (Reach me at english.knutson@gmail.com)

Sudoku

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Solutions on page 31



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COLUMN

FROM THE GARDEN: Which came first?



By Nancy Abra

The age-old question of, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg," has intrigued curious minds for centuries. Keeping with that same concept, let's put a horticultural spin on it. Which came first, the plant or the seed? Another puzzling riddle, don't you think?

Personally, I think it is the seed that came first. Seeds are incredible little packages of life. They contain genetic information needed for germination, their development and to grow into a mature plant. So, while plants produce seeds, those seeds are the starting point of new plant life.

When gardeners are on the quest for seeds for their gardens, many turn to open-pollinated and heirloom seeds for the vegetable and flower gardens. These types of

seeds have been valued for their productivity and flavour when it comes to food crops and their dependability. Open-pollinated is a term used to describe seeds that have been harvested from plants, saved, and then replanted with the outcome of the same quality, flavour and production of that variety year after year. Open-pollinated and heirloom seeds are terms that are commonly used interchangeably.

Seeds of Diversity is at the forefront of the movement to protect and preserve valuable heirloom seeds. In 1984, Seeds of Diversity sprouted as the Heritage Seed Program within the Canadian Organic Growers organization. In 1995, it became incorporated and changed its name to Seeds of Diversity. Members across Canada actively collect, grow and save those seeds from vegetables, fruits, grains and flowers to ensure the survival of diverse seed varieties for future generations. Seeds of Diversity also maintains a 'seed library' of over 2,900 regionally adapted and rare varieties which backs up the work of seed saving members, whose efforts maintain genetic diversity and preserve Canada's garden seed heritage.

For more information, visit <https://seeds.ca/>.

Seeds of Diversity provides information, networks and programs to encourage gardeners to save seeds and grow their knowledge to contribute to preserving heirloom and rare plant varieties. The concept of Seedy Saturday emerged from the broader seed-saving movement with the first Seedy Saturday event taking place at the Van Dusen Botanical Gardens in Vancouver in the early spring of 1990. The goal of Seedy Saturday was simple; create an event where people could share seeds, learn about gardening and celebrate the magic of growing food from scratch.

Over the years Seedy Saturday has quickly gained popularity across Canada and beyond. This grassroots event has become a hub for seed swapping, workshops, garden talks and encouraging the use of diverse varieties of food crops and flowers. As there are only a few Saturdays in February leading up to the planting season, the concept has gone beyond Saturdays with many Seedy Sundays planned and even some taking place over a whole weekend or on a weekday. With the



Seed-swapping events have become very popular in Canada and around the world, and help to promote plant diversity and preserve genetic heritage of garden vegetables, herbs and other plants over generations. Contributed photo

success of Seedy Saturday in this country, it has inspired similar events in the U.S., the U.K., Australia and beyond.

Whether you believe it was the seed that came first or not, many area gardeners have their calendar marked with a seedy event in their area to swap seeds or purchase from seed vendors while taking in

inspiring garden presentations.

On Feb. 25 from 10am to 1pm, the Stratford and District Horticultural Society is hosting its Seedy Sunday, and on March 2, the London Middlesex Master Gardeners are hosting their annual Seedy Saturday from 10am to 3 p.m.

It all starts with seeds.

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Ask the Arborist

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

Dear Arborist,

I have a 100 acre farm. Buckthorn is overtaking my fields. What are my options? It's such a mess.

Sincerely,
Buckthorn Troubles

Dear Buckthorn Troubles,

European Buckthorn is extremely invasive and difficult to remove.

Option 1. Walk along with a chainsaw and remove it by hand, this is the slowest way. Also, this method often causes injury from the thorns, which can be problematic in the short term.

Option 2. Hire someone to dig out the buckthorn with an excavator and burn it. Pros and Cons - Pros you don't have to touch it. Cons - you make a real mess, and will have to

get a burn permit.

Option 3 is to hire a forestry mulcher.

Normally, I use a disk forestry mulcher on an excavator. The mulcher does make a lot of large wood chips, but does the job. Additionally, the stumps need to be poisoned, stump-ground, or dug up in the end.

There are also drum forestry mulchers which work quite well, although I have never used one.

Sincerely
The Arborist

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

Riddles

What is it that everyone always overlooks?

Their nose

What is always before you, yet you can never see it?

Your future

What can be right but never wrong?

A right angle

What is full of holes and yet holds water?

A sponge

With what do you fill a barrel to make it lighter than when it is empty?

Holes

What is always coming but never arrives?

Tomorrow

What room can't a skeleton go in?

The living room

Why did the dinosaur bring string to the baseball game?

He wanted to tie up the score

What do you call a pig that does karate?

A pork chop

What do you get when a pig and a chicken bump into each other?

Ham and eggs

What smells but doesn't have a nose?

My brother's socks

- Word Search -

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 C R U M Z H M M M H F N O I T C E F F A
 S T M E C T P G F M X X A R S F M R Y R

Word List

Fourteenth

True love

Sweetheart

Romance

Arrow

Cupid

Chocolate

Champagne

Flowers

Affection

Hugs

Kisses

Cherub

Celebrate

Embrace

Together



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

How did one T Rex skeleton say hello to the other T Rex skeleton?



Bonejour!

Lilly Garniss (10)

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 pets of the week are Rosa (left) and Lily (right). Rosa was adopted from feline friends (Stratford) and is approximately 5 months old, while Lily was a kitten brought in from the cold that was hanging around that no one claimed, about 18 months old. The two get along great and are forever kids of the Becker's.



St. Marys Veterinary Clinic is pleased to be the sponsor of the

PET OF THE WEEK

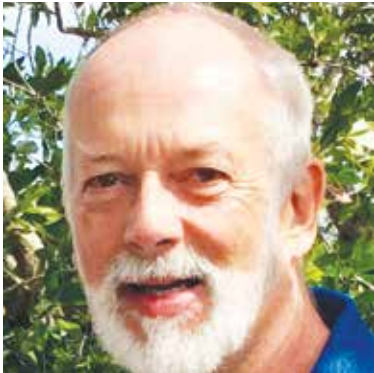
February is Dental Month

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COLUMN

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: An underappreciated day-trip destination



By Paul Knowles

Once upon a time, a company called Gooderham & Worts was the largest distillery in the world, and the largest corporate taxpayer in Canada. The company was founded in 1832, and by the time the twentieth century dawned, the Toronto-based distillery complex covered 13 acres and included more than 40 buildings.

Today, Gooderham & Worts exists only as a brand name owned by another, international company. By the end of the 20th century, though the Gooderham & Worts property had been designated a national historic site in 1988, it was a collection of derelict buildings.

But no more. Just over 20 years ago, the Distillery Historic District was opened as a centre for arts, culture, entertainment, dining and boutique shops. Today, it's perhaps best known for its Christmas Market, but the district is actually a great place to visit 364 days a year (it closes only for Christmas day).

I wandered through the district earlier this month. To say it was not busy would be an exaggeration. But while visitors were a bit thin on the ground, the shops and attractions were open and welcoming.

It's perhaps not surprising that February is a slower time for a district that requires visitors to walk outside to get from building to building. But even the summer months don't present the challenge of fighting through crowds, partly because the site is so large and partly because the Distillery Historic District is less well known than it deserves to be.

And that's why I am telling you about it.

The folks who reclaimed and reimagined the district have done an incredible job. Walking along the pedestrian-only streets with names like Distillery Lane, Tank House Lane, and Gristmill Lane, you are transported back to the Victorian era of solid, red-brick industrial structures. It feels like a highly authentic movie set.

Inside the shops, restaurants and entertainment venues, heritage is married with modern design to delightful results.

The district boasts dozens of businesses. There are more than 40 boutiques alone, ranging in size from the tiny British shop, "The Queen's Trunk," to the large and quirky Bergo Designs. Entertainment venues include the

Young Centre for the Performing Arts and Illuminarium (a fully-immersive experience). There is a full menu of options for good places to eat and drink.

And yes, while Gooderham & Worts is no longer in the building, there is a distillery in there and it's a happening place – The Spirit of York. Never one to bypass a distillery, I popped in unannounced and asked if I could take a photo or two. That led to a warm conversation with general manager Ray Zwicker.

Ray told me the place has taken on new life in the past few months. Many of the staff – including Ray – have joined the enterprise since last fall, and they have initiated a lot of programs based in their distillery. Twice a week, they hold gin-making classes where people learn to combine their own mix of botanicals to produce a unique, personal gin. They also host cocktail workshops, offer tasting tours on the weekends, and present a monthly concert series.

The Spirit of York distillery makes vodka, gin, aquavit and whisky all on site, and all from 100 per-cent Ontario rye. Zwicker told me that makes the product very special because most distilleries use a grain blend.

Then he uttered the magic words, "Would you like a tasting?" I can tell you the vodka was smooth and soft – a delightful spirit, unlike many harsher vodkas – and the



The Spirit of York carries on the Gooderham & Worts tradition. All photos by Paul Knowles

whisky was very tasty, aged in oak. I'd recommend both.

I thanked Zwicker and continued my exploration of the Distillery District. The place has several coffee shops. I met a travel-writing colleague at the Stage Door Café – part of the Young Centre for the Performing Arts – and enjoyed a conversation and a creamy cappuccino. The reason I was in the district in the first place was to attend a tourism-media function that evening hosted by the state of Colorado at the Mill Street Brewpub.

While the streets of the district may have seemed underpopulated, the brewpub was not. It was a happening place – and this is only one of a huge selection of pubs and restaurants in the district.

The British newspaper, The Guardian, has called the district "one of the coolest shopping districts around the

world." The goal of the team that transformed an abandoned distillery complex into the destination it has become was "to create a place that would excite and inspire the senses where people could experience new ideas, new foods, new designs and new ways of living and working." Their vision "was to provide a place where creativity would flourish and passion would be aroused."

I admit that sounds rather over the top, but having spent an afternoon in the Distillery District, it's also spot on. The district is exciting and relaxing at the same time. This is a seldom-thought-of destination that is definitely worth the day trip to Toronto.

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



The dozens of eclectic and welcoming boutiques, bars, restaurants and entertainment venues in the Distillery District are all housed in buildings once part of the Gooderham & Worts distillery complex.

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WEEKDAYS 9-4
WEEKENDS 10-4

PRICES IN EFFECT Feb 16 - 22
Senior Discount Day: Feb 15

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OBITUARY

Eckert



Beulah Frances Eckert, age 91, of Stratford passed away peacefully surrounded by her family at the Stratford General Hospital on February 8, 2024. Born in East Nissouri Township, daughter of the late Robert and Mary Jane (Tate) Elliott.

Predeceased by her husband Dalton November 24, 2010. Beulah is survived by her children Nancy Jane Argyle (Bob Dally) and David Francis Eckert. Lovingly remembered by nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by son Robert William in infancy, son-in-law Frank Argyle, sisters Marie Kelly (Keith), Vonda Drinkwalter (Bill), Gloria Drinkwalter (Doug).

Beulah and her husband lived and farmed in Fullerton Township for many years. Beulah enjoyed gardening, playing cards and traveling with Dalton to the United States. She was a faithful member of First St. John's Lutheran Church, Seebach's Hill.

Visitation for family and friends will take place at the W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford on Thursday, February 15, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. and on Friday, February 16, from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 10:30 a.m. Interment at First St. John's Lutheran Church Cemetery. As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Stratford General Hospital or First St. John's Lutheran Church. www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

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OBITUARY

Dill



Michael John "Jack" Dill passed away peacefully on January 15th surrounded by his family. Jack leaves behind his loving wife of 51 years, Violet (née Corbett). He will be dearly missed by his children Nancy Goundry (Bill), Julie Davis (John), Chris Dill (Sarah) and Kenny Dill (Laura).

Lovingly remembered by his grandchildren: Justin Winford, Ian Davis, Jack Davis, Chelsea Dill, Leightyn Dill, Ryann Dill and Wesley Dill. He also leaves behind his siblings Don, Tom (Wilma), Kevin (Molly), Steve, Marty (Alicia) and Paul (Jayne) as well as many nieces and nephews. Jack was predeceased by his parents Ken and Mary (née Whaling), as well as brother Rob.

Family and friends attended the visitation on Thursday, January 25th, 2024, in Ottawa.

in Jack's memory please consider making a donation to Slay Society INC.

THANK YOU

Ballantyne

I want to sincerely thank my family, neighbours and friends and anyone who remembered my Special Day from the bottom of my heart for many cards, flowers and gifts. The favours were appreciated very much and will never be forgotten.

May God bless everyone of you. Many, many thanks again.

Mabel Ballantyne

Book your pet's Spa Date

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IN MEMORIAM

Watkins

In Loving Memory of our dear dad Fred who passed away 39 years ago Feb. 13, 1985.

Though your smile is gone forever
 And your hand we cannot touch
 Still we have so many memories
 Of the one we loved so much.
 His memory is our keepsake
 with which we'll never part
 God has him in his keeping
 We have him in our hearts.

We still miss and remember you
 Your children, all six of us.

IN MEMORIAM

Peter W Vossen



February 14, 2023

In memory of my true love Pete
 One year has passed but never forgotten
 You will remain in our hearts forever
 Barb, Stepheny, Devin and families

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COLUMN

Straight from the Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Jayne Dill is an end-of-life doula and a grief educator. Join us in the 2/3 Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, March 6 at 7 p.m. for her enlightening presentation, "Living Fully, Dying Prepared". Topics covered include: the role of a death doula, how we die, advance directives, informed consent, palliative and hospice care, pain management at the end of life, medical assistance in dying, and body disposition. To sign up for this free event, please visit tinyurl.com/SMPL-Bookings.

This Week's Recommendation

Library staff have prepared a list of books focusing on grief, death and dying on BiblioCommons. Titles include "A Good Death: Making the Most of Our Final Choices", "You'd Better Not Die or I'll Kill You: A Caregiver's Survival Guide to Keeping You in Good Health and Good Spirits", and "The Last Doctor: Lessons in Living from the Front Lines of Medical Assistance in Dying". For the full book list, visit tinyurl.com/End-Of-Life-and-Grief. Find additional resources on this important topic at tinyurl.com/EndofLife-Death-Grief.

Up This Week

Friday, Feb. 16: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 17: The Adventures in Winter Bird-

ing with David T. Chapman – 11 a.m.*^

Monday, Feb. 19: LIBRARY CLOSED

Tuesday, Feb. 20: Writing Club Ages 10-17 – 6-7 p.m.*; Writing Club 18+ -- 7-8 p.m.*

Wednesday, Feb. 21: EarlyON Play and Read – 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Mahjong Intro – 1-2 p.m., 6-6:30 p.m.; Mahjong! – 2-4 p.m., 6:30-8 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 22: Scrabble – 6-8 p.m.

*Registration Required

^Held at the Pyramid Recreation Centre 2/3 Hall



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The Township of Perth South is requesting quotations for Lawn and Landscape Maintenance in St. Pauls at the Downie Optimist Park, Baseball & Soccer Fields, and Municipal Buildings for the 2024 Season, in accordance with specifications and information as available through the Township.

Documents are available at Bids and Tenders online through www.perthsouth.ca which links directly to <https://perthsouth.bidsandtenders.ca/Module/Tenders/en>

Sealed Quotations will be received by the Municipality on the forms provided until 12:00 noon Thursday, February 29th, 2024.

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LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Snowmobile introduced

25 years ago (1999)

The skateboarders may finally have a place of their own in St. Marys if the efforts of an ad hoc committee prove successful. Sgt. Bob Jackson says a committee has been working towards creating a place where youngsters can freely skateboard without fear of harassment. Skateboarding is not allowed on sidewalks, is too dangerous on roads, and for the most part is not welcome in business or school parking lots.

The St. Marys for the Children of Chernobyl committee is seeking host families in the St. Marys area for the 6-week visit this summer. This is the seventh year that the St. Marys chapter will be hosting children from Chernobyl, Russia.

The Avon Maitland District School Board has received a generous gift from a former teacher who passed away a year ago. The late Elizabeth Klockman left over \$200,000 to the school board, to be used to help students with disabilities.

50 years ago (1974)

Employees at Campbell Soup, west of St. Marys, were evacuated to cars in the parking lot as a result of a bomb threat last Monday evening. OPP officers conducted a thorough search of the premises before allowing employees to resume work on the night shift.

A little arithmetic on the possible saving of \$5,000 per year by town conducting its own garbage pickup shows a saving to the taxpayer of \$2 per year based on a \$15,000 home assessment.

It wasn't easy, but finally the decision was made last Wednesday afternoon that the present "St. Marys Recreational Centre" sign along the south side of the building at Cadzow Park be repainted to read "Stonetown Friendship Centre". Some members of the steering committee held out for the inclusion of the word "senior", but the majority approved a motion made by Mrs. Jane White and seconded by Cliff Brown that the wording above be adopted.

75 years ago (1949)

Extra Board of Works employees were engaged on Monday and Tuesday clearing away the accumulation of snow from the curbing on Queen and other downtown streets. This is the first time this winter that such snow clearing operations have been necessary.

Lineman Bob Howell of the P.U.C. Electrical staff was fortunate on Monday when his safety belt came in contact with the wires of the 550 feeder line while he was working atop a pole on Water Street North. The short blew fuses at the Water Street transformer station but Mr. Howell was unharmed.

George Vanstone, owner of the General Delivery service in town, has informed police that some unprincipled person appears to have put a quantity of sugar in the gasoline tank of one of his trucks. When the engine was taken apart for overhaul recently, sugar deposits were found inside.

100 years ago (1924)

Mr. H.J. Truscott of Toronto has now taken over the Ford Agency and Service Garage in St. Marys from Mr. Joseph Rae, who will retire on February 1. It will now be known as Truscott Motor Sales and 1924 models of Ford cars are expected to arrive this week.

It looks as though the problem of inventing a machine which can propel a sleigh over the snow has been solved. A machine is now on the market called the Snowmobile and it is manufactured by an American company. It consists of a Ford car, the front part of which rests on two wide runners. The hind part has low wheels which run a wide belt, similar to the belts used in propelling war tanks.

As several citizens have asked why it is that certain young men are not allowed to play on certain Inter-church League teams, the Manager of the League wishes it to be known that the rules plainly state that no boy is eligible to play unless he is a regular attendant at Sunday School or church.

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QUIZ ANSWERS

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Kansas City Chiefs | 7. Hot water |
| 2. Birds | 8. Robert Munsch |
| 3. 1970 | 9. Magic and Animal Kingdom, Hollywood Studios, EPCOT |
| 4. Stomach Cancer | 10. Italy |
| 5. China | |
| 6. Earth, Wind & Fire | |

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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For full job descriptions, see our website: www.baseballhalloffame.ca

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Available to students grade 12 or higher, plus adults
Pay: \$18.50/hr (weekdays and weekends)

Application deadline for all positions:
February 29, 2024

Start date for all jobs will be late April.



All cover letters and resumes can be emailed to baseball@baseballhalloffame.ca or dropped off at 386 Church St. S. in St. Marys



Stratford Police Service

We currently have openings for the following position:

PART TIME CLERK - COMMUNICATOR (DISPATCHER)

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

Application forms will be available on the Stratford Police Service website under the "Careers" link.

Completed application packages for this Part Time Clerk-Communicator position will be accepted until March 8, 2024.

Please mail or deliver completed applications to Stratford Police Service, 17 George Street West, Stratford, ON N5A 1A6.

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

THE WEEK AHEAD

SPONSORED BY:  **McDonald's St. Marys**
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PRC & Friendship Centre events - See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5

St. Marys Library events - See Page 29

Friday, February 16

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

Saturday, February 17

- St. Marys Public Library presents "The Adventures in Winter Birding" at the PRC - 11 am
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 pm
- St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at the PRC - 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 18

- Kirkton-Woodham Optimist Club community breakfast at the K-W Community Centre - 9 am to Noon

Monday, February 19

- St. Marys Lincolns vs Sarnia Legionnaires at the PRC - 2:30 pm

Wednesday, February 21

- Accessory Apartments Seminar at the PRC - 9 am to noon

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