

# St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1190

Thursday, December 21, 2023

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## To St. Marys With Love



Weeks of organizing drew to a close on Sunday December 17 with a successful 'To St. Marys With Love' community Christmas dinner held at the PRC. See the full story on pg. 10.

## St. Marys continues to shine bright this holiday season

The Town of St. Marys is bursting at the seams with holiday spirit

St. Marys continues to shine bright, thanks to our WinterLights display and Holiday Light Tour. The Winterlights are lit every evening from 5:00 to 11:00 p.m. at Milt Dunnell Field. Enjoy the display from a horse-drawn wagon on December 23 and 24 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The Holiday Light Tour features 19 beautifully decorated homes located

throughout town. Download and print the map at [www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays](http://www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays). Hard copies of the map are available at municipal facilities. The tour runs until January 1, 2024.

For indoor fun, browse the St. Marys Museum's "Holidays on Display," exhibit running until Monday January 15,

*Continued on page 2*

## What's Open or Not over the holidays

Leading up to Christmas and New Years, here is a summary of what's open and when for the holidays. Unless listed here, all other hours are normal.

### Delmar Foods

Dec. 23rd - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 24th - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 25th & 26th - Closed

### Foodland

Dec. 23rd - normal, Dec. 24th - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Dec. 25th - Closed, Dec. 26th - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Dec. 31st - 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 1st - Closed

### Tremblett's Independent Grocer

Dec. 23rd - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Dec. 24th - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 25th - Closed, Dec. 26th - Closed, Dec. 30th - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Dec. 31st - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 1 - Closed

### Canadian Tire

Dec. 23rd - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Dec. 24th - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 25th - Closed, Dec. 26th - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 31st - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Jan. 1st - Closed

### The Beer Store

Dec. 24th - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 25th - Closed, Dec. 26th - Closed, Dec. 31st - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 1st - Closed

### LCBO

Dec. 24th - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Dec. 25th - Closed, Dec. 26th - Closed, Dec. 31st - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Jan. 1st - Closed

The following hours will be in effect for the Town of St. Marys services this holiday season.

Administrative Offices-Closed as of Dec. 22nd at 4:30 p.m. to January 2nd at 8:30 a.m.

Adult Learning - Closed as of Dec. 22nd at 4:30 p.m. to January 8th at 9:30 a.m.

*Continued on page 2*

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# COMMUNITY —

## St. Marys continues to shine bright this holiday season

Continued from page 1

2024. From parades to retail storefronts, this exhibit examines the history of holiday displays in St. Marys. The Pyramid Recreation Centre is

also offering free skates and swims throughout the holiday season, thanks to sponsorships from the Downie Optimist Club, Petals and Foliage, and Avon Maitland Elementary Teachers Union. Pre-registration is

recommended. For specific dates and times, visit [www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays](http://www.discoverstmarys.ca/happyholidays).

Have a safe and happy holiday season, and be sure to follow the Town of

St. Marys' Facebook, Instagram and X accounts for any updates and reminders.

## What's Open or Not over the holidays

Continued from page 1

Child Care Centre & Before and After School Program - Closed December 22nd at 5:30 p.m. to Jan. 2nd at 7 a.m.

Winter Break Camp running January 2nd to 5th.

EarlyON Centre - Closed as of Friday Dec. 22nd at 12 p.m. to Jan. 3rd at 8:30 a.m.

Friendship Centre/Senior Services - Closed as of Friday Dec. 22nd at 4:30 p.m. to Jan. 3rd at 8:30 a.m. For in-home support throughout the holiday season, please contact the Friendship Centre at 519-284-3272 prior to December 22nd.

Landfill - Closed Dec. 26 & 27 and Jan. 1st

Library - Closed Dec. 24th-27th, 30th, 31st and Jan. 1st

Museum and Archives - Closed as of

Friday Dec. 22nd at 4 p.m. to Jan. 2nd at 9 a.m.

Mobility Services - Mobility Services office and EasyRide closed as of Friday, Dec. 22nd at 4 p.m. to Jan. 2nd at 8:30 a.m.

Mobility Services will operate for prearranged transportation. Rides must be booked by Wed. Dec. 20th at 4 p.m.

Pyramid Rec Centre - Pool closed Dec. 24th to 26th, Dec. 31st and Jan. 1st

Swimming lessons will not run from Dec. 23rd to Jan. 5th.

Arena and rooms closed Dec. 24th at 3 p.m. to Dec. 26th, Dec. 31st at 3 p.m., Jan. 1st

Running a Holiday Break Day Camp Dec. 27th to 29th and Jan. 2nd to 5th from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Pre-register [www.townofstmarys.com/activenet](http://www.townofstmarys.com/activenet))

Service Ontario - Closed as of Friday, Dec. 22nd at 4 p.m. to Jan. 2nd at 8:30 a.m.

Train Station - No change to station hours. Visit [www.viarail.ca](http://www.viarail.ca) for train schedules.

Youth Centre - Closed as of Friday, Dec. 22nd at 5:30 p.m. to Jan. 8th at

3:30 p.m.

Running a Swim and Movie Night program on Dec. 29th and Jan. 5th from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. (pre-register [www.townofstmarys.com/activenet](http://www.townofstmarys.com/activenet))

Waste and Recycling Collection - Running as scheduled throughout the holiday season.

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**Holiday Hours of Operation:**  
Regular business hours  
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Closed the week of December 25  
We will be closing at 4:30 pm on Dec. 22nd and re-opening Tuesday, Jan. 2/23 at 8:30 am for regular business hours

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a safe Holiday Season

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

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7 Day Forecast - Weather Sponsored by **THE HITCHING POST**

Wednesday Dec-20th	Thursday Dec-21st	Friday Dec-22nd	Saturday Dec-23rd	Sunday Dec-24th	Monday Dec-25th	Tuesday Dec-26th
Sun/cloud	Sun/cloud	Sun/cloud	Mainly cloudy	Sun/cloud	Cloudy showers	Mainly cloudy
2°C Feels Like -1	0°C Feels Like -5	1°C Feels Like -3	4°C Feels Like 1	6°C Feels Like 4	8°C Feels Like 5	6°C Feels Like 4

COMMUNITY —

# Care kits created for those in need



Pictured from left: Alexia Weyer, Canadian Mental Health Association (SMHA) Huron Perth, Street Outreach; Brittany Petrie, Town of St. Marys Community Outreach Worker; Leah White, City of Stratford Social Services Outreach Worker; Janene Cameron, Municipality of North Perth Community Developer and Support Worker; Christian Tekle, City of Stratford Intensive Housing & Community Outreach Coordinator.

Outreach workers from across Perth County gathered last week to create care kits that will be given to unhoused individuals and those sleeping rough this winter. The kits include information about local resources and services, socks, gloves, hats, hand warmers, lip balm, a water bottle, and a gift card for a local business.

Those in St. Marys who would like to request a kit can contact Brittany Petrie, Community Outreach Worker at 226-261-0098 or bpetrie@town.stmarys.ca. Kits will also be available through the local police, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and Perth County Paramedics.

# Aylward named Deputy Mayor

By Stewart Grant

At their December 12 meeting, Town of St. Marys Council installed Brogan Aylward as Deputy Mayor of St. Marys. Aylward will serve in this annual appointment from December 13, 2023 through to December 10, 2024.

The St. Marys native is in his first term of Council, having been elected in the municipal election on October 24, 2022. Since elected, Brogan has served as a Council representative on the St. Marys Business Improvement Area (BIA), the St. Marys Public Library Board, and Green Advisory Committee.

Councillor Fern Pridham was the most recent Deputy Mayor, with her term ending on December 12. She was very complementary of Aylward, who at age 24 is believed to be the youngest Deputy Mayor in the town's history.

"He's very keen and dedicated to all the committees that he serves on, and he gives wonderful reports that are very detailed," said Pridham. "I think that this appointment will help him expand into an area that he's really primed to



do. Brogan's got a real good head on his shoulders and it's a good opportunity for him."

Mayor Al Strathdee told the Independent that he's really enjoyed having Aylward on Council, noting that his youthful energy has been contagious and that he's seen that energy translate into the various committees that he has served on.

Aylward said to the Independent, "I'd just like to say that it is truly an honour to be entrusted with the position of Deputy Mayor. I've had a blast learning the ropes on Council this past year. I will meet this new opportunity with the same enthusiasm and dedication!"

# Don't let slow internet make you cranky this Christmas!

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# COMMUNITY —

## A banner year for Porter and Colton's Toy/Food Drive



It's that time of year again where Porter and Colton (of Porter and Colton's Toy Drive - Lucan Ontario) invaded the local St. Marys, Canadian Tire to spread Holiday Cheer (along with their friends Blake and Connor), buying toys to donate to the Alisa Craig Food Bank to insure all children in the area have a present awaiting them on Christmas morning.

Colton and Porter along with their pals shopped on Thursday, December 7th with the help and amazing support from Angie Kim-Miskuski & Matt Miskuski and their staff who have gone above and beyond to support the boys year after year. This is a tradition that Porter and Colton have continued for the past 6 years collecting Canadian Tire points, completing an annual bottle drive (Lucan and surrounding area), and selling raffle tickets with donat-

ed hockey tickets for both the Toronto Maple Leaf's (courtesy WSP) and London Knights (courtesy Mike Radcliffe of The Radcliffe Real Estate Team).

This year Colton and Porter have raised \$11,000 + making it a banner year for their Toy/Food Drive. They have managed to purchase \$5,000 in toys and \$2,000 in gift cards for teens, grocery gift cards to donate to local Food Drives and the Food Bank, along with sponsoring a Family through Community Living London.

Porter and Colton are both 11 years old, in grade 6 at Wilberforce PS and live in Lucan. Employees from St. Marys Canadian Tire, along with their friends, Blake Robertson and Conner Morrison and their mothers, Lyndsay Lawrence and Jennifer Noble helped them with this project.

### Bravo

We have 3 Bravos this week.

- 1) Bravo to the two women who chipped in \$2.00 to cover my bill at Sukie Lee's last Thursday. I did run back to give a tip. Merry Christmas & God Bless!
- 2) Bravo to those that make an effort to help, even in some small way, those in need leading up to the holidays.
- 3) Bravo to all the local hockey teams who have contributed their time at the Salvation Army kettle.



### Boo

We have 1 Boo this week.

- 1) Boo to my cat who keeps climbing the Christmas tree. You're on the naughty list.



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

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

### Quote of the Week

*"It was crazy to see it with my own eyes. We have had volcano explosions before, but this was the first time I got really scared."*

**Iceland resident Aoltheiour Halldorsdottir, when describing this week's volcano eruption in nearby Grindavik to BBC News**

## St. Marys Independent

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## The St. Marys Independent

THOUGHTS  
OF THE WEEK

Sponsored by:

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May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve.

The magic of Christmas never ends. Its greatest gifts are family and friends.

Christmas isn't just a day, it's a frame of mind.

The best Christmas gift is to realize how much you already have.

## Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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I have seen your social media posts, I am getting you a dictionary for Christmas.

I got on Santa's naughty list this year and it was totally worth it.

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



## Holiday Season Reminder



### Please Don't "Wish-cycle"



Just because something is paper, metal, plastic, or glass, does not mean it is recyclable! Placing the wrong items in recycling bins increases program costs and affects the safety of our staff.

During this holiday season, please remember that the following items are not acceptable for recycling:

- Greeting cards
- Gift wrap
- Christmas lights
- Batteries

**If you are unsure, contact [info@bra.org](mailto:info@bra.org) or 1-800-265-9799, visit [www.bra.org](http://www.bra.org) or download the Recycle Coach App.**

### Landfill Holiday Hours



The Landfill (1221 Water St. N) will be closed on the following regular days of operation over the holiday season:

- Dec 26 and 27, 2023

Please note the Landfill will be closed on Monday, January 1, 2024 as per regular operating hours (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday).

**Details:**  
[townofstmarys.com/landfill](http://townofstmarys.com/landfill)

**Be in the know about where waste should go!**



### Curbside Collection



There will be no disruption to curbside garbage and recycling collection throughout the holiday season.

To ensure that your materials are collected, place your recyclables at the curb by 7 AM on your collection day on your designated side of the street.

**For a map and details visit: [townofstmarys.com/curbsidecollection](http://townofstmarys.com/curbsidecollection)**

### Christmas Tree Collection



Wondering what to do with your real Christmas tree?

The Kinsmen Club will once again be doing a curbside tree collection on Saturday, January 6, 2024. Please ensure your tree is out by 8 AM and be sure to remove:

- Ornaments
- Tinsel
- Lights

If you wish to dispose of your tree before January 6, you can bring it to the Yard Waste Depot (408 James St. S).

After January 6, trees can be taken to the St. Marys Landfill.

# STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



## HOLIDAY BREAK DAY CAMP

Pyramid Recreation Centre

Camp PRC is offering a Holiday Break Day Camp with swimming, skating, and decorating gingerbread houses! Visit our website for registration dates and details.

[townofstmarys.com/campprc](http://townofstmarys.com/campprc) or 519-284-2160

## SHOWER PROGRAM

Thursdays, 9 AM - 1 PM | Pyramid Centre

This program provides free showers to those in need. Showers are private, secure and accessible for individuals of all abilities.

Visit Guest Services or call 519-284-2160



## FREE FESTIVE SKATES

The Optimist Club of Downie, Petals and Foliage, and the Avon Maitland Elementary Teachers Union have generously sponsored free public skating this holiday season. Visit our website for dates!

[townofstmarys.com/skating](http://townofstmarys.com/skating) or 519-284-2160

## SWIM AND MOVIE NIGHTS

Dec. 29 & Jan. 5 | 4-7 PM | Pyramid Centre

Splash and kick, catch a flick at the Pyramid Recreation Centre from 4 - 7 PM. Start with a swim and then settle in for a movie with pizza and popcorn!

[townofstmarys.com/activenet](http://townofstmarys.com/activenet) or 519-284-2160



## FREE FESTIVE SWIMS

Enjoy a free, festive swim sponsored by the Optimist Club of Downie over the holiday season! All children must be accompanied by an adult. Visit our website for dates and details.

[townofstmarys.com/aquatics](http://townofstmarys.com/aquatics) or 519-284-2160

### Contact us

519-284-2340  
[communications@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:communications@town.stmarys.on.ca)





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## Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Santa Claus. He lives at the North Pole with Mrs. Claus and all of the elves. One night a year he delivers toys all around the world to millions of children.

His favourite food is cookies and he loves a nice cold glass of milk. Santa's favourite animals are reindeer and although he doesn't pick favourites, he is more partial to ones with a red nose. In his spare time he likes to make lists and checks them twice to see who is being naughty and nice.

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

## COMMUNITY —

# Staffen Family requests adjustments on Penrose development charges

By Stewart Grant

Matt Staffen of Red Pen Properties Ltd. made a presentation to Council on December 12, 2023, requesting pro-rated development charges and revised payment terms for the Penrose Suites accommodations project that has recently begun construction at the southwest corner of the St. Marys Golf & Country Club property.

Staffen's letter to council highlighted the fact that their project, which was initiated in July 2021, pre-dated the recent implementation of the commercial development charge by-law which has changed the economics for a significant project such as this. At the time of completing the project's financial budget and application, back in 2021, commercial development charges were exempt. The Town of St. Marys development charges by-law took effect in January 2023.

"Our project's financial framework was based on the exemption for this type of fee, creating unforeseen challenges in meeting the newly imposed development charges," Staffen wrote in his formal letter to Council that accompanied his presentation.

Red Pen requested that Council consider a 50% reduction in the development fee for the Penrose project, covering Phase I and Phase II of the approved site plan, and modification of payment terms to align with Section 3.18 of the Development Charges by-law, allowing fees to be paid at the Building Occupancy stage rather than at the building permit approval stage.

Staffen summarized that the Penrose project, which will provide 21 short-term rental units to the community when completed, brings multiple benefits to

the Town of St. Marys. The suites will support the growth of tourism, which in turn provides a positive economic impact to local businesses. Staffen also projected that, over the first ten years of the project, that \$434,100 in property tax revenue would be generated for the Town of St. Marys from a previously unutilized piece of land.

Staffen's presentation was transparent in terms of the types of costs that a developer must incur for a project of this scale. He shared that upfront costs of development have totalled \$230,742. These include professional fees (\$159,819), permit and other town fees (\$12,747), security deposits (\$23,000), and development charges thus far (\$35,176).

In total, Staffen estimated that development charges would ultimately add \$90,791 to the cost of the project (\$35,176 for Phase I, and \$55,615 for Phase II), thus providing another barrier to develop a project that brings so many benefits to the community.

Council discussed the Red Pen Properties Ltd. request under item 8.2.1 of the agenda. Director of Corporate Services / Treasurer Andre Morin provided some background on the purpose of development charges and noted that most municipalities that assess development charges do not provide an exemption to non-residential properties.

During the ensuring discussion among Council members, there was empathy for this particular situation but also concerns about setting a precedent for the future with regards to the assessment of development charges. What was resolved from the December 12 meeting was that Council would direct staff to consult with legal counsel to determine the options available in regard to the Red Pen request.

## Weekend Quiz

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- 1) What did the Three Wise Men bring as gifts?
- 2) In the song "Jingle Bells", what kind of sleigh is mentioned?
- 3) What brings Frosty the Snowman to life?
- 4) Who plays Elf in "Elf"?
- 5) "All I Want For Christmas Is You" is sung by who?
- 6) Which country does eggnog originate from?
- 7) Under which type of plant are people supposed to kiss?
- 8) Where does Santa Claus live?
- 9) How many sizes did the Grinch's heart grow?
- 10) In the song "12 Days of Christmas" what was given on the 11th day?

This week's answers are found on pg. 39



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### HOLIDAY HOURS OF OPERATION

CLOSED THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 25

CLOSING AT 4:30 PM ON DEC 22 AND RE-OPENING WEDNESDAY JAN 3, 2024 AT 9 AM FOR REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS 9:00 AM - 5 PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, AVERY HOSKINS, GWENDOLEN BOYLE, JANICE THOMSON, DAVID MCLEOD, MELANIE HIGGIN

**COMMUNITY —**

# Winter lights on Widder Street



When you are out viewing the WinterLights display at Milt Dunnell Field, a side trip down Widder Street East is strongly suggested. Joseph Siddall and Becca Gagnon at 404 Widder St. E have decorated their spruce tree for the holiday season. Joseph, who works for Forman Electric, used their aerial truck to assemble approximately 5,000 lights on the tree, a job that took about 9 hours to complete. It is absolutely stunning! (Murray Grant photo)



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\* Scratch & Save valid only Tuesday December 26, 2023. One coupon per customer. In store only. Discount can only be applied to one transaction. Other conditions may apply.

# COMMUNITY —

## Rock'n around at Christmas at the Salvation Army kettle



The Home Hardware U13 BB team got together on Saturday to man the Salvation Army kettle in front of New Orleans Pizza and St. Marys Foodland. The youngsters also helped Foodland patrons get their groceries to their vehicles. Pictured from left to right: Jayden Aylward, Styn De Wit, Kain Visser, Zac Zwambag, Cam Huges, Joe Wilhelm, Elliott Wilhelm, Colton Cubberly, Jack Brockman, Bryce Blight and Jude Schlotzhauer. (Contributed photo)



The U11 B girls St. Marys Rock Hockey Team were getting in the spirit manning the Salvation Army Kettle at Scotia Bank on Saturday. From top left: Nora Frayne, Jae Seok, Camille Crummer, Molly Haight, Lauren Masselis, Head coach Adam Haight, Emily Ewing, Jaynie Johnston, Charlotte Heinbuck,, Jessica Zwambag, Cassie Adams and Evelyn McAllister. The team's sponsor is St. Marys Landscaping. (Wendy Lamond photo)

### BOXING WEEK BLOWOUT DEALS - KNOCKOUT SAVINGS @ STRATFORD NISSAN!

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**\$31,888** + HST & lic  
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2020 Nissan Murano SL



**\$35,888** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 36,898 KM

2021 Ford Ranger Lariat



**\$43,998** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 45,985 KM

2022 Toyota Corolla Le



**\$26,998** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 79,556 KM

2022 NISSAN FRONTIER SV 4X4



**\$42,498** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 23,412 KM

2020 Hyundai Ioniq Electric



**\$29,796** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 33,380 KM

2019 Infiniti QX50 ESSENTIAL



**\$31,999** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 55,509 KM

2019 Ford Mustang GT



**\$39,495** + HST & lic  
LOW KMS - 30,964 KM

2016 Chevrolet Malibu



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# COMMUNITY —

## To St. Marys With Love



Above, Al Strathdee, Mayor of St. Marys, MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae volunteered their time at the 'To St. Marys With Love' community Christmas dinner.



Above are some of the many guests that enjoyed a roast beef dinner. (Photos by Nancy Bickell)

Weeks of organizing drew to a close on Sunday, December 17 with a successful 'To St. Marys With Love' community Christmas dinner held at the PRC.

Over 350 people enjoyed a meal prepared by Chef Nathan Brown and served up by Mayor Al Strathdee, MP

John Nater, MPP Rae alongside local Volunteer Firefighters, local Stratford Police Officers and members of the St. Marys community.

Financial support from local businesses such as Quadro, McLean Taylor, Meridian Credit Union and Vet Purchasing ensured that for at least

one night a gathering of area folk could put aside the cares and stresses of the world and simply enjoy this great community that we are so fortunate to call home.

A special treat was entertainment by The Friendship Centre Choir following which the entire gathering got to

sing Silent Night in whatever first language was theirs.

Many thanks to the numerous 'behind the scenes' groups and people that make this event a true collaboration of hearts and hands. Blessings abound and we look forward to next year's 'To St. Marys With Love'.

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# COMMUNITY —

## WinterLights Night Market



Milt Dunnell Field was the place to be this past Friday and Saturday night as the town hosted a WinterLights night market. The mild weather, although not as festive as snow, allowed for those attending to take in all the planned activities. There were vendors, warm apple cider, an outdoor firepit with free s'mores, free horse & wagon rides, food trucks and the lovely light display. Pictured above left, the Conforzi family gets into the spirit of the holidays taking in the market. From left to right is Kyle, Thomas in the buggy, Brianne and Lucas. Above middle, vendor Julie Phillips of JLP Hats displays her homemade products including a new line of 70% Alpaca, 30% Merino Wool blend beanies and pom pom hats. Above right, James and Brayden Seyler take advantage of the yummy S'mores and outdoor fire pit. (Wendy Lamond photos)



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*Dave Steward & Gwen Ament are so grateful for the support of so many in bringing the 2nd Annual "To St. Marys With Love" to life*

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- St. Marys Golf & Country Club

*And none of this would happen without the many volunteers from the community and local service groups:*

- Chef Nathan Brown
- Beef through Mike Hern
- Local leaders: Mayor Al Strathdee, MP John Nater, MPP Matthew Rae
- Local Councillors Rob Edney, Fern Pridham and Brogan Alyward
- Volunteer Firefighters & Community Police
- St. Marys United Way
- Rotary, Innerwheel, and Kinettes
- To Stratford With Love
- Local Churches: Mapleview Mennonite Church, St. Marys Presbyterian, St. Marys United Church, Bethel St. Marys
- Staff of The Friendship Center and St. Marys Library
- Brittany Petrie, Community Outreach Worker
- Jayne Fuller Photography
- The Friendship Center Choir
- Community volunteers
- Local primary students who crafted Christmas cards

**THANK YOU**

**SPORTS —**

# Hits keep coming for unbeaten U15 LL Boys

By Spencer Seymour

The Ashton Tire Service U15 LL Boys St. Marys Rock kept their record free from defeat last Saturday when the team picked up a 4-1 win over the St. Thomas Jr. Stars.

Head Coach Burton Pickel had a glowing review of his team's performance immediately after the game.

"We played a good team effort," Pickel told the Independent. "We're asking a lot of the boys in terms of getting the puck over the blueline, grinding at the bluelines, getting the puck deep, and playing a team game. Those are important because, at the start of the year, we were catching a lot of teams flat-footed with our speed but now, with teams getting more reps, it's important to see us coming together as a group the way we are."

"Our defencemen were amazing tonight keeping shots off of our goalie. It was just an excellent effort. We never took our foot off the gas. We kept going. They scored one and we didn't change our speed. We came back and scored three more in response."

When asked what in his eyes it meant for his squad to play a strong team game, Pickel explained that the U15 LL Boys have become aware that they are even better when working as a cohesive unit.

"I think it means that the boys recognize that they can't do it alone. This is a group of boys that has so much talent as individuals that, in the past, they have been able to take over the



Jaxon Brown leads the rest of his Ashton Tire Service U15 LL Boys St. Marys Rock linemates over the blueline during their game last Saturday. (Photo by Spencer Seymour)

game and do it themselves. They realize that, as a group, when they include the others with them and they start moving the puck, it gets the boys on the ice and the bench engaged and wanting to play hard."

Cainin O'Dorherty broke the ice with the game's first goal at the 5:13 mark of the first period. In the second period, after the Stars tied the game at one apiece, Chase Jeffrey put the Rock back ahead by a goal.

St. Marys continued to push in the third period and were rewarded with

goals by Tys DeWit and Abe Bender to secure a 4-1 victory. Gavin Lang earned the win in between the pipes.

Pickel described how he has seen his group evolve from the start of the season.

"At the start of the year, we would watch that player drift to the front of the net and just assume he would score so nobody would be coming hard behind him. Now we know how much more effective it is to get to the net, pick up rebounds, and grind with each other. It's really the boys coming together. None of these boys are


afraid to move the puck to anyone else on the ice, they know they can include everyone and rely on each other."

The great start to the season isn't just limited to the on-ice results and their loss-free record. According to the Head Coach, the vibes surrounding the team have made this year positive to a "refreshing" degree.

"It's definitely impressive," Pickel said of the teamwork his group displayed. "I think that they realize that, when we get into a tight game now, it can't be a one-man show. Even our most talented boys realize that they can't play one-on-five hockey. We've got good, talented captains who are helping coach the other boys to make sure that they are in the right spots. That helps everyone stay engaged with those leaders helping to instruct and direct on the ice. That really is the team. They are so happy together on and off the ice, they encourage each other, and they speak highly of each other. I've never seen a group of boys as happy around each other as this one."

**ST. MARYS CURLING CLUB  
Competitive League Standings**

TEAM	W	L	T	PTS
Morris Van De Walle	8	1	0	25
Pat Murray	6	2	1	22
Jared French	6	3	0	21
Tom Westerveld	6	3	0	21
Jim McCutcheon	4	5	0	17
George White	4	5	0	17
Brady St. Louis	3	5	1	16
Adam Winchester	3	6	0	15
Lindsay McLeod	3	6	0	15
Chris Meyer	1	8	0	11



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## SPORTS —

# Sr. Boys basketball team wins twice on home court

By Spencer Seymour

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys basketball team hosted a pair of games last Wednesday and came away with victories in both, including their most dynamic offensive performance of the year.

Their first game of the day came down almost exactly to the last second as a back-and-forth contest against Goderich. A late three-pointer by Peyton Lobb was answered by Goderich connecting on a pair of free throws to tie the game. However, with just seconds remaining, Sebastian Linares scored what went on to be the deciding basket as the Salukis held on for a 32-30 nail-biting win.

Head Coach Tim O'Connor told the Independent that a strong effort in their own half of the court allowed them to stay in the game until they finally struck with the winning basket in the game's dying moments.

"We played very good half-court defence," said O'Connor. "We had a bit of trouble scoring but we hung around the whole game and even when we fell behind, we never fell too far behind. When we got the ball with about 30 seconds left, we had a really good possession. We were working the ball around really well and finally, Sebastian [Linares] attacked on a nice look and got the bucket that won it for us."

Nathan McDonald led the Salukis in



Ryan Hodkinson drives towards the basket during the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys basketball team's 57-39 win over St. Anne's last Wednesday. (Photo by Spencer Seymour)

points with seven while Ryan Hodkinson and Grayson Boreham each chipped in six and Lobb had five.

O'Connor, who coaches the team alongside Ian Moore, said that the team showed improvement at challenging the other team when they have the ball.

"Our defence is a big part of what we do and we're pretty committed on that side of the ball to make shots difficult. Ian [Moore] was emphasize-

ing the importance of playing with their hands up. Having their hands in the passing lanes and in the way of shooters and we did a better job of that today."

Later that day, the Senior Boys returned to the court for their second game of the day against St. Anne's and put up their most explosive offensive outburst of the season, downing the visitors 57-39. Linares led the way with a dynamite 21-point effort with Hodkinson once again scoring

six.

According to O'Connor, there was no doubt that their game against St. Anne's was the Senior Boys' strongest outing.

"That was by far the best game we have played. They were running on all cylinders in that one. Hitting a few early gives you a bit of confidence so it was really good how we were scoring in transition and we were able to make plenty of good things happen."

"Playing with that confidence makes a world of difference," O'Connor continued. "I was honestly a bit surprised because we've been trying to slow things down a bit recently to minimize turnovers but they were playing quick but were still managing the ball well."

In addition to Linares' stellar offensive showcase and a strong effort from every single player, O'Connor noted the sturdy presence of Hodkinson as allowing everyone on the court with him to be even better.

"Ryan [Hodkinson] is a heck of a player. He's really solid. He sees the court well, he makes everyone else around him better, and my goodness, I don't know how many rebounds he got for us but he got a lot. And then, he was able to get the ball to where it needed to be. He was really good for us but honestly, everyone played very well today."

## U13 B Girls battle for "big win"

By Spencer Seymour

The U13 B Girls St. Marys Rock earned an important 4-2 victory over the visiting Woodstock Wildcats last Wednesday.

Head Coach Chris Kennedy raved about his team's compete level following the game.

"I thought they played a really good game," Kennedy told the Independent. "They battled back when they fell behind which we really like to see and we've really emphasized this year.

They were battling hard and shooting the puck which is what we've been telling them all year and we got the win because of it."

After a scoreless first period, the Wildcats opened the scoring in the second with the only goal of the middle frame. In the third, the Rock finally broke through, first with a game-tying goal by Reese Crawford assisted by Charlotte Matheson and Chloe Phillips.

Almost two-and-a-half minutes lat-

er, Woodstock retook a one-goal lead but the tide continued turning in St. Marys' favour when Avery Fifield once again tied things up. Brinley St. Clair and Maeve Sheldon picked up the assists.

Crawford's second goal of the game and the eventual game-winner came less than two minutes later, with assists going to Hunter Kennedy and Tealya Thistle. Phillips added an insurance marker with 47 seconds. Matheson and Naomi Maxwell picked up the helpers.

Kennedy explained that his team seemed to display many of the key aspects of their game that they had been working on so far this year.

"We were hoping that they were going to play hard, get lots of pucks to the net, and be going hard to the net. I was really impressed with what they showed tonight. This was a big win for us. They were moving the puck a bit more. All the things we've been teaching them all year seemed to finally click."

## U15 C Girls blank Inferno in 7-0 win

By Spencer Seymour

The Home Hardware Building Centre U15 C Girls St. Marys Rock found their fifth win of the season last Saturday with a 7-0 rout of the West Oxford Inferno.

Five of the Rock's goals came from the team's Captain Ellie MacArthur, while

two were scored by Emma Carradine.

Head Coach Kelly Linton told the Independent that his team showed a strong work ethic guided by their top on-ice leader.

"Our Captain Ellie MacArthur is a really strong player," noted Linton. "She gives her all every game and she leads

by example and I think the rest of the girls are really starting to show signs of following her lead. Hard work pays off and that's what Ellie does and what the rest of the girls are starting to do as well."

Linton added that the team has been showing positive signs of development.

"It's a season-long process to get where we want to be. They are starting to work much better together as opposed to working individually. They've improved their breakouts and their passing and now we're just trying to make getting the puck out of own zone a bit more instinctive."

## SPORTS —

# Lincs display clear identity as win streak hits six games

By Spencer Seymour

Despite missing a quintet of key players, the St. Marys Lincolns continued to pile up points in their two interconference games last weekend.

Last Friday, the Lincolns hosted the Fort Erie Meteors, winners of eight straight games and 13 of their previous 14. As expected, the Meteors came out of the gate strong but by the end of the first, the Lincolns led in shots 15-11 while both teams found the back of the net once. Luca Spagnolo scored the lone St. Marys goal of the first and was one of several players praised by Assistant Coach Mike Herman.

"Luca was outstanding," said Herman. "He has been really good on the powerplay, penalty kill, and at five-on-five lately. I thought Ryder Livermore was steady and playing hard. He was physical against a pretty big team. He is an engaged and competitive guy. That's what you need in games like that because it's a glimpse of what the playoffs will be like. Brandon [Abbott] I thought was so good. Brandon is just such a solid goaltender and he's helping the guys in front of him play with confidence."

Abbott stopped 18 of 19 Fort Erie shots to earn the win. Only one goal was scored during the final 40 minutes, a shorthanded breakaway for Owen Voortman that snuck between the legs of netminder John Lloyd. The scorer of the eventual game-winner was also a stand-out to Herman.

"That's the version of Owen that other teams always have to be aware of and concerned about. He played like a man. When Owen is in that groove, he seems to be completely unstoppable, and you look at the guys we have out, you put them back in eventually and then add Voortman playing this dominantly, it takes our roster to an even higher level."

The list of players missing included forwards Ethan Weir, Marcus Dashevsky, and Matt Prendergast and defencemen Adam Barkley and Ethan Sullivan. However, everyone in the lineup appeared able to thrive in any role.

"It's such a good thing when you develop an identity. To me, that's one sign that you have it together as a team. That's what it feels like right now and we're still going to have points when we struggle but it will be different. We're a different team than we were earlier this season."

A big factor in that identity has been what Herman called the "evolution" of the team's younger players which was put to its biggest test last Friday.

"How our young guys have stepped up was going to be tested more by Fort Erie and they passed. They did a really good job. Everyone did, but you expect



Brandon Abbott makes a save during last Friday's St. Marys Lincolns' game against the Fort Erie Meteors. Abbott backstopped the Lincs to a 2-1 win with a strong 18-save performance. (Photo credit: Mike Chennette/McGinny Photography)

your veteran players to step up. To see the evolution of our young guys and see them rise to the level of an opponent as good as the one we played was awesome."

Big dogs lead Lincs to 5-1 win in Welland

Although it wasn't a masterpiece, the Lincolns still secured a 5-1 win over the Welland Jr. Canadians on Sunday. Head Coach Jeff Bradley was back behind the bench and viewed it as an instance of the result being more important than how it was achieved.

"It wasn't as pretty as we would have liked but there were large parts of that game that we liked," noted Bradley. "I thought the first 10 minutes of the game, it looked like we were going to completely dominate. I think we got a little too comfortable after that but we did a better job for most of the second period. We did enough to get the win so I think what matters right now is racking up as many wins as we can before the break."

The game's first goal came five-and-a-half minutes into the game as Voortman potted his sixth of the year, making it three straight games with a goal. The goal was assisted by Voortman's linemates, Spagnolo and Jaden Lee. The Jr. Canadians tied the game with a powerplay goal late in the first.

The Lincolns struck back midway through the second on a goal by Spagnolo, assisted by Lee and Luke Bogart. Later, Noah VandenBrink, playing in his 100th career GOJHL game, snapped a six-game goal drought with his seventh of the season. Billy VanSumeren and Ryan Hodkinson earned the helpers.

An unusually sloppy third period still saw St. Marys lead in both shots and goals, firstly with the second of the

game by Spagnolo, with Lee earning an assist, giving both forwards three points on the night. Lee has at least a point in five of his last six outings while Spagnolo has points in nine of his last 10 games, including five straight.

"Luca is playing at less than 100 percent and he's got 16 points in 10 games," said Bradley. "He is an absolute warrior. Both he and Jaden are. They are two awesome hockey players and awesome people. I don't know a single person who doesn't like them. There is a lot to admire with those two. They work hard, they care about the team, and they are their hardest critics, so it's nice to see them both getting rewarded."

James Sigmon also picked up an assist on Spagnolo's second goal, the first of two for the Royal Oak, Michigan native as he later assisted on a goal by MacQueen-Spence that made it 5-1. Ryan Cornfield also earned an assist on the goal.

Like Herman, Bradley also told the Independent that he has been incredibly pleased with the development of the players further down the lineup.

"Guys like Jimmy [Schiedel], Blake [Elzinga], Ryan [Hodkinson], just to name a few, they have all been given larger roles and there hasn't been a drop-off. I think our team is in an awesome spot right now. Our game is in order. We've still got things we want to improve upon but when you've got half of the season left and you're as happy as we are, there's no telling what you could do."

Bradley also credited the team's 2006-born contingent for how they have differentiated themselves.

"At the start of the year, we looked at our rookie crop as very skilled players. Now, they all have defined roles and are all very different. Ryan Cornfield is

a very different player than Ryan Hodkinson, and they are both very different than Blake Elzinga. Luke Bogart is playing like an established, three-year veteran. Colby [Booth-Housego] quietly is second in goals against average, he's third in save percentage, and he's played more games than the guys above him in those stats, and he's a rookie. It's remarkable how well every single one of our young guys has turned out."

That identity, Bradley added, that was so instrumental in the team pushing their win streak to six games, stems from the culture of the organization.

"The goal of any team is to have a culture in which people know how they have to conduct themselves. That has been built from the top of this organization with Brandon [Boyd, Lincs' President] and Pat [Powers, Lincs' GM] and it funnels down to the veteran players who then funnel it to the younger players."

"The best thing we have right now and I think it's the reason why guys are stepping up for us is they believe in what we're doing. They believe we have a good team, they believe we're getting better, and they believe in the process. They want to help in every way they can. Having that makes it easier for them to buy in. These guys want to be a part of something special and do it together."

## SMMHA Raffle Draw winners

The annual St. Marys Minor Hockey Association Raffle Draw took place at the PRC on Friday, December 15th. The winners are as follows:

- Early Bird \$1,000 - Bentley Dundas
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- 7th ticket \$500 - Paul Jackson
- 8th ticket \$500 - Kevin McDougall
- 9th ticket \$1,000 - Rob Bell
- 10th ticket \$1,000 - Meg McKay
- 11th ticket \$15,000 - Mark Armstrong

## GOJHL STANDINGS Western Conference

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS
LaSalle Vipers	28	20	7	1	0	41
<b>St. Marys Lincolns</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>
London Nationals	27	18	7	1	0	37
Chatham Maroons	29	16	11	2	0	34
Strathroy Rockets	26	16	9	0	1	33
Sarnia Legionnaires	29	13	13	2	1	29
St. Thomas Stars	29	11	16	1	1	24
Komoka Kings	30	3	27	0	0	6



**SPORTS —**

# Alumni Group presents \$3,000 cheque to Lincolns' executive last Friday

By Pat Payton (Special to the Independent)

The St. Marys Lincolns Alumni Group made a special presentation to the 2023-24 Lincs' executive last Friday night, just prior to the GOJHL game between the Lincolns and Fort Erie Meteors at the PRC.

The Alumni Group (established in 2018) handed over a cheque for \$3,000 to the Lincs' executive. The money was raised at the Alumni's golf tournament last September at River Valley Golf and Country Club.

"Last September, we made enough money at the successful golf tournament that we ran to pay for the budgeted things that the Alumni wants to do," explained Alumni Vice-President Brian Hughes.

"Talking to Brandon (Boyd) and Pete (Frehner), from the Lincolns executive, they have things that they would like to do and haven't budgeted for. In a small way, this donation hopefully helps them do some of the things they couldn't do before. So, it made perfect sense to us."



The St. Marys Lincolns' Alumni Group presented a cheque for \$3,000 to the Lincs' executive last Friday night at the PRC. Taking part in the presentation, from left to right, are Rob Mossey, Jacques Cousineau, Mike Mattiussi, Rick Fifield, George Cifa and Kara Stevens. Alumni members Cousineau, Mattiussi, Fifield and Cifa presented the cheque to Mossey and Stevens, who accepted on behalf of the current Lincolns' executive. (Photo by Pat Payton)

Presenting the cheque on behalf of the Alumni Group were Mike Mattiussi, George Cifa, Jacques Cousineau and Rick Fifield. Mattiussi, Cifa and

Cousineau were all members of the 1962-63 Lincolns, who won the franchise's first All-Ontario championship. Fifield is one of the most prolific

scorers in the Lincs' 67-year history. The talented right winger had an outstanding career (1969 to '73) with the Lincolns, clicking for 230 goals and 400 total points (including playoffs) in just three and a half seasons in green and white colours. Fifield once scored seven goals in one game.

Accepting the cheque on behalf of the Lincs' executive were directors Rob Mossey and Kara Stevens.

**President thrilled with donation**

Club president Boyd said he was thrilled with the Alumni's donation to the Jr. 'B' hockey club last Friday night.

"It was a great surprise, and we're very fortunate to have the Alumni network that we do," Boyd said. "There are so many great resources and so many great stories that we can tap into. For the Alumni Group to take the time to give back to their former team, it helps us accomplish our goals and we're super appreciative to get this donation from them."

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# SPORTS —

## Minor Sports Scrapbook



Sianna Sicilia slaps the puck towards the net during the Kinsmen Club U9 C Girls St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Henley Mykicz advances the puck down the ice during last Saturday's Harris-Greig Automotive U9 HL Girls St. Marys Rock game.



Kyle Johnson dekes around an opposing defender during last Sunday's Finnbilt Construction U9 MD Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Adam Nelson drives into the slot towards the net during last Saturday's U13 LL Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Scott Dewan rounds the back of the net with the puck during the Frayne Custom Cabinets U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock game last Thursday.



Sheamus McCutcheon fires a shot during the U11 LL Boys St. Marys Rock game last Saturday. (Photos by Spencer Seymour)

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# SPORTS —

## Jr. Boys basketball team records first win of season

By Spencer Seymour

In their second game of the day last Wednesday, the St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys basketball team picked up their first win of the year with a 52-34 victory over St. Anne's.

Head Coach Ken French praised the Salukis for their tenacious play on both sides of the ball.

"We had a couple of guys find their game," said French. "It's a quick season and we got a late start but the offence found a rhythm and our effort on defence is always great. Our players were moving with purpose and running our offensive scheme well. They were using their bodies effectively and being aggressive when necessary. The communication on the floor has also gotten better and will continue to improve."

Justin Ropp led the Salukis offensively with 19 points while Donovan McGregor put up 16 and Brody Higham scored 10. French noted Ropp and

Higham as veterans who helped lead the team with another key player unable to play.

"Justin [Ropp] and Brody [Higham] ran our offence when our big Simon Taylor went down with a sprained ankle early in the first game. Simon is our rock and the boys play great with him down the middle so we had to find something else to center our offence around and it was Justin. He played awesome. Brody is our quarterback. We couldn't do much without him. We have excellent leaders on our team."

"They lead by example," French continued. "They include everyone and work well with the grade 9's on the team who are still learning and adjusting to the game. They take control but include their teammates. That's all without even mentioning what a great group of guys they are. They are just kind, smart, and inclusive leaders, and great athletes to boot."



Brody Higham passes the ball during the St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys basketball game last Wednesday. (Photo by Spencer Seymour)

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# Letters to Santa

Dear Santa,

My name is Kamiyah. I tried to be good. I help with my sister and my mom. I want toys for Christmas and a robot. How do the elves make all the toys?

Love, Kamiyah

Dear Santa,

My name is Asher. I've been really good this year. I'm nice to people. I want a mini Batman and one of his cars. I would really like a Hot Wheels colour changing set. Are the reindeer okay? I like getting presents.

Love, Asher

Dear Santa,

Hi, I'm Addie. I have been good. I did cleaning with my mom. For Christmas I would like a slinky and a yoyo. How do you make toys?

Love, Addie

Dear Santa,

My name is Elly. I have been good. I help my mom and dad. For Christ-

mas I would like a math book and a makeup set. How are your reindeer doing?

Love, Elly

Dear Santa,

My name is Emma. I tried to be good. I set the table and I make my bed. I clean my room and I also clean my toy room. I would like a stuffy rainbow that is a purse. I would also like a stuffy watermelon. I would also like a pretend plant for my room. Are your elves big?

Love, Emma

Dear Santa,

My name is Jake. I've been pretty good. I make really good builds and I also help people out. I want a Tech Desk Skate Park. I also want a Beast Lab. I also want a white stuffed tiger with a leash. Getting presents is the best part of Christmas. How did you make the elves?

Love, Jake

Dear Santa,

My name is Jovi. I have been good this year. I've helped my daddy do work. I want a ukulele for Christmas. Is Rudolph's nose actually red? I also want a new backpack.

Love, Jovi

Dear Santa,

Hi, my name is Brooklyn. I have been good. I'm proud of my school work. I want a laptop. How are the reindeer?

Love, Brooklyn

Dear Santa,

My name is Gabriel. I have been good. I help my friends. I want a Nintendo Switch. Are the elves making good presents? How are the reindeer doing?

Love, Gabriel

Dear Santa,

My name is Henley. I've been pretty good this year. I've been really nice. I want a watch that has games on it.



How do the elves make all the toys? I like that I get presents for Christmas.

Love, Henley



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# Letters to Santa



Dear Santa,

My name is Blair. I've been really good because I clean my room. How are the reindeer doing? For Christmas I would like a Furby. How are the elves doing. My elf was up on our light over the dinner table. I will leave cookies for you.

Love, Blair

Dear Santa,

Hi, my name is Hailey. I tried to be good this year. I clean the living room and sometimes I clean my room. I want a Shopkins doll for Christmas. Why do snow angels dance around?

Love, Hailey

Dear Santa,

My name is Terry. I was trying to be good this year. I set up my Christmas tree. I try to listen to my parents, but sometimes I don't. For Christmas I'd like a rainbow monster truck, some paper and a new rainbow water bottle. Does Rudolph actually have a red nose? I think you're real. I also want my own Nintendo Switch that hooks up to a TV and a laptop.

Love, Terry

Dear Santa,

My name is Stella. I have been very

good this year. I cleaned up my room and I put socks away with my sister. Once I even made my own lunch. I want a Stich stuffy. I also want a Christmas book to read with my mom at night. I really want a math book. How do you have the magic to make your reindeer fly?

Love, Stella

Dear Santa

I'm Joey and my favourite colour is blue and orange. How do you make a toy? I want a book please Santa.

Joey, Grade 1 South Perth

Dear Santa,

My name is Nick and also my age is six and I have a cat.

I want to know how many elves you have. I want to let people have a dog. I would like a remote-control car please.

From Nick, Grade 1 South Perth

To Santa,

My name is Evan and I like transformers. Santa how is the north pole?

Wish you a Merry Christmas.

Can I please have an elf.

I hope you have a Happy New Year.

From Evan, Grade 1 South Perth

To Santa

My name is Leah and my favorite color is pink. Are there penguins at the north pole?

I hope you are loved. Can I please have a Barbie?

From Leah, Grade 1 South Perth

To Santa

I like the decorations and my name is Parker. I have two cats and my cats' names are Jasper and Ally.

Hohoho how do you make the lots of toys? Can you get Will a pack man game. Can you get me a Pokemon bide and Pokeman pack.

I hope you get there in time.

From Parker H, Grade 1 South Perth

To Santa

My favorite colour is black and blue. Where is the north pole? Can you get Will a monster stuffy. I wish I had a double wheel tractor. Have a good day Santa.

From Griffin, Grade 1 South Perth

To Santa

What does the star on top of the tree mean?



I wish that Abigail had pez. May I please have a puppy. Merry Christmas.

From Tessa, Grade 1 South Perth

To Santa,

I like Dinosaur stuff. What do you feed the reindeer? Can you get people clothes? Can you please give me a turtle? Have a great CHRISTMAS!

Brody, Grade 1 South Perth

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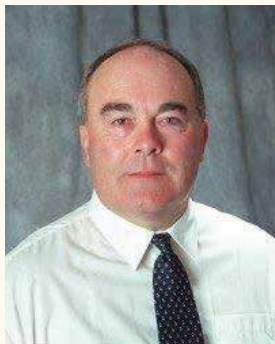
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# Letters to Santa

**Dear Santa**

My favourite colour is red, and my favourite animal is a dog. What is it like to be at the north pole? What I want for someone else is for Griffin for him a tractor hat please can you get that for him?

May I please have one elf please can I have that. I hope that you can have a Christmas eve.

From Ruby, Grade 1 South Perth

**Dear Santa**

My favourite colour is the rainbow. I want two see what you look like. My brother loves a Paw Patrol. Can you get me a Paw Patrol. May I please have a Pokeman toy with a Charzard please. I hope everyone has a good Christmas.

From Nar, Grade 1 South Perth

**Dear Santa**

I really like Mario stuff. Have you ever got chased by a polar bear?

I want people to have homes. I wish I had a Mario. I want for you a new sleigh

for you.

From Gavin, Grade 1 South Perth

**Dear Santa**

I am Morgan. My favourite animal is a cat. Santa what is your favourite food to eat? Is it cookies? I will like Abigail to be loved for Christmas. I will like a kitten. I hope you have a nice Christmas.

From Morgan, Grade 1 South Perth

**To Santa**

My favourite colour is pink and purple. I like magic mixes. How do you make presents so fast?

Have a good Christmas Santa. Santa, I want a jewellery box. We will write to you again.

From Elena, Grade 1 South Perth

**Dear Santa**

How are you and the elves? I have been very good this year Santa.

How fast can the sleigh fly? This year I am hoping for a Bauer RS Junior roller skates, a hyper light hockey stick left

handed and a fish bowl helmet cage.

Thank You

Matthew, Grade 2/3 Little Falls

**Dear Santa**

How are you? My elves came back from the North Pole. They brought me Santa slippers and an advent calendar. Are you ready for Christmas? I was hoping for a yoyo or a barbie airplane. I would also love a lego set. Hope you have a good Christmas.

From Scarlett, Grade 2/3 Little Falls

**Dear Santa**

How are you? Are you getting all ready for Christmas? How do you get your magic? How many elves do you have? Also, can you say hi to the elves and Mrs. Claus. I am hoping for a sticker book, lego and an art kit. I hope you have a good Christmas.

Love Lyla, Grade 2/3 Little Falls

**Dear Santa**

How are you? Are you getting ready for Christmas? My elf came back from the north pole. I think I have been really good this year. For Christmas I am hoping for a big stuffy and sweet treats.



Merry Christmas Santa

From Logan, Grade 2/3 Little Falls

**Dear Santa**

How old is Rudolf? Santa, how many elves do you have? How are the elves Santa? I love Christmas. I am hoping for lots of Pokemon cards for my binder and hockey cards. Merry Christmas

From Mitchell, Grade 2/3 Little Falls

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# ARTS & CULTURE —

## The King of Instruments



Casavant Organ 1907

By Krysl Klassen, Edited by Alice Rixson

From Montreal to New York to Jamaica to Japan and Africa, magnificent pipe organs manufactured by Casavant Frères, a Canadian company founded in 1879 in Quebec, can be located. But an equally exquisite specimen – and one much closer – is in St. Marys United Church.

A pipe organ is a massive wind instrument that produces sound by driving pressurized air through the organ pipes selected from a manual keyboard operated by the hands and a pedalboard controlled by the feet. Because each pipe creates a single pitch, the pipes are organized in sets called ranks.

Most organs have many ranks of pipes of differing pitch, timbre and volume that the player can employ singly or in combination through the use of controls called stops.

Pipes are usually constructed from metal or wood; sometimes even from bamboo, a perennial grass. These media are all susceptible to climate changes. The organ needs to be tuned two or three times a year because of our climate's fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

Acoustics can be affected by interior building features such as floor coverings, rugs or carpeting, or window

coverings, like drapes. The number of people in an audience or even an open window can also alter the acoustics.

Mozart, for one, called the pipe organ The King of Instruments. It's considered "King" because of its size, complexity and power. The largest Casavant organ in the world by the number of pipes is reported to be the Boardwalk Hall Auditorium Organ in New Jersey, which with over 33,000 pipes weighs about 150 tons. The one lodged in the St. Marys United Church doesn't quite compete. It dwarfs with only about 2,000 pipes, which still renders it huge compared to any other musical instrument.

The original Warren organ at the United Church, installed in 1886, was replaced in 1907 with a new Casavant instrument, installed to the tune of \$5,400. Today's price tag is estimated at \$500,000. According to Larry Pfaff, a noted local architectural historian and an organist, the entire church was revamped and expanded to accommodate this enormous pipe organ.

The Casavant brothers' instruments boasted many innovations unique for the era, such as concave pedalboards, balanced expression pedals, keyboard improvements and other enhancements. Their reputation as organ builders of international star-



Casavant Organ at St Marys United Church

tus was cemented in 1891 with their construction of the organ for the Notre Dame de Montreal Basilica, which is comprised of four keyboards and 7,000 individual pipes. Technical modernizations continued to be developed after the deaths of these gifted entrepreneurs.

Over the years, the instrument here in St. Marys has been upgraded numerous times. A new Keates console was installed in 1957, new reed stops were added in 1979 and the current Casavant console was replaced in about 2000. Solid state action for the console was added about 13 years ago, along with MIDI digital stops.

There is no other musical instrument that can be played using both hands and feet, with a whole orchestra-plus in sounds. Through the use of combinations of effects, it allows every performance to be as unique as each instrument. Organists are amazing musicians, but even they can't predict exactly how the organ will respond.

The popularity of organ music has been in decline for some years and there are numerous reasons for this

regression. Perhaps near the top of the list is cultural changes in society that influences our exposure to other forms of music. Moreover, there is a lack of musical experience with organ music and the shortage of qualified organists to educate. There is also the expense factor.

Tim Gilbert, who has been the organist at St. Marys United Church for 16 years, holds demonstrations and tours at the Doors Open events. It's an affair worth attending when it's offered. Furthermore, upon request, Tim will consider demonstrations for groups and special occasions.

Organ compositions can, of course, be heard at weekly Sunday services. But with Christmas season just around the corner, the organ at St. Marys United Church will be the star at the annual Christmas Eve's service at 7:00 pm and again at the *Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols* at 10:30 am, December 31. Visitors are always welcome.

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



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# HISTORY —

## HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Holiday Celebrations

By Mary Smith

Although the St. Marys Museum will be closed for staff holidays from Friday afternoon, December 22, 2023, until Tuesday morning, January 3, 2024, that still leaves a number of days for those on school break to visit the special exhibits. In the upstairs hall, a display has been created especially for this holiday season. Through text and photographs, it explains how St. Marys has traditionally celebrated this time of year with decorations, lights and parades.

Local merchants have always been aware that Christmas presents a great marketing opportunity. The St. Marys Argus, November 30, 1882, reported: "The windows of our merchants are beginning to wear a Christmas appearance." Grocery stores showed displays of citrus fruit, nuts, candy and other holiday produce. Their specials were advertised in window signs if they could not be openly displayed. In 1913, for example, J. M. Adam's grocery store was offering fresh oysters, shipped directly from the coast, as well as late cranberries and Thedford celery. For cheese, there was Ingersoll cream, Roquefort, and fine old Canadian cheddar. A rival grocery business, Dickson's Ltd., offered fish (from kippered herring to fresh Ontario Whitefish) and fowl – turkeys, ducks and geese.

All the downtown stores, no matter what they sold, declared that their merchandise would make ideal Christmas presents. Practical gifts, "handsome, useful things," were popular. Carter and Creighton's "Christmas Store for Men" promised: "Every woman who buys gifts here can be satisfied that they are absolutely correct in every way." In its advertisement in the St. Marys Journal, it provided a list of suggestions that include braces, garters, collars and cuffs, underwear, umbrellas, bathrobes, and pajamas. "A handsome box with every purchase!"

In the early decades of the 20th century, another downtown department store, A. H. Lofft, also dressed its windows with the attractive items to encourage Christmas buying. Gifts for women included various fabrics – brocades, silks, velvets and plush cords – suitable for making up dresses for winter wear. Gloves were displayed, made of kid, suede or washable fabric: "No lady will object even if she receives nine or ten pairs!" Large-brimmed, elaborate hats were falling out of fashion but Lofft's offered knitted aviator-style caps at 50¢ each – "very becoming and one of our best sellers!" Silk hose, lace scarves and "dainty" linen or lace handkerchiefs were gift suggestions. Other practical gifts – but maybe not displayed in the front windows – were silk girdles and Nemo corsets "for comfort." Pictures of this corset brand can be found on the internet.

Ready's Shoe Store proclaimed a century ago: "Nothing will be more appreciated for the long winter evenings than Slippers for the whole family." The store's window display included patent leather, button shoes for ladies, "cushion sole" shoes for men, as well as pumps and evening slippers. The store also sold trunks, club bags and suitcases. And maybe to catch the attention of younger window shoppers, there were "hockey shoes for boys and girls." St. Marys Hardware Ltd. also sold skates for children and adults.

Luxury items were available in St. Marys. Jewel-



Photographer Frank Robinson (1888-1958) caught this glimpse of Santa Claus passing by an illuminated Town Hall on a snowy night in St. Marys in the 1940s.

ler William Andrews had subtle display windows, showing specially chosen items behind thick beveled glass. His advertisement in the Journal declared: "Your Christmas shopping will not be complete without a visit to our store. Here you will find a large and carefully selected stock of gems and fine jewelry and a wealth of articles all at the best quality, which we offer at moderate prices." These items included bracelet watches, pearl necklaces, pearl stick pins, fobs, cufflinks, chains, thimbles, fountain pens, cigarette cases, safety razors and diamond rings, ranging in price from \$5 to \$250.

Today, bright Christmas lights are a feature of the holidays in downtown St. Marys, as well as in many neighbourhoods throughout the town. The exhibit at the Museum explains that the tradition of electrically illuminated displays began in North America in the 1880s. But at first this was too expensive for most home and business owners. When safer, less costly, outdoor Christmas light bulbs and light strings were put on the market in the late 1920s, holiday lighting became popular. St. Marys embraced the trend, beginning in the 1930s, and increasingly after World War II. The town hall was illuminated and always had a Christmas tree beside it, strung with lights. More stores began to use colourful lights in Christmas window displays. But even before electric lights were available, stores, such as A. Beattie & Co. sold holly branches, evergreen wreathing and cedar ropes for home decorations. Many households added a few sprigs of mistletoe to hang in strategic places.

The Museum's holiday display includes some great photographs of Santa Claus parades organized in St. Marys through the years by local service clubs. The first full-scale parades were held in the 1950s, sponsored by the St. Marys Lions Club. The event was taken over in 1973 by the Kinsman Club. That means that the great parade we enjoyed on Fri-

day, November 17, 2023, marked half a century of Kinsmen involvement in this community tradition. Santa Claus, however, has been paying visits to St. Marys for much longer than that. For decades, local merchants have invited him to endorse their gift suggestions. For example, ca 1910, he recommended that nothing would please a wife more than a Bissell carpet sweeper from St. Marys Hardware Ltd. The F. W. Hutton grocery store claimed that, in case of shortage, "Santa Claus has made full arrangements to replace his supplies from our store. Of course there is a reason. It is that our candies, fruit and nuts are exceptionally good and they suit him. They will please you too."

Santa Claus was also called upon to make pre-Christmas appearances at many special community events. Although a century ago, not every household had its own Christmas tree, every one-room school organized a Christmas concert and Christmas Tree. The tree was decorated with candy and presents for the children and, at the end of the evening's entertainment, Santa Claus appeared and distributed these gifts to all. In 1923, Rannoch School's Christmas Tree and Concert was held on Thursday evening, December 20. Admission: 20¢ adults and 10¢ for children. Sebringville, Granton, Kirkton and Prospect Hill Schools and many others also required Santa's attendance. So did the Sunday School concerts held in many church halls. As if Santa Claus wasn't busy enough on Christmas Eve, that was the date chosen in 1923 for the concert and Christmas Tree at Brown's Church in East Nissouri. Entertainment consisted of "choruses, drills, dialogues and a short play given by the young people." A modest admission was charged.

The most ambitious church concert in St. Marys in 1923 took place at the Salvation Army citadel Tuesday, December 18, at 8 p.m. Although the event was organized by "Ensign Kirbyson and his willing Salvation Army workers," it was an ecumenical affair with the Presbyterian minister, the Reverend F. W. Duggan, acting as master of ceremonies. Many people attended. According to the Journal Argus, "The crowd filled every seat and much of the available standing room." In Salvation Army tradition, entertainment included club swinging, a dumbbell drill, and an instrumental duet "consisting of harmonica and tambourine." The highlight of the evening was the arrival of Santa Claus on his faithful steed, Daisy. The presents on the "large, illuminated Christmas tree" were distributed, but the children "were not content until all were, in turn, given a ride on the horse's back along with St. Nicholas himself."



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# Memories of Christmas Past

By Nancy Abra

The Christmas season is a festive time that bring families, friends, and community together to celebrate. But for some, this holiday can be a struggle. Loneliness, the loss of a loved one, an anniversary of a traumatic event or dealing with a serious illness can be a challenge to find any joy in season festivities. The memories of Christmas past can help warm the heart and recall joy. The following is a collective of Christmas memories from Thorndale area residents.

“My favourite Christmas memory is when I was six years old,” Thames Centre Councillor Tom Heeman shared, “I received my first hammer, a saw, and a bag of nails. I was so excited. It came with a note from Santa saying, ‘I thought you might like these as I can hear your dad asking where his tools and nails went, all the way up here at the North Pole.’ I made many projects with my first tool set.”

Olga Dos Santos and her husband, Alfred moved to Thorndale a couple of years ago from London. “I grew up on a farm in Appin and then later in Lobo Township. At Christmas, there wasn’t a lot of extra money for presents.” Olga remarked. “I have a Dutch background and at Christmas we each would wrap up a tangerine in pretty paper with a bow on it. When we got together with our cousins, we exchanged our tangerine gifts with the cousin that was our same age. A couple of years ago,” smiled Olga, “my cousin surprised me with a beautifully wrapped tangerine. That brought back wonderful memories of Christmas spent with our cousins.”

Dr. Michael Fernando, husband of Patti Kemp, have made their home together in Thorndale area since 2011. Prior to that, they lived in London, England and Michael was at St. Thomas Hospital in Central London doing Emergency medicine. “One Christmas, Patti was home in Thorndale with her family,” Michael shared, “and I was alone in London, working the night shifts in the Emergency department. A friend of ours invited me, along with some neighbours for Christmas. It is always hard to work in Emergency especially during the holidays, but the kindness of our friend and after a wonderful dinner, I felt very special as I left to go to my night shift at the hospital.”

Good friends for over five decades, the Ivins and Redman families had a tradition on Christmas Eve that produced wonderful memories for both Gayle Ivins and Pat Redman. Gayle was the organist at St. Georges Anglican church and Pat was in the choir. “We had an old pump organ at home that had a wonderful sound for Christmas Carols,” shared Gayle. “The Redman family would come over in the



Pictured are the Thorndale Holiday Elves, from left, Nas Mattaroo and Sara McClean. (Nancy Abra photo)

early evening on Christmas Eve and we would sing Christmas carols and have some snacks. Then we all headed over to St. Georges for the special 11:30 pm Christmas Eve service. It was often snowing when we came out of that service in the early morning, and it made me think of the Holy Baby Boy’s birth.”

“Christmas was always exciting for our family, especially the children,” recalled Pat Redman. “When we came to live in Thorndale in the late 1960’s, we connected with the Ivins family. Gayle and I have been close friends ever since. Our Christmas Eves together are one of my cherished Christmas memories.”

Another Thorndale area resident, Ray Chowen, has lived here all his life. Ray shared that during Christmas there were many special dinners. “Our Christmas Eve supper was always the highlight,” Ray recalled. “Dad and I would do our barn chores a little earlier and extra good while my mom would set out her fine china and prepare a special meal. Dad and I would come in, barn clothes off and clean up for our special Christmas Eve supper for our family of three, plus the dog. On Christmas Day, with morning chores done, a quick breakfast and into the living room to see what Santa brought. It was the dog’s annual trip to our living room. To this day, we still have a special Christmas Eve supper with our children and grandchildren with the table dressed with the

fancy china and delicious food.”

I hope this holiday season is filled with warm memories that brings you gratitude and joy that lasts a lifetime.




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**COLUMN —**

**HOSTING UKRAINE:** The Spirit of Giving is Alive

By VJ Knutson

Another week has passed by in a blink, I swear. Lesia keeps reminding me of how many days are left until Christmas. Good thing, too, as I seem to be losing my sense of whatever day it is.

When Lesia decided, with her friend in London, that they would help collect medical supplies – bandages, tourniquets, and pain medications for the wounded soldiers in Ukraine – she didn't want to mention it to me, as "I was busy enough with other things."

Naturally, I wrote about their efforts in my column, and sure enough, a kind soul stepped forward and offered to help. Patricia Evans went into action and "put a request on Facebook, and to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints (in Stratford)." She also contacted the Women's Relief Society (Church of Latterday Saints in Kitchener): "an organization established in 1842 to reach out to those in need."

Patricia writes: "They responded in true form."

Patricia then contacted the Ukraine Centre in London, where she delivered an incredible donation of Tylenol, and was reassured that the medicine will reach the front line as soon as possible. She plans to continue with this effort.



When I showed Lesia the photos, she asked that I thank Patricia in my column. In these times, where communication with Ukraine is thwarted through power outages, your efforts are a ray of hope, Patricia. Not Lesia's words, but mine. Lesia is overwhelmed and most grateful for your kindness.

A few other Ukrainians received an early Christmas present thanks to Doug Betteridge, who wrote to me recently asking if everyone had a bicycle. A few of the new arrivals did not, and thanks to Doug, two young

boys and a mom are excited to have wheels.

I've expressed before how difficult the holiday season can be for those separated from loved ones, and unable to meet their expenses. Add into the fray a child needing specialized medical care, and the challenges become unsurmountable. When I heard of the situation, I reached out to the Rotary Club. It was an unusual request, I know, and they weren't quite sure how to respond, but in the end, with their help, we were able to ease this family's burden. Bless

the Rotary Club and its members for all they do. For people like me, who want to help, but have limited experience, the Rotary members are beacons of hope.

A thank you also, to the kind community member, who delivered gifts and food to the family. This special gesture did so much to raise their spirits. Please note, that I have purposefully not included any names here, opting to preserve the family's privacy. Ukrainians are proud and grateful people, and accepting the help of strangers has been stress enough.

The week has been capped off with the free dinner at the Pyramid Centre: To St Marys with Love. When Lesia came home with the tickets, she was astounded by the fact that they were numbered in the 190's. I explained that the dinner holds up to 350, and her disbelief reminded me of what another Ukrainian had told me once: that living in Canada has taught her the importance of kindness and looking out for one another.

By the time this goes to publication, holiday celebrations will be in full swing. No matter how or where you are celebrating, I wish you all, dear readers, the best of the season. May we all find time to pause and feel the blessings around us.

Till next time.

(Reach me at english.knutson@gmail.com)

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



Dear Arborist,

I have a Colorado Blue Spruce that, up until about 2 years ago, was completely healthy. Sadly, recently, the needles have been turning orange and purple before falling off. It looks terrible. Please help.

Sincerely, Blue Spruce Troubles

Dear Blue Spruce Troubles,

It sounds like your Colorado Blue Spruce has a fungal infection. Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens*) is very susceptible to a fungal infection known as Needle Cast (*Rhizosphaera kalkhoffii*). Needle Cast is a fungus which is spread by

spores, normally affecting the lower part of the tree first. The treatment is spraying the tree with a fungicide (normally copper sulfate). Spraying will cure the fungus but not necessarily recover the dead branches. As a result, many tree owners choose to remove and replace.

Hope this helps, thank you,  
The Arborist

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

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

## Word List

- Turkey
- Stuffing
- Cranberries
- Mashed potato
- Gravy
- Squash
- Brussel sprouts
- Eggnog
- Fruit cake
- Mince pies
- Yule log
- Plum pudding
- Gingerbread
- Chestnuts

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The **Riddle Kid** OF THE WEEK

Where do snowmen put their money?



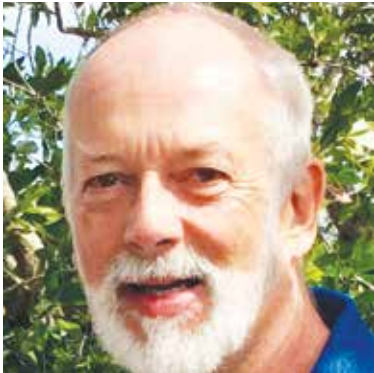
In snow banks!

Mac McCarthy (7)

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

## COLUMN —

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The imaginary barrier to travel



By Paul Knowles

Last month, I spent a few days in Ottawa attending the annual congress of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC). I was there in my role as President of the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC). I know, why are organizations so fond of acronyms... TIAC, TMAC, YIKES? I digress.

I had one job. I was there to present the award my organization sponsors to the Travel Media Professional of the Year and all three finalists were members of TMAC. I was very proud of my friends.

But the rest of the time, I could just sit and listen to a raft of excellent speakers. And one theme came up again and again – the impact of negative news on travel.

There can be bad news. Wildfires in many Canadian provinces, for instance. But the point was made, again and again, that major media reports about wildfires in British Columbia or the Northwest Territories failed to identify where the danger was and equally importantly, where it wasn't. And after the danger faded, even in the effected areas, none of the major media bothered to mention that it was now open for visitors.

They didn't report the fact that for the health of the economies of those areas, it was essential that visitors return.

So... a lot of potential visitors didn't visit. And that, in our post-pandemic world where tourism businesses are trying to claw their way back into viability, was very bad news.

The truth of this struck me even harder in the first week of December when I learned of the murders of Canadian businesspeople and environmental pioneers, Daniel Langlois and Dominique Marchand. You may even have been following this story. Daniel and Dominique were the visionary developers of the luxury, off-the-grid Coulibri Ridge resort on the island of Dominica (not to be confused with the Dominican Republic). They were killed by a hit man who shot them and then burned their car with their bodies inside.

A neighbour who had a legal dispute with the couple has been charged with hiring the hit man, who has also been charged. Both are in custody and will appear in court in March.

This crime shocked me, especially since I spent several days with Dominique and Daniel just a year ago. They had invited me, with four other travel writers, to stay at Coulibri Ridge. The place was, to say the least, astonishing.

But more amazing were these two people. Not only had they demonstrated that it was possible to build an entirely sustainable luxury resort, a place that actually improves the environment, but they had created and supported foundations that are working to restore coral reefs, they have built a

school in the local community, they employ dozens of local people (including all the workers who built Coulibri Ridge), and much more. All Dominica is mourning their deaths.

All Dominica is also worried that potential visitors will see these headlines and conclude that their magical island is not a safe place and choose to go somewhere else.

And that's why I had to write this piece. Just as all of B.C. was not destroyed in forest fires, so all of Dominica is not now closed to visitors because two lunatics apparently committed a horrible crime against neighbours.

Yes, there was a ghastly murder on Dominica, just as there are murders in Toronto, Waterloo Region and once upon a time, in the house next door to my parents' bucolic rural residence in Elgin County. But the moral of the story is, such isolated happenings should not provide the paint with which we cover entire communities, let alone countries.

Dominica is still open, ready to charm visitors. So are British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. So are Canada's Maritime provinces, even though we mostly hear about storms there or fires.

So is the area around Fort Myers and Sanibel Island in Florida which recovered from 2022's Hurricane Ian in a miraculously short time, as I saw only six months after the storm.

At TIAC, the point was made that, due to global warming, there probably will be more extensive fire seasons in Canada in the coming years. And when it comes to person to



Daniel Langlois and Dominique Marchand, at their beloved Coulibri Ridge resort. Photo taken by Paul Knowles, one year ago. (All photos by Paul Knowles)

person violence, there is no lack of reports from around the world. We do need to travel smart.

So the key, fellow travellers, is to do some homework before you plan to go anywhere. If an unspoiled Caribbean island is on your bucket list, don't make a decision based on news reports of an isolated incident – check out Dominica. Contact a travel agent and ask... or query the Dominica tourism organization. You will get honest answers and then you can decide, based on fact, not on dramatic but narrow-focused news coverage.

If Florida is your fancy, don't write off the Gulf Coast be-

cause the news reporters didn't believe "recovery" makes as good a story as "disaster." Same goes for all those areas in Canada where our Canadian reporters falsely blanketed entire provinces as disaster areas.

I am very sad about the horrific deaths of two people I liked and admired. But that will in no way discourage me from revisiting the island that they had fallen in love with.

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



The view of a volcano, from one of the pools at Coulibri Ridge.



The unspoiled beauty of Dominica.



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## IN MEMORIAM

### Webb



In memory of Michael Webb  
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But we will forever feel you in  
our hearts.

Please take some time on the 21st. to remember  
him with a smile.

Judy, David, Kiel, Megan & Boys

## IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of our DAD's **Ray Wakem** who  
passed away December 26, 2017, **Bob Harris** who  
passed away December 13, 2019, and our MOM  
**Ida Anne Harris** who passed away February 1, 2023

1 thought of you today  
But that is nothing new,  
I thought about you yesterday  
And days before that too.  
1 think of you in silence  
1 often speak your name,  
Now all 1 have are memories  
And your picture in a frame.  
Your memory is my keepsake  
With which I'll never part,  
God has you in his keeping  
I have you in my heart.

Sadly missed, never forgotten and Forever in  
our memories

Love Christine & Rob, Grandchildren - Crystal &  
Chris, Whitney & Tom, Kyle & Melanie and your  
great grandchildren - Aurora, Kendall, Bronson,  
Anna, Corbyn and Grace

## IN MEMORIAM

### Podsadecki



In loving memory of Sharon  
Podsadecki  
June 20, 1944 - December 27,  
2022

We know it has been a year,  
but it still feels like yesterday.  
Those we hold most dear never  
truly leave us. They live on  
in the kindness they showed,  
the comfort they shared, and  
the love they brought into our  
lives.

We will hold you close within our hearts and there you  
will remain.

Love Ted, Paul, Michelle, Jeff, Faye, Avery and your  
grand fur babies.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Webb



In memory of Donald Webb  
April 15, 1925 - December 23,  
2008

If time would stand still,  
We could listen to the stories  
you loved to tell,  
If time would stand still,  
We could tell you how proud  
we were of you,  
If time would stand still,  
Our family's father would still  
be here.

In our hearts everyday.

David, Judy, Kiel, Megan & Boys

## THANK YOU

### Olbach

Henry Olbach will be missed, he touched many  
lives. Heart felt thank you to those who were able  
to come to the visitation and/or funeral. We thank  
many of you who donated, called, emailed or sent  
cards of compassion and support.

We would like to send thanks to our St. Mary's  
Emergency staff and the Paramedics for their care  
and compassionate words on December 5. To be  
part of this community is a blessing.

We are at peace knowing Henry is with his faithful  
Saviour Jesus Christ. The Olbach Family

## THANK YOU

### Harrigan

We would like to thank all the doctors and nurses  
on the 6th and 10th floor of University Hospital in  
London and also Dr. Jeff Hepburn of Happy Valley  
Family Health team for the care of Andrew.

Thank you to friends, family and neighbours for  
their visits, flowers, cards, phone calls and meals.

Also to Haskett's Funeral Home for their support  
during this difficult time and Rev. Darrell Shaule for  
the service.

Thank you to Huron Shores Catering for the lovely  
lunch they prepared.

Cindy, Ashly & Sean Harrigan

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

Solutions on page 39

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COLUMN —

# Straight from the Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

It's time to place those holds and browse the shelves to stock up for the holidays! As the holiday season ramps up, the Library will be observing adjusted holiday hours over the next two weeks. Fear not, however, because all our online resources and the Libby app are open 24/7 for all your e-book and audiobook needs. Remember that no Library materials will be due on closure dates and your items will automatically renew as long as no one is waiting for them. Call the Library before the 24th if you need to renew your card or would like a reminder about how to log-in to Libby or Bibliocommons (our online catalogue).

**The Library's holiday hours are as follows**

- Dec. 24th to Dec. 27th - CLOSED
- Thursday, Dec. 28th - OPEN (10:30am-5:00pm)
- Friday, Dec. 29th - OPEN (10:30am-4:00pm)
- Dec. 30th to Jan. 1st - CLOSED

Regular hours will resume on January 2nd. We want to thank all our amazing patrons for their support this year and for making 2023 a wonderful year! Happy holidays from all of us at the St. Marys Public Library!

**This Week's Recommendation**

Put the "box" in Boxing Day this year by crafting with recyclable materials.

Get inspired with "Out of the Box" by Jemma Westing. "Out of the Box" contains step-by-step instructions on how to make 25 cardboard projects from a penguin family to a pirate ship. Find this exciting title in our children's non-fiction section; look for the call number J 745.54 Wes on the book's spine.

**Up This Week**

- Friday, Dec. 22nd: Open 10:30am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Dec. 23rd: Open 10:00am-4:00pm
- Monday, Dec. 25th: CLOSED
- Tuesday, Dec. 26th: CLOSED
- Wednesday, Dec. 27th: CLOSED
- Thursday, Dec. 28th: Open 10:30am-5:00pm



# LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

## Kodak Moments

**25 years ago (1998)**

A luncheon will be held following church service at Union Church to bid Pirie Mitchell farewell and extend best wishes.

Kirk Gregory's Construction Technology classes from St. Marys DCVI began doing wiring and plumbing work last Thursday morning at the Youth Centre, below the post office.

Julie Noble of St. Marys spoke about her trip to the United Nations this past summer at the Oddfellows Christmas dinner last Thursday night at the Presbyterian Church. Noble is a grade 12 student at St. Marys DCVI.

**50 years ago (1973)**

A notice regarding local pharmacy service is published in this issue. It outlines the drug stores which will be open on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's.

Perhaps some naturalist can explain the strange appearance of thousands of house flies under an evergreen tree on Jones Street West last Friday night. The only theory we can suggest is that the flies had taken up winter quarters in the tree but were shaken loose by the sudden heavy front at that time.

The discovery that a fire had been burning in a waste container in the town hall basement aroused some apprehension recently. The fire had evidently been smothered by the lid before it had a chance to spread. The basement area is used by local paper boys to sort out their route.

**75 years ago (1948)**

Monday, December 27 has been proclaimed as Boxing Day by Mayor Archie Skinner.

During one of the fine days last week several roses were in bloom in Mrs. King Sales' garden at Cherry Grove.

Monday's avalanche of votes in the municipal election seemed to indicate a resurgence in interest in municipal affairs after years of what seemed to some as downright apathy. Ballots were cast by 1410.

**100 years ago (1923)**

The book of etiquette tells you almost everything except the graceful way to retrieve the roast from a guest's lap.

Kodaks make the ideal Christmas gift, and you will see a full supply of Kodak calendars for your photo snaps, which make a yearly reminder. All kinds are available at McIntyre's Rexall Drug Store.

As a result of work done by sewing circles held at the homes of the Catholic Women's league members, two boxes of clothing were packed in the Council chamber on November 28 and sent to the orphanage at St. Joseph's, London.



Happy Holidays

Best wishes for a Christmas and New Year filled with comfort and joy

(doggy treats optional)

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## QUIZ ANSWERS

- |                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1)Gold, frankincense, and myrrh | 5)Mariah Carey      |
| 2)One-horse open sleigh         | 6)United Kingdom    |
| 3) An old silk hat              | 7)Mistletoe         |
| 4)Will Ferrell                  | 8)The North Pole    |
|                                 | 9)3 sizes           |
|                                 | 10)11 pipers piping |

## SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

## OBITUARY

### Wettlaufer



Lynda Lou Wettlaufer, 75, of St. Marys, formerly of Tavistock, passed away on Sunday, December 10, 2023 at Stratford General Hospital. She was born on November 19, 1948 at Stratford, daughter of the late Percy John Wettlaufer (1979) and the former Ruth Marie Hinz (2021).

Lynda is survived by her sisters-in-law, Claudette Wettlaufer and Gloria Wettlaufer; nieces and nephews Fred Wettlaufer, Marianne Ruby (Dale), Charlie Wettlaufer (Chris), Scott Wettlaufer (Erika), Angela Wettlaufer; great niece and nephews, Emily & Josh Wettlaufer, Riley & Travis Wettlaufer, Jayden & Simon Ruby.

She was predeceased by her brothers, Bob Wettlaufer (2017), Jack Wettlaufer (2022), Bill Wettlaufer (2022) and niece, Yvonne Claudia Wettlaufer in infancy (1967).

Lynda received her Legal Secretary Diploma from Fanshaw College and was employed as a Legal Secretary for three different law firms for over a span of 40 years. She loved long car rides in the countryside enjoying the birds and wildlife along the way. Lynda was an avid dart player many years ago at the Tavistock Legion.

Friends and family were received at Grace United Church, Tavistock on Sunday, December 17, 2023 from 2 – 2.45 pm where the funeral service was held at 3 pm. Interment in Grace United Cemetery. Reception followed.

Francis Funeral Home entrusted with the arrangements.

Donations to St. Marys Memorial Hospital Foundation, St.Marys ON would be appreciated.

Personal condolences can be posted at [www.francis-fh.ca](http://www.francis-fh.ca)

## OBITUARY

### Brown



Elizabeth Ann (Beth) Brown, of R.R. 7 St Marys, on December 12, 2023 at the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth in her 87th year.

The daughter of the late Douglas and Hilda Anderson. Predeceased by husband of 57 years, Jack Brown (2019). Lovingly remembered

by daughter Lisa Loucks (Joe) and son Murray Brown (Janette). She was a devoted and very proud Nana to grandchildren Alyssa Loucks (Kevin Mandigo), Ashley Monteith (Matt Monteith), Leah Brown (Pierson Smith) and Cameron Brown. Beth is also survived by five cherished great-grandchildren Clark Monteith, Maeve Monteith and Burk Monteith, and Sophia and Penelope Mandigo.

As the oldest of a family of six, Beth is sadly missed by siblings Bill Anderson (Jan), Dorine Ellis (Jim, deceased), Eunice Boyd (John, deceased), Jane Crawford, and Mary Anderson (Bob Zaharia, deceased). Beth is survived by many special nieces and nephews.

Beth was a schoolteacher, teaching at Motherwell, North York and the Avon Maitland District School Board. She also spent many enjoyable years as the Activity Director at Hillside. Beth experienced many travels to Northern Ontario, New York, Cancun, Sanibel Island, Florida, Europe, Alaska and Ireland.

There will be no funeral home visitation. A private family graveside service will take place in Avonbank Cemetery in the spring of 2024. Many thanks to Dr. Schiedel and Dr. Fernandes from the London Regional Cancer Clinic, and to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth for their loving care of Mom. Donations to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, the Canadian Cancer Society or a charity of your choice would be gratefully accepted. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.com](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.com).

## THE WEEK AHEAD

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

St. Marys Library events - Page 37

### Friday, December 22

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog/sausage lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 pm
- Harmony of Friends concert at Holy Name of Mary Church - 7:30 pm

### Saturday, December 23

- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 pm

### Sunday, December 24

- St. Marys United Church Christmas Eve service - 7 pm

### Monday, December 25

- Christmas Day

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