

# St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1200

Thursday, February 29, 2024

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## Coldest Night of the Year raises over \$50,000, and counting



The fourth annual Coldest Night of the Year event in St. Marys was a great success, with 37 teams, 36 volunteers, and 163 walkers participating. As of press time, a total of \$53,265 had been raised – 95 per cent of the way to the campaign's \$56,000 goal. There's still time to help push the total past this year's goal, since donations are still being accepted throughout the month of March at [www.cnoy.org/location/stmarys](http://www.cnoy.org/location/stmarys) to support local United Way Perth Huron initiatives such as Nourish Market and community outreach worker. See story on page 12. Photo by Hodgins Photography

## St. Marys Public Library brings new book club to Broken Rail Brewing

By Emily Stewart

The St. Marys Public Library is inviting residents to talk about books over a glass of beer, pop, or water at a local brewery.

The library's Books and Brews

at Broken Rail Brewing is a new monthly book club where patrons can talk about one of the four books selected. The next Books and Brews event was announced on the library's social media for March 13

Continued on page 8

## St. Marys residents left in the dark five times in February

By Galen Simmons

According to Festival Hydro, St. Marys residents were left in the dark – even if only briefly – five times in February.

Festival Hydro classifies power outages as either momentary – lasting less than a minute – or sustained – lasting more than a minute. Momentary outages were recorded by the local hydro distributor at 2:03 p.m. Feb. 2, at 12:49 p.m. Feb. 5 and at 8:32 a.m. Feb. 10. Festival Hydro also recorded sustained outages on Feb. 12 at 1:09 p.m. and again on Feb. 22 at 11:23 a.m.

"Festival Hydro endeavors to minimize the frequency and duration of power interruptions within all the communities we serve through planned asset-renewal projects and regular maintenance," Festival Hydro CEO Jeff Graham told the Independent by email.

"Even with these measures, some interruptions are out of our control due to weather events, tree contacts and foreign interference such as motor-vehicle accidents and animal contacts. Other interruptions, under our control, such as planned replacement of assets and protection-system operations when faults do occur, are part of the distribution-system design and operation."

According to Festival Hydro, the causes of each of the momentary outages in February are unknown, and the company could not find any obvious reason for the sustained power outage on Feb. 12.

On Feb. 22, hydro workers did find an animal that may have contacted the circuit. While that normally would have only resulted in a momentary outage, the protection-system station circuit break-

Continued on page 3

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COMMUNITY

# Travelling during March Break? HPPH says to be sure to update your vaccines

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With March break travels on the minds of many families across Huron-Perth, local public health officials say it's important to double check vaccine records before travelling, as a record number of children are not up to date, according to Huron Perth public health (HPPH) records.

"Vaccination is one of the best tools we have to protect us from certain infectious diseases," said HPPH communications coordinator Katherine Horst. "Vaccines have successfully lowered the rates of disease in countries with strong vaccination programs. Keeping up to date on your child's routine vaccinations helps to protect them against serious diseases and ensure those diseases remain rare or eliminated."

Over 5,000 students, 3,454 of whom are elementary school students in Huron and Perth counties, were sent home with vaccine letters addressed to parents and legal guardians of elementary and secondary students whose immunization records were incomplete.

Horst says COVID-19 played a factor



Huron Perth  
**Public Health**

in the high number of children who are currently in need of vaccines.

"The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major disruption in childhood immunization coverage around the world," said Horst. "Due to the risk of COVID-19 transmission, many families avoided non-essential medical appointments, many family health teams and clinics did not provide in-person services, and school-based immunization programs, including in Huron Perth, were suspended.

Although HPPH has not seen an increase in vaccine-preventable diseases in the region, measles cases across Ontario have started to become a concern. She notes it's vital to be up to date with appropriate vaccines to keep loved ones safe.

"We have not seen an increase in vaccine-preventable disease in our region, although we are monitoring the situation closely. Recently, there have been a few cases of measles in Ontario. As a result, HPPH is encouraging families who are travelling during the upcoming March break to ensure that their MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) immunizations are up to date," Horst said.

Before travelling, those who may not be aware of their vaccine status can contact public health for records or check in with family doctors where vaccines may have been provided.

"Travellers born before 1970 should make sure that they have received one dose of the vaccine, or are considered immune due to a history of measles disease or evidence of immunity (e.g. blood testing)," said

Horst. "Travellers born in 1970 or after (12 months or older) should make sure that they have received two doses of the measles vaccine on or after the first birthday."

If you are travelling with an infant (six to 12 months of age), Horst says the MMR vaccine may be given as early as six months. If so, the routine two-dose series must be restarted on or after the first birthday. Therefore, three doses are given.

On a final note, travelling or not, Horst says vaccines offer protection for both residents and those around them.

"Some vaccines can help to create community immunity (also known as herd immunity). This means that the more people who have been vaccinated against a disease in a community, the less chance there is of the disease spreading in that community. When you vaccinate your child, you help protect them and those around them. Community immunity helps protect people who may be unable to get vaccinated and those who may not respond as well to vaccination (such as those who are immunocompromised)."

For more information about vaccine-preventable disease, please visit [www.hpph.ca](http://www.hpph.ca)



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# COMMUNITY

## Museum's popular Seminar Series resumes on March 21

By St. Marys Independent staff

The popular St. Marys Museum seminar series resumes its 11th season this spring with a variety of engaging presentations.

On Thursday, March 21, the museum will hold a seminar on the history of food preparation and preservation. Janis Fread and Diane O'Shea will explore food trends, cookbooks and

culinary artifacts from the Museum's collection.

The stories of two notable St. Marys families will be presented on Thursday, April 18. Paul King will share about the Mathieson family, who lived at The Maples in the North Ward. Ken Telfer will discuss the stories of the Carter family, who built a family compound on both Jones and Peel Streets. The presentation will

concentrate on their substantial contributions to St. Marys and important events in their lives.

For a special Saturday presentation, local architecture experts Larry Pfaff and Mary Smith will explore the St. Marys buildings of designer-builder Robert Barbour (1822-1898). This morning presentation will take place on Saturday, May 11 and will include a walking tour, weather permitting.

Thursday evening seminars will start at 7 p.m. The Saturday, May 11 seminar will take place at 9:30 a.m. The seminars are fundraisers for the museum. The cost per person is \$12 or \$10 for museum members. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, call 519-284-3556 or email museum@town.stmarys.on.ca.

## St. Marys residents left in the dark five times in February

Continued from page 1

er reclose function – an automatic, high-voltage electric switch that shuts off electric power when trouble occurs – was blocked. As a result, the power outage continued until hydro crews reported they were safe and clear, and the station circuit breaker could be closed.

"We do understand that these events can be frustrating and inconvenient for our customers, so we are committed to addressing the root causes and responding quickly and safely when the unfortu-

nate need arises to remedy a situation," Graham said.

"We have active and planned projects for St Marys in 2024 to replace insulators, trim overgrown trees and renew aging infrastructure along with planned work in the other communities we serve. We encourage customers to contact us to get more information during these events and we will make every effort to proactively communicate restoration times when available."



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## COMMENTARY

# St. Marys Independent earns nomination for "Best Sports Section"

By St. Marys Independent Staff

Earlier this month, the Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) announced the nominees for the annual Better Newspaper Competition (BNC) Awards, with the St. Marys Independent and Stratford Times each earning nominations.

The St. Marys Independent is one of three nominees in the Best-Sports-Section category, along with the Eganville Leader and Niagara-on-the-Lake Local.

"I'm very pleased to see that Spencer Seymour's outstanding sports coverage has been recognized by this BNC Award nomination," said Stewart Grant, publisher of the Independent. "Our newspaper was similarly honoured in 2022 under Pat Payton's leadership of the sports section, and Spencer has maintained this high standard of local sports coverage. Spencer has developed into an excellent journalist and photographer,

and through the pages of our newspaper he is helping to cement some wonderful memories for young athletes and their families."

Another Grant Haven Media newspaper, the Stratford Times, was nominated within the prestigious General-Excellence category for newspapers with circulations of 2,000 to 6,499. Other newspapers nominated in this category were the Eganville Leader and Fort Frances Times.

"It was wonderful to hear of our nomination, especially as we're still a relatively young newspaper," said Grant. "We've been fortunate to have had so many talented people contribute to our paper – a great cross section of the community. I think the best is yet to come, but I'm very proud of our team and what we've been able to do so far to add to local journalism in the area."

The winners of the Better Newspaper Competition will be announced at a later date.

## Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week.

1) I met a family on the Grand Trunk Trail, newcomers to town. While I had a very special walking stick in my hand, I proceeded to tell them all the wonderful activities we have in the town for families. Their son then went into the field and grabbed a special walking stick so he could have one too. It made my day to see such a great young boy and family enjoying their new town.

2) Bravo to Daniel Greig, for going above and beyond while volunteering his time with the most recent community dinner, and to Shirley Porter for her continuing help and support at the community dinners.

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

## Boo

We have 2 Boos this week.

1) Boo to the people who park in the post office parking lot and then proceed to other downtown businesses. Parking spaces are for post office customers only and have a 15 minute maximum. Unfortunately parking spaces are being abused which causes the large Doug Coleman trucks to struggle getting in and out for mail pick ups and drop offs.

2) Boo to the person who left their doggy bag in my trash can on garbage day. While I applaud your willingness to poop and scoop rather than leave a mess on the ground, I would have preferred that you carried your dog's droppings to your own house. Having a dog to pick up after was your choice; storing your dog's poo in my garbage bin for the next week was not mine.

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

## Quote of the Week

*"He is by far the most disgraceful figure in modern presidential history ... You have to be in the throes of some sort of toxic delusion in a toxic cult to believe that Donald Trump has ever been, in any sense, emotionally, psychologically, intellectually, or ethically fit to be president of the United States."*

- Bob Costas commenting on the U.S. Election campaign, February 26, 2024

## Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Happy birthday leap year people. Hope you will soon be able to vote.

Happy Leap! What will you do with the extra day?

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

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## St. Marys Independent

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## The St. Marys Independent

THOUGHTS OF THE WEEK

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Time is free but it is priceless. You can't keep it but you can spend it.

Anger doesn't solve anything, it builds nothing and can destroy everything.

For every minute you remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of peace of mind.

## COMMUNITY

# January sees uptick in police calls for service in St. Marys

By Galen Simmons

Police responded to more calls for service in St. Marys last month than the month prior, jumping from 189 calls in December 2023 to 218 in January.

Stratford deputy police chief Gerry Foster presented the Stratford Police Service's monthly crime statistics report for January in St. Marys to the town's community policing advisory committee at its Feb. 21 meeting.

Of note, officers responded to 10 domestic calls in St. Marys – up from eight in December – and laid charges related to two of those calls. Officers also responded to one assault, two thefts from motor vehicles, two calls for theft under \$5,000, and six motor-vehicle collisions – all six of which resulted in property damage only and did not cause any injury.

“There were three frauds (last)

month. I believe all frauds were on-line or on digital-related frauds,” Foster told the committee. “That’s what we’re consistently seeing. Mischief (calls) were up a bit from (December) from four to eight.”

According to police, a couple of those mischief calls were related to mental health and a few others were related to damage done to St. Marys town hall.

Police also issued a total of 21 traffic-offense tickets in January, up from 11 in December. Of those tickets, five were for speeding (up from one in December), eight were for drivers not having a valid permit (up from one in December), and one was for careless driving (up from none in December).

Police pursued one driver for failing to stop last month, however no charge was laid.

# CUPE 1331 and HPPH reach tentative agreement

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After over three years of negotiations, Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) and Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) members have reached a tentative agreement.

The tentative agreement was reached Feb. 15 after more than eight hours of bargaining. The union is pleased to have reached a tentative deal it says will improve working conditions for members.

With the assistance of a ministry of labour conciliator, this agreement aims to offer fair working conditions for CUPE members currently employed at HPPH.

At this time, details of the negotiation are not available, however CUPE 1331 president Pam Hanington says more details will come once the board of health votes on the tentative agreement on March 8.

CUPE Local 1331, representing a wide range of HPPH employees from health promoters to custodians, were seeking a 35-hour work week and increased wages and benefits.

“The possibility of labour disruption is there should conciliation not lead to a deal these workers deserve,” a CUPE Local 1331 representative told the Stratford Times before a tentative agreement was reached.

CUPE Local 1331 was formed in July 2020 after the locals of the former Huron County and Perth District health units merged.

CUPE Local 1331 advocates for workers who deliver the public services people depend on. They aim to help members by providing the highest level of service by ensuring they are safe and healthy at work and they get fair pay and benefits for the services they provide.

## STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8, 1 PM | Friendship Centre

Join the St. Marys Friendship Centre on Friday, March 8 at 1 PM for their free 2024 International Women's Day event! Pre-registration is required.

[townofstmarys.com/activenet](http://townofstmarys.com/activenet) or 519-284-3272

### EARLYON MOOVE AND GROOVE

March 12, 10 AM | Pyramid Centre

EarlyON and the Friendship Centre are teaming up to bring you an exciting intergenerational event with a morning of music, dancing and fun with talented children's entertainer, Erick Traplin.

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### LIVING FULLY, DYING PREPARED PRESENTATION

March 6, 7 PM | Pyramid Centre

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### CAMP PRC

Registration is now open for the following camps:

- March Break Camp (March 11 - 15)
- PA Day Camps
- Summer Camp (starting July 2)
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## Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Edith (Youngson)

Kestle. Edith was born in Blanshard Township and will be celebrating her 90th birthday on Feb. 28. Edith has six children, 19 grandchildren, 25 great grandchildren and eight great-great grandchildren. Throughout her life Edith has lived on the 8th of Blanshard, Rannoch and St. Marys. In her spare time Edith enjoys knitting, singing in the choir, reading and doing puzzles. Happy Birthday Edith!

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

## Weekend Quiz

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1. When did Shark Tank first air?
2. In what Ocean would you typically find a Narwhal?
3. In 2021, Reddit users came together to make what stock skyrocket?
4. Willem Dafoe played what Spiderman villain?
5. What is the largest desert on Earth?
6. Who was the Greek God of love?
7. How many lines of symmetry does a square have?
8. What do you call someone who studies the weather?
9. What is the smallest Canadian coin?
10. When did we land on the moon?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

## COMMUNITY

# St. Marys green advisory committee proposes three Earth Week initiatives

By Galen Simmons

St. Marys residents could have three separate opportunities to help protect and preserve the local environment during Earth Week this spring.

At the town's Feb. 15 green advisory committee meeting, new town public works coordinator Thomas Redman and public works director Jed Kelly presented a report on three proposed environmental initiatives the town could lead during Earth Week 2024 from April 15-20. The three initiatives proposed by staff include planting trees at the municipal operations centre, a townwide litter cleanup, and partnering with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) on its annual Thames River cleanup.

"Given that the town is committed to addressing and reducing the effects of climate change on our community, it's essential to outline impactful initiatives that align with our town's commitment to environmental stewardship," Redman said. "We took into account four factors when drafting these initiatives. Those were environmental impact, prior commitments to environmental stewardship, ease of public engagement and existing infrastructure."

The first of the three proposed initiatives would, if approved by council, involve the planting of trees behind the St. Marys municipal operations centre at 408 James St. S. as part of an ongoing effort to naturalize a strip of land on the operations centre property that has no future development use and acts as a buffer between the operations centre and the neighbouring industrial use.

Last year, town staff and the green advisory committee proposed the planting of between 100 and 200

trees on that strip of land. For this Earth Week initiative, staff proposed working with the UTRCA and local schools to plant trees along a portion of the area to be naturalized.

When asked about the trees to be planted, Kelly said the trees would be native species in alignment with the town's forestry bylaw, however the exact species would be determined based on available supply at local nurseries.

As part of this initiative, Redman also suggested town staff take the opportunity to promote the town's existing tree donation program – a program through which residents can pay to have a tree planted in their name with the option of a nearby plaque commemorating the donation – through its Earth Week media campaign.

The second proposed Earth Week initiative, a townwide litter cleanup, would involve the town placing a large dumpster in Milt Dunnell Field where residents will be encouraged to dispose of any litter they've picked up along local trails, in parks and in other St. Marys natural areas.

While some members of the committee were concerned with the possibility that residents may use the dumpster to throw away household or other non-litter waste, both Redman and Kelly said the town would ensure there is proper communication with residents and signage to make it known that the dumpster is exclusively for litter picked up during the cleanup event. Committee members also suggested the town set up a recycling station of some sort next to the dumpster.

"There is opportunity for abuse. We are encouraging that litter picked up from trails and parks goes in the bin," Kelly said. "We have done this before in the past. We placed the bin a few days before the river cleanup ... and, knock on wood, we haven't seen that kind of abuse. It's kind of self-policed and it's been more focused on the litter cleanup."

Finally, the town is looking to collaborate with UTRCA and organizers of the annual Thames River Cleanup, which sees communities across the Thames River watershed come together to pick up litter along the Thames River and its tributaries and off-shoots. As part of the river cleanup, which is expected to be slated for April 20 or April 27 as a rain date, Redman said the town would again ensure a dumpster is available for litter disposal in Milt Dunnell Field.

The town would also host a barbeque in Milt Dunnell Field after the event concludes and would ensure there is adequate picnic-table seating at the Milt Dunnell Field pavilion and available public-washroom facilities.

During the advisory committee discussion, members also suggested the town communicate other ways for residents to protect and preserve the local environment during Earth Week, something Redman said he would bring to town corporate communications manager Brett O'Reilly as they develop media and social-media campaigns for the week.

The proposed Earth Week initiatives will be presented to town council at a future meeting for further discussion and final approval.



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**COMMUNITY**

# Stratford offering free income tax clinics for low-income households

By Amanda Modaragamage, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The City of Stratford's social services department is offering free income tax clinics for low-income individuals and couples in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County.

The program has been offered through the city for several years to help those who may require financial assistance filing their taxes. Kim McElroy, Stratford's director of social services, says the program is offered in partnership with Famme & Co. Professional Corporation and McCutchen & Pearce Professional Corporation each year.

Residents receiving social assistance such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or Ontario Works with a T5007 tax slip are eligible to sign up.

For others to participate, they must have a total gross annual income of \$16,000 or less for individuals, \$32,000 or less for couples, \$25,396

or less for seniors 65 and older, or \$34,346 or less for senior couples 65 and older. Disability income received should be included in your total gross income.

Residents are required to provide the following documents, if applicable: T4s and T5s; rent receipts or property tax receipts; medical receipts; donation receipts; disability tax credit certificates (T2201); and date of entry into Canada.

Those who are interested are asked to register in advance by March 7 by contacting the social services clerks at 519-271-3773 ext. 277.

Office hours at the City of Stratford's social services department are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. An appointment time will be provided for document delivery between March 8 and 14, and further instructions will be provided when registering.

There is no fee for the income tax clinic.

# Bake sales, books and the Boutique: Fundraising with the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

By Janis Fread

It's a proven fact that the members of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary are fabulous bakers. In 2023, both the spring and fall bake sales sold out within a couple of hours, so mark your calendars as they're hosting another Easter Bake Sale on Saturday March 30. Once again, Troyer's Spices is generously providing space for the Auxiliary's bake sale tables in its downtown spice store.

To celebrate spring, the group is hosting a Books, Bags and Bling sale on Saturday May 4. Not sure what this is? Come and find out.

These fundraisers as well as others that are planned for later in the year and sales from the hospital Boutique all support the town's hospital. The 2024 fundraising goal is \$8,500, which will cover the purchase of a SCifit Step One recumbent stepper for the St. Marys Memorial Hospital, which is the only hospital in the HPHA group that does not have this equipment.

For updates on fundraising events or to become a volunteer, follow the Auxiliary on Facebook by searching The Boutique at St. Marys Memorial Hospital, or email [smmhauxiliary@gmail.com](mailto:smmhauxiliary@gmail.com).

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## COMMUNITY

# St. Marys Public Library brings new book club to Broken Rail Brewing

*Continued from page 1*

starting at 7 p.m. and readers can choose between *Restart* by Gordan Korman, *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick, or *The Thing about Jellyfish* by Ali Benjamin.

Meaghan Everett, programming library clerk for the St. Marys Public Library, said there is already a book club at the library where most of the attendees are older women, but the library wanted to expand their range of ages and genders in book clubs.

"We wanted to bring more of a community sense to the library," Everett said. "We felt we'd reach out to the brewery to see if we could use their space to bring a different group ... to see if we could get some different faces. We approached them and they were more than happy to have us."

St. Marys Public Library has hosted three Books and Brews events

at Broken Rail so far with an average of between 10 and 12 attendees – and sometimes more – coming to each meeting. The last event, held on Valentine's Day, saw about 20 people participating.

Books and Brews attendees have four books to choose from to ensure they can get their hands on a book. The library does not have the space for several copies of the same book.

Everett said talking to a large group of people that occupies four tables at the brewery can be tricky.

"When I spoke to the group as a whole at the beginning and introduced what books we were doing, they then met different people each time they chose a different book," she said. "So, you'd have four, five, six people in each group, and each month you'd be switching."

There's a different genre or theme picked for each month. Most recently, it was young-adult (YA) fic-

tion. Everett said there's a stigma towards books geared for younger readers, despite junior fiction series like *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* appealing to readers of all ages. She said YA novels can offer a lot of learning opportunities and the books for the upcoming meeting deal with topics such as the loss of a parent or a friend, amnesia and racism.

"I said to them, 'When you read this, don't read this as an adult. Read it as a 12-13-year-old child because we were all there at one point,'" Everett said. "A topic such as those for that young an age is quite heavy, right? It's quite heavy no matter what age you are, so I'm sure they'll get something out of it."

When selecting the books for each month, Everett will read every single book to engage with the participants and ensure that she's not unknowingly recommending a bad book.

"I can then go from group to group and just get into that conversation and know what they're talking about," she said.

Everett said Broken Rail Brewing is great to work with and is hoping more people will join in the summer months when Books and Brews can be taken outside. The meetings occur while the brewery stays open and serves other customers, some of whom listen to the discussions.

"We're helping them by bringing in some of the community," Everett said. "They're meeting new people. Maybe then those people will come out on their own to Broken Rail other than just when I'm there. They're very gracious in letting us use their space."

Residents can register for Books and Brews either by visiting the library at 15 Church St. N, calling 519-284-3346, or emailing [meverett@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:meverett@town.stmarys.on.ca).

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# COMMUNITY

## Kin Canada Flag raised at the town hall to honour Kin week



On Tuesday, Feb. 20 the town raised the Kin Flag to recognize Kin Canada Week. Representing the St. Marys Kinsmen and Kinettes are from left to right Kelly Wiffen, Lindsay Munroe, Dan McCallum, Sherri Barber, Wanda Mossey, Vicki Lawson, Kinsmen president Cliff Sterritt, Counselor Brogan Aylward, Dave Bage, Ava Bage, Kinetite president Terri Iredale and Kenny Hutton. Photo by Wendy Lamond

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## ARTS & CULTURE

# The Birth of Reborn Dolls

By James Giles, edited by Alice Rixon

Some years ago, St. Marys resident Joan MacPherson decided to sell the works of homegrown artisans so, in 1972, she opened a shop to support these artists. Her small business soon expanded to a craft retail store. The following year, her venture merged with her husband's general store to become the largest privately owned craft store in Canada.

Daughter Brenda MacPherson, now owner, joined forces with MacPherson Arts & Crafts as marketing manager in 1989 and began offering customers lessons in various crafts. A mail order marketing venture then led to flourishing internet sales. MacPherson reorganized the craft store in 1998 and stumbled upon the niche market of Reborn Doll making and OOAK (one of a kind) sculpted dolls.

A Reborn Doll is a handmade art doll created from a blank kit or a manufactured doll that has been transformed by an artist to resemble a human infant with as much realism as possible. These dolls are weighted baby and toddler-size models, sculpted from silicone or vinyl and hand painted with attention to skin colour and texture, birthmarks and facial expressions. The process of creating a Reborn Doll is referred to as reborn-ing.

The concept of Reborn Dolls evolved in the United States about 35 years ago. It emerged as an answer to enthusiasts who wanted more lifelike dolls. Many of the current dolls are custom-shaped from vinyl or silicone blends and poured into molds in the likeness of real newborns. Realistic skin tones are achieved by applying flesh colored paint in multiple layers of 15 or more. Hair is added, usually fine mohair. Dolls are then weighted, eyes are added and the body is dressed appropriately. MacPherson dolls have appeared in film and television productions such as *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Heartland* and *12 Monkeys* series. Some were equipped with electronic devices that rendered them even more lifelike.

MacPherson's has become an in-



Shelley Marie Doupe, Shelly MacLean, Sabrina Smith and owner Brenda MacPherson. Contributed photo

ternational source for Reborn Dolls and carries over 900 authentic hand-sculpted kits it ships worldwide. Unfortunately, the demand for these dolls has spawned counterfeit or cheaper, factory produced models for sale on Amazon or Facebook from sculpts and materials that can be toxic.

According to a report published in December 2023, the silicone doll market is rebounding from the COVID-19 pandemic and was valued at US \$44 million in 2021. This is predicted to increase to US \$65.24 million by 2031.

Over the years, the painting techniques of doll creations have advanced. Veteran in-house artist Shelley Marie Doupe began in decorative arts and found a new opus – doll painting – an art she has been perfecting for almost 20 years. Doupe is also an inventor and has refined innovative techniques in the process of reborn-ing, including a sponge kit and air-dry paints. Along with Doupe, MacPherson's employs two other doll artists. Shelly MacLean can be found in the retail location but, after being Doupe's assistant for many years, she has become an in-house artist. Sabrina Smith from Ingersoll started out as a hairdresser, but five years ago discovered her passion for bringing

vinyl doll kits to life. Smith operates Brene Sprout's Nursery and enjoys making realistic dolls as well as fantasy or alternative creatures.

Doll enthusiasts collect them as a hobby while others do so for the appreciation of the art. Reborn Dolls also play a large therapeutic role for those

suffering from autism and Alzheimer's. Many Reborn Doll owners also believe their dolls contribute a positive influence managing and overcoming mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression, especially in women. Comfort and calmness can be achieved by cuddling and rocking a baby because it releases hormones that produce a sense of well-being. This physical act provides immediate comfort and happiness for many MacPherson Reborn Doll customers.

MacPherson's also produces tutorial DVDs on self-help and e-books on doll creation. With the expanding reborn-ing portion of the business, the company recently relocated to a facility with about 3,000 square feet in St. Marys' southeast. MacPherson and her passionate and talented team of 16 employees can continue to accommodate this flourishing enterprise with more elbow room.

Visit MacPherson's retail store at 91 Queen Street East or its website at [macphersoncrafts.com](http://macphersoncrafts.com).

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



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# COMMUNITY

## Perth County's annual paramedic recruitment now open

By St. Marys Independent staff

As of Feb. 23, Perth County's paramedic-services department is accepting applications for new members to join the Perth County Paramedic Services team.

Perth County is recruiting 15-20 new members. Those interested in learning more about the recruitment process and working for Perth County can visit [www.perthcounty.ca/paramedics](http://www.perthcounty.ca/paramedics). From there, candidates can read more about being a primary care paramedic in Perth County as well as review the requirements to apply for a position.

"We are a busy service with an incredi-

ble group of people," said Perth County Paramedic Services Chief Mike Adair in a press release. "Our service offers many great opportunities for paramedics to have a positive impact in the community."

"Each year, we look forward to welcoming new paramedics to our team," added deputy chief of program development Chris Keyser. "Perth County Paramedic Services offers a great atmosphere to work and grow in your career."

Recruitment will remain open until March 8. Interested candidates can visit [www.perthcounty.ca/employment](http://www.perthcounty.ca/employment) to apply.

## Advocating for local heritage



St. Marys resident and president of the Stratford-Perth branch of Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO) Dan Schneider (left), Chatham-Kent Coun. Alysson Storey (centre-right) and former St. Marys resident Paul King (right) recently met with Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae (centre-left) at his Queen's Pak office in Toronto as part of a delegation from ACO. During Heritage Week every year, ACO members meet with MPPs to discuss the importance of heritage conservation and call for changes to provincial laws and policies to encourage keeping, fixing and reusing older buildings. Contributed photo

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# COMMUNITY

## Coldest Night of the Year in St. Marys celebrates success



By St. Marys Independent staff

While the United Way Perth-Huron and the St. Marys community committee are still shy of their \$56,000 goal for this year's Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser, organizers are nonetheless proud of this year's event.

In total, 163 walkers helped raise this year's total of \$53,000 – 95 per cent of the fundraising goal. The top-five fundraising teams included Team Better Together, T.E.A.M. Together Everyone Achieves More, the Icicle Picklers, St. Marys DCVI Staff, Students and Families and the St. Marys Curling

Club Rockers. The top-five individual fundraisers were Marco D'Angelo, Pam Zabel, Julie Docker Johnson, Elena Dumitru and Angela Zenfire Paterson.

"Once again, St. Marys came together in support of pressing local issues," said Pam Zabel, who helped organize the St. Marys event. " ... We would like to say thank you to our volunteer organizing committee for helping make this such a memorable event and congratulations also go to our top three fundraising teams. You all helped us create such great community spirit."

Funds raised help support the St. Marys community outreach worker and the Nourish Equal Access Food Market. The community outreach worker offers facilitation, education and referrals for residents needing support with life skills, mental health, homelessness and addictions, along with providing short-term support and help connecting community members to important services, and delivering community education and outreach, including neighbourhood mediation. Nourish runs bi-weekly offering fresh, nutritious, locally sourced produce and meats to residents facing

food insecurity every day.

United Way thanks sponsors All Roads Dodge Chrysler Jeep, Harris Grieg Automotive, Hodgins Photography, Ideal Supply, Jayne Fuller Photography, McDonald's St. Marys, Meridian Credit Union, Scotiabank, St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, St. Marys Insurance and St. Marys Landscaping.

Donations will continue to be accepted at [cnoy.org](http://cnoy.org) until March 31. For pictures and video of the event, visit the St. Marys Coldest Night of the Year Facebook group.

(Photos by Hodgins Photography)



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COMMUNITY

# St. Marys Kinettes spread KINdness



The St. Marys Kinettes were out on the weekend celebrating national day of KINdness as part of National Kin Week. The club was out at various locations on Saturday handing out treats, and activity and coloring sheets teaching kids about kindness. Above left, Kinettes Sandie Vanderschot and Wanda Mossey were at the arena spreading kindness. Above right, Ken Aarts and daughter Deanna receive their random acts of KINdness. Photos by Wendy Lamond



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## SPORTS

# Lincs tied for first after pair of dramatic wins

By Spencer Seymour

If the St. Marys Lincolns' two games last weekend are an indication of what is to come in the post-season, there will be no shortage of drama in the upcoming GOJHL playoffs.

Last Friday saw the Lincolns host the LaSalle Vipers in what turned out to be one of the most exciting games of the year for St. Marys. Overall, the game featured one of the Lincolns' best performances in weeks and, as head coach Jeff Bradley noted, it began from the opening faceoff.

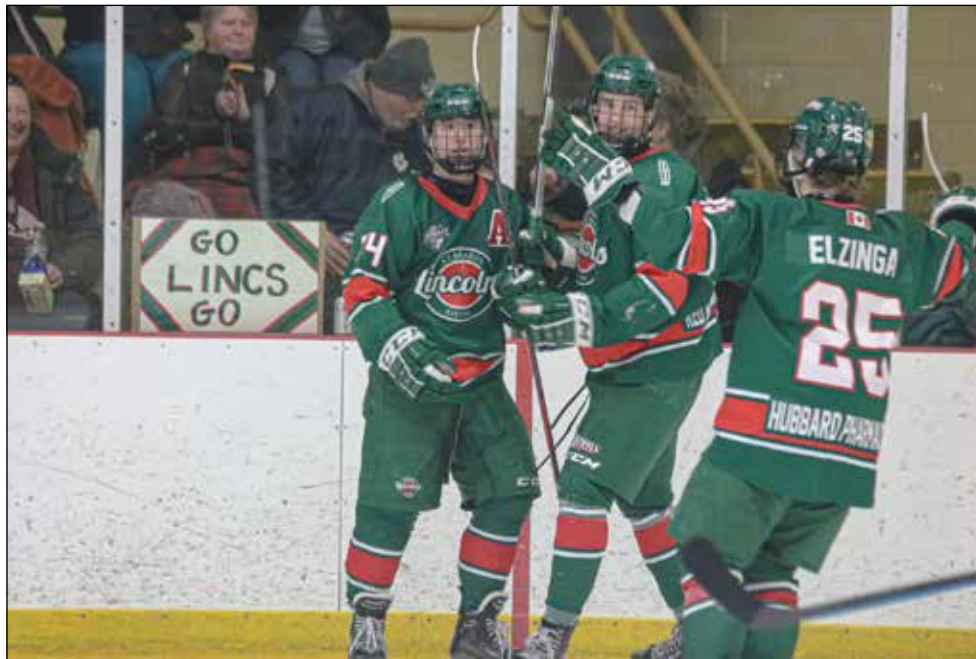
"Slow starts have been a bit of an issue for us lately," Bradley admitted. "But right from the first shift, all the way through the game we came to play and we came to win. Every guy was responsible and playing well. I don't think there was one guy on our team who didn't make a contribution in that win. It's tough to pick one guy, but that can be a nice thing when you have everyone playing so well."

Despite outshooting the Vipers 16-5 in the first period, the Lincolns were unable to find the back of the net until the middle frame when Cohen Bidgood batted home a bouncing puck to net the icebreaker – his 18th of the year – and put St. Marys ahead 1-0. Ethan Weir and Noah VandenBrink earned the helpers.

Just one minute and 16 seconds later however, Owen Findlay fired a seeing-eye shot from the point through a maze of bodies and past goaltender Brandon Abbott to tie the game at one apiece. Abbott made several 10-bell saves in the second period and ended the game with 22 stops and the victory.

Bradley felt incredibly pleased with his group's strong teamwide effort, especially considering all of the absences from the lineup.

"It was great to see because we've dealt with quite a bit of adversity injury- and illness-wise. Josh (Cornfield) is out, Marcus (Dashevsky) out, James (Sigmon) out, and right before game time, Maddox (Callens) is unable to play. We had five defencemen and guys getting into responsibilities that they haven't really been used to. Every forward was on the powerplay for over a minute and a half. Everybody



Jaden Lee, Ryan Hodkinson and Blake Elzinga celebrate a goal during a recent St. Marys Lincolns' game. Lee scored the game-winning goal of last Friday's 3-2 Lincolns' win over the LaSalle Vipers with under a second left on the clock. Hodkinson then scored the game-winner 48 hours later as the Lincs downed the Chatham Maroons by a score of 3-2. Elzinga earned high praise for turning in two very hardworking efforts and displaying great versatility, specifically on Friday when Elzinga was slated to play as a defenceman but, when Maddox Callens left warm-ups due to injury, the native of Walkerton, Ont. shifted back to being a forward on a line with Ethan Weir and Billy VanSumeren. Photo by Spencer Seymour

shared responsibility in reaching a common goal and we got it done."

Going into the game, Blake Elzinga was slated to slot in as a defenceman, but with the

last-minute loss of Maddox Callens who left warmups due to an injury, Elzinga was moved back up to a forward role, playing alongside Weir and Billy VanSumeren. Bradley praised the

first-year forward for his versatility.

"It's important for Blake and the team. Blake came in as an offensive guy from major midget and he's gone through some ups and downs and being in and out of the lineup, but he stays positive,

he doesn't complain and he wants to get better. He works hard and does what we ask, and it was nice to be able to give him a bigger role and see him do well and be physical like we asked. Blake is going to be an awesome player in this league."

As Bradley noted, there was no one who the head coach felt wasn't pull-

ing their weight in the win and he felt everyone deserved credit for the win.

"Chase (MacQueen-Spence) has been given the tough job of turning into a centreman when you've always been on the wing, on a team that stresses defence when you've always been an offensive weapon, but he's taken those responsibilities just as seriously as he takes the offensive side. That line with Chase, Noah (VandenBrink), and Cohen (Bidgood) was great."

"Obviously, the line of Luca (Spagnolo), Owen (Voortman), and Jaden (Lee) was great again," Bradley continued. "Ethan (Weir) did a really good job moving back into the middle with Callens out. He was competing really hard. The (Ryan) Hodkinson, (Ryan) Cornfield, and (Matt) Prendergast was really effective. Our five defenders were really good and Brandon (Abbott) was on top of his game in net for us."

Just 44 seconds into the third period, the aforementioned Spagnolo, Voortman and Lee line came up with a go-ahead goal with Spagnolo scoring and

assists going to Lee and Ryder Livermore.

Five minutes and 20 seconds later, LaSalle once again brought the game back to even on a powerplay when Alec Stewart tipped a shot through Abbott's five-hole.

The game remained tied at two apiece and seemed destined for overtime until the dying moments of the third when, with 25 seconds left on the clock, the Vipers were assessed a penalty when Adrian Manzo chopped the stick out of the hands of Voortman. On the ensuing powerplay, with approximately five seconds left on the clock, Spagnolo received the puck at the point and fired a shot that was tipped and eventually batted home with barely half a second left on the clock.

Lincs hold off Maroons to win third straight

The Lincolns then hit the road 48 hours later to do battle with the Chatham Maroons and, once again, the Lincolns emerged victorious by a final score of 3-2 after last-minute theatrics and controversy.

Braeden Burke potted the game's first goal at the 11:32 mark of the first period for the depleted Maroons, who had just nine forwards and five defenders dressed. Despite going into the dressing room for the first intermission down by a goal and with the Maroons controlling the play, the Lincolns' bench boss remarked that his team handled the effects of the unfriendly confines of the Chatham Memorial Arena well.

"We were very happy," said Bradley. "That is a really tough place to play and a tough team to play against and I thought we weathered the storm in the first period and then came out really strong in the second, and we controlled most of the third. There were a couple of miscues on the six-on-five, but we got through it. Everybody was solid, everybody is buying into the gameplan and everybody knows it takes a whole team effort to win, and they're executing."

Bradley recognized that Chatham had the early advantage with the Maroons dominating the puck posses-

Continued on page 15

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## SPORTS

# Lincs tied for first after pair of dramatic wins

Continued from page 14

sion metrics of the first 20 minutes, but in the eyes of the bench boss, very little high-danger chances reached the St. Marys net.

"We didn't have enough pushing. We were letting them take it to us a little bit and they definitely controlled the play but, aside from two or three scoring chances, we didn't end up with a tonne of really good opportunities. They were heavy on the body and had a lot of zone time, but we didn't panic and kept doing simple things properly and even though they controlled the play, we limited them pretty well in the first. We knew one goal wasn't going to beat us and for the rest of the game, I thought we shut them down well."

Chatham outshot St. Marys 13-9 in the opening frame, in which Abbott made 12 of the 28 saves he would make in the contest. Bradley believes Abbott is cementing his spot as the team's starting goaltender ahead of the playoffs.

"You're seeing Brandon (Abbott) becoming the guy for us. When he first got here, he was adjusting to starting more than he had been. Now he's playing two or three times a week plus practices and he's the man. He's found his groove, he's confident and he's always in good position. Plus, he's got the perfect demeanor to be a goaltender."

One of the game-changing moments came when Ryder Livermore levied a big open-ice hit near the Lincolns' blueline. Coach Bradley praised Livermore for being such a constant, steadying presence on the team's back end.

"Ryder (Livermore) turned the tide for us with his big hit. He has been the same guy all year. He's a staple in our top four, but he can play on any pair and on the right or left side. He's physical, he does every little simple thing right and he's patient when he needs to be or can have urgency when he needs it. He's the total package as a defenceman."

In the second frame, the Lincolns took the game over, outshooting Chatham 17-5 in the middle period and got two goals in two minutes and 22 seconds, first from Voortman assisted by Spagnolo and Livermore, and then from VandenBrink assisted by Bidgood and Luke Bogart.

A makeshift powerplay unit came together for a goal in the third period for the Lincolns with Ryan Hodkinson finishing off a setup from Matt Prendergast. Ryan Cornfield also had an assist. Hodkinson and Prendergast, who made up the Lincolns' newly created third powerplay unit

alongside Voortman, Elzinga and Jacob Montesi, were filling in for the injured Callens and Spagnolo. At the time of the goal, the latter was serving a 10-minute misconduct.

"The nice thing about both Matt (Prendergast) and Ryan (Hodkinson) is there is no ego there at all," Bradley said. "They just want to contribute, be a part of what the team is doing, and do what is asked of them. They went out and did exactly what we asked them to, and we got a goal out of it. With Jacob (Montesi), Owen (Voortman) and Blake (Elzinga), it's the exact same story."

With 46 seconds left in the game, Josh Cleary got the Maroons back within a goal and then, with 22 ticks left on the clock, the Maroons thought they had tied the game, but the goal was disallowed on account of a kicking motion directing the puck into the net. The Lincs held on for the 3-2 win, which, as of press time, has the Lincolns tied for first in the Western Conference with the London Nationals, both of whom sit at 69 points going into the final week of the regular season. The Strathroy Rockets are two points back of London and St. Marys.

The Lincolns have two games left in the regular season while the Nationals and Rockets both have three left to play. St. Marys hosts Strathroy this Friday before travelling to St. Thomas on Sunday.

## Western Conference Standings (as of Feb. 27)

Rank	Team	Record	PTS	GF	GA
1	London Nationals	33-11-1-2	69	202	133
2	St. Marys Lincolns	33-11-4-1	69	192	125
3	Strathroy Rockets	31-11-3-2	67	194	136
4	LaSalle Vipers	30-17-1-0	61	194	139
5	Chatham Maroons	26-20-2-1	55	191	174
6	St. Thomas Stars	18-24-3-2	41	137	186
7	Sarnia Legionnaires	15-27-4-2	36	166	244
8	Komoka Kings	8-40-0-0	16	97	227

## St. Marys Lincolns 2023-24 Stats (as of Feb. 27)

Rank	Player	GP	G	A	PTS
1	Cohen Bidgood	50	18	27	45
2	Luca Spagnolo	41	17	27	44
3	Jaden Lee	44	17	26	43
4	Ethan Weir	32	17	20	37
5	Chase MacQueen-Spence	47	19	17	36
6	Noah VandenBrink	46	10	23	33
7	Billy VanSumeren	39	8	24	32
T-8	Matt Prendergast	43	14	9	23
	Ryan Cornfield	45	11	12	23
	Owen Voortman	48	10	13	23
	Ryan Hodkinson	44	9	14	23
12	Adam Barkley	40	9	13	22
13	Josh Cornfield	28	4	15	19
14	Luke Bogart	47	4	13	17
T-15	Maddox Callens	12	10	6	16
	James Sigmon	35	1	15	16
17	Ryder Livermore	48	1	14	15
T-18	Blake Elzinga	36	7	7	14
	Jacob Montesi	43	0	14	14
20	Jaden Shiell	32	2	5	7
21	Marcus Dashevsky	13	3	3	6
22	Ethan Sullivan	0	0	0	0
#	Goalies	GP	GAA	SV-%	Wins
1	Colby Booth-Housego	22	2.01	0.925	15
29	Brandon Abbott	18	2.56	0.913	12



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## SPORTS

## Stonetown Karate Centre celebrates two new black belts

By Spencer Seymour

In the world of martial arts, achieving the esteemed rank of black belt is a symbol of dedication, perseverance and mastery.

Isabelle Lariviere and Conner Gerrits embraced the principles of discipline and respect needed to succeed from the start of their karate careers. They encountered moments of self-doubt, physical exhaustion and frustration, but through their determination and resilience, they pushed forward and grew with every obstacle.

After years of hard work and dedication, Lariviere and Gerrits demonstrated their skills and knowledge in the ultimate test, their black-belt examination. With grace and determination, they showed off their amazing skills in kata, techniques and self-defence, leaving no doubt they deserved their new rank.

Both of the new black-belt students described their feelings about their accomplishments to the Independent.

"It feels incredible," Lariviere said emphatically. "I feel so proud whenever I wear my new belt. It took years of training and hard work, and it was so worth it. I learned many lessons along the way about focus and dedication, and made friends too. My karate community is one that I love so much and they're so important to me."

"Finally having my black belt is a



Pictured from left to right are Sensei Jalyne Lorentz, Conner Gerrits, Isabelle Lariviere and Sensei Jeremy Lorentz. Gerrits and Lariviere recently attained their black belts at the Stonetown Karate Centre. Contributed photo

huge accomplishment," added Gerrits. "It is so fulfilling and feels amazing to obtain something of such value that I have been working towards for six years."

Lariviere and Gerrits also went into detail about their journeys reaching this level of their karate careers.

"On my way to becoming a black belt, I have not just learned karate skills, but I have learned life skills like kindness, discipline, respect, self-control and, overall, how to be a better person," Gerrits said. "All these things I will keep with me forever. This journey has for sure shaped who I am to-

day and who I will be for the rest of my life."

"The journey of achieving my black belt has taught me the importance of dedication," said Lariviere. "Through years of training, I had so many awesome opportunities to compete at tournaments and put what I learned to the test. It also taught me to be diligent and the importance of having a good attitude. Training three-to-four nights a week took lots of effort but is so much easier when you show up with a smile on your face."

Sensei Jeremy Lorentz told the Independent he was thrilled for the pair of

new black belts.

"Sensei Jalyne (Lorentz) and I want to congratulate Isabelle and Conner on achieving the remarkable milestone of earning their black belts. We couldn't be prouder of the dedication, perseverance and growth they both have demonstrated. This achievement is not just a reflection of their martial-arts skill, but also of their character and determination."

Lorentz added both Lariviere and Gerrits embody both the personal and tactical traits necessary to achieve the rank of black belt.

"We have watched them overcome challenges, push past their limits and embrace the core values of karate with unwavering commitment. Their journeys have been a testament to their resilience and passion for the art, and we are honoured to have been a part of it. We have no doubt Isabelle and Conner will continue to inspire others with their dedication and skills both in karate and in life.

"The road to black belt is not an easy one," Lorentz continued. "It demands countless hours of practice, unwavering commitment and the willingness to confront one's limitations. Isabelle and Conner embraced this journey wholeheartedly. Their commitment reminds us that greatness is not attained overnight but is the result of dedication, hard work and unwavering determination."

## U13 LL Boys double up Port Stanley in playoff opener

By Spencer Seymour

The U13 LL Boys St. Marys Rock started the playoffs with a bang last Saturday when they defeated the Port Stanley Jr. Sailors by a 4-2 final score.

According to head coach Jon McDonald, a solid team-wide effort coupled with the pace at which his team played caused problems for the visiting squad from Port Stanley.

"They played really well. They worked together and played hard. We were playing a really good team but everyone showed up ready to play. Our goaltending was good, our defence was sound, and they just kept pressuring the other team. I feel like they tired the other team out, especially when they had the lead in the third.

"They did a good job sending the puck deep and always making the other team work hard," added McDonald. "They kept their legs moving and were moving the puck well. A few mistakes at different times but they recovered well from their mistakes and they forced the other team



Sheamus McCotter fires home one of his three goals during last Saturday's U13 LL Boys St. Marys Rock 4-2 playoff victory over the Port Stanley Jr. Sailors. Photo by Spencer Seymour

to make mistakes as well. Then, when they did, they capitalized on those mistakes."

It took a mere 34 seconds for Sheamus McCotter, the eventual player of the game, to open the scoring for St.

Marys in the first period. Adam Nelson netted another goal less than two minutes later. McCotter completed the hat-trick in the second frame with a pair of goals, one of which went on to be the game-winner. Cole McIn-

tosh also posted a pair of assists in the contest.

McDonald told the Independent that the win not only got the post-season off on the right foot for his squad but also continued the team's strong recent play.

"It's a great way to start the playoffs, for sure. At the end of the regular season, they didn't lose in their last seven games so we have an eight-game streak of not losing. We're seeing a big difference from the start of the year, they're working together, there is a more positive atmosphere, and everyone is holding themselves accountable when they do make mistakes."

"They're playing with a lot of confidence which is great to see," McDonald continued. "Everyone is contributing in one way or another. It's definitely easier for guys when they are all on the same page, they're all together, and no one is blaming each other when things don't go right. They're keeping their head in the game, even when things don't go perfectly."



# SPORTS



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Nico Thompson skates the puck into the offensive zone during last Saturday's Finnbilt Construction U9 MD Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Elliott Maddock makes a save on an incoming shot during the U9 LL Boys 1 St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



Meredith Stokes enters the slot to line up a shot during last Saturday's U14 St. Marys Snipers game.



Addison Poetker fires off a shot during the St. Marys Kinsmen U9 C Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



Aiden DeBoer launches a shot on goal during last Wednesday's Home Hardware Building Centre U13 C Boys St. Marys Rock game.



Lily Murphy flies down the wing looking for a shot during the U12 St. Marys Snipers game last Saturday. Photos by Spencer Seymour

**SPORTS**

# DCVI Jr. Girls capture WOSSAA Bronze

By Spencer Seymour

The St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls volleyball team left WOSSAA hosted at London Christian High School last Thursday with the bronze medal.

A nervous and jittery start to the day caused the team to lack the energy necessary to win their semi-final against Woodstock Collegiate, who beat St. Marys three sets to one.

This set the Salukis up for a bronze-medal faceoff against Holy Cross Catholic School, in which St. Marys claimed a victory in four sets. Jess Chateauvert, the team's head coach, was pleased with the group's bounce-back effort in the bronze-medal game.

"The girls regrouped and adjusted their goal to win the bronze against Holy Cross," Chateauvert told the Independent. "We got out to an early lead to win the first two sets but let up a bit in the third which allowed Holy Cross to stay in it and take the

third set. Thankfully though, we got back to focusing on finishing it off and controlled the play throughout in the fourth set."

Chateauvert reflected on the season and credited the squad for their development both in each player's skill level as well as their collective ability as a unit.

"Coach Tanya Thorup and I thoroughly enjoyed coaching this group of athletes. The team showed growth both individually and as a team throughout the season and were led by the more experienced players. Individually, their serving improved and it became a big part of their success.

"They also developed their passing skills," Chateauvert continued, "which allowed setters Gracy (Schlotzhauer) and Marin (Chateauvert) to run a varied attack. As a team, they learned to trust each other which led to them playing strong defence and keeping rallies alive and made them a really cohesive team."



The St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls volleyball team captured the Bronze Medal at WOSSAA last Thursday in London. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Katie Namink, Nicki Wilson, Alanna Savile, and Naomi deVries. In the back row, from left, are Adrianna Hollestelle-Black, Libby McCurdy, Marin Chateauvert, Cortney Linton, Cammie Lobb, Gracy Schlotzhauer, and Jess Chateauvert. Contributed photo

# U11 LL Boys 'play hearts out' in playoff victory

By Spencer Seymour

The U11 LL Boys St. Marys Rock were on their game from the opening puck drop during last Saturday's U11 LL Boys St. Marys Rock 4-1 win over the St. Thomas Junior Stars in their second playoff game.

Head coach Eric Sampson praised the team's compete level following the victory.

"I think every kid on our bench played their heart out," Sampson told the Independent. "Everyone gave us 100 per cent of what they had and it was great to see. You need to have that willingness to battle to succeed in the playoffs and we absolutely showed that we have that."

Clark Monteith got the scoring started at the 9-minute mark of the first period with the lone assist going to Sheamus McCutcheon. Four minutes and 16 seconds later, Jaxson Arn put the Rock ahead 2-0 with the eventual game-winner. Monteith picked up an assist on Arn's goal. Sampson noted one of

the highlights for his group was the fact they executed excellently on the gameplan discussed beforehand.

"We talked about applying pressure in both ends of the ice before the game, and moving your feet. When they do those things, the other team is going to make mistakes. That's what happened tonight and we were able to capitalize."

A pair of unassisted goals by St. Marys in the second period five minutes and four seconds apart were scored by Nixon Near and McCutcheon. Dalton McKenzie earned the victory in net.

Sampson explained why the team's puck movement was also a key element in the team's win.

"Playing cohesively as a team is really important. We saw a lot of good passing tonight which is one of the biggest successes so far that we've seen this year in terms of progression. Their passes were tape-to-tape and that helps us create more opportunities for ourselves.

"We've practiced it quite a bit and put a lot of effort into making our puck movement better this season," Sampson continued. "There were a few set plays off the faceoff that we executed on and we got a couple of shots as a result. We didn't score on those plays tonight, but we have in the past. It's really sinking in with our guys and they're talking to each other on the ice which is a big part of it as well."

**ST. MARYS CURLING CLUB**  
Competitive League  
Final Regular Season Standings

TEAM	W	L	T	PTS
Morris Van De Walle	13	4	1	45
Brady St. Louis	11	5	2	42
Jared French	11	7	0	40
Tom Westerveld	11	7	0	40
Pat Murray	10	6	2	40
George White	10	7	1	39
Lindsay McLeod	6	11	1	31
Chris Meyer	5	11	2	30
Jim McCutcheon	5	13	0	28
Adam Winchester	3	14	1	25

**ST. MARYS CURLING CLUB**  
Doubles League  
Final Regular Season Standings

TEAM	W	L	T	PTS
Stewart & Jake Grant	12	2	2	42
Adam Hudson & Andrew Zwambag	10	3	3	39
George White & Neil Hemingway	10	4	2	38
Pat Murray & Jeff Jackson	7	5	4	34
Tom & Marjie Westerveld	7	8	1	31
Mark King & Chris Van Wieren	5	8	3	29
Merlin Leis & Alan Johnston	6	10	0	28
Luke & Rick DeBrabandere	4	9	3	27
Richard Murphy & Ryan Leaman	1	13	2	20

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## SPORTS

# Speed, powerplay lift U11 A Boys to win in playoff opener

By Spencer Seymour

A high-octane forecheck coupled with an explosive powerplay propelled the Social Thirty-One U11 A Boys St. Marys Rock to a 5-3 victory in their first playoff game Feb. 19 against the Mount Brydges Cougars.

Head coach Merlin Malinowski raved about the team's performance, specifically in regard to how quickly they were playing.

"We played a pretty good game and, in fact, the best game we've played in the last month. We were a bit flat in our last couple of regular season games. Our start was amazing. I've never seen us start that fast. It was really encouraging and good to see and we kept it up and played well the whole way through. The goalie had a good game, the defenders were pret-

ty solid and the forwards got a lot of chances, so I was quite happy with the effort."

The speed of Malinowski's squad was particularly evident when they chased pucks down in the offensive zone, forcing the opposition's defenders into tough situations.

"The quickness of our forecheck was the big factor, for sure. We got in on top of the other team's defence and forced them to turn the puck over. We were able to feed it out front and get shots and rebounds. That's the thing that stands out to me the most. Our forwards were able to get in and get on top of them before they could make their first pass."

Malinowski was also pleased with the team's compete level, especially in the dirty areas where they had to grind

for loose pucks.

"The boys also battled hard along the boards and each line did a good job getting in with speed and fighting for pucks. Ryder (Boehmer) came out with the puck a couple of times, Adam (Agar) forced some turnovers and Brett (Peterson) was getting in there and really battling for every puck."

Supported with a strong effort from Luke Saville in net and the entire crop of blueliners, the Rock got a huge night from their three ultra-skilled players – Talan Ward, who scored once, along with Keaton Ward and Attley Ehgoetz, the latter of whom bagged four of the Rock's five goals.

Three of Ehgoetz's four tallies along with Ward's goal came on the powerplay, which Malinowski noted was a product of the trio's high-end skill,

willingness to battle for rebounds and the guidance of assistant coach Jeff Richardson, who was in charge of working with the powerplay unit in practice.

"During the regular season, everyone plays on the powerplay. In the last week, we put together a powerplay unit and Jeff (Richardson) worked with them and they scored four of our five goals, so it paid off for us. They were passing the puck and had their heads up pretty well. Talan

(Ward) is an excellent shooter, and Keaton (Ward) and Attley (Ehgoetz) were setting him up nicely and going to the net for rebounds, and that ended up helping Attley get three of the powerplay goals."

# Shooting growth, camaraderie on display in U19 Snipers win

By Spencer Seymour

In one of the final ringette games of the season last Saturday, the U19 A St. Marys Snipers took the ice focused on enjoying playing with one another before their season comes to an end.

In that regard, the game was a smashing success and helped lift the Snipers to a 7-3 win over the visiting London Lynx. Head coach Samantha Henderson felt there was plenty of positivity amongst the players throughout the entire game.

"They played very well for the most part," Henderson told the Independent. "It's our second-last game so, coming in, it was mainly about having fun together for our last two games

of the season and it seemed like that was happening. On the bench, spirits were super high. Everyone was cheering each other on. We were all talking together about our next move and what we need to work together on."

This year has been one dedicated to adapting and improving with many of the players making the jump from the U16 tier to U19. Henderson explained how the team's biggest learning curve was understanding what it takes to score, and she detailed the strides her team has made.

"Their shooting has really improved. Going from U16 to U19, the biggest jump for us was realizing that you have to pick top corners in order to score goals. At the start of the year,

it was harder for us to score because we were navigating that change and goalies are much stronger at this age group. We've gotten a lot better at moving the ring around in front of the net so that we can get quality shots and make good passes to the low post."

The Snipers jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first period, beginning with a pair of goals by Abby Martin in the first five minutes of the game. Later in the first, Leah Van Straaten and Chloe Bouchard scored goals just 67 seconds apart.

In the second, Payton Blight extended the Snipers' lead to 5-0 just under three minutes into the period. London got one back less than a minute later, but Martin completed the hat

trick to restore the five-goal deficit. However, the Lynx once again responded under a minute later to cut the St. Marys lead back down to four. Each team scored once more before the final buzzer with the Snipers getting a goal by Raella Brodhagen enroute to the 7-3 final.

According to Henderson, far more important than the win-loss record was the incredibly strong bond the team has forged.

"It really shows the community that they have created amongst themselves. You can see the friendships and the trust that they have with one another. From last year to this year, they have really meshed well together and, both on and off the ice, they are like one big family."



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# SPORTS

## St. Marys Bowlers take third at Zone Hi-low doubles tournament



On Sunday, Feb. 25, St. Marys' YBC bowlers took to the lanes in St. Marys, Stratford, and Brantford to compete in the Zone Hi-low Doubles Tournament. Pictured on the left are St. Marys junior bowlers Landon Ball and Erin Slaney with coach Helen Brockman. Ball and Slaney received the Bronze medal with 63 points over average. They missed out on second place by just two points. Pictured in the middle are bantam bowlers Leia Slaney and Nate Sims who claimed fifth place with 126 points over average. On the right are senior bowlers Jaxon Cubberley and Tyler Sims who finished in sixth place. A special thanks to Jaxon Steffler and Jack Brockman for being the pacer team. Contributed photos

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# COMMUNITY

## St. Marys Ministerial update

By Rev. Gwen Ament, convenor of St. Marys Ministerial

The St. Marys Ministerial gathered in January with two focuses in mind.

First, we met with the Town of St. Marys community outreach worker Brittany Petrie along with Stratford police Const. Darren Fischer. Like so many in our town we have been concerned about reports of people struggling with homelessness. It was good to learn there are options available for people should they choose to accept help.

Resources are coordinated and shared across Perth County, which is important because this ensures any help provided maintains the health and safety of all. Mental health, financial stress and the challenges facing our world today can leave any of us feeling overwhelmed. We give

thanks that resources are available such as the Nourish Market, the Salvation Army Foodbank, the Library Pantry, the Clothing Cupboard, a community outreach worker, the Pyramid Recreation Centre shower program and access to crisis housing.

The ministerial's other focus was to finalize plans for this year's Lunch Hour Lenten Services. This year's theme will be The Prayers of Jesus. It began Wednesday Feb. 28 and runs until March 28 with 20-minute services beginning at 12:10 p.m. followed by a light lunch. These take place at the United Church with different local ministers each taking a week. We look forward to seeing you there as all are welcome and lunch is by donation.

## SECRET MARATHON 3K RUN



Entry is FREE and everyone is welcome, from walkers, to runners, to those with mobility aids. Participants can also run with strollers or leashed dogs. Entrants are asked to email [admin@gcboyle.ca](mailto:admin@gcboyle.ca) to confirm registration. Post-run snacks and drinks will be provided by GC Boyle Law Firm. Runners are welcome to wait inside the Firm until the run begins.

**March 8, 2024**  
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# HISTORY

## HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Wartime houses a solution to post-war housing crisis

By Mary Smith

In spite of all the new homes being built in St. Marys, especially in the north ward, the challenge of finding affordable and attainable housing exists in this community as it does in all parts of Canada. St. Marys town council and administration are aware of this challenge, recognizing in the town's strategic planning that a supply of adequate housing is vitally important to attract and retain residents. In 2023, council received a report, *Opening Doors*, that analyzed the housing situation in St. Marys in relation to residents' income and identified areas that are lacking. The greatest shortfall is in rental units and the town has set targets to increase these units by 2027. Of course, if it is possible to tap into grant programs from senior levels of government, the municipality's ability to reach these targets would be boosted to a large degree.

Though many factors, such as inflation, have contributed to the current crisis, this is not the first time Canada has had a housing shortage. St. Marys, along with the rest of the country, experienced this eight decades ago in the final years of World War II and immediately afterwards. At that time, government intervention was direct and immediate. The housing crisis led to the creation in 1941 of a crown corporation, Wartime Housing Ltd. (WHL). WHL addressed the need for housing for the women and men hired to work in large new factories to produce war supplies, munitions, aircraft parts and even ships. While there were dormitories housing single workers, as the war progressed, the need for homes to accommodate workers' families became apparent. Homes, known as Victory Houses, were built in these new, industrial areas.

In Ajax, Ont., for example, where Defence Industries Ltd. (DIL) was located – the largest munitions plant in the British Commonwealth – 600 homes were built on expropriated farmland in Pickering Township. Workers were able to rent them for \$32 a month. These first houses were built very quickly on blocks or slabs (no basements) and were equipped with coal or wood stoves for cooking and heating. The government had intended to dismantle them when the war was over. Instead, because the housing shortage remained, the houses were upgraded with foundations and basements and offered for sale to DIL employees and to veterans for \$3,500 to \$4,000. In fact, the WHL program was extended across



Wartime houses under construction in the east ward, mid-1940s. Photo courtesy of St. Marys Museum historic image collection.

the country to address the housing needs of returning veterans.

The houses built immediately after the end of World War II were a bit more substantial than the houses built during the war. They were intended from the first to be permanent. Their occupants were part of the communities where these houses were built. However, construction of these houses followed the same methods – many of the components were partially prefabricated and shipped to the sites to be assembled. When finished, their exteriors were similar in appearance to the original Victory Homes. They were a sort of condensed Cape Cod style with clapboard siding, a steeply pitched roof and often a small front porch. They came in two basic versions: a bungalow with a living-room, kitchen/dinette, bathroom and two bedrooms on one floor, or a storey-and-a-half house with a living room, dining room, kitchen and one bedroom downstairs, and two more bedrooms upstairs. They were placed on lots that were relatively deep but narrow – barely enough space for a driveway between the houses. Most had no basements but were built on concrete pads.

St. Marys town council acted quickly to become part of this housing program. Led by the Mayor Vic Tovell, they instructed the clerk, John Durr, to contact the WHL branch in London, and on March 14, 1946, a special meeting of council was held with the WHL representative to discuss housing for veterans in St. Marys. As a result, a motion was made "that the mayor and clerk apply to War-

time Housing Ltd. for the erection of 50 veterans' houses in St. Marys." The motion carried. The town did not get quite the number requested but, at the council meeting on April 23, 1946, correspondence was presented from Ottawa approving the construction of 35 wartime houses in St. Marys.

But where would these houses be built? Town council and administration had planned ahead and knew exactly where they would go. At the same April meeting, another motion was presented.

"That the mayor and clerk be empowered to purchase the Gould property consisting of 38 lots numbered Park Lots 3 and 4, Jones South and Elgin North and Lots 73-78 Jones South, and 73-78 and 1 and 2 Elgin North for \$2,500 to provide the necessary land for the erection of 35 Wartime Houses by the Dominion Government."

The motion carried.

This parcel of land already had an interesting part in the history of St. Marys. It was first developed by Samuel H. Mitchell, who had been born in 1830 in England but came to Canada with his family as a child. By 1861, Samuel, his wife, Jane, and his children had moved to St. Marys where he started a market garden in the east ward. He began with one acre and expanded over the years. By the late 1880s, assessment records show that Mitchell owned seven acres of orchard and garden on the south side of Jones Street East. In the 1891 census, he gave his occupation as gardener and florist. Before he died in 1910 in his 80th year, S. H.

Mitchell turned the market garden over to his daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Alfred Edward Gould. By the 1920s, the Goulds had built large greenhouses between Jones and Queen Street, thus expanding the market gardening operations.

This family-run business provided seasonal employment to a number of workers well into the 1940s, supplying fresh flowers and produce to customers in the St. Marys area. When A. T. Gould died in 1945, there was no one in his family to carry on and the town was able to purchase the property. The subsequent registered transaction was a deed that transferred these lots from the Corporation of the Town of St. Marys to His Majesty, King George VI, "in the right of Canada."

Immediately, the acreage that had been a market garden for decades became a construction site. Any buildings on the property were removed and the area was resurveyed. New lots were laid out. On Jones and Elgin streets between Waterloo and Cain, 35 small homes began to take shape. This week's photograph shows them under construction, some closer to completion than others. Wartime Housing Ltd. was re-formed as the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in 1946. CMHC offered the houses, first to veterans, and then, if still available, to anyone else in need of a starter home. They were taken up quickly. Assessment records show all 35 houses occupied in 1948 with the occupants either tenants or in the process of converting tenancy to ownership.

Today, most of these houses are still standing along Jones and Elgin Streets but through the years, their owners have altered them beyond recognition with new doors and windows, verandas, basements, additions and attractive landscaping. It takes an effort to connect these pleasant homes with the bare-bones structures of that post-war period 75 years ago.

It is interesting to note that Canada's current Minister of Housing, Sean Fraser, believes some aspects of the government intervention that created the crown corporation Wartime Housing Ltd. in the 1940s could work in communities today to get affordable housing built more quickly. It would also require a resurgence of the same shared responsibility on all levels of government and in the private sector that carried the building projects forward in that earlier time of housing crisis.

# Thorndale News

A section within the  
St. Marys Independent

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## TRS Components part of the community for 50 years

By Nancy Abra

Many businesses can claim their origins in Thorndale, but few have survived the test of time. The local success stories have grown economically over the decades and as an essential contributor to the community. They hold a significant and respected position in the fabric of the community of Thorndale, contributing to various fundraisers, other local initiatives and employment opportunities for the area.

TRS Components is one of these businesses.

Located at the southwest corner of Thorndale Road and Nissouri Road, TRS Components has operated under various names since Pete Davis founded Thorndale Roof Truss in 1974. His son, Ed Davis, took over the reins of the company ten years later. During the following years, Ed Davis expanded the business from roof-truss manufacturing to also include floor and wall panels for the building-construction sector. In 1999, Universal Forest Products purchased Thorndale Roof Truss with Davis staying on as the company's manager.

In April 2004, a devastating fire destroyed the facility. They rebuilt and, with a re-



A valued part of the Thorndale community for 50 years, TRS Components in turn values its roughly 100-150 employees, many of whom also live in Thorndale. Contributed photo

silient unified strength, grew as they faced challenges that preceded. When Universal Forest Products decided to close this company in 2008, Davis couldn't let it happen and purchased the company back in 2009. With the strong values this company was built on, Davis also believed in the prospects for the company and its employees in this community. In 2022, TRS was sold to Ar-

gyle Capital Partners of Toronto. Davis continued as owner until he retired in September 2023.

"Ed set a high benchmark of values for us," said general manager of operations Joyce Baker. "We do our best to follow these standards to continue as a team to ensure success in the industry for our southern Ontario customers and in our associate company in Michigan."

Currently, TRS Components employs approximately 100 people including office, sales and design staff. Approximately 60 per cent of this number work in production, shipping, trucking, or company maintenance. Depending on the industry demands, the number of employees expands to roughly 150. Many of the employees are from the local area.

"We make a point to recognize our employees' work anniversaries with a small token of appreciation," Baker said. "We also invest in our employees and like to promote within the TRS company. There are a few from the Thorndale area who started when they were teenagers and have grown with the business through various positions. We work as a team and everyone realizes that sometimes tough decisions must be made when it is warranted by the changes in the industry."

The community of Thorndale is very important to TRS Components.

"Being part of this community for 50 years, we are in awe of the compassion of the various community groups and 'I Love Thorndale'. We are honoured to support our community as we continue to grow together," Baker said.

## Tom Heeman receives award from Ontario Berry Growers

By Nancy Abra

Thorndale's Tom Heeman was recently honoured with the Award of Merit for his dedication to the Berry Growers of Ontario, having served the maximum term as a board member, at the association's annual general meeting.

The Berry Growers of Ontario was founded to represent and support the berry growers in this province by funding promotion of the industry, research activities and educational events for the benefit of its 200 members.

"I am proud to receive the Ontario Berry Growers highest honour, the Award of Merit," Heeman said. "I

first joined the board of the Ontario Berry Growers Association in 2014 and served five years as president of the Ontario Berry Growers, starting in 2017. Today was bittersweet as I attended my last meeting as a director. It's been quite a ride following in the footsteps of my parents, Rudy and Florence, and my brother, Will. I'm proud to have volunteered my time for the past 10 years to help Berry Growers of Ontario thrive in Ontario."

Besides supporting the berry growers, the organization provides consumers with reliable information about the Ontario berry market. Its mission is to ensure a healthy, satisfying, local berry eating experience for consumers, while returning value to their growers.



Thorndale's Tom Heeman recently received the Award of Merit after serving first as a director and then as president of the Berry Growers of Ontario board of directors. Heeman was presented with the award at the association's recent annual general meeting. Contributed photo

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# COLUMN

## FROM THE GARDEN: Yarrow is the International Herb Association's 2024 Herb of the Year



**By Nancy Abra**

Herbs offer a rewarding combination of beauty and usefulness. They can be a garden of their own or tucked into existing flower borders, vegetable beds or grown in decorative pots. Most herbs are also very adaptable and grow happily on sunny patios, balconies or even indoors. With a small amount of effort, they can reward the gardener with their aromatic foliage, scented decorative flowers, savoury leaves and spicy seeds.

Since 1995, the International Herb Association selects an herb to honour as the Herb of the Year. A committee evaluates potential herb candidates based on their qualities in at least two out of the three major categories – medicinal for health benefits, culinary for uses in flavouring and cooking, and in the decorative or ornamental category for

their appearance and/or fragrance. Each year, the association chooses a specific herb to highlight and educate the public about its various uses.

This year Yarrow takes the spotlight.

Yarrow is a hardy perennial herb that belongs to the Asteraceae family. Its botanical name, achillea millefolium, pays homage to the legendary Greek hero, Achilles, as it is believed he used yarrow to treat wounds during the Trojan War. In ancient folklore, yarrow was considered a powerful herb for divination and protection. It was believed to ward off evil spirits and enhance psychic abilities.

Yarrow is native to Europe and was introduced to America during colonial times. Over the centuries, it has naturalized across areas in Europe and in various regions in North America. It is a versatile herb that thrives in various conditions. It is cold-hardy and dies down in winter to resurface in the spring with bright, neon-green leaves. Being very adaptable, it can be found along roadside and hiking trails as well as in home gardens. It will thrive in poor soil during dry periods and still produce blooms.



Yarrow has been selected by the International Herb Association as its 2024 Herb of the Year. Contributed photo

It is easy to grow in sunny locations but will tolerate light shade.

There are many varieties and hybrids of yarrow with a variety of traits that make it popular in ornamental-flower gardens. Flowers are typically white, but also come in pink, red, cream and yellow. These dome-shaped flower heads consist of clusters of tiny daisy-like flowers which bloom from May to October depending on the regions and if deadheaded for a second blooming. It is also charac-

terized by its fern-like, green leaves. Yarrow grows upright from 60 cm to approximately 90 cm depending on the variety and can spread about a metre underground through its rhizomes. It can be aggressive and is best divided every two or three years to control its growth.

As for its versatility, yarrow can be used to control erosion on hillsides. It also attracts butterflies and other beneficial insects, making it ideal for pollinators gardens. As cut flowers, they have an

excellent vase life and, when dried, they fade a bit but work well for everlasting bouquets. Their spicy scented, green foliage along with their dried-flower head add colour and fragrance to potpourri.

Yarrow has many useful assets as it makes a resilient garden companion or a cherished addition to any herb garden. No wonder the International Herb Association has chosen yarrow as Herb of the Year for 2024 to celebrate its diverse uses and benefits.



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ST. MARYS, ONTARIO

## Ask the Arborist

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



*Dear Arborist,*

I have an Austrian Pine that has lost greenery and turned orange. Its been getting worse for around 4 years. Any ideas as to why?

*Sincerely,*

*Fun Times*

*Dear Fun Times*

Austrian Pines often get a fungal disease called Diplodia. The spores can live in dead needle branches and cones of the tree all year round. Treatment is

normally spraying with a fungicide such as copper sulfate. It is also helpful to clean up needles and cones on the ground. Fertilizing is also recommended.

*Sincerely*

*The Arborist*

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



COLUMN

# HOSTING UKRAINE: The pressure is on, but at least the garage is clean

By VJ Knutson

February 24th marked two years since the Russians invaded Ukraine, and the onslaught continues. Rallies were held in London, Kitchener, and Toronto, as well as across Canada, to draw attention to the ongoing need for support if Ukraine and democracy are to win out against Putin's autocracy. Families from our area joined the protests in London and Toronto. It's been an emotional week.

As anticipated, many more asylum seekers are arriving in Canada. A notice went out last week asking for volunteers to walk through the Toronto airport looking for mothers and children sleeping there. A colleague from Toronto held a zoom meeting with a volunteer from CUIAS, a settlement service who greets newcomers at the airport. They reported that although the government supplies them with 200 hotel rooms to grant newcomers a free stay (2 weeks) while they get settled, all rooms are booked up. She gave the volunteer my contact number and I have been attempting to connect with organizations helping Ukrainians further North. We're running out of ideas.

The deadline looms for Ukrainians here to either apply to extend their visas or apply for Permanent Resi-



St. Marys Ukrainians protest the second anniversary of war with Russia. Photo by Nataly Shyshkivska

dency. I have been busy writing letters to support the latter.

Miraculously, after two years of not being able to find anything in our garage, a few Ukrainian friends came over last weekend and helped us clear out the excess. Ric is pleased. If you have been following this column, you'll know that the amount of donations that have ended up in our garage, have almost driven Ric over the

edge a few times. Of course, I didn't tell him about the offer of primary books we received the next day – thanks Wendy. They are tucked away in the trunk, for now. Just kidding, Ric, they have an intended home.

In the planning stage are ESL support in Stratford on Saturdays, a weekly family swim for all newcomers at the Pyramid Centre, and an Easter themed get together. All coming up in

March.

Our newest Canadian, Charlotte, is already outgrowing her clothes, so we took mom and baby to meet with my son and daughter-in-law in London, whose own daughter is a year and a bit ahead. They generously came up with a tub of things for Charlotte.

I put out a message earlier in the week, asking for a diaper fairy, and was thrilled by the many responses. Jacqui Hibbert was first in line, and has agreed to supply diapers for the baby. As there are several other babies in town, I would like to suggest that any other diaper fairy wannabees could drop supplies at the Library, as Moms and babies meet on Tuesday afternoons. The babies range in age from 2 months to 19 months. Every little bit counts. We are still looking for a diaper genie, which I understand is an actual thing, not a magical being.

I continue to hear daily about the kindness of Canadians. From the co-worker who offers a lift to and from work, to the neighbour who extends a hand when needed, Ukrainians are warmed by our St Marys welcome. On behalf of all, I thank you.

Until next time.

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

## LOCAL MATTERS.



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



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## WOODSTOCK DUTCH THEATRE

The Woodstock Dutch Theatre group is back in full swing preparing for a new play! Every year around this time people start asking if there will be another production? Absolutely! Rehearsals are underway and this year is the 39th season. New to 2024 is the addition of an afternoon AND an evening show in Goderich and we are adding a new venue in St. Thomas!

This year the Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group will be presenting: **"High Tea in Bakkerij van Schie"** (High Tea in the Van Schie Bakery).

The playwrights are Cocky van Dijk and Michiel Geurtse.

Mrs. Van Schie has convinced her husband to go along with her brilliant idea that will breathe new life into the bakery. High Tea parties and an opportunity to enjoy a delicious lunch. A hilarious comedy about the ups and downs of a bakery unlike you have ever seen before!

A wonderfully entertaining play that you won't want to miss!

Please join us on the following dates at these venues:

**Woodstock, Market Theatre**  
Saturday March 16th - 2pm and 8pm

**Goderich, The Livery Theatre**  
Saturday March 23rd - 2pm and 8pm

**St. Thomas, Princess Ave. Playhouse**  
Saturday April 6th - 8pm

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

Solutions on page 31

# Riddles

If athletes get athletes foot then what do astronauts get?

**Missle-toe**

Why was the clock in the cafeteria always slow?

**Because every lunch it went back four seconds**

What is the hardest thing to hold that even the strongest person in the world has difficulty with?

**Your breath**

What did the duck say to the waiter?

**"Put it on my bill"**

Where does a 600 pound gorilla sit?

**Anywhere he wants**

What did the doctor say to the rocket ship?

**"Time to get your booster shot"**

What did the Nerds Candy want to be when it grew up?

**A Smartie**

What did the bread say to the man?

**Nothing, bread can't talk**

What did the bee say to the naughty bee?

**"Bee-hive yourself"**

If Mr & Mrs Bigger had a baby, who would be the biggest?

**The baby would be a little Bigger**

## - Word Search -

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### MAPLE SYRUP SEASON

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

### Word List

March

Warm days

Frosty nights

Sap

Harvest

Maple tree

Sweet

Sugar shack

Tree tap

Boiling

Production

Pancakes

Taffy

Family fun

Sutherhill



The **Riddle Kid** OF THE WEEK

Why did the princess go to the dentist?



To get her teeth crowned!

**Henry Theal (2)**

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

## TONS OF FUN FOR KIDS EVERY WEEK!

### PET OF THE WEEK

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



Our pet of the week is Dexter. 'Dexy' is almost 11 years old. He's a shy, indoor boy but loves his family. He loves cardboard boxes and paper bags for cat naps. His favourite toys are his Santa hat and fetching straws when we throw them. His proud owners are the Emm family.



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

### PET OF THE WEEK

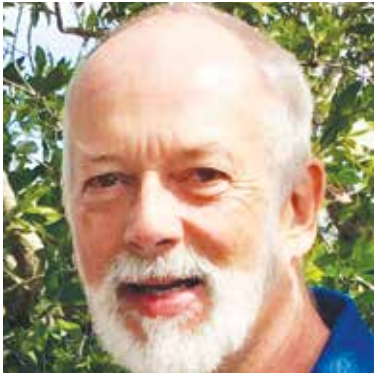
#### February is Dental Month

Be aware of the toys that you allow your fur baby to play with. Some toys can pose a risk to their dental health and damage teeth. Moderation and supervision are key for safe, playful fun

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## COLUMN

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: When real history elbows its way into our travels



By Paul Knowles

"I never realized that!"

"Wow! I'm going to have to learn some more about this!"

"Who knew?"

If, during any of my travels, I find myself thinking those things, I know I am having a good experience. Sure, travel is about leisure, entertainment and adventure, but travel should also be about learning and expanding our understanding and our imaginations.

Walking into an exhibit at Qaumajuq – a museum that is part of the Winnipeg Art Gallery – was one of those lightbulb moments for me. It started a process of learning that has not stopped.

Consider the name, Louis Riel. If, like me, you were raised to learn Canadian history in its traditional (colonial) form, Louis Riel was presented as a bad guy, a rebel and traitor to our country who was executed for his misdeeds.

But then I walked into this exhibit at Qaumajuq and was stopped in my tracks by a wonderful piece of artistry – a chair featuring beautiful

beadwork and a creative design by contemporary Métis artist Jennine Krauchi.

This chair represented the chair Louis Riel was never allowed to occupy – his seat in Canada's Parliament. He was elected to Parliament a number of times but was prevented from claiming his place on threat of death.

That was an ah-ha moment. I realized I needed to rethink this whole Riel narrative I had been taught. This being a travel feature, I feel I must point out I would never have experienced this moment had I not been travelling.

I was travelling again, months later, spending a few days in Ottawa. I toured the elaborate, temporary quarters of the Canadian Senate. The guided tour included a visit to the First Nations Standing Committee Room. To my surprise, the Indigenous art on the walls of the room included a modern portrait of Louis Riel. It was a powerful statement that I believe reflects an acknowledgement by the Canadian government of today that repudiates the tragic, racist actions of their predecessors. Again, a lightbulb moment in the midst of a touristy tour.

I thought of all of this today because I read of an amazing event back in Winnipeg. On Feb. 19, Manitoba Métis Federation president David Chartrand and Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew unveiled a portrait of Louis Riel. The picture isn't new. It has hung in the Manitoba Legislature building for years. What's new is a

plaque on the portrait, which identifies Riel with the honorary title of "First Premier of Manitoba."

This follows the passing of a bill in the provincial Manitoba parliament last year. The bill reads in part, "In 1869, the Métis people of the territory known as the Red River Settlement established a provincial government ... led by Louis Riel, [which] adopted a List of Rights based on a multicultural, bilingual and inclusive vision of a province that respected the rights of Indigenous peoples and minority rights; and ... the List of Rights was accepted by the Government of Canada as the basis for ... the establishment of Manitoba as a province."

The bill further notes that Riel himself submitted Manitoba as the name of the province, and that Riel "has been recognized as a founder of Manitoba and is regarded as Manitoba's father of confederation."

Wow. I never realized that.

It's probably no coincidence that the Premier of Manitoba who helped to unveil the portrait is Wab Kinew, from the Onigaming First Nation. He's the first Indigenous Premier of Manitoba. But these bits and pieces of historical information seep into my thinking. I have to wonder why it took that for justice to be done. Are we non-racialized people blind to the inequities of history? Probably. In fact, largely yes. Can travel be one solution to that lack of perspective? I like to think so.



Louis Riel's chair that should have been his right in Canada's Parliament. A contemporary work by Métis artist Jennine Krauchi.

It's obvious that adding a plaque to a portrait is not a sufficient answer to the inequities and injustices that are baked right into the fabric of Canada. Métis leader David Chartrand was extremely clear about this at the unveiling.

"This is an historic and momentous day as we reflect on the true history of Louis Riel and the Métis of the Red River. Our history has been one of hardship, marginalization, racism and discrimination – a continued struggle for recognition of our identity as the Red River Métis people. We have been 153 years in waiting and advocating to correct this part of our history, and today we see the true title of Louis Riel further acknowledged.

The stain on Canada remains

for portraying him as traitor and a madman instead of telling his true history as the first premier and the founder of Manitoba. We hope what we do here today will be a catalyst for real change so that all know the truth and honour Premier Riel's legacy, and the legacy of our people."

So no, a plaque on a picture is not enough. But it is something. Something important. Personally, I have learned something important about the legacy of Louis Riel.

Thank you, Winnipeg and Ottawa.

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).



A powerful statement photographed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery -Qaumajuq. The work is by KC Adams.



The painting of Riel that hangs, among other Indigenous art, in a Canadian Senate committee room. All photos by Paul Knowles

**OBITUARY**

*Tufts*



Mary Julia Tufts, born June 21, 1927, passed away on Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024, in Stratford General Hospital. In December 2023, she had moved from the Fairhill Residence in St. Marys to West Perth Village in Mitchell.

The beloved wife of Ross

Tufts, Mary grew up on a farm near Motherwell. She graduated from the Stratford Normal School (teachers college) in 1945 and taught in Perth County elementary schools until her retirement in 1984. S

he and Ross farmed near Kirkton until December 2006, when they moved to St. Marys. They were members of Kirkton United Church and she was also a member of the Kirkton Horticultural Society. Mary will be missed by sister-in-law Norma McIntyre, of London, brother-in-law Pat Sebben of Carlingford, and many nieces, nephews and friends.

In addition to her husband (in 2010), Mary was predeceased by her parents, Russella and James Brown; sisters Ruth Parsons of Oakville, Jean Sebben of Carlingford and Christine Hearn of Lucan; brothers Roger, Jack and Bill Brown; brothers-in-law Ivan Hearn, John Parsons, Edwin Tufts, Leroy Tufts, Lorraine (Chink) Funnell, Gil McIntyre and Bill Moore; and sisters-in-law Mary Brown, Irene Brown, Marion Funnell and Ruth Tufts. A Memorial Service was conducted at the St. Marys United Church on Feb. 24, 2024. Spring burial with a private interment service will take place in Kirkton Union Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to a charity of choice. Online condolences at [www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca](http://www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca).

**OBITUARY**

*Hengeveld*



John Hengeveld, of St. Marys and formerly of Brussels and Stratford, died peacefully at home surrounded by his family on February 19, 2024. John is survived by his wife of 41 years, Maureen; children Jeremy, Stacey (Scott) and Katelyn and his favourite people in the world, grandsons El-

liott and Henry. He is also survived by siblings Gerry (Brenda), Harry (Sally), Ina, Wilfred (Carmen), Ruby, sister-in-law Judy (Shawn), mother-in-law Sheila Cochrane and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents William and Janna (Sien) Hengeveld, father-in-law, Robert Cochrane and sisters Irene and Wendy.

John lived his life exactly as he envisioned. His love of animals and sense of humour were apparent throughout his life. His dream of a hobby farm came to life as a successful business raising alpacas. After 30 years at UPS, he warned us that he was coming back as a porch pirate!

A private family funeral service will be held. A public celebration of life will take place at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, 317 James Street South, St Marys in the 2/3 room on Saturday, March 2, 2024 from 1:30-4:30. Entrance is located off Lindsay Atkinson Drive either directly to the Community room, or through Entrance B. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the K9 Safe Space or Out of the Ashes (Large Animal Rescue) through the W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford. 519-271-7411 [www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com](http://www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com)

**THANK YOU**

*Firby*

Cheryl and I cannot thank our dear family, friends, and neighbors enough for all the help and support we have received. We are eternally grateful to the St. Marys Hospital Emergency Department for their care and attention. We would have truly been lost without them.

We can never repay Everyone for all the kindness.

Love,  
Cheryl and Ken Firby

**THANK YOU**

*Spearin*

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all those who sent cards, flowers, donations, food and on-line condolences in memory of George.

Thank you to the physicians and staff at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital for the great care during his stay.

A special thank you to Dr. Trevail for his exceptional care of George over the years.

Thank you also to Andrew Hodges and team for their professionalism and assistance during this difficult time.

We are truly grateful to all.  
Ann, Derek, Kim and Rob

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# COMMUNITY

## Straight from the Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

There has been a slight location change for the 'Living Fully, Dying Prepared' program running at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6. Instead of being in the 2/3 Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC), the event will now be held in the Friendship Centre. Join us there for an informative presentation by Jayne Dill, end-of-life doula and grief educator. She will speak on topics including the role of a death doula, how we die, advance directives, informed consent, palliative and hospice care, pain management at the end of life, MAiD and body dis-

position. To sign up for this free event, please visit [tinyurl.com/SMPL-Bookings](http://tinyurl.com/SMPL-Bookings).

### This Week's Recommendation

Happy Leap Day! Celebrate 2024's extra day by putting a spring into your step with *So You Want to Be a Frog* by Jane Porter with illustrations by Neil Clark. This charming title is a great introduction to the incredible world of amphibians. Featuring adorable illustrations and unbelievable facts, *So You Want to Be a Frog* is as entertaining as it is educational as readers learn what it takes to be a successful frog. Look for the call number, J 597.89 Por, in our children's non-fiction section and bring this toad-ally awesome book home today.

### Up This Week

Friday, Mar. 1: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, Mar. 2: Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, Mar. 4: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, Mar. 5: Cooking Club\* (10:30 a.m.), Writing Club\* - All Ages (6-7 p.m.)

Wednesday, Mar. 6: EarlyON - Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong Intro (1-2 p.m., 6-6:30 p.m.), Mahjong! (2-4 p.m., 6:30-8 p.m.), Living Fully, Dying Prepared\*\* (7 p.m.)

Thursday, Mar. 7: Scrabble (6-8 p.m.)

\*Registration Required

\*\*Friendship Centre (317 James St. S, St. Marys)

## LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

### Beware the Muffin Club

25 years ago (1999)

Leanne Tunks will have her entire family watching her when she plays for the Ontario Under-17 girls hockey team at the 1999 Canada Winter Games in Corner Brook, Nfld. Parents Bev and Marg, sister Jennifer and brother Paul are making the trip out east to watch Leanne and her teammates attempt to win gold.

Perth County Crime Stoppers would like to warn residents of a pyramid scheme that is operating in the area. It is called "The Muffin Club" or "Woman Helping Woman". No matter what these people tell you, it's illegal.

The committee trying to establish a skateboard park in St. Marys wasn't about to wait for the spring weather to begin promoting their plan. So, almost 40 skateboarders, parents and organizers showed up on Sunday afternoon at the proposed site at Participark to kick off the campaign.

50 years ago (1974)

Every weekend seems to bring excitement to Kirkton. If it isn't a fire or snowmobile races, it's a baby being born in a car during a snowstorm in front of the Anglican Church Rectory at 6:30 a.m. last Saturday morning. The local ambulance needed assistance from a Blanshard snow-plow crew to reach the scene, but at last report all was well with mother and baby.

Renovations to the business floor of the St. Marys town hall got underway again last week. Mitchell Bros. Construction are presently busy renovating the large room at the north end of the floor which has been used as council chambers for the past number of years.

St. Marys Lions Snowmobile races, scheduled for the Windmill Park on Mitchell Road last weekend, were called off following the rain on Friday.

75 years ago (1949)

New plans for St. Marys Memorial Hospital have been completed by the architects, O. Roy Moore & Co of London, and tenders are being called for.

A family feud which broke out over the weekend in the South Ward occasioned a couple of visits by the Chief of Police who had to use his iron bracelet equipment to calm down at least one of the feuders.

The 37 wild ducks which drifted down the river when the ice went out last week are now reported to be making their way slowly back to St. Marys. Great Star employees who have become interested in the fine birds made a trip down the river the other day and discovered the ducks in the calm water near Lemonade Springs. They have since observed the ducks in the river near the Ernest Marriott farm.

100 years ago (1924)

On many of the main roads leading into St. Marys, pitch-holes are so deep that they cause those that travel over them some anxiety for the safety of themselves and their vehicles.

A hotel for dogs only is being successfully operated in New York. The owner of a valued dog going on vacation takes their dog pet there, checks it in and a clerk gives it a private kennel and a private place to play and exercise. There is an expert veterinary surgeon who is always ready to look after stomach aches and all sorts of dog troubles. Special food is provided for the dogs according to their needs. They may even be sent to school while their owners are away so they will have learned how to behave better. The owner of the hotel says the bulldog is the best hotel guest, and the chow is the worst.

## THANK YOU

*Campbell*

Again the Campbell Family of Avonbank are looking unto "Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; Hebrews 12:2 for hope, comfort, and strength to carry on in this difficult time.

Many thanks for all prayers, donations, flowers, food, cards, acts of kindness, and unconditional love shown to us at this sad time.

Please join us for a celebration of Doug's life June 8th, 2024.

Internment Avonbank Cemetery at 1.00pm

Coffee @ Downtown Avonbank.

Donna and Family

## THE WEEK AHEAD

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

St. Marys Library events - See Page 29

### Friday, March 1

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

### Saturday, March 2

- McCully's Maple Syrup Festival - 10 am to 2 pm
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 pm
- St. Marys Kinettes St. Patrick's Day Pub Night at the Legion - 8 pm

### Sunday, March 3

- McCully's Maple Syrup Festival - 10 am to 2 pm
- St. Marys Lincolns vs St. Thomas Stars at Joe Thornton Community Centre - 8 pm

### Wednesday, March 6

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

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