

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1205

Thursday, April 4, 2024

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Parkinsons once again donate to Ronald McDonald House - the tradition continues



Jess, Scott, Laura and Matty Parkinson delivering the donations to Ronald McDonald House in London. Contributed photo

By Wendy Lamond

Eight years ago, when Laura Parkinson was born, parents Jess and Scott had to spend some time at Ronald McDonald House (RMH) in London while Laura was at the hospital with some health issues.

Ronald McDonald House is a 40-room house steps away from London's Children Hospital where families can stay to remain close to their children.

Fast forward a year to Laura's first birthday. The family was looking for an alternative to birthday presents for a one-year-old that had everything she needed. Knowing how important RMH is to families, the Parkinsons wanted to be able give back in some way. According to Jess, Ronald McDonald House is truly a home away from home.

"We will never forget the comfort we felt when we stayed there," she said.

Because Laura was born at Easter time, the Parkinsons, with help from family and friends, started collecting Easter baskets and cash donations for the families staying at RMH.

Amazingly, this year there were 46 Easter baskets, more than \$800 in wish-list and pantry items, and more than \$750 in cash donated to Ronald McDonald House Charities Southwestern Ontario.

The small gesture of Easter baskets and wish list or pantry items is the least we can do to give back," Jess said. "We will never forget the impact that RMH has on families living through difficult times".

The donations were delivered on March 24. The staff at RMH distributes the baskets on Easter weekend to the families.

The amount of donations has increased over the years and is a wonderful way to support such a needed accommodation so that parents and families can be close to their sick children.

Ongoing St. Marys sewage-plant upgrades on schedule and under budget

By Galen Simmons

Ongoing upgrades to St. Marys' water pollution control plant are, thus far, on schedule and under budget, town environmental services manager Dave Blake told council at a recent meeting.

Work at the sewage-treatment plant

began in July 2023 after the town hired H2O Ontario Inc. to complete more than \$11 million in upgrades to the plant's odour-control system, grit-removal system and administration building.

"From a financial standpoint, the proj-

Continued on page 7

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys councillors rethinking town food-truck bylaw

By Galen Simmons

A request from Rotary Club of St. Marys president Mark Oliver to exempt food-truck operators from requiring a license from the town to operate during the upcoming Food & Brews Fest on Father's Day has prompted councillors to rethink the town's relatively new refreshment-vehicle bylaw.

Enacted in January 2023, the refreshment-vehicle bylaw requires operators of food trucks to obtain a license from the town annually to operate on public and private property for short-term events or festivals. While the town bylaw requires operators to pay a fee for the license, the fees for food-truck operators participating in events organized by non-profits and charities, including local service clubs, is waived, however those operators are still required to prove they have been inspected by the local public-health unit and the St. Marys Fire Department as required by provincial legislation.

While the license fees may be waived, Oliver told council in a letter that the process required to obtain a license has become a detractor for food-truck operators as they consider whether to participate in events like the Rotary Club's Brews & Food Fest.

"I would like to update council on the difficulty we are having attract-

ing food trucks to this year's festival," Oliver wrote on March 7. "As of today, we only have three trucks confirmed out of the possible nine we are hoping to attract. ... Prior to 2023, attracting food trucks to our festival was relatively easy. ... (Last year) was the first year we failed to attract the full number of food trucks we were looking for. (Last year) was also the year St. Marys introduced its refreshment-vehicle bylaw."

For an event like Brews & Food Fest on a busy weekend that traditionally attracts between 700 and 800 people, Oliver said the town's license requirements add red tape for out-of-town food-truck operators who have their pick of larger festivals in the region that attract more potential customers.

"It is the pre-approval process they must go through that they claim is too onerous," Oliver wrote. "Truck operators claim that the list of documents required by the town is excessive and redundant. All of the supporting documentation the town requires is routinely stored in any reputable food truck and easily available for inspection upon request by any bylaw-enforcement officer."

While town CAO Brent Kittmer said the feedback from food-truck operators outlined in Oliver's letter has not been confirmed through conversations between operators and town staff, he did note that a conversa-

tion with one operator who regularly works in London and was considering bringing their truck to St. Marys seemed to back up those concerns. That operator, Kittmer said, suggested that for short-duration events, operators would prefer if the town would respect or honour the licensing process from another municipality rather than duplicating the process.

Though council ultimately opted to exempt food-truck operators participating in this year's Food & Brews Fest from requiring a license from the town to operate, Kittmer offered councillors a choice of two potential bylaw amendments that could reduce red tape for food-truck operators looking to participate in public events in St. Marys going forward.

The first would be to exempt operators participating in specific short-duration events like Brews & Food Fest from the licensing requirement, while the second would see the town honour licences recently granted to operators by other municipalities. While both options would reduce red tape for operators, Kittmer said the first would leave the town in the dark as to whether operators have been inspected by public-health and fire officials, while the second would require the town to accept licensing standards of other municipalities and both staff and event organizers would need to assume operators have remained in good standing since that license was issued.

"Are we going to make them come back every year and request an exemption or are we going to modify the bylaw like Thames Centre has done," Mayor Al Strathdee said, referring to the Thames Centre refreshment-vehicle bylaw that exempts operators from requiring licenses to participate in specific events. "It took us a long time to get here to have a bylaw. I'm not being critical. It was a politically charged situation where the previous council couldn't come to a consensus, right? ... Now we have someone who I certainly have a lot of respect for in the community saying, 'Ya, it's not working for us because of things out of my control.'"

"I still feel (event organizers) should be told it's your responsibility," Coun. Fern Pridham said. "Like we'll exempt you from our bylaw, but it's still your responsibility to make sure (operators) show them whatever documents they require to make sure they're safe to serve. And then it would be completely up to them with no supervision at all."

As council did not decide to amend its refreshment-vehicle bylaw at its March 26 meeting, the bylaw will remain as is for now and event organizers will need to request exemptions from the licensing requirement if they find it is preventing them from attracting food trucks for their events.

Councillors seemed willing to take a "wait-and-see" approach before deciding whether the bylaw needs to be amended.



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Feels Like 4	Feels Like 2	Feels Like 0	Feels Like 5	Feels Like 12	Feels Like 12	Feels Like 14

COMMUNITY

Carbon tax increase comes into effect this month despite controversy

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Although Ontario Premier Doug Ford and others from across the country called for a pause on the increase, carbon pricing will rise to \$80 per tonne on April 1, up from the current \$65.

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater says this increase will not help rural communities but instead make it harder for small businesses and farmers to survive in the already strapped economy.

"The carbon tax has a significant impact on Canadians, especially those living in rural communities including farmers, agribusinesses and local small businesses, because other alternatives are not available in communities like ours. Drying grain, heating barns and running farm equipment all use fuel and, unfortunately, there are no other alternatives in rural ar-

eas.

"When the carbon tax is applied to all these different aspects of rural and small-town living, it adds the cost to each and every person who lives in these communities and owns businesses in these communities. So that's the substantial economic impact," said Nater.

The carbon tax increase is a "cornerstone policy of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's minority Liberal government," said Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, a senior researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, who notes the carbon tax pricing is a fine policy, but it's not enough to help the economy.

Local MPs are siding with premiers across the country to try to highlight the impact the tax hike will have on all aspects of the economy. Nater notes this could not only drive up

food costs across the country but also push small businesses and farmers to do business across the border.

"Unfortunately, small business folks are looking at different options because the cost is becoming unaffordable to businesses in Ontario.

"We're really seeing a huge impact on business, and we believe there can be a more reasonable approach to this."

Though the carbon-tax increase was implemented on April 1, Nater wants to see it scrapped. He says Trudeau requested "better alternatives to the carbon tax," but he isn't taking suggestions passed along from other provinces.

"A lot of other provinces have come up with alternatives, but they're basically being denied by the federal Liberals. Meanwhile, the provincial proposals are far more beneficial to the environment and consumers.

"We've heard from other provinces that are looking at alternative methods, including nuclear-power-generation and transportation alternatives, providing all these different options that don't involve a carbon tax. However, the federal government has said that none of these alternatives are acceptable without a carbon tax or a price on carbon."

Nater said he believes the carbon tax is a political move rather than a way to promote the decrease of fossil fuels. He says studies conducted on the carbon tax show the program is a "wash" when it comes to its benefits.

"At the end of the day, I think what we're seeing is a very short-sighted approach, as they're unwilling to change direction. What we've seen in the last few months is that this is all political science rather than environmental science," he said.

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys Kinettes Easter Egg Hunt



On Saturday, March 30, St. Marys Kinettes held their annual "Meet the Easter Bunny" and Easter Egg Hunt at Lions Park - Milt Dunnell Field. Anyone who found a metallic egg had their name entered into a draw for a chance to win one of three Easter baskets full of treats. A donation of a non-perishable food item was accepted. Pictured from left are brothers Theo and Charlie Bowes, who had fun collecting lots of hidden Easter eggs at the Easter egg hunt. Photo by Nancy Bickell

Bravo

We have 1 Bravo this week.

1) Bravo to everyone that has contributed to the library food pantry in the past. They are once again in need so bravo to all of those that are willing to help if possible.



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

Boo

We have 0 Boos this week.



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

Quote of the Week

"The threat of climate change is pressing. There is wide consensus that decarbonization is imperative; no serious counter-arguments remain. The only question is how best, at this time, to do so."

- Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey after penning a letter to Trudeau over the weekend asking for an emergency meeting of leaders to discuss alternatives to the raise of carbon tax that kicked in April 1.

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Is the MP's salary increase an April Fool's joke?

April Fool's was cancelled this year, as no made-up prank could match what is going on in the world right now.

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!

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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St. Marys Independent

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The St. Marys Independent

THOUGHTS OF THE WEEK

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April is a kind month. It gets you out of your head and out in the garden.

True healing will always begin with your thoughts.

The one who knows how to adjust is the one that knows how to survive.

April is a moment of joy for those that survived the winter.

COMMUNITY

Hospital Auxiliary provides Easter treats



The St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary held a very successful Easter bake sale at Troyer's Spices on Saturday. These events, along with their Boutique at the hospital, contribute to providing warmed blankets at the hospital, support diagnostic equipment and promote overall health in St. Marys. Pictured, from left, Joanne Winchester, Janis Fread, Corrine Rumble, Joyce Mulholland and Nan Skirten. Photo by Murray Grant



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STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



MUSEUM CLOSURE

March 27 to April 22

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April 6, 9 AM - 1 PM | Pyramid Centre

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Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Carol Herbert. Carol celebrated her 85th birthday on March 28. She was born in Ottawa and moved to the St. Marys area at a young age. Carol was married to Harvey for what would have been 64 years this year. She is adored by her nieces and nephews. Carol is a member of Legion Br. 236 and also Browns Church. She volunteers at both of these places as well as anywhere else she is needed. Happy birthday Carol.

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. When was the last time a total solar eclipse crossed Canada?
2. How many divisions are on an American Roulette Wheel?
3. What does SPF stand for?
4. Does sound travel faster in water or air?
5. What is the bunny's name in Disney's Zootopia?
6. What country has the most castles?
7. What is a group of flamingos called?
8. What are April showers meant to bring?
9. What day is Earth Day?
10. What nationality was Picasso?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

COMMUNITY

Sports Wall of Fame to be installed at the Pyramid Recreation Centre

Town annually recognizing outstanding accomplishments in sports

By St. Marys Independent staff

The Town of St. Marys is installing a Sports Wall of Fame at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to recognize those who have achieved outstanding accomplishments in sports in the community.

The project was proposed by the recreation and leisure advisory committee in 2022 for the preservation and promotion of the importance of athletics history within the municipality. Those who meet the category and criteria, including individuals, teams and builders, can be nominated for consideration to honour their sporting accomplishments.

"We are thrilled to highlight the remarkable sports achievements in St. Marys," said town recreation manager Joannah Campbell in a press release. "Our community is incredibly supportive and en-

gaged. It is important to acknowledge the committed individuals, teams and builders that contribute to the success and growth of sports in our town."

The nomination period for the Sports Wall of Fame will open annually for one month beginning April 1. The Sports Wall of Fame is expected to be installed in the coming months and the successful inductees will be announced and celebrated this fall. The nomination period is now officially open for 2024.

For more information about the Sports Wall of Fame or to nominate an individual, team or builder, visit www.townofstmarys.com/sportswall or follow the Pyramid Recreation Centre on Facebook (facebook.com/pyramid.centre). Hard copies of the nomination application can be picked up at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

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COMMUNITY

Ongoing St. Marys sewage-plant upgrades on schedule and under budget

Continued from page 1

ect has been able to progress while also identifying a number of efficiencies to date," Blake said while giving an update on the project at the town's March 26 council meeting. "While the project did have a contingency allowance approved with it, it remains in full at this time, and we've actually been able to realize almost a quarter of a million dollars in additional savings on top of that. ...We've been able to work with the contractor to realize those savings, but also (work) that would have normally gone into our contingency at this point, we've be able to keep out of it with some of those efficiencies we've identified. So that's been kind of a positive to date.

"I'm sure as the project progresses, other stuff will (make use of) that contingency, but as of now it's in a positive situation."

According to Blake's report to council, the town and the contractor have realized nearly \$244,000 in credits or savings, which have been added to the project's original \$650,000 contingency fund – a pot of money built into a project's budget to cover any unforeseen costs or increases.

The work itself, Blake told council, is progressing as expected.

The upgrades to the plant's odour-control system will see the two existing carbon-odour-control units decommissioned and replaced with a singular biological-odour-control system that is expected to significantly improve odour emissions from the plant.

The new odour-control equipment is expected to be delivered to the site in late spring with installation progressing into the fall. The installation requires new utility supply lines and air ducting to be installed. Commissioning of the new odour-control system and final performance testing is expected to take place in late fall and, at that time, all controlled sources of odour will be managed by the new system and the existing, activated-carbon units will be decommissioned.

Construction of a new building and underground infrastructure for the currently open-air, grit-removal system has been ongoing since the project began last summer. Blake told council the outer building shell has been constructed on what was green space on the property, along with much of the underground utility infrastructure.

Many of the internal-process components are being manufactured and commissioning of the new grit-removal system is scheduled for late fall. Once this process has been brought online, it will take the current open-air process and contain it to a new building onsite that will manage and treat fugitive odour from the facility, thereby further improving odour-control measures at the plant.

"There really won't be any difference in odour (this summer compared to) last summer, and then you should really see a significant improvement in air quality by late fall," Blake said in response to a question from Coun. Fern Pridham about construction and odour disruptions for nearby residents.

The construction itself, Blake said, will be limited to business hours from Monday to Friday, and town staff will provide area residents with advance warning if additional odour is expected at any time during construction.

The project also includes the removal and reconstruction of the administration-control building for the plant. According to Blake, this aspect of the project has proven to be more challenging because of the historical use of the building as a communications and power hub for the facility.

Blake said communications and power feeds and controls have been relocated elsewhere on the property to allow for the building to be removed. Once the building is removed, construction of the new building will begin within the same general footprint. Construction of the new building is expected to begin this year and be completed in early 2025.

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COMMUNITY

Five St. Marys businesses nominated for Business Excellence Awards



Trailblazing Award nominee Human Synergistics Canda. From left are Lynette Geddes, IT, director Kate Stewart, CEO Allan Stewart, director Ryan Stewart, IT manager Fred Stam, administrator Rose Wynands, consultant Gloria Onomuodeke and marketing/communications specialist Andrea Macko. Contributed photo

By Wendy Lamond

On March 25, the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce announced its nominees for the 28th annual Business Excellence Awards.

The awards are to recognize and celebrate Stratford and area business members who have made exceptional contributions to their business and community.

In total, there were 73 nominated businesses across nine categories. Winners will be announced on May 2 at the Business Excellence Awards gala at the Arden Park Hotel in Strat-

ford.

Five St. Marys businesses made the list of nominees.

Betty's Bookshelf was nominated in the Emerging Business Award category along with 14 other nominees. This award will be presented to an entrepreneur who has been in business for one to five years and has built a strong and successful business through community engagement, good business practice and entrepreneurial spirit.

In the Trailblazing category is Human Synergistics Canada. The nomi-



Hospitality Award nominee Social 31. Pictured from left are Jen Dong, Matt Staffen, Patrick Grogan, Jenn Benny, Brandon De Groote and Mark McMurray.

nees in this category are businesses with an innovative and pioneering approach. Judges will also be looking for a strong leadership mindset and the ability to adapt to market changes and customer needs in this category.

In the Hospitality category, both Broken Rail Brewing and Social Thirty-One were nominated. This award will recognize a commitment to excellence in hospitality, customer service, staff knowledge, quality and consistency of product, as well as a business that plays a pivotal role in the community.

Lyric Flowers has been nominated in

the Retail Award Category. Nominees in this category excel in selling merchandise, show strong commitment to innovation and excellence in their field, and provide exceptional customer service.

The gala on May 2 will honour the hard work, innovation and success each business has achieved.

Congratulations to all the nominees!

For additional information about the Business Excellence Awards or upcoming events for the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce, visit www.stratforddistrictchamber.com.



Emerging Business Award nominee, Jan Scott of Betty's Bookshelf.



Hospitality Award nominee Ryan Leaman of the Broken Rail Brewing.



Retail Award nominee Jay Harrison and Lanny Hoare of Lyric Flowers. Photos by Wendy Lamond

COMMUNITY

Town encouraging residents to participate in Earth Week 2024

Earth Week events aim to highlight actions and inspire change

By St. Marys Independent staff

The Town of St. Marys and its green advisory committee are celebrating Earth Week with a slate of impactful initiatives happening April 15-20.

"We are thrilled to enhance our Earth Week initiatives this year," said town public works coordinator, Thomas Redman in a press release. "Even small actions can make a big difference in creating a greener, healthier future for all."

A townwide litter collection campaign

will be running throughout Earth Week. This initiative focuses on minimizing litter in the town's parks and on local streets. A designated bin will be available at the north end of Milt Dunnell Field (1 Veteran's Circle) for participants to discard any litter they collect within local parks and the community.

On April 17, the town is partnering with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and local schools to plant around 150 trees within the designated naturalization area at the

municipal operations centre. This initiative will not affect any existing amenities, like the walking trail, ensuring minimal disruption.

The annual Thames River Clean-up Project is scheduled for April 20 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Milt Dunnell Field. More information on the Thames River Clean-up Project can be found at www.thamesrivercleaup.ca.

The town is also encouraging residents to consider its tree donation program as part of their Earth Week

celebrations. The town accepts monetary donations for the planting of trees on public lands in remembrance, observance, or acknowledgment of a special event or purpose. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.townofstmarys.com/treedonations.

For more information about Earth Week events, follow the town on Facebook (facebook.com/stmarysontario) or contact Redman at 519-284-2340, ext. 213.

Town hosting Municipal Hazardous and Special Product Event on April 13

The Town of St. Marys is hosting its next Municipal Hazardous and Special Product Disposal Day on Saturday, April 13, 2024.

The event will run from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Municipal Operations Centre (MOC) located at 408 James Street South (enter off South Service Road). It is open to residents of St. Marys and Perth South.

Items that will be accepted at the dis-

posal event include:

- Acids, aerosol cans, antifreeze
- Bases, batteries, bleach
- Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs), fluorescent tubes
- Fertilizers, fuels, garden and pool chemicals
- Household cleaners, motor oil, paints, pesticides
- Propane tanks/cylinders, solvents,

stains, Varsol

All materials must be sealed and in their original containers with labels. Materials should be transported in the rear of vehicles (trunk, truck bed, etc.), and contained in rigid containers for safe transport and unloading. Vehicles with materials in the back or front seat will be re-directed to a separate area of the parking lot where they can be moved to the trunk or tailgate. Residents are asked to remain in

their vehicles at all times as materials will be unloaded by trained staff.

Please note that the MHSW depot that was located at the St. Marys Landfill has now been closed, and MHSW material will no longer be received at the landfill.

For more information about waste disposal services in St. Marys, visit townofstmarys.com/MHSW.



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COMMUNITY

Queer Art Event opportunity for creativity and breaking stereotypes



Heather Poechman (centre) hosting a community workshop in Martha's table in Kingston, Ont. The artist will host a Queer Art Event at Zenfire Pottery and Mercantile on April 13. Photo by Viara Mileva



Heather Poechman will host the Queer Art Event in St. Marys on April 13 at Zenfire Pottery and Mercantile. The afternoon event will be a chance for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and allies to work on creative projects. Photo by Chris Miner

By Emily Stewart

St. Marys and area residents who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and their allies will be able to work on their creative projects with guidance from a local artist.

Heather Poechman, founder of RubiArt, will host a Queer Art Event at Zenfire Pottery and Mercantile on April 13 from 3-4 p.m. The event is for participants aged 14 and older. Poechman, a queer and non-binary artist using the pronouns they or she, told the St. Marys Independent the event provides a space for participants to bring their textiles, watercolours,

markers, laptops and sketchbooks to work on creative projects.

"It is a low-pressure creative environment where folks can connect with friends, partners and peers in a welcoming, supportive space," they said. "Although this event is not an art class, as an artist myself I am happy to provide feedback and participants are welcome to solicit group feedback as well on their projects."

The tagline for RubiArt is "art for social change." Events like the Queer Art Event provide a creative space for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and challenge stereotypes and miscon-

ceptions.

"Often people associate queerness, queer visibility, art and art opportunities as something that only exists in bigger cities and it makes me sad to see folks – young folks especially – feel they need to leave their small-town environments to be seen, heard, welcomed and able to live their fullest, most authentic lives," she said. "I grew up in a small town and remember having that same view but have done a lot of internal work to unlearn assumptions about rural, queer life. I see events like my Queer Art Event as a way of challenging the dominant

narrative in addition to creating space for small-town creative, queer folks to come together in solidarity and community."

Although the event is free, pay-what-you-can-donations will be accepted. Registration online at www.rubiartist.com/classes/p/queer-art-events is recommended.

Poechman also offers painting and drawing classes, and several are hosted at Zenfire. More information about the classes can be found by visiting www.rubiartist.com/classes.

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COMMUNITY

Betty's Book Clubs offer unique dining, reading and social experiences

By Emily Stewart

Bookworms and foodies alike will have a chance to try the recipes from their newest cookbook purchase.

Betty's Bookshop will run its second cookbook book club event at the Flour Mill on April 17. Jan Scott, the owner of Betty's Bookshop, said the upcoming event will feature a four-course meal with recipes from the book, *The Side Gardener*, by Rosie Daykin.

The first cookbook book club ran in October 2023. Scott works with Tracy Pritchard and Alex O'Shea, owners of the Flour Mill, to create an event featuring a new cookbook to be released the month of the meeting. The culinary team at the Flour Mill then creates the meal based on the cookbook's recipes.

"We go over to the Flour Mill and everybody has this beautiful, seated, plated dinner made from the book, and everyone goes home with a copy of the cookbook," Scott said.

As of March 27, when the Independent spoke with Scott, there were only two spots left for the second cookbook book club event. The next event will be a Mother's Day brunch on May 12. The brunch will be served family style with recipes from the cookbook, *The Kitten and the Bear*, by Sophie Kaftal and Bobby Zielinski.

Scott said to expect scones, sandwiches, tarts, jams, jellies, lemonades and teas at the brunch. She also said the cookbook book club events are fun and enjoyable.

"It's a great way to meet people in

your community," she said. "I think it offers something new and different to do in town. I think it offers a new dining experience. I think it's a great community builder and it introduces both of our businesses to people who otherwise may not be familiar with them."

In addition to the cookbook book club, Betty's Bookshop also runs the new book book club, British book club, classics book club, romance book club and non-fiction book club. All five of the book clubs will have members select the next book of the month from a selection of books Scott picks.

The classics book club and the non-fiction book club alternate meetings and run six times a year, whereas the rest occur every month. There are waitlists for both the British book club and the new book book club.

Friendships are formed at all of the book clubs. Two women who met each other at the first cookbook book club event now get lunch together regularly. The book clubs give St. Marys residents who have been in the area for decades and residents new to town a chance to connect.

"I often hear that they'll run into each other at a coffee shop or walking their dog or in another store in downtown St. Marys," Scott said. "So, I think it's been a really great way for other people to connect with other people in town."

More information can be found by visiting www.bettysbookshelf.com/betty-s-book-clubs.

ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS PROUDLY PRESENTS 98TH ANNUAL RURAL URBAN NIGHT

HISTORY

The Rotary Club of St. Marys was chartered in 1925 and the first Rural Urban event was held in the Town Hall, to foster good fellowship between Rural and Urban residents. In the early years travel was by horse and buggy thus Rotarians travelled to the communities of Kirkton, Thorndale etc. for the meetings. The venues were local church's because they were the heart of the communities and the church ladies put on a great country meal to enhance the relationships.

In later years, cars became common, and Community Centers were built in Kirkton, Thorndale, and St. Marys to accommodate events. Caterers then provided food, but local sourcing has always been maintained.

We have enjoyed many speakers over the years that provided information and entertainment, along with fellowship, before the busy spring planting season. We are pleased that for many years we have been able to have attendance between 350-425 from Perth, Huron, Oxford, and Middlesex counties.

Rotary is proud the Rural Urban event is celebrating its 98th year in 2024 thus it stood the "test of time" in this unique Town of St. Marys and rich diversified agricultural area. We sincerely thank all the participants.

AUCTION ITEMS - SHACKLETON ONLINE

St. Marys Votorantim Cement Plant VIP Tour

Join Robin Manzer for an unforgettable 2-3 hour tour of the manufacturing facility and quarry, which includes the opportunity to initiate a 40,000-tonne blast. This experience is for 4-6 people, and the date will be mutually agreed upon.

St. Marys from the Air

Join Bill Scott, the chief test pilot for Diamond Aircraft, for a thrilling 45-minute flight for two in a Cessna 172. Don't forget to bring your camera to capture the breathtaking aerial views. Date TBD mutually.

Brews and Food Fest VIP Tickets

Sample top-notch Ontario craft beverages and indulge in mouthwatering delight from food trucks. Beer, cider, wine, and spirits are available. Four VIP tickets which each include a souvenir sampling glass with 3 tickets, preferred parking, early access to the event, and same-day admission to Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame Museum. Must be 19+ to purchase.

Highlights of Elgin County

Wine & Brewery Tour, shopping including visiting lighthouses & beaches at Port Dover, Port Burwell & Port Stanley. 8 hour Chauffeured Tour with Guide. Lunch provided for up to 6 people. Vehicle provided by Kipp Edwards, St. Marys Ford.

Our Nation's Capital

When the House of Commons is in session, the staff of John Nater, MP for Perth Wellington, will offer a tour of the Parliament Buildings for a maximum of four individuals. Free passes to the Canadian History, War, Agriculture and Food, Aviation and Space, Science and Technology Museums are included. The package includes \$250 towards the cost of accommodations of your choosing.

Town of St Marys Facility Tour

Mayor Al is delighted to be your host for a tour of one of the town facilities. Two people may tour the Pyramid Centre (including the non-public areas), the firehall, or the Town Hall (including the historic bell tower). Lunch at a St. Marys eatery of your choice is also included.

London Knights Prime Seating

Experience the excitement of a London Knights game at Budweiser Gardens with prime seating for a group of four. Tickets are located in The Talbot Bar & Grill so you can enjoy a beverage & meal if you wish. Date TBD mutually.

Blue Jays Tickets

Enjoy the atmosphere and excitement of a Blue Jay game in 2 great seats at the refurbished Skydome. Game Monday May 20th, 3:07 PM - White Sox vs Blue Jays - Section 128, Row 3, Seats 7 and 8.

Pike Lake Golf Package

This gift card is of the value of a 2 person, 2-day (1 night) spring golf package (must be used prior to May Long Weekend OR after October 1). This golf package has 2 rounds of golf with a cart, a night's accommodations, a dinner and a breakfast. Preferably used during the week.

Horse Drawn Sleigh or Wagon ride at McCully's Hill Farm

Enjoy a peaceful tour of McCully's Hill Farm, while the wagon or sleigh is being pulled by a pair of Clydesdale Horses. The tour will last approximately an hour in length, and 8 to 12 people can attend depending on the sleigh or wagon. The date and time will be agreed upon with McCully's staff and the winning bidder with consideration given to driver availability, sleigh or wagon and of course the weather.

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ARTS & CULTURE

Celebrating poetry in April with the St. Marys Poetry Circle



The St. Marys Poetry Circle at Barista's, Water St. (From Left to Right) Paul Richardson, John Cull, Beverly Blair, Jane Loucks, Brian Collinson, Rosemary Radcliffe, Kate Orland-Bere, Sylvia Bosgra, Alizon Sharun, Paul Stevens, Brogan Aylward. Contributed photo

By Alizon Sharun

There is a world of being

We range from pole to pole

Through seasons of the spirit

And weather of the soul.

Bliss Carmen, Canadian poet (1861-1929).

Throughout Canada, April is National Poetry Month, bringing together communities, schools, literary organizations, booksellers and poets to celebrate the vital place of poetry in Canada's culture.

Here in St. Marys, our Town Council has again proclaimed April as Poetry Month in St. Marys.

Established in 1998 by the League of Canadian Poets, National Poetry Month is given a different theme each year. "Weather" is this year's theme, which may inspire more curses than verses!

For the whole month of April, browse for poems in the downtown store windows. There are nearly 50 of them. Members of The St. Marys Poetry Circle, with encouragement and sponsorship from the B.I.A, have either written or found poems reflecting the power and poignancy of the weather which affects us all. If you want to curl up on a grey day with a book of poetry, go to Betty's Bookshelf on Water Street and the sun will start shining.

The St. Marys Poetry Circle, now celebrating its 14th year, is a vibrant group which was first brought together by Ione Grover and friends to encourage writing and reading poetry in a welcoming and appreciative atmosphere. Barista's on Water Street resounds on the last Friday of each month with the poems contributed by members, their own or a favourite author's. Lively discussion and laughter often punctuate the evening. The cost is \$10 per person, which includes a hot beverage and snack at half-time, provided by Tammy and Al, the proprietors.

Some members are local to St. Marys, and others come from Stratford, London, and outlying areas. Poets range from the interested beginner to pub-

lished poets and devoted listeners. New members are always welcome. Please contact alizonsharun@gmail.com;

We enjoy collaborations with other organizations in town. An inspired suggestion from one of our group linked poetry and curling. The vocabulary of curling is rich and the phrases used in the sport unique. Might there be some poetry which "covers the button"? A group of us met at The St. Marys Curling Club in early February, and from the comfort of the club room, watched the players on the ice as manager, Jason Clark, explained the rules.

The poem Hurry Hard by Poetry Circle member Paul Richardson, can be found in the collection "Stone", a collaboration with the St Marys Station Gallery and St. Marys Clicks Photography Club.

Please join us for various poetry offerings this April.

Tutt Co. restaurant is hosting "Dinner Poetry" every Wednesday, beginning April 3 when three poets will recite poetry to dinner guests, from 7-8pm.

Reserve a table at 226-301-4919 or tuttco.ca.

On Saturday, April 27, The St. Marys Poetry Circle is presenting "Weatherludes" at Riverwalk Commons, 84 Water St. S at 7 p.m.. Enjoy a captivating and entertaining selection of poetry on the theme of weather, joined by violist, Glenna Theurer, playing original compositions by Britt Theurer. Refreshments provided.

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An official poster about National Poetry Month.

Entrance is by donation (suggested minimum:\$15) with proceeds after expenses going to Upper Thames River Conservation Authority to fund local education and river conservation programs. Space is limited. Reserve seats at rwcommons.ca; or 647-992-9620

For more information about National Poetry Month: poets.ca

Hurry Hard

*Born of ancient volcanic residue
on the island of Ailsa Craig
cored, ground, shaped and polished
on the Scottish mainland
The weighty granite stone glides
over the pebbled ice sheet
Rumbling towards concentric rings
strategy determining speed and direction
Chess on ice
End after end
Stone after stone
The game unfolds
The winning team buys the drinks*

GOOD CURLING
- Paul Richardson

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys council awards nearly \$400,000 contract for Sarnia Bridge repairs

By Galen Simmons

St. Marys council has awarded a nearly \$400,000 contract for repairs to the historic Sarnia Bridge to McLean Taylor Construction Ltd.

The lower of two bids for the project came in at nearly \$394,000 – more than \$53,000 over the town’s \$341,000 budget for the preventative concrete and masonry work to the bridge’s abutments and piers.

“Last year, in our OSIM (Ontario Structure Inspection Manual) inspections – those are the bridge inspections we do every other year as required by legislation – the inspecting engineer recommended we undertake some concrete and masonry repairs to both the abutments and the piers of the bridge,” town infrastructure services manager Jeff Wolfe told council. “They recommended we do that in the near future.”

After accounting for engineering and other “soft” costs, as well as the HST rebate, Wolfe said the project required an additional \$53,444 above what was included in the town’s 2024 capital budget. That variance, which council approved in addition



to awarding the tender to McLean Taylor, will be funded through the town’s roads reserve.

Originally built as a Grand Trunk Railway viaduct that connected the Town of St. Marys with Sarnia by rail, the boardwalk-pedestrian bridge is now part of the Grand Trunk Trail.

“McLean Taylor has indicated they’re looking to start the work almost immediately, so we might see some activity down there shortly, and they are not anticipating any significant impact to trail goers as they complete the work,” Wolfe said, noting the

project will involve some in-water work, at which point the contractor will be working from a barge on the Thames River as they complete masonry repairs of the piers and remove vegetation.

In response to a question about the longevity of these repairs from Mayor Al Strathdee, Wolfe said this project will cover all foreseeable repairs over the next five years. The inspectors, he said, did not comment on any other significant work needed on the bridge for as long as a decade after that five-year outlook.

“It is a significant structure. We estimate the replacement cost would be in excess of \$12 million, so taking care of the asset while the cost of the repairs is relatively low is going to be super important to maintaining its affordability,” Wolfe said. “The sub-structure, originally constructed in 1880, otherwise will be in good shape after we do the repairs – or as good shape as you would expect for a structure that old.

“The superstructure and the wood; we’ve replaced wood planks in recent years and done some painting of the handrails. It will be important to keep up those minor maintenance activities ... as we go.”




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SPORTS

St. Marys' Hollestelle-Black competing at ringette nationals

By Spencer Seymour

St. Marys resident Adrianna Hollestelle-Black will be travelling to Dieppe, N.B. along with her club team, the U16AA London Lynx, for the Canadian Ringette Championships starting April 7 and running through April 13.

Hollestelle-Black and the Lynx earned their spot in the national ringette championship when they claimed the silver medal at provincials. Hollestelle-Black told the Independent she is excited about competing at nationals.

"Immediately after the (provincial gold-medal) game, I was frustrated with the loss because we had tied West Ottawa twice," said Hollestelle-Black. "After that feeling passed and I took time to really think about it, I realized that going to the Canadian Ringette Championships as Team Ontario 2 was something to be proud of. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and something most players don't get to experience."

According to Hollestelle-Black, several elements make her team special.

"We have a strong bond on and off the ice. My team is comprised of players from eight different ringette associations. Our success was dependent on how quickly we could gel. Many teams we faced had played together as a core group for many years. We needed to work together to learn the plays and what we needed from each other to stay positive and work together.

"We are the only team representing Ontario at nationals that has an all-female bench staff," Hollestelle-Black continued. "Being coached by women who have played the sport themselves at a high level is an advantage. Mentors like our coaches are not something any other team has and they have helped get us where we are today."

That coaching staff, comprising Mel Evans, Karlee Sutton and Tina Parsons, has specifically aided the St. Marys resident and her teammates in multiple, key ways.

"Having coaches that have played



Adrianna Hollestelle-Black and the rest of the U16AA London Lynx will be travelling to Dieppe, N.B., for the Canadian Ringette Championships April 7-13. Contributed photo

ringette at a high level has helped me grow and improve this season. They understand the game and push us to improve and get stronger. We practice twice a week, do dryland three times a week and have games weekly. U16AA is a competitive field, and most associations are strong. You only win by bringing your A-game each time you step on the ice. My coaches also focus on supporting us in developing our mental game and teaching us how to keep the right mindset."

According to Hollestelle-Black, her team found success this season because of everyone's ability to contribute.

"My team was successful throughout the season and at provincials because we utilize all the players on the ice. When working offensively, all of the players are able and strong enough to shoot and score. Our defense can cycle through and still get back to create a strong defensive triangle. We stay positive with each other and encourage each other. These are some of the things that led to our success."

That teamwide cohesion is also a major part of Hollestelle-Black's love of the sport.

pate in the St. Marys tournament as a member of the Richmond Hill U19A team. We all share a common love of the sport. Another reason I love this sport is because of the players I have played with. I have met people I likely wouldn't have met otherwise and many of them are still friends of mine today."

Hollestelle-Black noted the contributions of many of her previous coaches as having helped her reach the national stage.

"I am representing Ontario but I'm also playing for myself and everyone who has supported me in my ringette career to this point. My coaches from St. Marys including Rudy Taylor, Jeff McCurdy and Rebecca Taylor introduced me to the sport. In later years, Sheri Unich, Kelly Linton and Sammi Henderson pushed me to take my game to the next level and encouraged me to keep setting new goals.

"My current coaches took a chance on me and have taught me more in one season than I could ever have hoped for," Hollestelle-Black continued. "I'm also playing for my parents and family who have driven me all over the province so that I can play ringette. I set goals for myself and worked hard to achieve them. At the start of the season, nationals seemed like a dream but now it is a reality."

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MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



Liam Showers whips a shot on goal during a Social Thirty-One U11 A Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



Ben Becker loads up a shot during a Home Hardware Building Centre U13 C Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



Brock Chessell plays the puck into the slot during a St. Marys Cement Plant U18 A Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



Cortney Linton rockets a slap-shot from the point during a Hubbard Pharmacy U18 B Girls St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



Abby Russell skates the puck into the offensive zone during a Home Hardware Building Centre U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock game earlier this season



Zack Tubman blasts a slap-shot during a Frayne Custom Cabinets U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season. Photos by Spencer Seymour

SPORTS

Lincs sweep Rockets, meeting London in West final

By Spencer Seymour

For the second consecutive year, the St. Marys Lincolns have swept their way to the Western Conference Finals and are set for a rematch from their semi-final a year ago against the London Nationals after beating the Strathroy Rockets 5-3 in game four.

While head coach Jeff Bradley acknowledged the team has yet to complete its mission, he acknowledged the special nature of back-to-back seasons in which the Lincolns went unbeaten through two rounds of playoff hockey.

"Certainly now isn't the time to reflect as a fan or as a part of the team," said Bradley. "We're still in the battle. We still have a job to finish. But when you put it that way, this is the third year now that we've gone to the second round and the second year that we've gotten to the conference finals. It's no longer a fluke that we're at this point."

"You see it all the time in every league where teams get to the finals once and then fizzle out. But to be able to call yourself a perennial contender and you're expected to be a top team is special for this organization. It all starts from the top with Brandon (Boyd, Lincs' President). You look at our attendance and it has increased massively over the last few years. It takes time to build something like this and for a smaller centre, reaching this point is somewhat rare and I think it shows how special St. Marys is."

It took just two minutes and 57 seconds for Peterborough native Cohen Bidgood to register the first goal of the game, jamming home a loose puck during a goal-mouth scramble. The goal gave Bidgood points in seven of eight games so far this post-season.

A goal by Billy VanSumeren 78 seconds into the second frame appeared to have the Lincolns on track to another decisive win but Mason Landry halted St. Marys' momentum just half a minute later. Not only did it take some of the wind out of the Lincolns' sails, but it gave the Rockets a shot in the arm, with Strathroy scoring the next two goals including a short-handed tally by Ethan Facchina at the 8:50 mark of the second followed by the first of the playoffs for Denis Beley-Camara.

Bradley was pleased with his team's performance in the first 20 minutes but recognized the flaws in their performance in the middle period.

"Overall, it wasn't our most perfect game. Fatigue was a factor for both



Ryan Hodkinson rounds the back of the net during the St. Marys Lincolns' semi-final series against the Rockets. The Lincs swept the Rockets last Tuesday with a 5-3 win in Strathroy. Hodkinson along with Owen Voortman led the Lincs' forwards in ice time in game four and both were praised by head coach Jeff Bradley for both being "a coach's dream." Photo by McGinny Photography

teams. I thought we had a really good road period in the first. We were up 1-0, we had a couple of other good scoring chances, and I don't think we gave up any high-danger chances in the first. Their first goal I thought was a bit of a fluky one but the short-handed goal we gave up and then to go down 3-2 was obviously disappointing."

Just under three minutes after the Rockets took their first and only lead of the game, VanSumeren scored his second of the period to tie the game at three apiece. Coach Bradley was happy to see the 2023 Sutherland Cup Champion rise to the occasion and score two massive goals for the Lincolns.

"I know Billy was hard on himself throughout the regular season because he wasn't getting the production he wanted, but when it's important, that's when you expect your 20-year-olds to step up and Billy did that. In a deciding game, Billy scored two goals for us and continued to be a beast."

In the second game of the series, the Rockets had a multi-goal lead that evaporated, and they found themselves unable to stop the comeback. In game four, it was the Lincs who blew a multi-goal lead, but they were able to tie and eventually retake the lead. Bradley attributed this to a complete devotion by every Lincoln to their lofty goal.

bench boss.

"Obviously, Adam (Barkley) has been a stud these playoffs. Josh (Cornfield) was outstanding. Typically, Josh isn't an incredibly physical defenceman, but when the time comes, he can step up and he had some guys on Strathroy scared."

Perhaps no one turned in a more complete effort, however, than the two leaders in ice-time amongst St. Marys forwards, which Bradley noted were Owen Voortman and Ryan Hodkinson.

"The guys who played the most for us were Ryan (Hodkinson) and Owen (Voortman). In tight games, you want the guys you trust the most and who will do absolutely everything to win and

Ryan and Owen were two of those guys (in game four). The way they play, they are a coach's dream. They listen to what you say, they believe in what you say and they execute it.

"Ryan started as a first-year guy who may go in and out of the lineup and he's separated himself from that group," Bradley elaborated. "He's a really important part of this team and he can really do it all. In Owen's case, in a time when there are no real power forwards, he's a true power forward. He's an elite penalty killer. He just puts his head down and works. We are nowhere near where we are without guys like Owen and Ryan."

Throughout this post-season, the Lincolns have enjoyed contributions from up and down their lineup, something that, according to Bradley, was reinforced during their semi-final against the Rockets.

"You look to learn from each opponent and take something out of each series. We were able to look at ourselves and realize we were able to win in different ways and have other guys step up. We thought Strathroy posed a certain threat. They are very dangerous in transition and a very potent, offensive team. We didn't have to match up against their top players. Our depth allows us to not have to hard match one of our lines against another. To know that you have multiple lines who can play against top players is incredibly important.

"Looking back at this series, we found four different ways to win. Game one was that complete effort where we didn't give them anything. The second game was the big comeback. Game three, it really only took us 25 minutes to win a game. Then, in the fourth game, we had to really gut one out."

"I know what our mission is this year and it's to win. When you want to win and you're willing to go through anything to do it, you're not going to stop fighting. I think that's something we've proved in this series. We're going to try to win no matter what it takes. Whatever it takes, these guys want to win and our players executed as best they could."

The score stayed at 3-3 for the majority of the third until Jaden Lee pulled out another heroic moment and wired a snapshot past Strathroy netminder Colin Androlewicz to put the Lincs up 4-3. Lee then added an empty net goal with 10 seconds left in the game to seal the 5-3 victory. Bradley noted that his team didn't quite have the speed and aggressiveness they hoped for, but they also performed well defensively.

"We stayed in the fight which was good to see. I didn't think we had the most jump coming out of the gate in the third, but we weren't giving up much either. We kept Strathroy to the outside. We waited for our moment to strike and, fortunately for us, it was the one guy we wanted going down the wing. Then we had two and a half minutes with their goalie pulled and we had the same five guys out the whole time."

Among the players credited with an assist on Lee's goals included captain Adam Barkley and Josh Cornfield, both of whom were praised by the

SPORTS

Lincolns holding golf tournament June 22

President's Cup package will be auctioned off at River Valley G&CC

By Pat Payton (Special to the Independent)

The St. Marys Lincolns will hold their annual golf tournament on Saturday, June 22 at River Valley Golf and Country Club.

Organizers say a maximum of 30 four-person teams (120 golfers) can sign up for the GOJHL team's fundraising event. It will again be a Texas Scramble format with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. The entry fee is \$150 per golfer, which includes a power cart and steak dinner.

The golf tourney chairmen are Dan Murrell and Brian Hughes. Contact them with your foursomes by emailing lincolns golf@gmail.com.

The tournament is already 20 per cent full.

Several impressive items will be auctioned following the dinner including a President's Cup package. The prestigious 2024 President's Cup will be held at the Royal Montreal Golf Club, Sept. 26-29. The package is for two people and covers four days, including tickets and hotel accommodations.

The popular golf-ball toss will also



be held, where patrons purchase balls and toss them off the River Valley patio onto the ninth green. The closest ball to the hole wins the 50/50 cash prize.

Tourney notebook:

- The fee for attending just the meal (steak dinner) following the tourney is \$50.
- The tournament winners will again receive green jackets.
- Core Fuels & Red Cap Propane is the title sponsor of the 2024 tournament.
- Hole sponsorships can also be purchased. Contact Rob Mossey (519-280-1915) for more information.

St. Marys bowlers qualify for Provincial triples' championship



The St. Marys Bowling Lanes men's triples team, pictured from left to right, of Scott Jackson, Mark Mohr, and Kenny Hutton won the Ontario Five-Pin League Triples Championship against four other teams with a points over average total of 249 on Saturday, March 30. The win earned the local trio a berth at the Provincial Championships in Scarborough on May 25. Contributed photo



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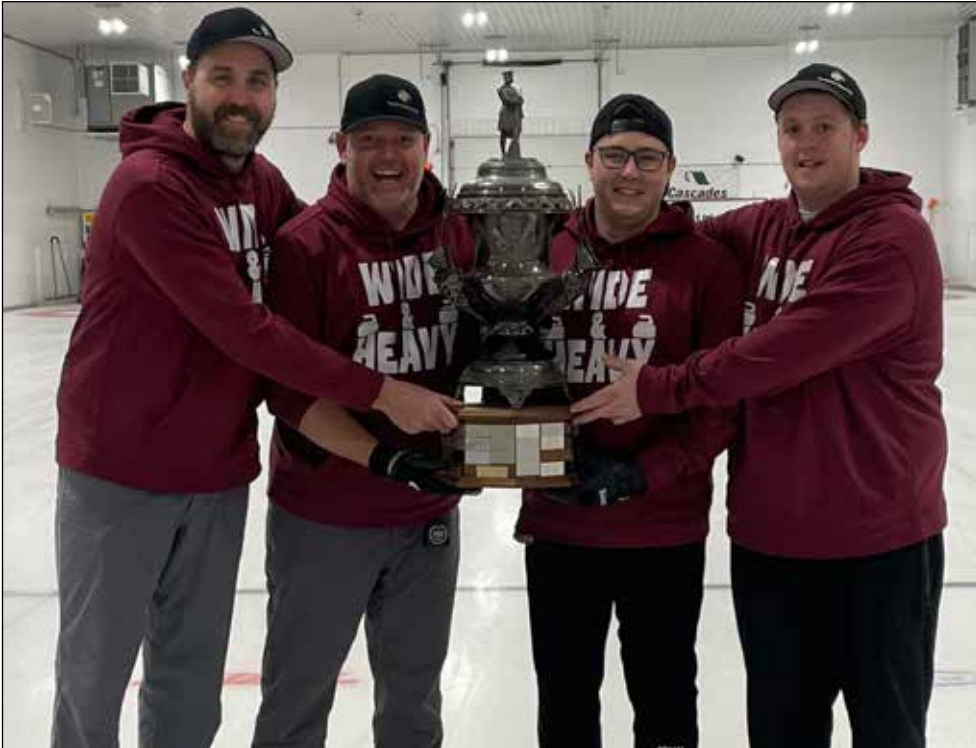
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SPORTS

St. Louis rink wins Competitive League



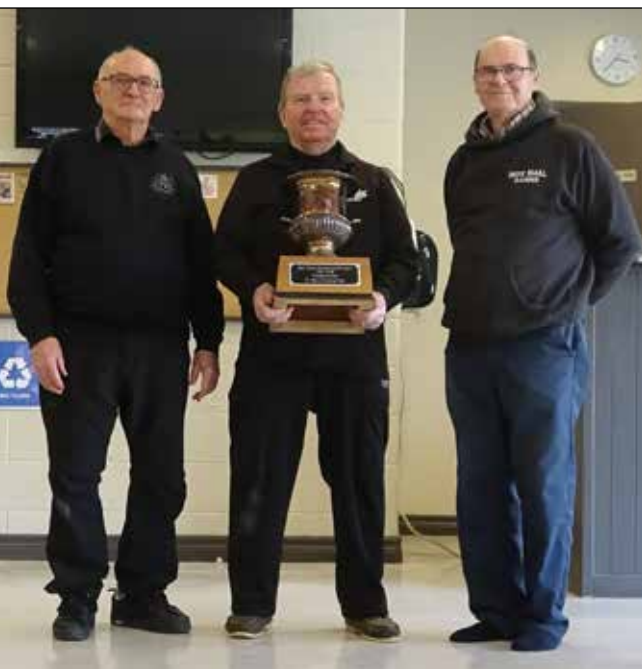
A shot so great, it was like we were watching the Brier! Skip Brady St. Louis, who represented Nunavut earlier this year at the Montana's Brier, pulled off a daring, dramatic shot for four points in the fifth end on Wednesday night that propelled his team to victory in the 2024 St. Marys Curling Club's Competitive League "A" final. This year's "A" final was contested between Morris Van De Walle's team, who finished first during the regular season, and St. Louis' team who had not lost a game since prior to the Christmas break. After St. Louis' four-point shot broke open a tight 2-2 game, that momentum carried on into the sixth end where they were able to steal an additional four points to end the game 10-2. Pictured above, from left to right, are vice Jason Clarke, lead Mark King, skip Brady St. Louis and second Aaron Waugh. Next week we will share the winning teams in the "B", "C" and "D" finals for the Competitive League. Photo by Adam Hudson

Grants earn Doubles Curling title



On Tuesday, March 26, the father-son duo of Jake Grant and Stewart Grant narrowly defeated the team of Alan Johnston and Adam Winchester by a score of 6-5 to win the St. Marys Curling Club's Doubles Championship. The Grants, who finished the regular season in first place (12-2-2), had lost both of their earlier meetings against Johnston's team. After adding Adam Winchester to the team late in the season, the Johnston team impressively cruised through the playoffs with four straight wins prior to the finals, while the Grant team had to reel off five consecutive victories in the double-knockout format after dropping their first playoff game. Stewart said of the father-son experience, "I remember fondly growing up curling and playing on a team with my dad (Murray), and similarly it was very special to curl throughout this season with Jake." Photo by Andrew Zwambag

St. Marys Curling Club's Daytime League concludes



The St. Marys Curling Club Daytime League had their wrap-up bonspiel on Monday, March 25. Eight teams competed for the Jim Nairn Trophy which was ultimately won by the team of, pictured from left to right, Gord Moylan, Geoff Clays, and John McIntosh. Not pictured was Verna Strathdee.



The winning foursome of the Burns Blackler Award for the Fall 2023 portion of the league's schedule was the team of, from left, Rika Aarts, John Hopkins, Paul Allen, and Doug Ranton.



The Burns Blackler Award for the Winter 2024 half of league play was presented to the team of, from left, Elaine Smith, Paul Grose, Maggie Burns, and Gord Moylan. Contributed photos

COMMUNITY

Ontario's 2024 Budget: aims to balance priorities during economic uncertainty

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Government of Ontario notes it's committed to investing in infrastructure, healthcare and education despite economic uncertainty, focusing on primary care expansion and long-term-home redevelopment projects.

However, Ontarians have raised concerns about the deficit and the need for a prudent fiscal plan. Ontario Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy introduced the 2024 Budget in the Ontario Legislature on March 26, stressing the importance of affordability in a strapped economy.

"Life has rarely been this expensive," said Bethlenfalvy in his address at Queen's Park. "The Bank of Canada has repeatedly raised interest rates at a big pace for months now. The pace and frequency of the Bank of Canada rate hikes have been punishing, perhaps most of all on homeowners whose mortgages have, in some cases, increased by thousands of dollars a month.

"The pressure of managing the government budget pales in comparison to the pressures many families face because they manage their family budget in time, and everything costs more. These are the challenges of a small-business owner managing their budget in order to keep the lights on and keep local workers employed."

In the 2024 budget, the provincial government is spending 13 per cent more in healthcare and 11.9 per cent more in education respectively. New and existing primary care teams will receive \$546 million over three years to expand the provision of primary care to an additional 600,000 people in Ontario.

Small and rural hospitals will receive \$50 million over three years to stabi-

lize health-care capacity in rural and northern communities. An additional \$500 million over ten years will be available to support small-hospital projects and community health programs.

"Our government is investing in health care, which is vitally important to our communities in rural Ontario," Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae told Grant Haven Media. "These are important investments our government decided to continue to make despite the economic headwinds we're currently facing as a province."

The budget also includes investments for a new medical school at York University. This will be the first medical school in Canada focused primarily on training family doctors and training and retaining nurses and medical staff.

Ontario is also investing an additional \$152 million over the next three years to support individuals facing unstable housing conditions and mental-health and addictions challenges.

"Our government's historic investment of \$1.8 billion in housing-enabling infrastructure will help us and our municipal partners unlock millions of homes across Ontario," said Rae. "I hope our federal partners will join us in building the critical infrastructure that we need to get homes built."

This year's budget also launches a new Ontario Transit Investment Fund, which will provide annual funding of \$5 million to deliver local and inter-community transportation projects in unserved and underserved areas in rural Ontario. The funding builds on the Community Transportation Grant Program.

Rae says that to help ease the tension surrounding transportation for fami-

lies, the 2024 budget will also extend the gas tax cut until December 2024.

"Our government is focused on ensuring that we keep costs down for

families," said Rae. "I will continue to advocate for ways to improve affordability for rural Ontario in particular."

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance Join Our Board of Directors & Board Committees!

The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) Board of Directors is recruiting community members for the following positions:

- Two (2) individuals from the catchment area of the HPHA to join the Board of Directors, and
- Three (3) individuals from each of the four hospital catchment areas - Clinton, St. Marys, Seaforth and Stratford - to join our Board Committees (Governance & Stakeholder Relations, Quality, Resources & Audit).

Prospective candidates will bring their skills, expertise and experience to the HPHA's Board of Directors/Board Committees, and demonstrate a strong commitment to our communities and the organization, aligned with the HPHA's Values, Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles.

Individuals interested in making a positive, sustained impact on our local health system and on the health and wellness of those we represent are encouraged to join the upcoming Virtual Information Session to find out more about our organization and the positions advertised.

The HPHA is committed to equity, inclusion, diversity and anti-racism.



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Virtual Information Session

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7 p.m.
Via Zoom

RSVP to Sue Davey, Executive Assistant
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Application forms are available on HPHA's website (www.hpha.ca)

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COMMUNITY

Giving Tuesday Good Neighbour Story booklet now available

By Kate Graham

"Won't You Be My Neighbour" was the theme for this year's Giving Tuesday in St. Marys.

This theme, selected in honour of Sheila Gleason, highlighted the many ways that giving goes beyond financial donations.

In support of the theme and in collaboration with the St. Marys Library, the Celebrate St. Marys team collected stories about kind and generous neighbours. Stories included:

- a caring neighbour family who provided a childhood "storm home";
- neighbours who came through when someone needed help;
- various garden-related acts of generosity;
- the warm welcome from the staff at MacDonald's and lots more.

Several of these stories were published in the St. Marys Independent at the time the stories were submitted.

The stories have now been compiled into a booklet that can be accessed as a pdf online through the Celebrate St. Marys Facebook (@CelebrateStMarys) page, from the Friends of the St. Marys Public Library (@StMarysFOL) or by emailing Celebratestmarys@gmail.com. In addition, hard copies are available for free at the St. Marys Public Library. Each Friends of the St. Marys Public Library newcomer welcome package will also include one of the booklets.



Sarah Andrews, CEO of the St. Marys Library, with Janis Fread, Kate Graham, Carol Passmore and Jan Mustard from the Celebrate St. Marys team. Photo by Reg Quinton



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COMMUNITY NOTICE

ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each year, CN is required to manage vegetation on its right-of-way. Managing this vegetation contributes to mitigating fire risks and enhances the efficiency of inspection of track infrastructure. The spray program is not being done for aesthetic reasons.

To ensure safe railway operations, CN will conduct its annual spray program on its rail lines in the province of Ontario. A certified professional (Davey Tree Expert Company Ltd., 1-800-465-6367) will apply herbicides on and around the railway tracks (primarily along the 24-foot graveled area/ballast). Product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met.

CN may use the following herbicides and active ingredients: Credit Xtreme (Nufarm), Esplanade (Bayer), Detail (BASF), Arsenal Powerline (BASF), Navius Flex (Bayer), Gateway (Corteva), Hasten NT (Norac), Round Up Weather Pro (Bayer), Torpedo (Valent), Telar (Envu/Bayer), Clearview (Corteva), Aspect (Corteva), Garlon XRT (Corteva), Milestone NXT (Corteva), Glyphosate (540 g/L), Indaziflam (200 g/L), Saflufenacil (29.74%), Imazapyr (26.7%), Metsulfuron-methyl (12.6%), Aminocyclopyrachlor (39.5%),

Paraffinic Oil (586 g/L), Alkoxylated alcohol non-ionic surfactants (242 g/L), Methyl and Ethyl oleate (esterified vegetable oil 75.20%), Flumioxazin (33.5%), Pyroxasulfone (42.5%), Chlorsulfuron (75%), Aminopyralid (52.5%-60%), Metsulfuron-methyl (94.5%), Picloram (97.5 g/L), 2, 4-D (360 g/L), Triclopyr (755 g/L), Florpyrauxifen (4.77%)

CN only uses herbicides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the province within which they are applied.

The program is expected to take place from May to October 2024.

Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation for more information or to make an inquiry, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

COMMUNITY

St. Marys area triplets celebrate 80th birthday

By Wendy Lamond

Eighty years ago on March 27, Hubert and Eleanor Alderson of Kintore went into Alexander Hospital in Ingersoll thinking they were coming home with one new bundle of joy. Instead, they brought home three newborn daughters.

From the time they were babies and as they grew, triplets Nancy, Alice and Joyce shared everything and were inseparable. They shared clothes, had chicken pox at the same time and could sense what each other was thinking and feeling, which sometimes led to trouble.

Growing up, the three girls all participated in 4-H Clubs, Junior Farmers, the Chalmer's United Church Choir and the Ingersoll District Collegiate Choir. Being musically inclined, the trio also performed together at community events.

People often asked them what it was like to be a triplet.

"We didn't know any differently," Joyce Tate said.



Triplets Nancy Cockle, Alice Weir-Hutchison and Joyce Tate were close growing up. They shared everything and knew what each other was feeling and thinking. Contributed photo

"Having two sisters was normal. We enjoyed having someone there who, at the same time in their lives,

was going through the same things.

"As adults we probably appreciated each other more. We've told secrets and inside jokes. We've shared remember-when's and someday-dreams."














All three of the triplets became teachers, all married farmers and each had two children. Joyce married Clarence Tate and moved to Browns Corners. Alice married Gordon Weir and lived in the Kintore area. She later married Doug Hutchison. Nancy married Chris Cockle and lives near Embro.

Sadly, in 2012 the trio was split as Alice passed away. Having been so close all their lives, Alice's passing is still hard for her sisters, who really miss her.

Throughout the years, the sisters have seen each other at their best and worst, laughed so hard they ended up in tears and were there for each other through the heartaches.

They are so much more than friends. They are sisters.

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HISTORY

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Surprise Flood, April 1975

By Mary Smith

Springtime weather can be full of surprises and we've had our share of them in 2024. However, because of the scarcity of snow during the winter months, we have avoided flooding, unlike the situation shown in this week's photograph, taken in April 1975. According to the St. Marys Journal Argus, at first the 1975 spring season appeared to be developing normally. The Thames River always provided proof of the arrival of spring. The breakup of the river ice with large blocks tumbling over the dam was something that local residents watched for. In 1975 in St. Marys, the ice on the lake beside the Flats broke up as usual.

Easter Sunday was early, falling on March 30 in 1975. With the arrival of April came the much anticipated event, the annual Bunny Bundle canoe race, held in support of the Easter Seal campaign. The campaign's main beneficiaries were special holiday camps for children with physical challenges. The camp closest to St. Marys was Woodeden in Komoka. Bill Brady, host of CFPL London's morning radio show, promoted the Bunny Bundle – an initiative each spring that encouraged school classes, Scouts, Girl Guides and other area groups to hold bake sales or raffles or similar projects to raise money for Easter Seals. Individual fundraisers or representatives from schools and groups came to the radio station to present their contributions and Brady interviewed them on the radio while friends and relatives listened proudly at home.

One important Bunny Bundle fundraiser was a canoe race starting just below the falls in St. Marys and ending at Fanshawe Lake in London, a 27-mile paddle down the river. Beginning in 1968, it was held on a Sunday in April when the water on the Thames River was still high enough to be navigable all the way to London. In early 1975, John Calcutt, the organizer and creator of the race, announced that the eighth annual Bunny Bundle canoe race would be April 6, the first Sunday of the month. He expected as many as 300 canoes to take part, most with two or three paddlers. There were categories for professionals and amateurs, kayaks as well as canoes. There was even a novelty class in case anyone felt like floating down the Thames in a bathtub or a rubber dinghy. Each contestant paid a \$10 entry fee and many also collected pledges. In 1974, the race had raised \$12,000 for the Easter Seal campaign.

However, winter kept its grip on the river longer than had been anticipated. In the Journal Argus, March 26, Calcutt announced that the race date had been moved to April 13 because the ice in Fanshawe Lake had not yet melted. It was a good idea to change the date because on Thursday morning, April 3, the week after Easter, southwestern Ontario got a big surprise. The Journal Argus described it as "the worst April storm in this area for many years." It began at one a.m. Thursday morning with a torrential rain storm that included thunder, lightning and hail. This changed to heavy snow by eight o'clock in the morning and conditions worsened throughout the day. Schools were closed and even the snowplows were pulled off the roads, except for emergency runs. Board of Works trucks only went out to help with accidents, illness or emergency deliveries. St. Marys did not have any power outages but some areas west of



Flooding of the Thames River in April 1975 backed up water in Trout Creek and created a lake on Parkview Avenue in front of the LCBO and the old creamery, at that time Paul Betteridge's landscaping and garden centre. Contributed photo

town were without electricity until Saturday.

The newspaper also reported that the Bunny Bundle canoe race had been postponed another week until April 20. Calcutt was hoping that the weather would be more moderate and that the water levels in the river would still be suitable. If he had hoped for high water levels, Calcutt got what he wished for and then some. On Saturday, April 19, the rain began to fall in the very early morning. It was once again another heavy storm with thunder and lightning, but this time the rain, instead of turning to snow, melted what was left of the heavy snowfall two weeks' earlier. People with rain gauges were eager to tell the Journal Argus that at least two inches of rain fell overnight. Others monitoring the level of the Thames River estimated that it rose a foot and a half between 3:30 and 4:00 on Saturday morning. By dawn, Water Street was totally flooded and several intersections were blocked off. The river was over the banks by the quarries, washing out part of the bed of the Canadian Pacific Railway line, leaving the tracks suspended in the air. Most of the east river road was impassible between St. Marys and Glengowan.

The Journal Argus, April 23, had many flood photographs and many flood anecdotes. For example, when Andy Hoe, manager of the liquor store, arrived at work Saturday morning, he and his fellow employee, Jack Puttock, discovered a lake on Parkview Drive in front of their building and in the parking lot between the store and Paul Betteridge's landscaping business – the occupants of the old creamery at that time. They had to reach the liquor store by climbing over the backyard fence. Rob Favacho was the keeper of the town's two swans. He saw, as the water rose, that the swans were liable to swim right over the fence on his property on Water Street North. He relocated them to Hooper's. The police warned residents of the Royal Edward Hotel to move their cars parked behind the building. The river current was so strong that there was a real danger of them being swept away.

The Journal Argus editorial felt that St. Marys had become complacent following the completion of Wildwood Dam and had assumed that their flood

problems had been solved. On April 19, Wildwood had done its job – the properties along the banks of Trout Creek were barely affected. However, too much water had come too fast down the Thames River and caught everyone off guard. Early estimates suggested that there had been \$100,000 in damages, much of it to inventory in the basements of businesses along Water Street. A better early warning system was needed so that people had time to prepare. In fact, within days, the town did form a flood committee and decided that the fire chief would act as coordinator in future emergencies. The Journal Argus editor also believed that effective flood control for the town could only be achieved by building the controversial Glengowan Dam to create a holding basin upstream from St. Marys.

The flood had made the Thames much too turbulent for safe boating and of course the canoe race had been postponed again. It finally took place on Saturday, April 26. But that date caused John Calcutt another concern. The water level in the river dropped almost as fast as it had risen in the flood. So many limestone rocks below the dam and under the Queen Street Bridge were exposed that the traditional starting place was much too dangerous. The start was moved a mile downstream to a wide grassy bank on the River Road. From that point, the race went smoothly on a cool but pleasant day. The money raised totalled approximately \$15,000 – the largest sum yet.

Readers who have a 2024 Historic St. Marys Rotary calendar will note that the photograph with this column is featured for the month of March and is identified as a flood in 1974. The photograph in the Museum's collection chosen for that month was mislabeled. More research indicates that this high water event definitely took place in 1975.

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It's children, chocolate and animated joy

By Nancy Abra

The key elements for any successful Thorndale event are good weather, group support, community participation and, in the case of last Saturday's event, excited children on a hunt for chocolate treats.

This year's Easter Egg Hunt was hosted by the Thorndale Optimist Club with promotion and sponsorship by I Love Thorndale. Over 250 children from toddlers to elementary school age excitedly gathered bright-coloured eggs on the grounds around the Thorndale Lions Community Centre to trade them in for an Easter treat bag.

The community centre was abuzz with excitement and lots of fun activities. Samantha Harvie, who resides in Thorndale and is a manager at the Old Navy Hyde Park store, along with some of her staff were there to direct children to the various activities.

"The owner's mandate at our Old Navy store is 'do more than sell clothes,' but to give back and volunteer at a community event every month," Harvie said.

Children lined up for the face painting and to pet a couple little goats brought in by Susan Ashley from The Laughing Goat Yoga Studio. The Angels Childcare of Thorndale sponsored and managed a children's Easter craft activity. Even the Easter Bunny was there for photos. Thorndale Optimist Club members and their volunteers were serving and selling a breakfast sandwich and hot beverages to the hungry event attendees.

"On behalf of the entire Thorndale Optimist Club, I'd like to express my thanks to the many volunteers and supporters who selflessly showed up to make this event a huge success," event organizer Melanie Sorensen said. "From monetary donations, to technology, to kitchen helpers, to feet on the ground ... every gesture is essential in pulling off a successful egg hunt, and this was certainly that."

Besides hosting this Easter Egg Hunt, the Thorndale Optimists continued their tradition at the West Nissouri Public School last week and handed out 525 special Easter chocolate bars to the children and staff at the school.



Pictured from left are Thorndale Optimist Melanie Sorensen, lead organizer of the Easter Egg Hunt for the Optimist Club, the Easter Bunny and Optimist Greg Morris, who looked after the Easter chocolate bars for the West Nissouri Public School children and staff. Photo by Nancy Abra

I Love Thorndale businesses can help

By Nancy Abra

With spring finally here, many homeowners' sights are focused on their yards and garden landscapes. The I Love Thorndale (ILT) website offers a simple reference to area businesses that can help for just about any project or service needed.

After the winter, there always seems to be tree damage or limbs down. Kuenzlen Brothers Inc. is a family owned and operated a tree-care business. They are

a premium supporter of ILT and based in Thorndale. They state they have the right team and right equipment for tree pruning - no matter what size - brush chipping, tree removal and other landscape projects. For more information for their services, check out www.kuenzlenbrothers.com.

Bergs Stump Grinding is another premium supporter and also located in the Thorndale area. They offer free quotes for stump-removal projects and are fully insured. They also offer cleanup af-

ter the stump removal and can bring in topsoil to finish and level the area. They currently serve Middlesex, Perth, Oxford and Elgin counties. Contact Rob at 226-919-7288 or rob.berg62@outlook.com for more information.

If tree pruning or removal aren't the plans for your landscape this spring, maybe planting new trees are. Little Creek Tree Farm is a family owned and operated local business since 2005. They have a variety of decorative and shade trees for sale, specializing in

black cedar which are available every spring and fall. They also offer their professional service in planting trees purchased from them. Check out their website for more information at littlecreektreefarm.com. Little Creek Tree Farm is also another premium supporter of ILT.

For other local businesses and services in this community, visit www.ilovethorndale.ca.

Thames Centre unveils new Community Grants Program

By St. Marys Independent staff

The Thames Centre council is excited to announce its new Community Grants Program aimed at strengthening community development and enhanced local engagement.

With an initial investment of \$40,000 allocated for the year and continued support throughout the years, this pro-

gram underscores the municipality's firm commitment to empowering community groups.

The Community Grants Program initiative aligns with the 2024-2027 strategic plan, with a particular emphasis on strengthening community communications and engagement. Goal 3E of the plan serves as a cornerstone to extend financial assistance to commu-

nity groups and local arts and culture endeavours, thereby ensuring the continuous growth and vibrancy of Thames Centre.

Thames Centre extends the invitation to all eligible groups and interested parties to actively participate in the Community Grants Program. By engaging with this initiative, organizations have the unique opportunity to directly

contribute to the enhancement of our community.

For more information, contact Municipality of Thames Centre communications coordinator Shannon Zylstra at szylstra@thamescentre.on.ca or apply at www.thamescentre.on.ca/.../community-grant...

COLUMN

HOSTING UKRAINE: Easter Celebration

By VJ Knutson

The plan was to save my energy for the Easter event on Saturday. A Zoom meeting on Monday night, and then I could rest. That is until I looked at my phone. There was an urgent message: A mother and son have one more day in a hotel with nowhere to go. Can you help?

It was too late to call anyone, but I promised the family we would not abandon them. Fortunately, Elaine Penalagan offered short term accommodation until mom and son move out to Spring Farm with Mary Ann Brown.

Then Rachel Koprowski messaged to say that she and the children had made babka, and would we like some. Recognizing an opportunity to initiate the new family into our community, I invited them to join us. The evening turned out to be more fortuitous than I could have imagined, as Oksana and Lesia discovered that not only had they lived on the same street in Lviv, but Oksana earned her degree in economics in Lesia's department at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Incredible!

What can I say about our Easter celebration? The room was alive with celebration – children's laughter, lively performances, and the sound of contentment as we all shared in the

communal table. I stayed out of the organization, leaving it in the capable hands of a group I called the Easter Bunnies.

January of 2023, when we packed 158 into the hall at St Marys Presbyterian church, we were funded by donations from the community, but this year, each attendee contributed on their own – an indicator of how far we have come. Paska, which I wrote about last week, was provided by Nataly, who baked for days. Tania contacted families to get a head count, and organized menu items. Ric and I cooked the ham, and by the time we arrived at the church, the kitchen was buzzing. Busy in my role of MC, I was last to the table, so I can't credit dishes with chefs, but I do know that Vira made an array of baked goods for those of us with gluten intolerance. Thanks for that Vira!

What I also didn't know was that many were preparing acts behind the scenes. Platon played the piano, Vasyliisa sang, Maksym recited poetry, Alina did a circus act, and Melaniia a dance. Anya and Sofiia performed a song they had written, and a choir of Ukrainian women (who I've now dubbed the St Marys' Ukrainian choir) sang two lively folk songs. Alona, our new mom, read a poem, and Vira played the violin, and just when I thought we'd seen it all, I was in-



Easter Performers.

formed that there was one more act – the 9-foot Polar Bear arrived to dance with the children, followed by a pinata and games for young and old.

Thank you to everyone who came to make our day special. An extra tip of the hat to Katya and Sasha of Good Mood Service who generously donated the decorations, pinata, games, and the bear. You can find them on Face-

book, or contact them at servicegoodmood@gmail.com.

As for me, I'll be catching up on rest this week, revelling in the warm memories. Once I've dealt with that new message I received, hours before our festivities began, but that is for next time.

(Reach me at english.knutson@gmail.com. I love hearing from you.)

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MARCH 2024 RECAP

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Word List

- Early Spring
- Sweden joins NATO
- Hitchcock wins gold
- Hearns opens Princess Catherine
- March Break
- Legion Mini Putt
- St Patricks Day
- ISIS Russia attack
- March Madness
- Baltimore Bridge
- Lincolns playoffs
- Easter

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Solutions on page 31

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The **Riddle Kid** OF THE WEEK

Where do aliens bring their sick pets?



To the Veterinarien!

Sully Rumble (8)

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

TONS OF FUN FOR KIDS EVERY WEEK!

PET OF THE WEEK

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



Our Pet of the Week is Chip, a six month old Pomeranian. Chip is very affectionate and loves to cuddle with his owner. He also enjoys looking out the window at passersby on Wellington Street. Chip is the official greeter and mascot at Spoiled Petz.



St. Marys Veterinary Clinic is pleased to be the sponsor of the PET OF THE WEEK
Why is a heartworm test so important you ask..

Heartworm is a simple blood test and is very important to the health of your dog. If your dog is heartworm positive and you put it on certain types of heartworm preventative, it could have detrimental effects, including death.

Fleas and ticks can be a year round problem. Talk to us about parasite prevention for your pet.

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

COLUMN

WHAT'S FOR DINNER: Celebrate spring with these fresh, fun recipes

**By Lauren Eedy**

Has spring finally arrived? Hopefully. If not, here are some seasonally appropriate recipes that are sure to usher in a spring-like vibe whether the weather reflects it or not. Ranging from approachable dishes and affordable ingredients to slightly more advanced, the following are all healthy and adaptable to different diets. We may have to wait a few more weeks for the dandelion greens, though.

Baked artichoke hearts with seasoned bread crumbs

Prep: 10 minutes; Cook: 20 minutes; Total: 30 minutes; Serves: 4

¼ cup olive oil

3 14 oz cans artichoke hearts, rinsed and drained

3 cloves garlic, minced

¼ tsp red pepper flakes

For Breadcrumbs:

½ cup plain breadcrumbs

½ cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano

¼ cup parsley, minced

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

½ tsp kosher salt

¼ cup dry white wine (such as Pino Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc)

Method:

- Preheat oven to 375°F and set to middle rack. Mix seasoned breadcrumb ingredients together and set aside.

- Mix the minced garlic and olive oil together in a bowl. Spoon half the garlic oil in a large baking dish and spread around to evenly distribute.

- Place artichoke hearts into the baking dish and top with remaining garlic oil. Sprinkle red pepper flakes otop.

- Evenly sprinkle the seasoned breadcrumbs and bake for 15-20 minutes or until hot all the way through and breadcrumbs have browned. For more colour, the artichoke hearts can be broiled for the last 45-60 seconds, but watch carefully. Enjoy!

- Leftovers can be saved for three days and reheated in a 325°F oven or microwave.

Steak and carrot tacos

Prep: 15 minutes; Total: 40 minutes; Serves: 4-6

1 lb small multi-coloured carrots, halved lengthwise

3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 ¾ tsp kosher salt, divided

½ tsp black pepper, divided

1 skirt steak cut crosswise into 4 even pieces (or roasted mixed mushrooms to make this vegetarian)

Flour tortillas, warmed

Sour cream, fresh cilantro leaves, thinly sliced jalapeños and lime wedges for serving.

Method:

- Preheat oven to 450°F. Toss together carrots, 2 tbsp oil, cumin seeds, ¾ tsp salt and ¼ tsp black pepper on a rimmed baking sheet; spread in an even layer on half the baking sheet. Roast until carrots are lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven.

- Brush steak pieces with remaining 1 tbsp oil; sprin-

kle with remaining salt and pepper. Arrange steak evenly on half the baking sheet. Return to oven and roast until carrots are tender and a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the steak reads 125°F, about 7m. Transfer steak to a cutting board and let rest 5m. Thinly slice steak against the grain.

- Divide steak (or mushrooms) and carrots among warm tortillas. Serve with sour cream, cilantro, jalapeños and lime wedges.

Butter-basted scallops with spring greens and snap peas

Total: 40 minutes; Serves: 4

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided

12 large sea scallops, side muscles removed

Kosher salt

Black pepper

2 tbsp unsalted butter, cubed

4 garlic cloves, 2 whole, 2 thinly sliced, divided

2 thyme sprigs

½ lb snap peas, trimmed

½ bunch of spinach, stemmed

½ bunch dandelion greens, stemmed and chopped

1 cup pea shoots

2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Method:

- Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season scallops to taste with salt and pepper, add to skillet. Cook until browned on the bottom, 2-3 minutes. Turn scallops, add butter, whole garlic cloves and thyme sprigs to skillet. Cook, basting scallops with butter, until browned on the other side and just opaque throughout, 2-3 more minutes. Transfer to a warm plate and pour butter on top. Keep warm. Wipe out skillet with paper towels.

- Add remaining 2 tbsp oil to the skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add sugar snap peas and thinly sliced garlic, cook, stirring occasionally until peas are crisp-tender and garlic is softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in spinach, dandelion greens and pea shoots and cook until barely wilted. Stir in lemon juice and season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to a platter and top with scallops and butter. Discard thyme sprigs and whole garlic cloves before serving.



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Ask the Arborist

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



Dear Arborist,

Recently I had someone trim my tree (not sure what kind). They did not paint the wounds with black wound sealant, and my tree is bleeding. What should I do?

Rather Frustrated

Dear Rather Frustrated,

In the past, it was recommended to paint the fresh pruning cuts on a tree. This is no longer common practice. After pruning, a tree begins to heal by growing around the wound, tar or paint slows down the natural

healing process. An exception to this may be an Oak tree; some experts believe sealing the fresh cuts will protect against Oak Wilt, but this is not necessarily a proven fact. If your tree is any other species other than Oak, there is no cause for concern.

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

OBITUARY

Smith



SMITH, Eileen Josephine (Stadelmayer) (DeGroot) passed away peacefully with her devoted husband, Victor Smith, by her side at the Wildwood Care Centre, St. Marys, on Thursday, March 21, 2024 in her 86th year. Daughter of the late Johan and Antonia (Smits) DeGroot, born July 28, 1938. She immigrated to

Canada from Erp, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands with her parents and 5 siblings on the "Tabinta" in 1948. Survived by her husband, Victor Smith, married on August 4, 2012; children, Thomas Stadelmayer and Nancy (Michael) McLeod; grandchildren, Steven (Debbie) Stadelmayer and Sarah Stam; Corinne McLeod (Daniel Blackburn), Brendon McLeod and Abbey (Anton) Dolgovykh; great-grandchildren, Eric Stadelmayer, Sophia and William Stam, Declan (Sidney Rowcliff) Satchell and Bailey Satchell; brother, Anthony (Darlene) DeGroot; sisters-in law, Cheri DeGroot (Joe Cassel), Marilyn DeGroot; brothers-in-law, Steve Eckert, Ronald Sweitzer and Joseph Jardine; sisters-in-law, Ann Oldenburg, Irmgard Derouin, Adelheid Belvedere and brother-in-law, Hans (Arlene) Stadelmayer; step-sisters, Mickie (John) Hamilton and JoAnne (Paul) Matthews; Also survived by the extended Smith Family; cousins in Canada, the USA and the Netherlands; nieces and nephews; and dear friends, Nellie Eckhardt and Margaret Goode.

Predeceased by her first husband, Claus Stadelmayer, married April 11, 1959; father and mother-in-law Daniel and Anna (Willud) Stadelmayer; step-mother, Florentina DeGroot; mother-in-law, Ruby (Smith) Burge; siblings Johannes DeGroot, Maria Nixon, Petronella Eckert (Sweitzer), Wilhelmina (Grant) Barlow, William DeGroot, Francis (Linda) DeGroot and James DeGroot; sister-in-law, Inge (Edmund) Wittek; brothers-in-law, William Nixon, Harry Oldenburg, Herman Derouin and Michael Belvedere; step-sister Ellie (Hans) Von Euw; nephews, Steven Nixon and Dean Pottle.

Eileen moved from Streetsville to raise her family on a farm in Downie Township now Perth South, Line 26; she was an employee at Canadian Fabricated in Stratford; she was a 4-H Leader; an avid gardener; she enjoyed music and dancing, knitting, crocheting, quilting, reading and playing cards. She read Tarot Cards throughout the years for those that were interested in that craft. She was affectionately known as "Omie" to many at Crystal Lake and at the Sebringville Athletic Association Ball Park Booth.

The family would like to express their heart felt gratitude to all the staff and administration who assisted in improving her quality of life during her time at the Wildwood Care Centre in St. Marys; and to the staff at the Stratford General Hospital and the St. Marys Memorial Hospital over the past few years.

Cremation has taken place. The Interment Service will be held in the cemetery at First St. John's Lutheran Church, Seebach's Hill on Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 1:00 pm, officiated by Pastor William W. Kramer with a reception luncheon to follow in the church basement.

Donations may be made through the Funeral Home to: First St. John's Lutheran Church; Stratford General Hospital; or the charity of your choice through W.G. Young Funeral Home www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com May you rest in peace - "Welt Reste - Anneke"

IN MEMORIAM

Thomson

In Memory of Roxie (1994), LLOYD (2001), Barry (2021), Murray (2023)

As time has gone by without all of you

And days turned into years,

They've held a million memories

And a thousand silent tears.

We think about and we talk about all of you still

All of you have never been forgotten.

**Never Forgotten,
Glen and Anne Mikel
Kim and Mark Jordan
Michelle and Kent Neeb**

THANK YOU

Beadle

My thanks to everyone who made my 100th birthday such a happy occasion. It was good to have a visit with everyone. Thanks for the flowers, cards, calls and good wishes. Thanks also to my family who made all the arrangements for a pleasant afternoon and all the wonderful memories.

Audrey Beadle

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CELEBRATION

*Open House
Birthday Celebration*

for Carol Herbert's 85th birthday

St. Marys Anglican Church

April 13, 2024 from 1-4 pm

Best wishes only!



<https://gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/534/>

Gardening in St. Marys

Monday, April 8th at 7:00 pm

St. Marys Legion Hall

Speaker: Jim Mabee

Topic: Bulbs and Tubers



Everyone Welcome

This meeting is for YOU! Come out and enjoy.
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Book your pet's Spa Date

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COLUMN

Straight from the Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Prepare for Monday's solar eclipse at our Solar Saturday event on April 6! Join special guest Tony Martinez at 10:30 a.m. to learn about eclipses and to make your own pinhole projector for safely viewing the astronomical event on April 8. This event is free to attend and open to all ages. Please note that attendees must bring their own empty cereal box to use for the craft and that caregiver/guardian supervision is required.

This Week's Recommendation

Learn about big players in our universe both near and far with "Super Space Encyclopedia" by Clive Gifford. Drink in large pictures and detailed diagrams as you learn about the cosmic wonders of

outer space. Find this easy-to-read, yet comprehensive tome in our children's non-fiction section. It's call sticker reads "J 520.3 Gif".

Up This Week

- Friday, Apr. 5: Open 10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Saturday, Apr. 6: Dungeons and Dragons (10:30 a.m.), Solar Saturday (10:30 a.m.)
- Monday, Apr. 8: Open 10:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Tuesday, Apr. 9: Open 10:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, Apr. 10: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.), Mahjong Intro (1 p.m. – 2 p.m., 6 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.), Mahjong! (2 p.m. – 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.)
- Thursday, Apr. 11: Scrabble (6 p.m. – 8 p.m.)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Are tiny homes the solution to St. Marys' housing shortage?

I have been watching with some interest how the powers that be are combating homelessness in our country.

Do they build smaller houses on smaller lots? No, there are bylaws in place to stop that very thing from happening. Why?

Suggestion for town council; STOP building million-dollar homes and expecting to stop homelessness.

There are many house plans available on the internet for tiny homes. I would suggest the town plan out and build an entire subdivision of these homes – 200-300 square-foot, two-storey homes complete with their own tiny lots of course. A first-time homeowner's dream come true.

Drive down a few of the streets in this very town and you will see small, cookie-cutter homes commonly referred to as wartime houses because, at the time, we needed housing and they built what they needed – small, affordable houses for people to live in – but times have changed, so we are now in a war against homelessness and people dying on our streets of exposure in favour of bigger, more-expensive homes.

While you are looking at changing the rules, I would also implement a bylaw that states, if you own a home in the new St. Marys tiny home subdivision you **HAVE TO LIVE IN IT**.

This will stop someone who is not currently living in a cardboard box from buying up every one of them and charging \$3,000 a month in rent just to make a profit or, worse yet, buy every one of them, not rent them out at all for a couple of years, then claim it is a failed experiment and tear them all down for more million-dollar homes.

As for the rules, if you do not want someone moving in just to build a bigger home on the lot, you already have green-space bylaws in place, so size the lots accordingly. If they want a bigger house, they can sell the tiny home and move.

Keeping in mind that we are also raising an entire generation that actually cares about the planet and global warming, they **WANT** smaller, cheaper, less-destructive living areas to live in. Tiny homes.

This may be the way to do it.

Something to consider.

Dave Lotte

LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Mr. Zero

25 years ago (1999)

As the St. Marys and Area Mobility Bus Committee is just getting a campaign underway to raise money for a much-needed new vehicle, a generous St. Marys citizen has left the charitable organization a large bequest. Sheila Craig, a former teacher at St. Marys Central School, left the Mobility Bus service a \$31,700 donation in her will.

Mayor Jamie Hahn is becoming comfortable with the title "Mr. Zero" as council announced its seventh consecutive zero percent tax increase for this coming year.

A former mayor of the City of Toronto, June Rowlands, was in town last Wednesday and commented how impressed she was with the fine Scottish stone architecture.

50 years ago (1974)

A new convenient front office has been set up by St. Marys Travel Agency on the ground floor at the front of the Claude Electric store. Mrs. Darcy Wheal is there to greet customers.

The fire siren atop Town Hall has been out for repair the past two weeks. Problems securing repair parts may mean quite a lengthy silence from the local "shrieker".

This season, for the first time, sailboats and dinghies will be available for rent at Wildwood Lake. The big conservation park is due to open on Victoria Day weekend.

75 years ago (1949)

Wet basement season is here, and the occasional household in St. Marys has had to employ a pump to keep things under control.

One of the fine things about spring is that many older people who we do not see too often in the colder weather again appear on the streets. The young babies too, who have been cozily wrapped up all winter, appear in lighter garb and show their stuff including perhaps a few new teeth.

The starling traps operated by the mink ranchers Calvin Martin and Clifton Brown have been highly successful these past few weeks. Nearly 4,000 of these bird pests have been disposed of by their combined efforts and countless thousands of starlings yet unborn will not be here this summer to annoy either farmers or townspeople.

100 years ago (1924)

There were some pessimistic individuals in and around town last fall when at a public meeting the baseball fans elected a corps of officers for the 2024 season to look after their interests. These public-spirited fellows have already got busy on their outlined program, with the result being that much of the equipment needed to start a town team for the season has already been ordered.

Are property values going down? Mr. R.C. Henderson, Wellington Street South, has sold his fine residence at a figure several hundreds of dollars less than what this property brought five years ago when everything was booming.

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9	8	4	6	3	5	7	1	2
3	7	6	9	2	1	5	4	8
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THE WEEK AHEAD

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

St. Marys Library events - See Page 29

Friday, April 5

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog/sausage lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- Game Two - St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at the PRC - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 6

- Scrapbooking Garage Sale at the PRC - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 7

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

Monday, April 8

- Solar Eclipse
- Community Dinner at the St. Marys United Church - 5 p.m., Sponsored by the Pickleball Association
- St. Marys Horticultural Society meeting at the Legion hall - 7 p.m.

- Game Four - St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at the PRC - 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10

- Game Five - St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at Western Fair Sports Centre - 7 p.m.
- St. Marys Poetry Circle "Dinner Poetry" at Tutt Co. bistro - 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.



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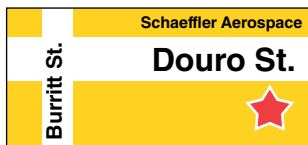
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