

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1203

Thursday, March 21, 2024

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O'Gradys Clothing and Accessories re-opens after a week of renovations



Daughter and mom duo Jennifer Dungo and Jan Westman were happy to show the changes that took place for their renovations. Photo by Wendy Lamond

By Wendy Lamond

When you step into O'Gradys Clothing store on Queen Street, you are welcomed by new carpet, brightly painted walls and a warm, welcoming atmosphere, not to mention the smiles from owner Jennifer Dungo and her mom, Jan Westman.

The store was closed for a week to allow for renovations and a refresh of the space so the brands and clothing can be better showcased.

It was a very busy week, having to put all current inventory and accessories into a U-Haul while the painting and carpeting were completed. The mom and daughter duo had everything back in and, for the most part, all put back in place by Sunday night at 7:30 p.m., just in time for the reopening.

"Everything went smoothly with the renovations," Dungo said. "We wanted the store to have a fresh, functional look that modernizes it without losing the well-established motif of the business that was already in place."

For the re-opening week, March 18-23, shoppers have the chance to win something from one of the store's featured brands: March 20 is Parkhurst save the tax, Thursday is a Foxcroft Blouse, Friday is Orientique and Saturday is an Atelier V Cuir Leather Bag.

Coming up, there will be some other changes taking place at the store. Dungo plans to expand the available sizes at her store from XSM to XXL. If a size is not in stock, she can order it in.

Also starting in mid-summer, the Dungo plans to carry shoes from the brands, Rieker and Remonte, and plans to have a men's clothing section from the brand, Royal Robbins.

They are also currently working with the St. Marys heritage advisory committee on getting a new sign

Continued on page 2

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St. Marys amends land-sale bylaw to provide flexibility when selling municipal land to advance housing, other priorities

By Galen Simmons

An amendment to St. Marys' land-sale bylaw recently approved by council has made it easier for the town to sell municipal land if the sale of a specific parcel of land or road allowance would advance the town's goals

in achieving affordable or attainable housing among other strategic priorities.

At the March 12 council meeting, councillors voted unanimously to approve a bylaw amendment that gives

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys amends land-sale bylaw to provide flexibility

Continued from page 1

the town the ability to forego the public and limited-public sale processes outlined in a previous version of the bylaw and directly sell land to people or parties as needed to advance specific strategic priorities. Those priorities include increasing the supply of affordable or attainable housing, improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the town, and promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of town residents.

"I think council has seen instances in this term where we'd like to sell a road allowance or sell a property for the purpose of economic development or for housing, but the public process is viewed as a barrier; not necessarily a barrier to the person who you'd want (to sell it to), just in terms of the pro-

cess," town CAO Brent Kittmer said.

"What this update to the bylaw does is, for full-marketability land, it now allows you to not have to take it to the open market. It does allow council to sell it by whatever terms council sees as advisable, provided you do it in an open and transparent way, meaning you discuss it at an open meeting of council ... (and) the land is sold at full market value or fair market value unless there is a (community improvement plan) program that allows you to sell it for less than that."

Also at the March 12 meeting, councillors voted to have staff consult with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs on a proposed housing-focused community improvement plan that, if approved by council, would establish an incentive program allowing the

town to offer surplus land to developers looking to build affordable or attainable housing at a reduced price or free of charge.

In an entirely new section of the bylaw, the town now also allows for the sale of highway land or road allowances through a similar process if it advances the previously mentioned strategic priorities.

In accordance with this new section of the bylaw, the sale of highway lands can be initiated by the town or others, council has the sole discretion to decide to proceed or not based on factors outlined in the bylaw, and council is no longer required to offer the highway land to abutting neighbours. Council is also required to provide notice of its intent to the public prior to selling highway lands, and the

bylaw allows an opportunity for those affected to make their comments and concerns known to council.

"That, in a nutshell, is what we're trying to do here. It gives us more flexibility to sell land in those instances where we feel it will advance strategic priorities in the town," Kittmer said.

Prior to selling any land, the town's land-sale bylaw dictates council fully consider whether selling a municipal property is in the public interest. As part of that consideration, town staff present council with a report that includes the description of the land, an analysis of the future needs for the land, a determination of the land's value, a recommendation as to whether the land is marketable or has limited marketability, and a recommendation for how to sell the land.

O'Gradys Clothing and Accessories re-opens after a week of renovations



The Canadian-made Parkhurst sweater that Jennifer Dungo is showing here will be making an appearance in the Canadian Living Magazine in support of the Professional Women's Hockey League. Photo by Wendy Lamond

Continued from page 1

for the store.

Dungo bought the store from previous owners Heather and Ed Parkinson in September 2023. Dungo's mom worked for the store for eight years and loves that she can come in everyday to work with her daughter even when many of her friends are

retiring.

Dungo commented how much the support from town residents and businesses mean to her. They have support from people from London, Stratford and Exeter, but they love seeing locals walk through the door, even if just to say hi.

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-2 °C	-4 °C	-3 °C	0 °C	3 °C	5 °C	9 °C
Feels Like -9	Feels Like -11	Feels Like -8	Feels Like -4	Feels Like -1	Feels Like 0	Feels Like 6

COMMUNITY

St. Marys Legion brings back 18-hole mini-putt course over March Break



Lots of work goes into setting up the St. Marys Legion's 18-hole mini-putt course. Contributed photo

By Wendy Lamond

St. Marys Legion Branch 236 held its annual, 18-hole mini-putt course for families and friends to enjoy over March break.

This is the eighth year the Legion has established a mini-putt course as a fundraiser, which was put on pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many volunteers help with the setup, take-

down, running the door and ensuring all runs smoothly.

One of the major draws for the fundraiser is balloon artist Kate Gregg, who offers facepainting and shares her creativity by making balloon animals for the kids. Gregg donates her time, all her supplies and even a portion of her tips back to the Legion.

There was 157 people that played the



Bentley O'Brien had a great time playing the game and shows off his monkey balloon animal. Contributed photo

course March 13 and 14 and, at \$5 a person, it offered the kids a low-cost activity to do while they were out of school over March Break.

"It would not have been possible without the tireless work of a number of legion volunteers," St. Marys Legion president Bim Graham said. "It takes the volunteers five to six hours of set-up.

"Each year we try to change the setup or the decorations on the holes, so it seems new every year."

There are already plans in place for some different hole designs for next year.

Legion volunteers extend their thanks to everyone who supported the legion and played a round of mini putt.

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COMMUNITY

Provincial funding will help boost PC Connect transit in Perth County

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The province announced earlier this month that the Ministry of Transportation has allocated an additional \$159,406 for Perth County and \$590,000 for the City of Stratford through the Community Transportation Grant Program to support continued operation of the PC Connect regional transit service.

The newfound financial support aims to sustain ongoing operations and alleviate the fiscal strain on forthcoming municipal budgets.

"I am so pleased to hear about and receive these additional funding dollars for both the City of Stratford and the County of Perth," said Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma in a press release. "These funds continue to support and improve inter-community transportation between our local communities for work, medical services, education, tourism and social activities. As Mayor, I continue to value these strong partnerships with MPP Matthew Rae and our provincial government."

PC Connect is described as a dependable, accessible, cost-effective bus service that facilitates connectivity throughout rural Perth County, Stratford, St. Marys, Kitchen-

er-Waterloo and London.

PC Connect has provided more than 34,000 rides, enabling residents to access employment opportunities and social services, attend appointments, foster social connections and uphold an independent and active lifestyle.

"Our government is providing an additional \$749,000 to Perth County and the City of Stratford to support our rural transportation network," said Rae.

"Whether it is travelling for medical appointments, shopping, or visiting family and friends, it is important that residents of Perth-Wellington have transit options. I will continue to advocate for provincial investments in our rural communities."

The PC Connect public-transit initiative is a collaborative effort involving Perth County, Stratford, St. Marys and North Perth, which was made feasible with the support of the Government of Ontario.

The Provincial Community Transportation Grant Program will support this project until March 31, 2025.

For further details on PC Connect, visit www.perthcounty.ca/pconect

Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week.

1) Bravo to all of the dedicated fitness and falls prevention class instructors that volunteer their time to lead the fitness classes through the Friendship Centre. Thank you for your energy, enthusiasm and dedication to improving the functional fitness of so many of us in the St. Marys community.

2) A bravo to the Town of St. Marys public works and parks staff for the improvements to the trail that borders the quarry. The wood chips and cleared brush make it much easier to use and the obvious connection to the Quarry Road is much appreciated!

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

Boo

We have 1 Boo this week.

1) A Boo! to the fools that thought it was a good idea to try driving up the hill in the Elgin street allotment between Wellington and Church streets on Saturday morning at 5:52 a.m. Your stunt was dangerous and irresponsible. It could have injured or killed any driver or pedestrian than was passing by at the time. I truly hope your driving caused damage to your suspension to balance the mess you made to the grass in the area. Park your truck until you grow up enough to use it responsibly.

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

Quote of the Week

"We are so proud of their play and how they came together as a team this weekend. Sometimes, miracles do happen."

- Head Coach Bob Davis on the U13 A Boys St. Marys Rock winning the Garden City Warriors tournament this past weekend

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Spring is here, I am so excited I wet my plants.

First day of Spring. How many people are still sticking to their New Year's Resolutions?

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!

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The St. Marys Independent

THOUGHTS
OF THE WEEK

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Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush.

Despite the forecast, live like it's Spring.

When you plant positive thoughts, anything is possible.

The pleasures of Spring are available to everyone and cost nothing.

COMMUNITY

Scrapbooking garage sale set for April 6

Event raises funds for seniors' programs in St. Marys

Members of St. Marys' thriving scrap-booking scene will have a chance to stock up on supplies at a fundraising event happening next month. The Friendship Centre and a committee of volunteers are hosting a Scrapbooking Garage Sale on Saturday, April 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

A variety of gently used and new crafting supplies – paper, handmade greeting cards, stamps, cartridges and embellishments - will be available for purchase tax-free. Admission to this cash-only event is free; a portion of

sales will support local seniors' programs.

"Scrapbooking provides a creative outlet and is an excellent way to capture memories to share with future generations," says Hillary Bennett, Senior Services Activity Coordinator for the Town of St. Marys. "We want to express our gratitude to the committed group of scrapbooking volunteers who have volunteered their time to organize this fundraising event."

For details about the sale, contact 519-284-2340, ext. 621 or email hben-nett@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Station Gallery to close during painting of the Via Station

St. Marys Station Gallery will be closed for the painting of the Via Station beginning Monday, March 18th. For now the current Station Gallery season will be on hold until the week of April 8th when the gallery will be reassembled.

The Station Gallery will re-open on

Friday April 26th with a new exhibit: Textile Art which will feature an exhibition of works by five local and regional textile artists.

Station Gallery resumes regular exhibit hours of Wednesday to Saturday 11am to 4:30 pm.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



UPCOMING MUSEUM CLOSURE

March 27 to April 22

The exhibit spaces are getting a makeover! Staff will be on-site during the closure to accommodate research appointments in the archives and answer phone inquiries.

townofstmarys.com/museum or 519-284-3556

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AUTHOR TALK WITH LOGHAN PAYLOR

March 21, 7 PM | Pyramid Centre

Library CEO, Sarah Andrews will sit down with author Loghan Paylor to discuss their debut novel, The Cure for Drowning. Register to save your spot, limited space available for walk-in attendance.

townofstmarys.com/library or 519-284-3346

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Senior of the Week

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Weekend Quiz

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2. What is the largest species of deer?
3. What town do the Flintstones live in?
4. What has a gravitational pull so strong even light cannot escape it?
5. How many sides does the home plate have in baseball?
6. What do you call a group of lions?
7. Who released the 1987 song "Never Gonna Give You Up"?
8. What is the most common letter in Scrabble?
9. Who won the Oscar for best actress in 2024?
10. Which country is nicknamed the land of a thousand lakes?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

COMMUNITY

St. Marys council approves improvements to trail connecting quarry and Lind Sportsplex to overflow parking at Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame

By Galen Simmons

Improvements to a previously unmaintained trail between the St. Marys Quarry and an overflow parking lot for the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame will help address parking issues at the town's most-popular summer, aquatic attraction.

At its March 12 meeting, St. Marys council approved improvements, most of which have already been completed, to a 500-metre "goat trail" that runs on town property from Washington Street to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum driveway, which staff reported is overgrown in some areas and has roots in the path that pose tripping hazards.

"We had a lot of time between snowstorms (this year) and we got this done. It's actually somewhat completed already, so hopefully you agree with (this recommendation)," St. Marys public works director Jed Kelly said, smiling. "All kidding aside, it was (a trail) that was being actively used so, from a parks perspective, we tried to improve the grading and make it more accessible just between the quar-

ry and the (baseball hall of fame)."

According to the staff report to council, a lack of adequate parking has been a constraint on growth for the recreational programs and services offered at the Lind Sportsplex and the quarry. While there is an existing walking trail that links the quarry to the hall-of-fame overflow lot, staff say the trail is steep and difficult to navigate.

In addition to cutting back the overgrown vegetation along the "goat trail" and laying down woodchips to improve grading and remove tripping hazards, which public-works staff has already completed, council also approved the purchase and installation of additional directional signage along the trail at a cost of \$2,000.

Future maintenance of the trail including laying down more woodchips and cutting back vegetation is expected to cost the town roughly \$2,000 annually. As the trail runs through a wooded area, staff do not recommend converting the woodchip surface to a hard surface in the future to keep the trail's natural feel.

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys Museum to temporarily close for minor renovations

By Emily Stewart

The St. Marys Museum will be closed for nearly a month to update the space.

The Town of St. Marys announced in a press release the museum will be closed starting on March 27 for minor renovations. The updates are expected to be complete by April 22 when the museum will reopen. Town cultural services manager Amy Cubberley said the floors will be refurbished and the new exhibition spaces will be painted during the \$8,000 renovation. The interior updates are part of a capital plan that was originally supposed to take two years. As that meant the museum would close twice, the facilities team was able to put them together into one project.

"We're in a 160-year-old heritage house and so with that comes some preventative maintenance," Cubberley said.

During the renovations, the archival wing will still be available for research appointments. A seminar booked for April 18 at 7 p.m. is set to continue. Cubberley said updates on the museum's renovations will be posted on social media, as well



as other content, to maintain visitor engagement.

"The best way to support would be to come check out the new exhibits when we reopen," she said. "We're taking this opportunity to refresh a number of exhibit spaces in the museum since everything's coming off the walls anyway. We look forward to welcoming visitors back at the end of April."

More information and updates can be found online by either visiting townofstmarys.com/museum, facebook.com/stmarysmuseum. Research appointments can be booked by calling 519-284-3556 or sending an email to museum@town.stmarys.on.ca.

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COMMUNITY

Perth County Official Plan raises concerns for landowners

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Area residents have recently scrutinized Perth County's draft official plan regarding proposed policies concerning agricultural activities and natural-environment designations.

Over the last two months, concerns about the implications for agricultural practices and tree-related uses within these designated areas were raised at open-house discussions throughout Perth County.

According to Perth County planning associate Aubree Erickson, the plan states that the natural-environment designation will not limit agricultural activities. Therefore, planning staff is addressing these concerns with residents throughout Perth County.

"This means that you can continue to farm directly alongside natural-environment designations," she said. "We are working on making it clear to the public that if a property is designated agriculture and has a natural-environment feature on it, agricultural practices take precedence."

The plan outlines requirements for new developments on agricultural lands with natural-environment features to ensure the preservation of natural features amidst potential development.

"We are currently working on outlin-



Officials at Perth County offer clarification regarding ongoing concerns raised at open houses held last month. Photo by Amanda Modaragamage

ing the different scenarios where the adjacent lands will be applied to ensure that the public understands the current and proposed requirements," said Erickson.

According to the act, any non-agricultural development requiring an application under The Planning Act must demonstrate its "lack of adverse impact on natural features," which aims to protect the integrity of both agricultural and natural environments throughout Perth County.

Another concern heard during the official plan open houses was around

the impact of natural-environment designations on woodlots and tree harvesting.

Erickson notes, however, that woodlots are protected under bylaws and would not be included in proposed changes.

"Woodlots that meet a certain size criterion (0.5 acres) are already subjected to the Forestry Conservation bylaw. The bylaw applies regardless of whether the woodlot is designated or not."

Recognizing the need for more clarity and a better user experience, the

county is committed to revising and reviewing policies to reduce confusion and enhance accessibility throughout the planning process.

Perth County says feedback from the public consultations has been instrumental in refining the plan.

"We are pleased that over 600 people attended the open houses," said Erickson. "The comments and questions that have been provided both at the public meetings and through directly contacting the department offer great feedback to incorporate into the next version of the draft new official plan."

The revised draft official plan will be posted online for public review at least one month prior to a statutory public meeting to provide an opportunity for further public comments in advance of the meeting.

"We encourage landowners to subscribe to receive notices when there are updates to the website page," said Erickson. "Review the draft official plan and the resources provided on the website and reach out if you have any questions or comments."

Physical copies of the county's draft official plan are available at all lower-tier municipal offices in North Perth, West Perth, Perth South and Perth East.

For more information, visit www.perthcounty.ca/NewOP.



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COMMUNITY

Breen Bentley wins Business Leader of the Year 2024

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Board of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce recently announced Breen Bentley is this year's Business Leader of the Year.

"The bar business isn't always easy, but with a lot of hard work, we've made it work," said Bentley, owner of Bentley's Bar Inn and Restaurant. "I was thinking about this and, you know, I'm proud of myself. I've made this business work and now I can show my kids and grandkids. It's great and I'm really proud of that."

Bentley's work in the restaurant industry started when he was only 10 years old when he was a dishwasher. Later, he honed his skills working in other restaurant positions, eventually leading him to graduate from the Stratford Chef's School.

After graduating, Bentley purchased the Jesters Arms, which later moved to its current location where it was renamed Bentley's Bar Inn and Restaurant.

"I didn't have a fancy education or a lot of experience, but I was street smart, in the right place at the right time and driven and determined to make it work."

Though many businesses decide to narrow down and target a small portion of the community, or tourists in particular, Bentley says he always based his business on the people of Stratford. He said ensuring everyone feels welcome has brought him a suc-



Breen Bentley and his three children, Breen Jr., Tanner and Brooklynn, will be presented with the Business Leader of the Year award at the 28th annual Business Excellence Awards gala on May 2. Contributed photo

cessful 40 years on Stratford's main strip, and his restaurant is still known as the iconic Stratford pub everyone knows and loves.

"I wanted to build a place where grandma could come with her friend at lunch and have a quiche and a glass of wine. But I also want it to be the same place at five o'clock that her son could come after work with all the boys to have a beer. And in the same building, his wife comes with all the girls from the volleyball team, and lat-

er, the grandson closes up at last call with a couple of shots of Yeager with his friends."

Bentley's is built on bringing together family and friends, as seen from their always-full tables and friendly staff. Not only is Bentley's a family restaurant for his customers, Bentley also notes that his business is the foundation of his own family, and while he never thought all three of his kids would stay in the restaurant business, they all have.

"I'm a lucky, lucky guy – the luckiest. All three of my kids are interested in the restaurant business and keep this place alive. I was raised by a mom who taught me about hard work, and I'm doing the same with my kids. I couldn't be prouder of the kids and I couldn't have done this without family."

He also notes his appreciation for Stratford and being in what he believes is the best city in North America.

"You know, Stratford is full of beautiful churches and places. People here love the city. They are concerned about the Cooper Lot, they're concerned about the swans in the river, and they all care so much about Stratford. You don't see this in other cities.

"We're surrounded by theatre, music and the best theatre in North America. As a city, we are truly blessed. I am blessed to be here in Stratford and I never take that for granted."

Bentley and his three children – Breen Jr., Tanner and Brooklynn – will be presented with the Business Leader of the Year award and will be the guest speakers at the 28th annual Business Excellence Awards gala on May 2 at the Best Western Arden Park Hotel.

The chamber board of directors decides the which local business leader will receive this award each year through a three-step, secret-ballot process. Nominations are put forth, a list is curated and secret ballots are cast. Votes are recast until there is a clear winner.

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COMMUNITY

UTRCA teaches waterway safety to 84 school classes

By St. Marys Independent staff

Nearly 80,000 students have participated in the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority's (UTRCA) River Safety program since its inception in 1998.

This year, 84 classes participated in the program – the highest involvement since returning to in-person programming following the pandemic.

The River Safety program teaches grades 1, 2 and 3 students how to stay safe around waterways like creeks, the Thames River and floodwater.

"With the warm weather we have experienced this winter, it was extremely important to emphasize that the water is still very cold and poses a danger," said Wildwood community education supervisor Vanni Azzano in a press release.

The interactive nature of the program is a draw for the young students.

It begins with a story about Splish and Splash, two water droplets learning about the dangers associ-

ated with water and how to stay safe. The students then engage in a collaborative puzzle activity, fitting their water and safety related pieces into a large board. Videos, songs and a quiz round out the one-hour program.

"The students learn to keep their distance from rivers and streams that can be cold, moving quickly and have unstable and slippery banks. While the activities are designed to be fun and engaging, the content is quite serious and can be lifesaving," added UTRCA community education coordinator Karlee Flear.

The UTRCA is very grateful for the donations and sponsorships that enabled this program to be offered across four school boards – the Thames Valley District School Board, London District Catholic School Board, Avon Maitland District School Board and Huron Perth Catholic District School Board.

The Wildwood education sponsors include the Hickson Lions Club, Optimist Clubs of Downie, Ellice, Kirkton-Woodham,



A total of 84 school classes across the Upper Thames River watershed participated in the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority's River Safety program this year. Photo courtesy of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

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COMMUNITY

Putting the fun in fundraising



A team of locals put the fun in fundraising by walking the five-kilometre loop at St. Marys' Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser last month. Currently, organizers are 98 per cent of the way to their \$56,000 goal in support of the Nourish Equal Access Market and the St. Marys community outreach worker. Visit cnoy.org/location/st-marys to donate before March 31. Photo courtesy of Ann Jackson



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COMMUNITY

Humane Society nears capacity, urgently needing fosters and adopters



Jack and Hazel are two of the animals looking for their forever homes. They are with the Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth, which is nearing shelter capacity and urgently asking for fosters and adopters. Photo courtesy of Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth

By Emily Stewart

The Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth's (HSKWSP) shelters are almost at full capacity and the organization is putting out an urgent call for residents to either foster or adopt.

The humane society sent out a press release recently noting there are 125 animals in between the two shelters and another 68 on the waitlist.

"We have so many animals in our care that if there's someone looking to add a new member to their family, they are bound to find their perfect match here at our centre," said Nasreen, the local humane society's communications and marketing manager. "If you adopt or even consider fostering, it opens up space at our shelter for another pet to be helped. And of course, we cannot provide the love and care we provide to animals who need it the most without the support of our community members."

HSKWSP is reliant on donations and does not receive government funding. Fostering is a volunteer opportunity for residents who cannot otherwise adopt a pet to help an animal in need. The pet's stress and anxiety levels

decrease in a foster home, and their happiness increases while waiting for their forever home.

"It's an extremely rewarding experience," Nasreen said. "It's incredibly rewarding to see the positive impact you can have on an animal's life, from their initial arrival to the day they find their forever home. Fostering also allows you to learn more about animal behavior, health care and compassion, which can be valuable skills that extend beyond the realm of animal welfare."

To make more room in the shelter spaces, the humane society will be reducing adoption fees for a few dogs that have been waiting for their forever family for quite some time. One of the dogs, Hazel, has been looking for nearly two years. Jack has been at the shelter for two months.

Along with fostering and adopting, supporters of the HSKWSP can either make a monetary donation to the organization or donate items such as pet food, collars, leashes and other supplies to the Pet Pantry program. More information, including animals available for adoption, can be found on kwsphumane.ca.



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ARTS & CULTURE

The Renaissance of Fused Glass



By Alice Rixson

There's a saying that "everything old is new again". This can fittingly be applied to the ancient art of fusing glass. Its history began roughly 3500 years ago and, depending on which side of antiquity you chose to embrace, it's either attributed to the Egyptians or the Romans, although artifacts recovered from archaeological digs tend to favour the Egyptians.

Whichever the true origin of this art, however, it is widely accepted among historians that either of these civilizations – ancient Rome or ancient Egypt – would have been the birthplace for molten glass techniques, within roughly the same time frame. Similarly, it is accepted that, once popularized, these techniques became the industry standard for glassware for at least two millennia and were at the core of the majority of decorative glass objects produced during that period in history.

However, this technique would eventually be surpassed and replaced by a more advanced alternative. Once the glass pipe was invented, glass blowing became the norm for glasswork and glass fusing – along with fused glass art – fell somewhat to the wayside, becoming at best a secondary form of glassware production. This status quo would endure for centuries.

But in the early decades of the 20th century, the art of fused glass would once again rise to prominence, recapturing its place within the hearts of lovers of colourful artwork. The trend started in the United States but soon became in vogue in other parts of the world.

Fast forward to the present. St. Marys lays claim to its own fused glass artist in Karen West, creator and owner of Glassy Girl. A graduate of Fanshawe College in London, ON, she studied interior design but her life-long fascination with glass, in the forms of beach, stained, blown and fused crept forward and would soon take front and centre stage.

After working in stained glass, West enrolled in a few fused glass classes about 12 years ago. She says, "I knew from the first class that I wanted to create pieces that were functional." She purchased a small kiln, the required tools and supplies and began conceiving designs for bowls, plates and platters in her home studio.

West purchases glass in sheets and also in fine, medium and coarse powders, all of which are lead free, food grade quality and dishwasher safe. Powdered glass has the versatility that affords her the flexibility to create free-form images that can add a unique

dimension and texture to a piece. For instance, it can be applied by sifting on in desired shapes, such as trees, mountains and sky.

Her glassware molds can form items starting with sheet glass in the size range from 4 inches square up to 15 inches square. When crafting flat pieces, the capacity increases to 24 inches square. "Each piece I produce can consume from 15 to 30 or more hours from start to finish," West says.

With some pieces West employs a tac process, which means pieces of glass are tacked together. "This is not as hot as a full-fuse fire. The tac fire means using a lower temperature to join layers of glass enough so that individual characteristics of the glass piece remains. This technique forms texture. Using heat and time, merging two or more layers of glass in any size or shape forms one solid, smooth piece," she adds.



Soda-lime and float glass are two types of glass commonly used. Soda-lime glass fuses between 1350 and 1500 degrees Fahrenheit. Float glass requires an addition 50 degrees. After fusing, the glass must be cooled slowly and annealed at 900 to 1000 degrees Fahrenheit to relieve stress that builds up during the firing process.

West believes there is art all around us. Her inspirations are derived from people and places and she has created many commissioned artistic pieces.

Glassy Girl is holding its first workshop, creating a mosaic sun catcher at Stone Home Creatives in St. Marys on Saturday, March 23 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm. The cost is \$65 plus HST and includes supplies.

Registration can be made online at stonehomecreatives.ca or in person at the store at 158 Queen Street East. Attendance is limited to 8.

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SPORTS

Lincs sweep Sarnia; to meet Rockets in heavyweight semi-final

By Spencer Seymour

A dominant series had a dominant conclusion last Thursday when the St. Marys Lincolns completed a four-game sweep over the Sarnia Legionnaires with a 9-3 win at the Pat Stapleton Arena.

The first goal of the game came eight minutes and three seconds into the first period when Matt Prendergast fired home his first goal of the postseason. Just 92 seconds later, Lucas Durham countered with his first of the playoffs to tie the game at one apiece. Before the end of the first, linemates Chase MacQueen-Spence and Noah VandenBrink found the back of the net to give the Lincolns a 3-1 lead heading into the intermission.

Even though his team held a two-goal lead after 20 minutes, head coach Jeff Bradley admitted the team wasn't firing on all cylinders to start the game.

"In the first period, it looked like we were just there and going through the motions a little bit," Bradley told the Independent. "We certainly weren't as aggressive as we would have wanted to be, and we were just doing the bare minimum at times. We re-focused after the first and I thought we did a much better job although we had a bit of a lapse for about a minute or so. That bit of adversity smartened us up and we were able to take back control and finish it off."

The lapse that Bradley mentioned took place in the second frame when, after goals by MacQueen-Spence and Owen Voortman in the first three minutes and 46 seconds of the period, Jimmy Monks potted a pair of goals just 17 seconds apart to suddenly put the Legionnaires within two goals.

However, the Lincs quickly halted Sarnia's momentum just 51 seconds after Monks' second goal with MacQueen-Spence completing the hat-trick. Just 59 seconds later, Luca Spagnolo found the back of the net followed by the third of the playoffs for Billy VanSumeren a mere 46 seconds after Spagnolo's goal. Coach Bradley was pleased with how his group battled back after Sarnia's two quick goals.

"We responded well which was good to see. Adversity can centre you and help you realize where you are, which can get lost or forgotten in a series where we had been so dominant. When we faced that adversity, we had to reset our focus and get back to the good habits that we've been building and fortunately we did that."

The third period was largely uncompetitive as the Lincs appeared to have sapped the Legionnaires of the intense compete level. Prendergast scored his second of the game and the only tally of the third period to make it 9-3.

MacQueen-Spence led the charge offensively with



Chase MacQueen-Spence celebrates a goal during last Thursday's St. Marys Lincolns playoff game in Sarnia. MacQueen-Spence netted a hat-trick as part of a five-point night which helped the Lincolns beat the Legionnaires 9-3, completing the four-game sweep in the first-round playoff series. Photo by Stefania Orsini

three goals and five points, while linemates VandenBrink had a goal and three points and Bidgood nabbed two helpers. Bradley felt that line led the way in the team's victory in game four.

"To see them put up a bunch of points was really good for them. They have really stepped up in the playoffs. Chase was a really good playoff performer for us last year. Noah was a really good playoff performer for us back when he was 16 years old. And Cohen, with the way he plays and the nature of his game, just seems to be built for the playoffs."

"It all comes down to the three of them wanting to win," Bradley continued when asked why the trio has experienced early playoff success. "They trust what we need them to do for us to win and they go out and execute it. They want to help the team be successful. They want to be a part of something special and they go ahead and make it happen."

With the Lincolns sweeping the Legionnaires, they are now set for a second-round clash against the Strathroy Rockets, who defeated the St. Thomas Stars in the opening round in five games. Bradley explained what in his eyes are the attributes that make Strathroy such a strong opponent.

"They are one of the most organized teams in this

conference. They are very well coached. They have very good players. I don't think there is too much separating us and them. Aside from one game, all the games we've played this year have been very close. They played us tough last year as well and gave us a good fight in the playoffs. It's going to come down to who plays their game the best and we know it's going to be a tight series."

Bradley also noted the familiarity between the two organizations.

"We're very happy with the way we play and we're not going to change that but there are things that they do that we're going to have to adjust for and make sure we have contingencies to have an answer to how they adjust to what we do. We know these guys well, we've played them a lot over the last two seasons with the same coaching staff and many of the same players, so there isn't too much to figure out but there are some things that we need to be ready for."

The Lincolns' second-round series against the Rockets will begin this Friday at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The other Western Conference semi-final will pit the London Nationals against the LaSalle Vipers.

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SPORTS

'Everyone at their best' - U10 A Boys claim Gold at Warriors tournament

By Spencer Seymour

The Dunny's Source For Sports U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock stepped up when it mattered most last weekend enroute to winning the gold medal at the Garden City Warriors Tournament in St. Catharines.

"The overall theme (of the week-end-long tournament) to me was that everyone contributed and played their best hockey of the year," head coach Brent Kittmer told the Independent. "The players' ability to stay focused, adapt when needed, work hard and stick to the plan over a long three days and six games is what made them successful. It started in the two weeks leading up to the tournament after we finished playoffs. We had a stretch of practices where it would have been easy for the players to take a break, but they rose to the coaches' challenge to practice like we play and to stay in game shape."

The team's stretch of strong practices alluded to by Kittmer yielded massive dividends as the Rock outscored opponents 28-3 during round-robin play and, in all six games of the tournament, gave up very few shots and scoring chances. Kittmer noted that the team's excellent play came in spite of several lineup changes thrust upon the group.

"We had been lucky all year to avoid a rash of sickness going through the team," explained Kittmer. "But leading up to Friday, we had a couple of players recovering from illness and one out for a few games. Because of



The Dunny's Source For Sports U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock played some of their best hockey of the season at the Garden City Warriors Tournament this past weekend in St. Catharines when they captured the gold medal. Pictured in front is Franklin Anderson. In the first row, from left, are Kane Douglas, Cameryn Stokes, Edwin Froud, Finn Harburn, and Jacob Hahn. In the middle row, from left, are Harper Graves, Jakob Kittmer, Dean Feeney, Jaxon Wittig, Cooper Sass, Karson Garrett, and Jack Bilyea. In the back row, from left, are trainer Ben Douglas, trainer Marshall Graves, assistant coach Jared Stokes, head coach Brent Kittmer, and goalie coach Luke Binning. Contributed photo

this, we had players playing out of position and the whole team had to adapt to this change and be ready. The boys' hard work leading up to the tournament paid off. Before each game, we challenged them to have a good start and boy did they ever."

After running the table in the round-robin, the Rock took on Halton Hills in the semi-final and played a bit tense, with both teams going scoreless in the first period and then St. Marys falling behind 1-0 in the

second. However, a challenge from the coaching staff to face the adversity head-on was answered as the group began to bang and crash in front of the net which helped St. Marys overtake Halton Hills enroute to a 3-2 win, which punched their ticket to the gold-medal game.

Waiting for the Rock in the finals was Casselman-Embrun and, despite a strong start to the game for St. Marys, they fell behind 1-0 at the 3:23 mark of the first frame. But, like

they had done repeatedly throughout the weekend, the Rock responded with Cam Stokes scoring just 30 seconds later.

"After that," Kittmer said, "the game was all ours."

St. Marys' focus on pressuring the opposing defenders to create turnovers was taken to the next level in the second period and rewards came in the form of goals by Kane Douglas at 7:45 of the period followed by the second of the game for Stokes with one minute and 21 seconds left

before the intermission. The Rock held on to their 3-1 lead to win the game and capture the gold.

Coach Kittmer was thrilled with how every part of his lineup performed all weekend, with the final game highlighting all the elements that were being executed so well.

"All weekend our defence had done a great job on their one-on-ones and limited shots, and I don't think Casselman-Embrun had a high-risk scoring chance after the first. Once the puck got out of our end, our forwards did exactly what we asked them to and got the puck in deep, then hemmed in the Casselman-Embrun defence. Even those times when we did give up a shot or a scoring chance, Franklin Anderson was there to make the save. Through the tournament, he had three shut-outs and he really stepped up in the semis and finals to be in the right position and make the saves when we needed them."

U11 C Girls earn playoff win, qualify for provincials

By Spencer Seymour

The Hitching Post U11 C Girls St. Marys Rock picked up a 5-1 win last Saturday when they hosted the Grand River Mustangs for a playoff game, a win that bolstered the already-celebratory mood for the team who recently qualified for the Provincial Championships.

According to head coach Jamie Matheson, the team's grit and determination earned them the win over Grand River.

"The game (last Saturday) was a complete team effort," Matheson told the Independent. "The girls competed, battled and worked hard. We liked the way the forwards battled in the other team's end and the defence took care of our end."

Ellie McDonald opened the scoring for St. Marys with the first and only goal of the first period at the 4:13 mark of the opening frame. The eventual game-winning tally came in the second when Hannah Schmidt scored with 44 seconds left in the period.

The Rock's offence came alive in the third when Amelia Falkiner extended the lead to three goals. Falkiner's goal was also the first of three scored by St. Marys in a span of five minutes and 22 seconds, with goals also coming from Kylie Blake and Alex Harlton. The Mustangs found the back of the net with just over two and a half minutes left, the only blemish on an otherwise strong effort in the Rock's net by goaltender Brynlee Pickel.

Coach Matheson also explained what the team qualifying for provincials

means to his squad.

"Making it to provincials is a great accomplishment for these girls," Matheson said. "They have worked and competed hard this year and they have really come together as a team. They won and tied some key games at the right time of the year. Being the only girls' team to make provincials from St. Marys is a pretty big accomplishment for these 12 girls and we are so thrilled and proud of them."

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SPORTS

'Miracles do happen' - U13 A Boys win Gold in St. Catharines

By Spencer Seymour

The St. Marys Fire Department U13 A Boys St. Marys Rock may not have entered the Garden City Warriors Tournament last weekend with the strongest season record or the loftiest expectations, but what they found in St. Catharines was an element of magic that carried them to the gold medal.

Head coach Bob Davis told the Independent his team found its stride as well as they had at any other point this year.

"The boys came to play this weekend," said Davis. "We had a game plan in place that we stuck to in every game. They did not let any adversity get in the way of our plan. They finally trusted the things they have been learning all year and they remained disciplined. One success led to the next with growing confidence. Our defence was exceptionally strong with our goalie making some huge saves to keep us on track. Our offence performed like we knew they could. They were relentless. Every single player stepped up when it was needed and they played as a unit."

The Rock went undefeated throughout the weekend, beginning in the round-robin when St. Marys beat Northumberland 7-0 which saw seven different goal scorers. A much tougher second game against Glancaster saw the Rock trailing 3-2 after two periods, a score that lasted until the final minute when St. Marys, which had an empty net in favour of the extra attacker, netted the game-tying tally with just 20 seconds left.

Game three pitted the Rock against the tournament favourites from Gar-



The St. Marys Fire Department U13 A Boys St. Marys Rock pulled off a miraculous gold-medal victory last weekend at the Garden City Warriors Tournament in St. Catharines. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Luke Savile and Braydon Wheeler. In the second row, from left, are Luke Simons, Ben Graham, Adrian Bes, Willy Richardson, Luke Showers, Landon MacDonald, Nate Hern, and Owen Pletsch. In the third row, from left, Lukas Francis, Elliot Hudson, Quinn Porter, Hayden Barker, and Jacob Savile. In the fourth row, from left, are coaches Rick O'Donnell, Sean Porter, Bob Davis, and Mike Davis. Contributed photo

den City. A 1-1 tie carried into the third when Garden City got into penalty trouble which opened the floodgates for St. Marys to ultimately claim a 5-1 victory over the host team.

In the semi-finals, the Rock had a rematch from their first round-robin game against Northumberland and a hat-trick by Elliot Hudson along with goals by Will Richardson and Luke Simons lifted St. Marys to a 5-0 win.

This put the U13 A Boys in the championship game for a rematch against Garden City. Going into the third, St. Marys was ahead 1-0 and midway through the period, the Rock extend-

ed the lead to two goals. However, Garden City responded with a power-play goal to cut the lead back down to one. Late in the game, St. Marys was shorthanded and Garden City pulled its goalie for the extra attacker, but the Rock managed to pot an empty netter enroute to the 3-1 victory and the gold medal. Owen Pletsch scored a pair for St. Marys with Richardson once again chipping in one.

Coach Davis described the feeling of his team overcoming the odds.

"Miracles do happen," Davis proclaimed. "We are so proud of their

play and how they came together as a team this weekend. It is a very special feeling. To win the tournament and not lose

a game is so unexpectedly amazing. It is a feeling I will never forget. It is like climbing the highest mountain and experiencing a spectacular view."

The U13 A Boys didn't put together the most glistening win-loss record this season but, in the eyes of the head coach, all of those trials and tribulations built to the moment when everything finally clicked into place for Davis' squad.

"We've had such a difficult season so to watch (the tournament) unfold in the manner it did reaffirms that anything is possible. The boys have worked hard all year without ever giving up. They show up and they try. We have seen a vast improvement over the last six weeks in their ability to play the game and how to think on the ice. Two areas that changed drastically this weekend were their hesitancy and their attitude. Even though we were improving, we never had complete control of a game. We would hold back thinking we were not as good as our opposition and even if we had a lead, one goal against would cause us to collapse.

"This weekend we played like we were possessed," Davis continued. "There was no worry about making the wrong move or the wrong play. We supported each other. If the other team did score, we drove harder to recover. They realized the game plan worked and they were rewarded for it. It was absolutely wonderful to see this confidence grow with each game."



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Andrew Garvie races through center ice to chase the puck during the U9 LL Boys 1 St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



Sullivan Rumble launches a shot on goal during last Saturday's St. Marys Ford U9 LL Boys 2 St. Marys Rock game.



Genevieve MacNeil tracks down a loose puck during the St. Marys Kinsmen U9 C Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Ivy Smith patrols the blueline during last Sunday's Harris-Greig Automotive U9 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game.



Josh Gerber jams home a goal during the Frayne Custom Cabinets U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock game this past Monday.



Donovan McGregor picks up a loose puck in the slot during this past Monday's A.N.A.F. U15 A Boys St. Marys Rock game. Photos by Spencer Seymour

COMMUNITY

U11 A Boys win consolation pool opener

By Spencer Seymour

In the first game of the SHL Consolation Pool B playoff action, the Social Thirty-One U11 A Boys St. Marys Rock came away with a high-octane 4-1 win over the Dorchester Dragons this past Monday.

Head coach Merlin Malinowski said after the game his squad didn't have the start they wanted, but they refocused and, by the end of the game, were fully playing the style they set out to.

"We started a little scambly, especially in our zone," admitted Malinowski. "We talked about (what we needed to do differently) in the intermission and I thought the difference between the first period and the third period was night and day. We played really well in our own end and suddenly all the scrambles and close calls in front of our net disappeared. When you're in position in your own end, you can break out much easier."

Malinowski elaborated on why the team's defensive strategy is so crucial for the group's success at both ends of the ice.

"When you play well positionally in your zone, you will get breakouts out of that. Good offensive attacks come from good defensive zone positioning. When you play your position in the defensive zone, you can knock pucks away from the danger areas and you have more time to look for that next

pass."

That scambly start to the game for the Rock allowed the Dragons to jump out to an early 1-0 lead, but before the first period was done, Talan Ward found the back of the net to tie the game at one apiece.

In the second, a rapidly refocusing St. Marys squad began to take control of the game, leading to a pair of goals in the final three minutes and 17 seconds of the period. First, it was Brett Pearson putting the Rock ahead 2-1, followed by an insurance marker by Ryder Boemer with 25 seconds remaining in the period.

Ward netted his second of the game and the lone goal of the third period enroute to the 4-1 St. Marys victory. Malinowski agreed that the team showed a good collective hockey IQ by being able to refocus and get back to their gameplan after their discombobulated first frame, and the head coach credited the team for always being receptive to feedback from the coaching staff.

"They've really listened well this year," said Malinowski. "When they come to the bench, you've got the whiteboard out and you keep preaching the message and it sinks in with them. They've learned to do it and they've also begun to realize what they're doing right when they do it. They make a pass that works and we point that out and they understand to do that again the next time."



Ryder Boemer jams home a goal during the Social Thirty-One U11 A Boys St. Marys Rock 4-1 win this past Monday night. Photo by Spencer Seymour

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SPORTS

SKC students capture medals at national championship



Pictured from left to right are Shannon Campbell, sensei Jalyne Lorentz and Lisa Sheldon. The three Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) students recently competed at the Canadian Open Martial Arts Championships held in Gatineau earlier this month. All three earned a first-place finish in their respective divisions as part of the SKC's haul of medals. Contributed photo

By Spencer Seymour

Three Stonetown Karate Centre (SKC) students travelled to Gatineau, Que. earlier this month and each came home with a first-place finish.

Shannon Campbell, sensei Jalyne Lorentz and Lisa Sheldon represented the St. Marys dojo at the Canadian Open Martial Arts Championships March 8-9 at the Palais des Congrès in Gatineau. The tournament, being a national event, attracted a field of competitors not seen by the SKC students on the Ontario loop of tournaments.

Campbell captured the gold medal in 42+ women's advanced belt point sparring.

Lorentz competed in five 15-17 girls black-belt events, including creative weapons in which she finished in first place. Lorentz took second in both traditional weapons and creative

open forms and third in traditional kata and classical kata,

Meanwhile, Sheldon added a pair of medals to the SKC haul, including a first-place finish in 35+ women's black belt point sparring and third in 42+ women's black belt point sparring.

"Lisa, Shannon and Jalyne have been training extremely hard and putting themselves against as much competition as possible to test their skills before the WKC (World Karate Championships) provincial qualifiers in April," said sensei Jeremy Lorentz. "We have an amazing time with our karate family attending tournaments. Amongst the pressure of competing there are many great laughs and smiles, and in this case, getting to experience a place not traditionally in our tournament loop made it even more special."

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Wedding GUIDE

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Things I learned on my journey down the isle and forever after:
 There is a proposed order in life to which we are expected to follow – but in my experience that order becomes more natural than we realize.
 We find someone special that you don't want to be without – you may already have a family or plan to start one or expand – you find somewhere to settle down and write the rest of your story – and all this happens in many different ways – my children were able to join me walking down the isle and I cherish that!
 The sayings 'Home is a feeling' and 'Home is where the heart is' becomes so much more true when it's filled with your past / present / future. It's a cozy feeling you can't get anywhere else, YES some hotels are incredible, but you still can't beat the feeling of coming HOME!
 If you are looking for your next HOME to fill with all that comes next in life, please don't hesitate to reach out, that is literally my job. I'd be happy to help you in your search for your next home OR just reach out to chat. I wish all the happy couples a wonderful wedding – the BEST is yet to come!



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COMMUNITY

Audrey Beadle celebrates 100th Birthday



On Saturday, March 16 many family and friends got together at Kingsway Lodge to help Audrey Beadle celebrate her 100th Birthday. Audrey has a total of 17 grandchildren and 31 great grandchildren. A wonderful time was had by all who attended. Nancy Bickell photo



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HISTORY

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The Adanac Images Donation to the St. Marys Museum

By Mary Smith

The St. Marys Museum has several thousand archival photographs in its collection, recorded, and many of them digitized for backup and easy access. These photographs show people, places and events from the past and so contribute to the understanding of this community's development and growth. Photographs are tremendously useful for all sorts of different research projects and provide the basis for many Museum exhibits. Usually, the photographs that accompany this column are from the Museum's image collection. Photographs really matter. When the Museum receives a large donation of local images, it is truly an occasion to celebrate.

At the end of 2022, Adanac Images, a local photography company, was sold and the business closed. Mark Oliver, second generation owner of the company, approached the St. Marys Museum offering to donate negatives from six decades of picture-taking in the St. Marys area. The Museum's curatorial team met with Mark just before Christmas – a quickly arranged meeting because the Adanac building on Queen Street East, having also been sold, had to be emptied and vacated by a fairly tight deadline. Adanac Images was probably best known in this area as the photographer for school pictures. The company did not keep these images. Photographs of children are sensitive – the school pictures have all been destroyed.

There were also some other images that were not destined for the Museum's archives – pictures from weddings, for example, or other family-specific events. (The Olivers made every effort to offer these negatives to the families.) However, two large boxes full of negatives – all in labelled and dated envelopes – were taken to the Museum. A draft inventory was prepared, and last summer, Ben Winchester, a student employee, spent considerable time scanning negatives to produce positive digital images. As he worked, treasures emerged – clear, detailed, well-composed pictures of considerable local interest.

Recently, for appraisal purposes, Museum intern Patti Nagle created a more detailed inventory. The contents of the boxes have been divided into seven main categories (or seven series, to use archival terminology): Clubs and Organization, Churches, Schools, Sports, Government (in this case, various area municipalities), Portraits, and Industries/Businesses. An eighth category, Miscellaneous, holds the images that didn't fit anywhere else. There are 71 subseries within these eight categories and, in



1973 aerial view of the Adanac Images, the white building in the centre foreground. McKinley Hatchery is on the right. The golf course clubhouse is just across Queen Street, at that time also the St. Marys Curling Club. The original nine-hole golf course forms the background. Photo courtesy of adanacimages.com

total, 712 envelopes of negatives – a sampling of two generations of photographic work.

The story began in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where Maurice Adrain Arthur Oliver was born in November 1930. According to the 1931 census, six-month-old Maurice was the youngest in a family of five children. His father, William Frank Oliver, 54 years of age, had come to Canada from Ireland as a young boy in 1882. Maurice's mother, Lavina Adrain, also of Irish descent, had been born in Canada. At the height of the Great Depression, William Oliver was fortunate to have a stable job, working for the municipality. As he was growing up, Maurice became interested in photography and after high school, worked in a studio, gaining experience in wedding, portrait and commercial photography. In 1952, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force where he trained as a military photographer. The Air Force brought him to Ontario; he was stationed at the radar base at Clinton.

In 1959, he married a St. Marys girl, Elizabeth (Betty) Bushfield. They opened a photography business in town, taking over the studio previously occupied for many years by photographer Frank Robinson (1888-1958). The G. C. Boyle Law Firm is in that location today. A brief notice in the St. Marys Journal Argus, along with a head-and-shoulders picture, announced the opening of Maurice Oliver's business: "With fifteen years experience with various photographic firms as well as several years as a public relations photographer with the RCAF, Oliver expects to offer a complete photographic service to the people of St. Marys and district."

A 1961 price card for colour prints lists portraits and family groups, taken in studio, for \$15 – six proofs shown. Wedding studio photographs (12 proofs shown from four or more poses) were more expensive – \$100 for a deluxe package of a dozen 8x10 prints. Candid colour wedding coverage was also offered: "From church entry to the cutting of the cake." The personable photographer soon built up a strong customer base in St. Marys.

Maurice Oliver Photography became particularly committed to school photographs. Realizing that there was no school photo processing lab in Canada at that time, Maurice began purchasing processing and printing equipment so that he could prepare the school packages right in St. Marys. He was also able to do processing for other school photographers. The small downtown studio could not accommodate this extra work. In 1969, with a partner, Maurice purchased a parcel of land at 766 Queen Street East, across from the golf course. The new building soon opened with a new name: Adanac Images – Canada spelled backwards, branding it as a Canadian company. Maurice bought out his partner within a few years. An addition to the building was added in 1976.

Meanwhile, Maurice and Betty Oliver were raising their children in St. Marys. The community was saddened in 1977 when Betty died, still in her early 40s, leaving behind her young family. Sometime after his wife's death, partly to counteract his grieving, Maurice decided to take flying lessons. He became a competent pilot and added aerial photography to his

repertoire. In 1980, he married Nelda (Kaufman) Mossip, whose husband, Donald Kenneth Mossip, had died in 1978, leaving four sons. The Oliver home on St. John Street South was a lively place for the next few years.

In 1983, Maurice's son, Mark, began working at Adanac Images. Mark and his wife, Janet, both with degrees in photographic engineering technology, took over the business upon Maurice's retirement in 1991. For more than three decades, they continued to improve the company's service, keeping abreast with technological developments in photo processing. Adanac Images created an excellent website. It is still live and many details of the Olivers' story in this column come from this source. This site also acknowledges the dedicated employees who worked with the Olivers through the years.

No story about Maurice and Mark Oliver would be complete without including Rotary. Maurice joined the St. Marys Rotary Club in June 1966 and became a life-long, contributing member. He was particularly involved in Rotary's work with Easter Seals, especially with nearby Camp Woodeden, the accessible camp in Komoka for children with physical disabilities. He also was instrumental in establishing the District Rotary Student Exchange Program and many exchange students spent part of their time in St. Marys, hosted in the Oliver household. Maurice was elected District Governor in 1981-82. He travelled all over the world to international conventions, making many good friends. Mark joined Rotary in 2014 and has become Youth Exchange Officer for the club, a position that he very much enjoys. He himself spent a year as an exchange student in Australia when he was 17.

It is appropriate that the St. Marys Museum made its first direct use of the Adanac Images donation when the photographs for Rotary's 2024 Historic St. Marys calendar were selected last summer. A 1950s view of the Royal Canadian Legion on Church Street North is the November photograph. A picture of some Holstein cattle, resting in a pasture on the Hooper farm off Emily Street is on the back cover. Other images will certainly appear on the pages of future Rotary calendars.

Picture St. Marys, the on-line digital collection of many of the Museum's images, is currently out of service for maintenance reasons. If all goes well, it will soon be restored so that everyone can enjoy the historic pictures, including the ones already posted from the Adanac Images donation.

Thorndale News

A section within the
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Donations needed for South Sudan

By *Stu McCutcheon*

I have just returned from a trip to South Sudan. The organization I travel under is Canadian Economic Development Assistance South Sudan (CEDASS). CEDASS' mission is humanitarian work, but we stay in the same South Sudan community.

Our primary school is heading into registration and the start of the 2024 school year. Our medical clinic is undergoing a small renovation through the dry season, a low-patient time, and will reopen soon. In the 20-acre school-training garden we have introduced a small, drip-irrigation plot with 12,000 feet of drip lines. In the middle of a dry season, it is so refreshing to see green rows of vegetables growing.

The dry season starts in November and runs through to July with some

light rains in May and June. The rains in May and June are not adequate to germinate and sustain crop growth. Our hope is to see vegetables growing and producing throughout the remainder of the dry season and into the rainy season. We have watermelon soon to be harvested, tomatoes and eggplant blooming and okra soon to bloom.

Two years ago CEDASS started to promote sustainability within our projects. We put people from the community to lead the projects. It has given the new leadership the opportunity to feel confident to make decisions and changes, and learn from things that don't go well.

We are starting to look at booking another container to send supplies in support of our community. We reach people in the ten villages, including our 500 primary school students, with

clothes and footwear. We send books and school supplies for the school library. Sport balls and jerseys are welcomed by the boys, but especially the girls who, in the past, have not been given equal opportunities. Thanks to Days for Girls Canada for the 1,500-2,000 hygiene kits they have sent for the schoolgirls, young moms in our community and neighbouring communities. Our Vulnerables Orphans and Widows (VOW) project desperately relies on the container. Supplies donated through the VOW project reach people in dire need who did not receive the basic necessities on container-distribution day. Lily, our VOW leader, distributes food and basic necessities four times yearly to our VOW members.

What do we need? Clothing and footwear for all ages of people, but our children and youth-clothing dona-

tions are very low and much needed. School supplies and bookshelves, medical supplies, lumber and used roof steel, tools, sports equipment, cooking and serving items are also needed.

We are looking at setting up a sewing-training class for graduate students and young moms. We are in need of fabric and sewing items to kick off this project.

Our local communities here at home have very much met our past container needs. In the next six months, if you have any of the above needed items, we welcome your donations. If you are doing a garage sale this summer and need to get rid of unsold items, we will welcome your gifts to us. Contact me, Stu McCutcheon, at 519 878 9417 or mcchol100@gmail.com to learn more.

Maximize your tax return: Tips for Ontario residents

By *Matthew Little, M Little Accounting Services*

As tax season approaches, it's essential for you to be prepared when filing personal income taxes. Here are some key considerations to ensure you maximize your tax return and take advantage of available benefits.

1. Organize Your Documents: Gather all relevant documents including T4 slips, receipts for charitable donations, medical expenses and any other income or deductions. Keeping everything organized will make the filing process smoother and help ensure you don't miss out on any eligible deductions. Medical expenses can also include travel expenses in some cases.

2. Utilize CRA Online Services: The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) offers convenient online services where you can access your processed tax slips, view carry forward information from prior years, and track the status of your return. Creating an account on the CRA website is highly recommended for easy access to im-

portant tax-related information.

3. Consider Pension Income Splitting: If you or your spouse receive pension income, consider pension-income splitting. This strategy allows you to allocate up to 50 per cent of eligible pension income to your spouse, potentially reducing the overall tax burden for your household.

4. Take Advantage of Ontario Tax Credits: Ontario offers various tax credits and deductions to residents, such as the Ontario Trillium Benefit, the Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant and the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. Be sure to explore these credits to see if you qualify and maximize your tax savings.

5. Plan Ahead for Next Year: Use this tax season as an opportunity to plan ahead for next year. Consider strategies such as contributing to an RRSP (Registered Retirement Savings Plan) or opening a TFSA (Tax-Free Savings Account) to reduce your taxable income and save for the

future. Additionally, a FHSA (First Home Savings Account) may be a consideration.

By following these tips and staying informed about available tax benefits, you can make the most of your

income tax filing and ensure you're not leaving money on the table. Remember, the deadline for filing your taxes is April 30, so don't delay in getting started!

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COLUMN

WHAT'S FOR DINNER: Easter Appetizers



By Lauren Eedy

While many have their tried-and-true Easter mains like ham, lamb or salmon, appetizers are still a satisfying and important part of the celebrations. Whether waiting for meals to cook or simply an afternoon nosh, having leisurely snacks on hand that are easy to prepare is a must. The following are all very satisfying and not overly indulgent so you will have room for the main event.

Onion Brie Appetizers

Makes: 1 1/2 dozen Prep: 25 minutes Bake: 15 minutes

- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp white wine vinegar

1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed

4 oz Brie cheese, rind removed and softened

1-2 tsp caraway seeds

1 large egg

2 tsp water

Method:

- In a large skillet, cook the onions, butter, brown sugar and vinegar over medium-low heat until onions are golden brown, stirring frequently. Remove with a slotted spoon, cool to room temperature.

- On a slightly floured surface, roll puff pastry into an 11x8 inch rectangle. Cut brie into thin slices and distribute evenly over pastry. Cover with the onions, sprinkle with caraway seeds.

- Roll up one long side to the middle of the dough; roll up the other side so the two meet in the centre. Using a serrated knife, cut into half-inch slices.

- Place on parchment-lined baking sheets; flatten to quarter-inch thickness. Refrigerate for 15 minutes and preheat oven to 375°.

- In a small bowl, whisk egg and water. Brush over slices. Bake until puffed and golden brown, 12-14 minutes. Serve warm.

Apricot-Glazed Bacon Spirals

Makes: 15 Servings Total time: 25 minutes

1 tbsp butter

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

3 tbsp apricot preserves

1 tube refrigerated crescent rolls

1 package ready-to-serve fully cooked bacon (alternatively, you can cook your own bacon and use that, which will increase total time but also well worth the extra effort).

Method:

- Preheat oven to 375°. In a small skillet heat butter over medium heat. Add onion, cook until tender, 3-5 minutes. Reduce heat to low, add preserves and stir until melted.

- Unroll crescent dough into one long rectangle. Roll into a 15x9 inch rectangle, sealing seams and perforations. Cut crosswise into 15 one-

inch strips; top each with one piece of bacon. Roll up jelly roll style, starting with a short side, pinch seam to seal. Place on a baking sheet, cut side down.

- Spoon apricot mixture over each spiral. Bake until golden brown, 12-15 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.

Roasted Vegetable Dip

Makes: 20 Servings Prep: 15 minutes Bake: 25 minutes

2 large sweet red peppers

1 large zucchini

1 medium onion

1 tsp olive oil

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

1 package (8oz) reduced-fat cream cheese

Assorted crackers or fresh vegetables

Method:

- Preheat oven to 425°. Cut vegetables into one-inch pieces. Place in a 15x10, one-inch-deep baking pan coated with cooking spray; toss vegetables with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast until tender,

stirring occasionally, 25-30 minutes. Cool completely.

- Place vegetables and cream cheese in a food processor, process until blended. Transfer to a bowl, refrigerate covered until serving. Serve with crackers and fresh vegetables.

Garlic Garbanzo Bean Spread

Total time: 10 minutes Makes: 1 1/2 cups

1 can garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained

1/2 cup olive oil

2 tbsp minced fresh parsley

1 tsp lemon juice

1 green onion, cut into 3 pieces

2 cloves garlic, peeled

1/4 tsp salt

Assorted fresh vegetables and baked pita chips

Method:

- In a food processor, combine the first seven ingredients. Cover and process until blended. Transfer to a bowl. Cover and refrigerate until serving. Serve with vegetables and pita chips.

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COLUMN

HOSTING UKRAINE: Hard to Translate Nuances

By VJ Knutson

One of the biggest challenges we face, week to week, is helping newcomers understand the nuances of Canadian life. How, for example, to understand deductions on a pay stub. Or how to decode an invoice for services rendered. Or how to find a job? To be honest, we don't think twice about most of these things, until someone asks us, and then it takes a fair bit of work to identify the gaps between understanding and meaningful translation.

Part of the problem, of course, is that we have no idea how things work in Ukraine. I remember Nataly texting me one day: How do I call a doctor to come to the house? How long has it been since doctors here made house calls? The question caused me to pause. I explained to her that you have to call the doctor's office early in the morning to get a same day appointment, and then drag your sick child in. The alternative, of course, is hauling them off to Emergency and waiting many hours to be seen. How could I justify our modern system of medicine that their paycheque deductions pay for when back in Ukraine, doctors make house calls?

Why does the dentist cost so much? Why doesn't the employer answer my emails when I am clearly suit-



Gathering in honour of T.G. Shevchenko. Contributed photo

able for the job? Why does the landlord not respond to my interest in their apartment? See what I

mean? Without context, how does one explain?

In preparing for a celebration of the Ukrainian poet T.G. Schevchenko to be held at the United Church on Sunday, Lesia asked me to print off programs, but no matter how we formatted the document, it would not come out right. Then Ric informed me that Ukrainians use a different paper size - A4. An important difference to understand.

The Sunday ceremony helped bridge the gap for those of us Canadians who attended. Dressed all in traditional clothing, children and adults recited the poetry of Schevchenko, who for Ukrainians, symbolizes a free Ukraine. Schevchenko's words capture the beauty of the country, the darkness of oppression, and the resilience of a people who so dearly love their nation. Although not all poems were read in English, the audience could see the emotion of the performers and feel their pride.

"And I grew up in a foreign country/ And I am gray in a foreign land/ It's lonely for me" begins one of the poems. Although written in the 1800's, the words resonate for many today, who like Schevchenko find themselves displaced, their country under attack.

Thank you, Lesia for organizing the event, and to all who came to participate and watch, including neighbours and members of the St Marys poetry circle. Thank you to the women who organized tea, coffee, and snacks. As I hurry to get this article to press, I am basking in the emotions of the day. As a first cultural event, we missed a lot in the planning, so we have room to improve. The takeaway, though, is that we need more of these events to understand one another.

Until next time.

(Reach me at english.knutson@gmail.com. Don't forget that March 30th we are planning an Easter celebration. All are welcome, but you must let me know.)

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Riddles

- What sound does a space turkey make? **Hubble, hubble, hubble**
- What are unhappy cranberries called? **Blueberries**
- What's blue and covered with feathers? **A turkey holding its breath**
- What did the mom corn ask baby corn? **"Where is pop corn?"**
- Why did the kid put the mail in the oven? **Because he wanted to have hotmail**
- What kind of mail does a superstar vampire get? **Fang mail**
- What did Dracula's teacher say when he failed his math test? **"Can't you count, Dracula?"**
- What did one math book say to the other? **"Don't bother me, I have my own problem"**
- What's green and makes holes? **A drill pickle**
- What's big, black and eats rocks? **A big, black rock eater**
- What's another name for a grandfather clock? **An old timer**
- What do you call an ice cream truck operator? **A sundae drive**

- Word Search -

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

Word List

- Spring break
- Robins
- Easter
- Planting
- Lawn raking
- Summer tires
- Daffodils
- Earth Day
- Tulips
- Daylight saving
- Income tax
- Maple syrup
- Sunshine



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

How do you know a snake is a baby?



It has a rattle!

Callum McKay (16 mo)

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 Ziggy, a 6 year old domestic short hair who lives with the Nelson family. He enjoys sleeping, eating and more sleeping. He is a rescue cat that once lived with 150 other cats in a small motel room. His solitary life now is definitely more enjoyable!



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

Did you know that our online store allows you to set up an auto-order for pet products, including treats?

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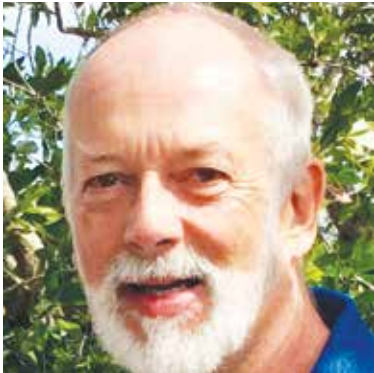
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COLUMN

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Exploring a real, fictional, community – and that's not a contradiction



By Paul Knowles

JoAnne and Dennis Rogers had spent the previous day taking a lengthy mini-coach tour, visiting sites that have inspired the work of their favourite mystery writer. After a long day on the tour, Jo Anne was nothing but enthusiastic. "It was incredible," she told me. "One of our best experiences ever."

The couple, who live in Massachusetts, had come to Quebec's Eastern Townships for the precise purpose of exploring the world of Louise Penny, the Canadian writer whose 18 and counting Inspector Gamache novels have earned fans all over the world. Those fans include former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who liked the novels so much she conscripted Penny as her co-writer when she decided to write a fictional thriller called *State of Terror*.

Fans of Penny's books know their protagonist lives in a fictional Quebec village named Three Pines. The village and its eclectic cast of characters figure large in the Penny novels.

I met the Rogers because, like us, they were staying at the

Hillhouse Bed and Breakfast in Lac-Brome. The town of Lac-Brome actually includes seven villages, one of which is Knowlton, where Penny lives, which has provided much of the thinly fictionalized setting for her novels.

It was no coincidence we were at Hillhouse B&B. Owners Louise Cadieux and Gilles Trudel are also the operators of the Three Pines Tours which the Rogers were praising so effusively.

The day-long tours, which have been vetted and approved by Penny, take visitors to many of the sites which appear – usually under assumed names – in the novels. Even if you are not a fan of Inspector Gamache, visiting these places on your own can still make for fascinating experiences.

Take, for example, the tour of the Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-lac on the shores of Lake Memphremagog. I wrote about this abbey, still home to cheese-making monks, in a previous feature. But what I didn't say was this monastery was the model for Penny's fictional monastery, Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups, site of mayhem and murder in *The Beautiful Mystery*. I asked our guide at the monastery if they were bothered by this link with evil. He laughed and pointed out that Louise Penny has been a faithful, financial contributor to Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-lac and also brings her friends there – most recently Hillary and Bill Clinton. So, they quite like her, even if she did leave them with fictional corpses.

In fact, it seems everyone in the mythical Three Pines area

likes her – and why not? Louise Penny has almost single-handedly raised tourism to a more-than healthy level in these towns and villages.

People like to dine where Gamache and his beloved wife, Reine-Marie, have enjoyed romantic get-aways. In that spirit, we had lunch on the patio of the highly rated Manoir Hovey, overlooking Lake Massawippi. The meal – scallops, a seafood wrap, corn soup, Caesar salad and a chocolate brownie – was exceptional, by the way.

We also wandered around Sutton, another point of inspiration for Penny, and enjoyed dinner at the Sutton Brouerie.

Penny's influence on tourism is very evident in the growth of the Three Pines Tours. Gilles and Louise told me while their team conducted 325 tours in 2022, in 2023 they hit at least 950. The day-long, guided, mini-coach tour costs \$335.

Visitors on the tour will stop at many Penny sites including Brome Lake Books, a shop owned by friends of Penny that has a dedicated Louise Penny corner where the author herself may sometimes be found doing a reading or answering questions from fans.

Tour participants will also get some personal information from their guides. Louise Cadieux confided in me that Inspector Gamache is based on Penny's late husband. As to other characters in the books, there is speculation in the town about some of the characters, including the



The Pettes Memorial Library in Knowlton, a beneficiary of Louise Penny's generosity. All photos by Paul Knowles

elderly, rude and belligerent poet, Ruth Zardo. Cadieux laughed and suggested Ruth may be a mélange of local personalities. No names were mentioned.

I asked Cadieux if Knowlton really has three pines. She grimaced. "They're dead." There was an effort to plant three pine trees, but they did not survive. So today, they exist only in Penny's fiction.

Louise Penny's international fame has certainly made an economic impact on Knowlton and its equally appealing Eastern Township neighbours. Most of the visitors, say Gilles and Louise, come from the United States. I think Canadian fans of Penny's work are missing a real opportunity, here.

But Penny's impact goes a lot farther than bringing tourists on a bus or diners to a restaurant. I wandered into

the Pettes Memorial Library in Knowlton and chatted with librarian Ingrid Bird. She told me about a current plan to expand the library and pointed to a list of donors to the project. The number-one major donor was Louise Penny, who has donated \$600,000 to the library expansion.

The Three Pines books have brought a lot of pleasure to thousands of readers including yours truly, but they have done much more than that, bringing employment and economic prosperity to a delightful part of Canada known as the Eastern Townships.

For visitors to Penny's Three Pines country, it's a win-win.

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



Brome Lake Books, where Louise Penny may be found doing a reading, is the model for one of the key locations in her Inspector Gamache books.



Hillhouse B&B owners Louise Cadieux and Gilles Trudel also own and operate the Three Pines Tours, a day following in the footsteps of Gamache.

OBITUARY

Durley



Catherine Joan Durley (nee Cowin), of St. Marys, passed away on March 14, 2024 at the age of 91. Beloved wife of the late John E. Durley (2009).

Loving mother of Dave (May Mah), Joy (Matthew Neville), Jane Anne Henderson (Barry), Jennifer (Michael Dover) and Mark. Dear grandmother

of Trisha, Isaac (Rebecca), Becca (Matt), Jordan (Matthew), Jessie, Josh (Joniah), Josiah, Kate, and great-grandmother of Benjamin and Liesel. Sister of Herb Cowin and sister-in-law of Gladys Cowin and Barbara Cowin, and fondly remembered by many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by her parents John James Cowin and Sarah McLaren and siblings Jack, Florence, Stanley, Evelyn, Bruce, Harold, and Ernie and sisters-in-law Dorothy, Joyce, and Donna and brothers-in-law Wib and Lant.

Cathy was born in 1932 in London, Ontario. Growing up, she worked hard helping out on the family farm and was an excellent student. Cathy became a teacher at 18 and taught at SS. No 7 West Nissouri, Crampton School, Ealing School, London before she married her sweetheart, John, in 1959 and began a family. Cathy was a devoted, supportive mother of five children. A faithful Christian, she exemplified the characteristics and actions of a woman who truly loved her Lord and Saviour.

Cathy carried on with courage, strength and resilience following John's death in 2009. She was the glue that held her family together, and even when her health deteriorated and her short term memory declined, she soldiered on with incredible determination. Cathy was a truly remarkable, unique soul who will be cherished, remembered, and missed by her family and the countless people she met and blessed throughout her 91 years.

The family thanks Dr. Gatfield for his years of care; Don Ewert at Better Ways for Seniors; the many caregivers and friends who lovingly supported Cathy at home for the last few years, especially Aida and Christy; the St. Marys Hospital Staff; the many caring PSWs at Waverley Mansion Retirement Home, especially Axyl. Very special thanks to Cathy's wonderful friends Ruth and Joan, for their devotion and service. A private family graveside service will be held in St. Marys Cemetery with a Celebration of Life to be held at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to Forest Cliff Camp or Community Bible Church in Lucan or your charity of choice. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Jones



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Murray Stephen Jones after a short battle with cancer at the Stratford General Hospital, with his wife and loving family at his side, on March 14, 2024 at the age of 72.

Loving husband of Bonnie (Pushelberg). Cherished Daddy to Shannon Buuck (Elliott), and Step-dad to Pam Levy (Rob) and Sherry Elliott (Mike). Papa to Sandra Douglas (Andrew), Ariel Levy (Bijay), Tyler Levy, Vanessa Huber, Zack Varley, Gwen Buuck, Norman Buuck, and Johnny Buuck. Great-grandchildren Audrey and Jayviut. Murray will be missed by his grand pups Behr and Millie. Brother to Ron Jones (Shelly) Ruth Harlton (Murray, deceased), Bruce Jones, deceased (Maxine), Linda Gregory (John), Janet Thomson (Cecil). He will be missed by nieces, nephews and Bonnie's family. Predeceased by sister-in-law Anna Jones, parents Mervin and Bernice, parents-in-law Lloyd and Edith Pushelberg.

Murray worked alongside his parents, brother Bruce and sister Janet at Mervin Jones Drilling (Thorndale) for over 50 years. Murray absolutely loved his job. In retirement, Murray enjoyed his morning coffee with neighbour Cliff, chatting with people around town, spending time at the trailer with Bonnie and his family and ripping up the streets on his scooter or in his corvette.

Special thanks to the doctors, nurses and staff at St. Marys Memorial and Stratford General Hospitals. Murray was able to go in peace thanks to their care. A Celebration of Life Open House will take place in the Community Hall at the St. Marys Pyramid Recreation Centre, 317 James St. S. St. Marys, on April 7, 2024 from 1 – 4 pm. Memorial donations may be made to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, or the Stratford General Hospital Foundation. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Hemphill



Ernest "Ernie" William Hemphill passed away peacefully on March 17, 2024 in St. Marys at the age of 92. Survived by his nephew Ken Bonk (Leah) and their son Calvin from Niagara Falls. Son of the late William and Annie. Also remembered by his extended family of long

time companion, the late Shirley "Beanie" Craigmile (2010); Jim Craigmile (Pat), Jeff Craigmile (Darci) and Kelly Craigmile. Ernie worked his entire career in the laboratory at the St. Marys Cement Plant. Special thanks to the staff at Kingsway Lodge and St. Marys Memorial Hospital. Cremation has taken place. A private interment will take place in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Hibbert



March 12, 1956 - March 16, 2024
Celebration of Life - Willow Ridge
Sunday April 7, 2024

1:00pm - 4:00pm

With his adoring family by his side, Steve Hibbert passed away peacefully at home on Saturday March 16 after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Born March 12, 1956, to the late George and Elizabeth (Betty) Hibbert, Steve leaves behind his wife, soul mate and

business partner, Wendie, children Aaron Hibbert, Cory Hibbert (Jessica), Nicole Hibbert, Sean Stafford (Sarah), Casie Nurse (Brent). A proud grandfather (Bumpa) of twelve grandchildren Braden, Bhrett, Broc, Brooklyn, Gavin, Jayla, Chloe, Bella, Blakely, Tenley, Avery and his Brinboo (Brinley).

Steve was born to humble, yet loving beginnings as the eldest of five children. He will be greatly missed by his siblings whom he adored, Brian Hibbert (Jacqueline), Bill Hibbert (Kathy), Doug Hibbert (Fran) and Beth Cartledge (Paul). Sadly missed and fondly remembered by in-laws Jean Walker and Eric Baldwin, Laurie Bearss (Mike), Julie Tanguay (Rob).

Steve was a "larger-than-life" character, never to be forgotten by all that came to know him. Not only large in stature, he had the personality to match. Steve was the epitome of "work hard, play hard". He loved working, and loved a good time with family, friends, and business associates — many who became lifelong friends. He started working from a young age which led him to the trucking industry. In 2007, Steve and Wendie acquired SM Freight Inc. in Blenheim, ON. Over the last 17 years, Steve, as the CEO, poured his heart and soul into growing and leading a profitable and respected trucking company, employing just under 100 employees. In April of 2023 it was sold to a multi-national, public company. Knowing he would always need something to stay busy, Steve and Wendie also developed a commercial real estate and warehousing business in Blenheim, ON, (Graham Street Warehousing Inc.), that continues today.

In 2007 Steve and his wife Wendie settled in the community of Rondeau Bay Est., and it wasn't long before Steve became the self-appointed "Mayor". He loved his neighborhood (The Hood) and the neighbors. He held the position of the Vice-President of the community's Association to this day. He never did anything by half measure and the bigger the equipment to get the job done, the better. He had a passion for anything and everything involving trucking, farming and equipment. His method of teaching and leading was "watch me" — never asking anyone to do anything he wasn't willing to do himself. Anyone who truly got to know Steve knew his bark was worse than his bite. He had a soft spot for kids and supported many local sporting and youth programs in the area, never saying no to anyone who came knocking for a donation small or large.

Steve and Wendie enjoyed many years RV'ing with friends in the summer while spending time in the winter months in North Ft. Myers FL, where he also became a notable figure and member of the local community's "Garage Guys". He made friends wherever he went. He enjoyed golfing and provided many of his friends with some good laughs on the course. There was never a dull moment when Steve was around.

Finally, Steve loved his family and was always there to support them. His passion for equipment and trucking has been passed down to his children; four of whom remain in the industry today.

Steve was not ready to go as he had much left he wanted to do. He fought very hard to beat his cancer in the hopes of achieving more goals and being able to enjoy his hard-earned retirement with Wendie, and tour North America in their RV. When it became evident no more could be done to ensure a quality of life, without spending most of the time in treatment, in true Steve fashion, he took control, no longer allowing his cancer to dictate his final days.

"Call a spade a spade" was another term he lived by which is exactly what he did. Fortunately for Steve, he passed away very peacefully without the need for further medical intervention although he was grateful it was available. The family would like to thank Nurse Practitioner Willi Kirenko, who made Steve feel so comfortable and at peace in his final days and, although MAID was not required in the end, she made herself available to the family and was there to help guide and support, as well Blenheim Community Funeral Home for their care and guidance. Thank you to all those who took the time to message Steve in his final days, he enjoyed them immensely. They were incredibly moving, funny, loving and will help to heal our broken hearts.

There are no words to describe the heartbreak we are experiencing. There will never be another quite like our Big Guy. Rest easy Big Steve, SG, Boss-Man. We'll take it from here. Keep your stick on the ice!

Cremation has taken place and Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday April 7, 2024, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at Willow Ridge Golf & Country Club, 439 Chatham St S, Blenheim ON.

The family asks those who wish to make a donation in honor of Steve, to please consider the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Foundation or Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southwestern Ontario. Online condolences may be left at www.blenheimcommunityfuneralhome.com

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys provides update on Grand Trunk Trail project

By Wendy Lamond

The Grand Trunk Trail improvement project is getting closer to completion.

Paving of approximately 700 metres of the trail from Wellington Street North to east of James Street North was completed in the fall of 2023. Currently, 23 light standards along that section are nearly finished being installed. A culvert was also put in place, and the trail was extended to a new parking lot for trail users at James Street North.

According to infrastructure services manager Jeff Wolfe, the next step in the project includes finishing the electrical connections for the light standards. There will also be a sign installed and some minor clean up.

A local property owner approached the town with the idea of installing a bird-viewing platform on the trail. This would be installed at the west end of the Grand Trunk Trail. The town is currently working with the property owner to see if their idea is feasible for 2024.

A project that recently went out for tender at an estimated cost of \$340,000 will see repairs to the Sarnia Bridge this summer.

"The Grand Trunk Trail project was made possible by many donations from anonymous St. Marys residents, the Lind Family, the Pepper Estate and exceptional volunteer work from the local Kinsmen Club, Texo Terra Contracting and Bill Richardson," Wolfe said.



A total of 23 light standards are currently being installed along a recently improved section of the Grand Trunk Trail in St. Marys. Photo by Wendy Lamond

The positive improvements to the trail will enhance the busy walkway, bringing people from all over to enjoy the town.

LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Flu of '49

25 years ago (1999)

Staffen's Food Market is holding a breakfast on Saturday in support of a fundraising campaign for a high-tech thermal-imaging camera for the St. Marys Fire Department.

St. Marys OPP has alerted the Journal Argus after a St. Marys resident complained about a suspicious telephone call recently. The person received a phone call from a company in North Bay, asking him if he wanted to buy Y2K insurance at one of the four major banks. The caller said he'd be protected in case of a crash caused by the Millennium Bug. He wanted the man's full name, address, and bank account numbers.

The recent Staffen's bonspiel winners were Linda McFadyen, Sharon Livingstone, Becky Bell, and Cathy Cubberley. Livingstone and Bell belong to the York Curling Club.

50 years ago (1974)

Local firefighters answered a call to a grass fire on the farm of Rae Mahaffy, at the curve two miles west of Rannoch last Wednesday evening.

Mr. Herb Sutherland of Peel Street South celebrated his 96th birthday on Tuesday. The former owner of a chain of movie theatres in this part of Western Ontario is enjoying good health and spirits.

A hockey "battle of the sexes" is scheduled for Sunday night at the arena. The local Sea Scouts and Rangers have challenged the St. Marys Dixies to a game starting at 8 p.m.

75 years ago (1949)

Butter prices have dropped to 59 cents in at least one store in St. Marys. Two weeks ago, the price was as high as 73 cents per pound. The drop is allegedly due to the impact upon the market of margarine which sells for as low as 40 cents per pound.

An epidemic of stomach and other types of flu is sweeping the town and district. Large numbers of students have been away from the local schools and factories have been severely affected because of illness among employees. There are also a number of cases of mumps in the area.

100 pupils at Central School are absent because of the flu epidemic this morning, according to Principal T.M. McLeish. This is out of a total enrolment of 387.

100 years ago (1924)

A verdict of \$1,224 in favour of Colin Leitch, a Thornedale farmer who was injured by an automobile driven by Robert McKay of Embro last fall, was given by the jury at the London Spring Assizes on Monday. Mr. Leitch was changing a tire when struck by Mr. McKay's car, the defendant being partly blinded by the headlights of a third machine.

Applications for the position of assistant at the St. Marys Customs office will write an examination at the Collegiate Institute on March 21. Mr. A.D. Lamont, principal of the Collegiate, will preside and it is expected there will be a number of candidates.

A Guelph young man who obtained three scripts for liquor from three different doctors and sent them to the vendors to have them filled was fined \$50 and costs recently.

Straight from the Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Dungeons and Dragons at the St. Marys Public Library is a critical hit! Join Dungeon Master Ian and his brave band of Barbarians, Bards, and more as they quest for glory, gold, and guffaws. Dungeons and Dragons meets every other Saturday in the media room at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting is this Saturday.

This Week's Recommendation

A bard, a barbarian, a paladin, a sorcerer, and a druid enter a vault in search of a mystical relic. Incredible action and hilarious hijinks ensue! "Dungeons and Dragons: Honor Among Thieves" is one of the most underrated films of 2023. Filled with epic battles, dazzling magic, and heaps of hilarity, this movie truly has something for everyone. Re-

serve your copy of "Honor Among Thieves" today!

Up This Week

- Friday, Mar. 22: Open (10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
- Saturday, Mar. 23: Dungeons and Dragons (10:30 a.m.)
- Monday, Mar. 25: Open 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- Tuesday, Mar. 26: Tuesday Book Club* (11 a.m.)
- Wednesday, Mar. 27: 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, Mar. 28: Scrabble (6 p.m. - 8 p.m)

*Registration Required



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The St. Marys Farmers' Market

Annual General Meeting | Tuesday, Mar. 27

End Zone Room | Pyramid Rec Centre | 7 p.m.

All vendors encouraged to attend to prepare for the 2024 market season.

Board members wanted!

Contact aslater@quadro.net for more information.



 Connect with us for special events and weekly updates!

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SUDOKU ANSWERS

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



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For Hall Rentals call 519-271-5343

- Sun. March 10 - Soya McKay, Stratford \$50.00
- Mon. March 11 - Dan Brown, Stratford \$50.00
- Tues. March 12 - Jeannie Rae, St. Paul's \$50.00
- Wed. March 13 - Blaine Myers, Stratford \$50.00
- Thur. March 14 - Hugo Merkel, British Columbia \$50.00
- Fri. March 15 - Tom Kittmer, Embro \$50.00
- Sat. March 16 - Alicia Buuck, St. Marys \$200.00

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- 1. The Mesozoic Era
- 2. Moose
- 3. Bedrock
- 4. A Black Hole
- 5. Five
- 6. A pride
- 7. Rick Astley
- 8. E
- 9. Emma Stone (Poor Things)
- 10. Finland

CORRECTION:

An error was printed on page 21 of the March 14 St. Marys Independent in the story, Scrapbooking to raise money for the St. Marys Friendship Centre. While the article said the Scrapbooking garage sale is to be held April 7, it will actually take place Saturday, April 6 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 317 James St. S. We regret any confusion from this error.

LOCAL MATTERS.



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



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



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

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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, March 22

- Service Canada pop-up shop at the St. Marys Library - 10 am to 3 pm
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog/sausage lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 pm
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Strathroy Rockets at the PRC - 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 23

- McCully's Maple Syrup Festival - 10 am to 2 pm
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 pm

Sunday, March 24

- McCully's Maple Syrup Festival - 10 am to 2 pm

Monday, March 25

- Community dinner at St. Marys United Church - 5 pm, Sponsored by St. James Anglican Church

Tuesday, March 26

- St. Marys Farmers Market annual general meeting at the PRC end zone room - 7 pm

Wednesday, March 27

- Ministerial Association lenton lunch & worship service at St. Marys United Church - 12:10 pm

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