

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1209

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Volunteers Candice Harris, Judy Greig and Sue McKechnie share their creative talents during the Smile Cookie Campaign which goes until Sunday May 5. The money raised from sales at the St. Marys Tim Hortons will go towards the Environmental Services at St. Marys Memorial Hospital in purchasing a new washer and dryer. It is a good time to make someone in your life smile with a smile cookie. Photo by Wendy Lamond

Town of St. Marys to clean up fishing quarry and consider future uses

By Galen Simmons

Building off its recent success with the Super Splash Inflatable Waterpark at the St. Marys Swimming Quarry, St. Marys council is now turning its attention to the town's other quarry – the fishing quarry – with the goal of cleaning up the former industrial site and considering opportunities for its

future use.

At the April 23 council meeting, councillors approved a recommendation from the town's strategic priorities committee to have staff develop a plan that focuses on both cleaning up the fishing quarry and increasing opportunities for passive and active uses of

Continued on page 7

Local 911 dispatchers adopt what3words location technology to find those in need faster

By Galen Simmons

Emergency 911 operators in Stratford, St. Marys and across Perth County have adopted a new technology that will make it easier and quicker for first responders to locate those in need of help.

Each of the participating municipalities are encouraging residents to download the what3words app, which allows users to communicate their location to emergency dispatchers in the event they become lost or are otherwise unable to.

"In an emergency, seconds can feel like hours and, when you need help now, you need to know where exactly you are so emergency services can be dispatched," Stratford Police Chief Greg Skinner said. "For any number of reasons, people find themselves in situations where they have no way of telling an emergency dispatcher where they are – there is no address, no street signs, no obvious landmarks. The what3words app allows dispatchers to know exactly where someone is and dispatch help immediately.

"Perth County attracts a lot of tourists who don't always know where they are when tragedy strikes, and when seconds count, responding to the right location matters. The public believes that if they call 911, then emergency services will know exactly where they are. That is not always the case and often precious time is spent getting that information when using the what3words app would provide that information immediately and accurately, allowing emergency personnel to respond more quickly. The Stratford police are adopting this app because we believe that we should be embracing

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COMMUNITY

Local 911 dispatchers adopt what3words location technology to find those in need faster

Continued from page 1

and implementing any new technology that allows us to more efficiently, effectively and professionally respond to the needs of the public.”

what3words has assigned a unique combination of three words to every three-meter square in the world. For example, ///frizz.empty.blot will direct users to the rear door of Stratford city hall and ///showdown.sticks.clash will bring users to the Listowel clock tower.

The app is free to use and it works offline, making it ideal for use in areas with poor cellular service such as the G2G Rail Trail and other remote areas in the county. The technology is available in 60 languages and can be used anywhere in the world. The system does not store or track users’ location data, and there are not advertisements in the app or map.

Currently, what3words is used by more than 50 emergency communication centres across Canada with a presence in eight provinces and two

territories.

“We encourage residents of Perth County, Stratford and the Town of St Marys to download the app now and become familiar with it,” Perth East and West Perth Fire Chief Bill Hunter said. “Most people will go their entire lives and never call 911, however when you do, you may be under an immense amount of stress or be in an unfamiliar area. This app makes it simple to relay your exact location to our dispatchers and get our services to you as quickly as possible.”

Using what3words addresses gives callers a simple way to describe precisely where help is needed and allows emergency response crews to get resources directly to the scene. It has helped to rescue people from a range of incidents including locating victims of rural road accidents, people trapped in flood waters, kidnap victims and critically injured hikers and cyclists.

In an emergency, where a location is difficult to describe, 911 callers can give their what3words address from the app. People who do not have the app installed will be sent a link by the 911 operator to a mobile version of the site. They can then open it in a mobile browser and read the three words on their screen to the 911 call operator.

The app only requires a GPS signal to

display a what3words address. These three words can then be used by the 911 dispatchers to identify the precise location and direct resources to exactly where it is required.

“For dispatching centres, it is particularly effective when tourists or others unfamiliar with their area can use the app and provide the three distinctive words to identify their location or that of an emergency incident,” Stratford Fire Chief Neil Anderson said. “This can include boating accidents in the water or a farmland incident in the middle of a field. Not only is it effective for emergency locates, but some food-delivery companies have also begun using this app, as well as some major package-delivery companies. Just imagine sitting at Lower Queens Park and having food delivered directly to your location in the field for an instant picnic, or being at the Stratford Fall Fair or a concert and easily meeting up with someone through identifying your location using this app.

“Although our focus is the use and benefits to people and 911 dispatch centres for emergencies, we are equally promoting this app for the multiple other uses it can offer with the hope that more people will download it to their phone knowing that it will also be there to identify your location in a worst-case scenario.”

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys Museum reopens after renovations

By Emily Stewart

The St. Marys Museum has now reopened following the recent completion of renovations, allowing visitors to check out the new exhibitions.

The museum announced in an April 22 Facebook post that the space is now open as renovations are complete. The St. Marys Museum will be open from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for self-guided tours, and its archives will be open by appointment only.

In an email sent to the St. Marys Independent, Amy Cubberley, curator, and Emily Taylor, curator assistant, said they are thrilled the museum is open again.

"During the pandemic, we got really good at having to close and reopen, and it always feels great to be unlocking our doors to the public again," they said. "We do anticipate that some additional minor repairs will be needed in the near future, but for now we're open and it's business as usual."

The renovations took place from March 27 to April 22, as this time of year tends to be quieter for the museum. So far, there haven't been a ton of patrons since reopening, but the visitors are pleased with what they see.

"Those who have seen the work are especially pleased with the rich colours on the

main floor," Cubberley and Taylor said.

There are two new exhibitions at the St. Marys Museum. The "Famiglia: The Story of the Italian Community in St. Marys" exhibit showcases contributions from Italian families to the Town of St. Marys and is based on the book, *Bravi: A History of the Italian Community in St. Marys*. The Famiglia exhibit will run until April 2025.

"Some additional recent donations led us to revisit this topic and share this important history with visitors," Taylor said.

The St. Marys Museum will also feature the "All About Optics" exhibit, running until January 2025.

"This is an opportunity to learn about light and how it impacts our daily lives," Taylor said.

All About Optics teaches visitors about the history of objects that use light to examine the world such as telescopes, cameras and microscopes. Guests will also have a chance to learn how to make a Victorian optical illusion toy known as a thaumatrope.

The St. Marys Museum will host a celebration of the new exhibits on June 1. Follow @StMarysMuseum on Facebook and Instagram for more updates.



Staff at the St. Marys Museum are looking forward to welcoming patrons back to check out their exhibitions. The museum closed from March 27 to April 22 for renovations. Photo courtesy of Emily Taylor



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COMMUNITY

Event celebrating lighting of new Grand Trunk trail lights planned for May 1

By St. Marys Independent staff

The Town of St. Marys is hosting a small celebration to acknowledge the big contributions of the donors and volunteers who supported recent improvements to the Grand Trunk Trail.

On Wednesday, May 1 at 8 p.m., members of council will join representatives from the Lind family, the Kinsmen Club of St. Marys, Texo Terra Contracting, Forman Electric and volunteer Bill Richardson on a section of the trail next to the James Street North parking lot.

The event will include a short speech by Mayor Al Strathdee followed by a ceremonial lighting of the new trail lights – a nod to another beloved St. Marys tradition. Once the lights are lit, attendees can enjoy free refreshments on the trail, courtesy of the town.

Improvements to the trail include 23 new light standards and 700 metres of paving along a section that runs between Wellington Street North and just past James Street North. The trail has also been connected to the new trailhead parking lot on James Street North.

"The Grand Trunk Trail is one of the jewels of St. Marys," said Strathdee in a press release. "I want to thank all the donors and volunteers, including those that chose to remain anonymous. Your hard work and generosity have made the trail safer and more accessible for all."

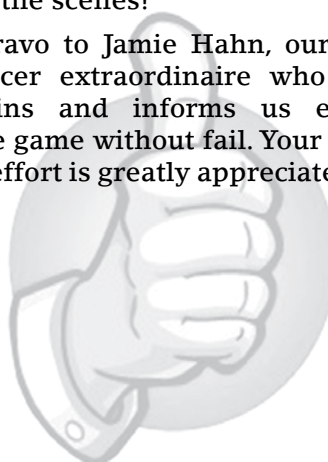
Everyone is welcome to attend this rain-or-shine celebration. Questions about the event can be directed to corporate communications manager Brett O'Reilly at 519-284-2340 ext. 432 or boreilly@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week

1) Bravo to Spencer Seymour, Joel Azzano and Cole Schnittker who are doing a great job broadcasting the Lincoln games! Your reliability and creativity doesn't go unnoticed. Also to the rest of the broadcasting team who work so hard behind the scenes!

2) Bravo to Jamie Hahn, our announcer extraordinaire who entertains and informs us every home game without fail. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated as well.



Boo

We have 1 Boo this week

1) Boo to the quality of the sound system at the arena. It is hard to understand what is being said, especially from behind the players' bench.



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

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

Quote of the Week

"I'm not saying both candidates are old. But you know Jimmy Carter is out there thinking, 'maybe I can win this thing. He's only 99.'"

- Comedian Colin Jost at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner on April 27, 2024

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The May forecast. It May rain, it May snow, it May be windy, it May be sunny

Where were you 48 years ago, the last time the Lincolns went for the Sutherland cup?

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

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THOUGHTS
OF THE WEEK

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You are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream.

You are capable of blooming like May flowers.

Being negative only makes a journey more difficult.

The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.

COMMUNITY

Scrapathon held at the Friendship Center



A wonderful day was spent scrapbooking at the Friendship Center on Saturday, April 27. It is always a great opportunity to meet with other scrapbookers to exchange ideas, learn new techniques, make new friends, and enjoy the wonderful food. Thanks to all the volunteers that helped to make this day a success. There were over 100 tickets sold. The next scrapbooking day will be held on Saturday, September 28th, 2024. Photo by Nancy Bickell

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



CAR SEAT SAFETY CLINIC

May 16, 10:30 AM - 1:15 PM | Fire Hall

Stop by to have your car seat checked and receive safety advice from certified car seat technicians at the St. Marys Fire Hall (172 James St. S).

townofstmarys.com/earlyon or 226-374-6544

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WEBSITE NAVIGATION STUDY

Survey open until May 5

We're running a navigation study for our new website to make sure you can easily find the information you need! The study involves a survey that asks you to find specific information on the site.

townofstmarys.com/navigation or 519-284-2340

CAMP PRC

Registration is now open for the following camps:

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- Summer Camp (starting July 2)
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Senior of the Week



This week's senior of the week is Phyllis Annis. Phyllis will be 80 in December. She was born in Norfolk England and came to Canada at the age of 20. She was married to her late husband Ken for 46 years.

In her spare time she loves gardening, shopping, playing with her cat and visiting with lots of friends and neighbors.

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

COMMUNITY

Camping season begins at Wildwood Conservation Area



By St. Marys Independent staff

Wildwood Conservation Area (CA) in St. Marys opened for another camping season on May 1.

This marks the 56th camping season as Wildwood CA opened in 1968.

"We're looking to build on the success of last year. We had a great season with well-attended events, new rental equipment and new visitors discovering what a beautiful spot Wildwood is," said Alison Miller, Wildwood CA superintendent, in a press release.

Campers can enjoy the hiking and biking trails at Wildwood CA, ranging from 1.2 kilometres to 25 kilometres. Park visitors interested in water sports

can rent a kayak, canoe, or stand-up paddle board to cruise around the picturesque Wildwood Reservoir. Boating and fishing opportunities are also available.

The following special presentations have been booked at Wildwood CA:

- Wild Ontario: Saturday, July 20
- Sciensational Snakes: Saturday, July 27
- Canadian Raptor Conservancy: Saturday, Aug. 3
- Scales Nature Park: Saturday, Aug. 10
- Speaking of Wildlife: Saturday, Aug. 24

For more information and to book online, visit wildwoodconservationarea.ca.

Weekend Quiz

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1. What is the largest moon in our solar system?
2. How long is an Olympic swimming pool?
3. Yellowknife is the capital of what?
4. How many languages are written right to left?
5. What band sang "What Makes You Beautiful"?
6. How many days are in a leap year?
7. Who is the god of the sea?
8. What does NASA stand for?
9. What is the longest movie ever made?
10. What is the 18th letter of the alphabet?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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COMMUNITY

Town of St. Marys to clean up fishing quarry

Continued from page 1

the facility.

"The one area (along that portion of Water Street South) that has not been developed is the fishing quarry," town aquatics manager Andrea Slade told councillors at their April 16 strategic priorities committee meeting. "This area has potential for advancement with a number of options to explore."

Like the swimming quarry, the fishing quarry was a previous industrial site – a source of crushed limestone that was exported by rail. Today, the area is fenced with three defined openings for fishing access, however the access paths are not accessible and there are warning signs at the entrances stating as much.

As the area was previously an industrial site, many remnants of the previous industrial use remain today. Concrete supports and footings, many of which are used as swimming platforms, are visible and can be reached via unmaintained "goat" paths. In addition, metal cables and materials can be seen adjacent to the access paths.

Swimming at the fishing quarry is restricted by bylaw as rescue access is problematic at best, and no sonar survey of the water has been completed to identify underwater dangers. Overall, usage is minimal with just a small amount of fishing and illegal swimming in the peak summer months.

According to the staff report, the fishing quarry – somewhat ironically – is not large enough to support significant fish populations without an external food supply and support, so stocking the quarry with fish is not an option for future use.

While the fishing quarry requires significant clean up both to reduce town liability and prepare it for future use, Slade said the popularity of the inflatable water park at the nearby swimming quarry has attracted businesses interested in operating in the fishing quarry including Boarder Pass, a wakeboard park operator from Sarnia. Slade said town staff have also been approached with the notion of establishing a scuba-diving partnership at the fishing quarry that could offer scuba training and other services similar to scuba quarries at the Sherkston Quarry near Pot Colborne, the Innerkip Quarry and the Kirkfield Quarry.

"The reality is (the inflatable water park is) bringing people to our community and I think, even with the quarry and that whole area, we need to reinvent," Mayor Al Strathdee said



The Town of St. Marys will be looking into how to clean up the fishing quarry on Water Street South so staff and council can consider opportunities for its future use as a recreational asset. Photo by Wendy Lamond

during the committee discussion. "We have a resource that other people don't have that's sitting there dormant. ... If staff were to come forward with some opportunities that would bring people, I think it's incumbent on us to look at it and I think we should be open to that.

" ... If there's 500-1,000 more people that came to St. Marys with money in their pockets; (this isn't) a big investment. ... We've had two seasons of the inflatable (water park) doing really well and being a destination and ... I know there are certainly a few businesses that have done really well because of it. That's the goal; they drive through town and (the economic benefit) spins off. We're in a very, very competitive market in terms of tourism. We could broaden our market with ... some sort of cost-sharing (partnership) and this is stuff we should probably be doing anyway. A lot of those trees need to come down. A lot of them are dead. The fence, whether it stays or goes; something's got to happen. If we were to partner with a business proposal where someone was to inject some dough into our community and bring some people, why wouldn't we look at that?"

As part of the same committee recommendation, council also gave staff the green light to explore additional amenities and modifications that could maximize the recreational-tourism potential of the swimming quarry.

This summer alone, the town is already planning to host themed, half-day summer camps at the quarry, offer rental opportunities upstairs at the Lind Sportsplex, partner with Tourism London to host the Ontario Summer Games triathlon, run a trial tourism-kiosk program and enhance influencer promotion of the swimming quarry among other improvements.

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Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce general manager Eddie Matthews to retire in June

By Galen Simmons

It's safe to say Eddie Matthews didn't fully understand what he was getting into when he decided to leave a 40-year-career in radio – 20 years of which he spent as the iconic voice of CJCS and Juice FM in Stratford – to take on the role of general manager of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce in 2019.

Having just announced he will be retiring from his position as general manager at some point likely in June to give himself more freedom to travel with his wife and find new ways to give back to the community, Matthews told the Stratford Times that leading the chamber as the world plunged into the COVID-19 pandemic completely rewrote any expectations he had going into the job.

"I'm not patting myself on the back because our staff here is so good, but we're in a good spot right now (at the chamber)," Matthews said. "We're through COVID, but there's still businesses that are really suffering. We figured it's going to be a few years after COVID where they're still going to be feeling the effects of it, and many businesses are, so I'm hoping the next person that comes in (as general manager) will remain vigilant on promoting and supporting local businesses."

Though he knew going into the position that supporting and promoting local businesses was the name of the game – something he had a leg up on thanks to the relationships and trust he built through his previous career – no one could have predicted exactly how he and the chamber would support and promote local businesses that were, all of a sudden, simultaneously struggling to make ends meet as they navigated shifting public-health restrictions.

"We were all never on one ship. Some were on a big ship, some were on a small boat, and we all had a different way of navigating the waters of COVID," Matthews said. "It was a good learning curve. I had been on the job for one year when COVID kicked in and I was still coming into work every day. I was the only one in the building. I felt like the Maytag repairman. It was a good opportunity to get one-on-one with a lot of businesses that were, like everybody, just sitting on the sidelines and finding out, 'What do you need? What can we do? And who can we point you to that could be an asset or help?'"

"The one word I'd heard about but never really gave it too much of a



Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce general manager Eddie Matthews has announced he will retire from his position, which he has held for the past five years, at some point this June. Photo by Galen Simmons

thought until COVID was advocacy and dealing with all levels of government, which I loved. It was so interesting and it also showed you how much red tape there was in many cases."

While Matthews and his staff worked hard to continue promoting local businesses through initiatives like the chamber's Shop Local campaign – something Matthews credits chamber office manager Shannon Stewart for – and they continued providing and connecting businesses with the resources they needed to navigate rough seas, Matthews himself met with politicians from all levels of government to push for the financial support they so desperately needed and then worked to help businesses apply for funding whenever it became available.

Matthews was also instrumental in making sure the chamber's annual Business Excellence Awards (BEA) Gala could continue. While the chamber couldn't host the awards ceremony in May 2020, it wasn't long before Matthews and his team came up with a plan to host the gala at the Movies Under the Stars drive-in theatre that October, an event that saw everyone but hosts Jodi Gerber and Courtney Teahen, as well as business leader of the year Franklin Famme, confined to their vehicles for the duration. Yet those business owners who won awards were still able to deliver their acceptance speeches through radio-style interviews with Matthews thanks to an FM broadcast transmitter.

"It went off so well," Matthews said.

laughed. "After that, we were putting the future BEA galas together and people said, 'Well, how did you do it before?' I didn't really know because I'd only done it that way for one year. But Shannon Stewart took control of that and we recreated it – kept a lot of the format the same."

Looking back over the past five years, Matthews is proud of how the chamber has expanded its ability to assist businesses outside of Stratford's borders in places like St. Marys, Mitchell and even as far as the Region of Waterloo.

"It's not just the Stratford chamber of commerce, it's the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce," Matthews said. "The work we do in our district is just as important."

While Matthews will stay on board as general manager until June, he will likely remain active with the chamber, helping whoever the new general manager will be hit the ground running and assisting in whatever other capacity he can.

"Eddie's been an integral part of the chamber's success since I've been on the board," said chamber board chair Dana Walton in a press release. "Our growth and innovation throughout the pandemic is a testament to his leadership. He's not only an advocate for the business community, but he's also become the voice – always aware of what's happening and when, and making key introductions to support our community's growth."

"On behalf of our entire board and membership, we appreciate all he's done for our business community and we wish him all the best."

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COMMUNITY

Downie Optimist Club and Perth County Pork Producers raise money for St. Marys Healthcare Foundation



Greeting drive-through motorists at the Downie Optimist Pork Chop BBQ last week include, from left, Cindy Bilyea, Bernice DeDecker and Jeff Bell. Photo by Gary West

By Gary West

Fundraising events in Perth County are very important for the survival of many organizations that provide needed services for residents in the area.

Last week, the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation was the recipient of the Downie Optimist Club's drive-

through Pork Chop BBQ where over 800 meals were served up by the club with cooking help from members of the Perth County Pork Producers.

The Downie Optimists have now exceeded their \$25,000 commitment to the foundation.

Foundation chair Cindy Bilyea, who was on hand to greet the drive-



Members of the Perth County Pork Producers and Downie Optimist Club working the grill include, from left, John Nyenhuis, Kirk Jackson, Henry Groenestege, Doug Ahrens, Jerry DeGroot and Kevin Varley. Photo by Gary West

through diners, smiled in appreciation of all the continued support for the St. Marys Memorial Hospital and all that continues to be done for the foundation.

Working hand in hand, the members of the Downie Optimists are always appreciative of the Perth pork producers. Pork producers president Henry Groenestege say members are

involved with 25 barbecues annually to raise funds for many organizations, and the organization also donates pork for many fundraisers involving hockey, ball and school organizations.

The upcoming Ontario Pork Congress set for the third week in June in Stratford is one of their biggest undertakings.

Something for everyone this summer in St. Marys

By St. Marys Independent staff

It is shaping up to be a full summer of fun in the Stonetown, as St. Marys gears up for a season of unforgettable community events.

"The Town of St. Marys, as well as all our community event organizers, are eagerly preparing for a season packed with fun activities and celebrations," said Town of St. Marys events coordinator Alanna Bowes in a press release. "We're excited to showcase the vibrancy and hospitality of St. Marys during our many summer events."

- The St. Marys Farmers' Market begins its regular season on Saturday, May 4 at the north end of Milt Dunnell Field, from 8 a.m. to noon. Check out www.stmarysfarmersmarket.ca to stay in the loop about vendors and special events.

- Explore the waterways this summer with the free kayak-loan program; the 'Yak Shack' opens on Tuesday, May 21. Kayaks can be reserved

through the St. Marys Public Library. Visit discoverstmarys.ca/yakshack for more information.

- The St. Marys Horticultural Society hosts its 25th annual Garden Fair on Saturday, June 1 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Garden items and décor are available for purchase, located at Milt Dunnell Field.

- The Friends of the St. Marys Public Library begins its free summer "Movies In The Park" series on Friday, June 7 at dusk, with additional dates of July 12, Aug. 9, and Sept. 13. For updates, go to townofstmarys.com/library.

- St. Marys Pride presents Pride in the Park on Sunday, June 9 from 11:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Milt Dunnell Field. Celebrate diversity and inclusion with music, vendors, food and fun.

- The Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's Induction Day on Saturday, June 15 will be a special one as the 2024 inductees are

honoured. The induction ceremony, which begins at 1 p.m., is part of a full day of activities; visit baseball-halloffame.ca for more information.

- The Rotary Club of St. Marys Brews and Food Fest takes over the Ball Hall grounds on Father's Day, Sunday, July 16 from noon to 6 p.m. Food trucks are free to access for all ages, but tickets must be purchased online via Eventbrite for the alcoholic beverage component.

- The Quarry and SuperSplash Waterpark opens for the season on Friday, June 28! Stay tuned to townofstmarys.com/quarry for details.

- St. Marys Commemorates Canada Day at Cadzow Park on Monday, July 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Catch the Canada Day parade departing the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 11 a.m. and finishing at Cadzow Park.

- Kin Summerfest returns for its 50th year to Milt Dunnell Field July 4-6 with a midway, live entertainment, refreshment tent and more! Details

will be announced on the Kinsmen website at stmaryskinsmen.com.

- Stonetown Heritage Festival showcases local arts and heritage with family fun activities, vendors, tours, music and more from Friday, July 12 to Sunday, July 14. Check out the full schedule at discoverstmarys.ca/festival, as well as on Facebook and Instagram.

- Food, fun and fabulous cars! Find it all at the St. Marys Lions Club Car Show on Saturday, July 20 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Milt Dunnell Field.

- Melodies at the Museum returns to the Cadzow Amphitheater every Wednesday in August starting on Aug. 7. Musical acts for this St. Marys Museum fundraiser will be announced on the museum's Facebook page at facebook.com/stmarysmuseum.

Be sure to subscribe to the Discover St. Marys events calendar at discoverstmarys.ca/eventscalendar to stay in the know! Accounts are free and notifications can be customized!

COMMUNITY

Human Synergistics host lunch and learn on leadership and development



Matt Staffen, president and general manager of the St. Marys Golf and Country Club, shared his experience working with Human Synergistics and the positive effect it had on his team. Photo by Wendy Lamond



Alan Stewart, president of Human Synergistics, shares his expertise on successful leadership at the lunch and learn hosted at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club. Photo by Wendy Lamond

By Wendy Lamond

Human Synergistics hosted a lunch and learn at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club April 19 to teach business owners about leadership and what they can do to help inspire, develop, and encourage innovation and better performance.

Having good leadership saves costs on staff turnovers, equipment issues, production problems and operation methods. Andrea Macko, marketing and communications specialist, welcomed the group and gave the history behind Human Synergistics, a business on James Street South many are unaware of.

Human Synergistics specialises in developing leadership strategies, ongoing education, team programs and individual behavioural styles. They do this by providing leadership tools, hosting workshops and working with companies on constructive thinking.

Human Synergistics Canada opened in 1982 and it was in the mid 1990s that CEO Alan Stewart made the decision to move the business back to his hometown of St. Marys so he could raise his family, be part of his community and work at a healthier pace.

The business' history has included working with some large corporations such as Loblaws, WestJet, Tim Hortons, RBC and the Department of National Defence, as well as many local

organizations that were represented at the lunch and learn.

Stewart spoke as well about the roles of leaders and how they get to be at the top of their game, and the effect they have on their teams. Stewart says natural leaders are not born, they are taught, which is where Human Synergistics comes into play.

The company offers a variety of coaching packages and leadership tools from a basic level up to a CEO level in both the public and private sector.



Kate Stewart, director at Human Synergistics, ends the lunch and learn with the good news of a 20 per-cent discount for local businesses to use before the end of the year. Photo by Wendy Lamond

Lori Wolfe, CAO of Perth County, shared with the group her experiences working with Human Synergistics. Wolfe works with several organizations and the purpose of her role is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the companies.

She has seen poor leadership at all levels and the tools she took away from Human Synergistics helped her work with staff on making better decisions and how to solve conflicts effectively. One tool she used and found beneficial was OCI, which stands for Organizational Culture Inventory. It

provides data on organizational culture, what is causing it and the outcomes from it. Basically, it is influence on how an organization goes about executing its existing strategy and how it adapts to change.

President and general manager of the St. Marys Golf and Country Club Matt Staffen also shared his experience with Human Synergistics. The business helped Staffen host an off-site, team retreat where his employees had to work together to solve a problem which, in turn, strengthened relationships and taught better communication in the workplace.

"Our research shows that growing and developing your leaders is one of the fastest ways to strengthen your organization and culture and ensure the long-term viability of your organization," Human Synergistics director Kate Stewart said.

The company offers many training and coaching packages and, if it is something your business is interested in pursuing, Human Synergistics is offering a 20 per-cent discount to companies that are located in the area until the end of the year.

For more information about the services Human Synergistics offers, reach out to Stewart at 519-284-4135 or kate@hscanada.ca. There is also information available on their website www.hscanada.ca.

COMMUNITY

Bayers begin new chapter with Bru Garden

By Emily Stewart

The Bru Garden's new owners are Stratford residents with three popular restaurants in the local hospitality industry.

The restaurant announced in an April 17 Facebook post that Mike and Cathy Bayer, who own Gilly's Pubhouse in Stratford and St. Marys and the Erie Drive-In, will be taking over the Bru Garden.

"It's another adventure for us. It's never a dull moment, so we're looking forward to it. I think it will fit nicely with the rest of what we're doing in town and we're excited about it," Mike Bayer said.

The Bru Garden offers a casual atmosphere where everyone is welcome to dine-in or grab takeout, which is what is offered from Gilly's and the Erie Drive-In.

"It's a very different aesthetic and atmosphere for sure, but it's a very casual atmosphere and that's kind of our sweet spot," he said.

The unique outdoor-dining atmosphere in the core of Stratford also appealed to the Bayers.

"It's got that backyard feel," Bayer

said. "You don't feel like you're in the middle of the city when you're sitting there, having a drink or enjoying a bite to eat, and I think that's really the appeal to us – just the uniqueness of the space."

He also said that the change in ownership has been smooth thanks to the guidance of previous owners Anthony Jordaan and Kim Hurley. The Bayers introduced table service since taking over to eliminate long lineups and wait times for customers having their meals at the restaurant. Takeout orders can still be placed.

The Bru Garden opened for the season on April 26 with the intention to keep the same food everyone stopping in the restaurant knows and loves for the first few weeks.

"We don't want to change any of the existing menus ... so we'll be offering what people are used to," Bayer said.

Eventually, Bayer would like to introduce some new drinks and food as the weeks go by, along with expanding restaurant hours to seven days a week.

Currently, the Bru Garden is open from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at 156 Waterloo St.



Mike and Cathy Bayer, new owners of the Bru Garden in Stratford, are looking forward to providing pizza, poutines and cold drinks to customers while introducing table service. Photo courtesy of Mike Bayer



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PUBLIC NOTICE – PESTICIDE USE

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The following pesticides registered under the Pest Control Products Act (Canada) will be used:

ClearView Herbicide (Registration No. 29752), which contains the active ingredients Aminopyralid (present as potassium salt), and Metsulfuron – methyl, in combination with Gateway Adjuvant (Registration No. 31470), which contains the active ingredients Paraffinic Oil, and Alkoxylated alcohol non-ionic surfactants.

Navius FLEX (Registration No. 30922), which contains the active ingredients Metsulfuron – methyl and Aminocyclopyrachlor, in combination with Hasten NT Ultra Spray Adjuvant (Registration No. 31760), which contains the active ingredients Methyl and ethyl oleate (esterified vegetable oil). Noxious weeds along the roadside will be controlled under the public works exception of the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban for the promotion of public health or safety.

For more information call:

Green Stream Lawn and Vegetation Management Inc: 1-905-510-1229

Corporation of the County of Perth 1-519-271-0531 or 1-800-463-8275 ext 311, (Collect Calls will be accepted)

** Any resident choosing to decline spray within their road allowance may contact the Corporation of the County of Perth at the above noted number **

COMMUNITY

Local women-owned businesses gather for Passion to Profit Idea Summit in St. Marys

By Amanda Modaragamage

One hundred-and-twenty women entrepreneurs from across Perth County gathered at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club April 29 for a full day of learning and networking.

The sold-out Passion to Profit Idea Summit was organized by Kerry Ramsay, founder of the Fresh Idea Collective, and supported by various local sponsors including signature partner KDB Law.

"The goal of the Passion to Profit Idea Summit is to help women-identifying entrepreneurs create meaningful financial goals for their businesses while learning the key strategies they need to help make those goals a reality," said Kerry Ramsay, a former marketing professor who now leads the women's entrepreneurship strategy remotely for the greater Kingston region through Queen's University.

The keynote speaker at the summit was Hadriana Leo of Money Navigator International, who offered attendees a training session on "Positioning Your Mind for Profit: Learning How to Manage Your Money Mindset."



Kerry Ramsay, founder of Fresh Idea Collective, speaks at the Passion to Profit Idea Summit at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club earlier this week. Photo by Amanda Modaragamage

"Your attitude about money is going to very heavily impact your experience with money and how you interact with money. In fact, it actually impacts what money can do for you," she told women at the conference.

Holly Mortimer, business advisor for

the Stratford Perth Centre for Business, was also speaking on how to "Become Your Own Profit Tracker: How a Simple Cash Flow Statement Can Boost Your Bottom Line."

A panel of six other local women entrepreneurs also spoke at the event

and provided ideas and insights based on their experiences with their own businesses.

Last fall, the Fresh Idea Collective began hosting monthly, sold-out events in women-owned spaces throughout Stratford and St. Marys.

More than 250 women have participated in the monthly meetups across Stratford and St. Marys, which provide guided-networking sessions and training, and fun experiences such as roller skating, business-book exchanges and axe-throwing.

"Like many entrepreneurs, I'm passionate about creating something out of nothing and helping to solve common problems in not-so-common ways," said Ramsay. "By gathering with other women creatives and entrepreneurs on a regular basis, we are generating fresh ways of thinking while boosting our mental wellbeing and creating a stronger business ecosystem."

To learn more about upcoming Fresh Idea Collective events, follow @freshideacollective on Instagram and Facebook.

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys Poetry Circle shares weather-inspired poetry

By Galen Simmons

To close out National Poetry Month, local poets and members of the St. Marys Poetry Circle shared original poetry and other pieces inspired by the weather – the theme for National Poetry Month – at Riverwalk Commons April 27.

Entitled Weatherludes in reference to St. Marys Poetry Circle member John A. Cull's original poem, "Weatherlude .or Whetherlude.. or..," which he read at the event, the evening was brimming with weather-related imagery curated into an hour-and-a-half presentation by poetry circle president Alizon Sharun.

"This was a special event related to the month of April. April is poetry month universally, not just in Canada," said poetry circle member Sylvia Bosgra, who read her original poem, "Time Capsule," and poet Amy Clappitt's "Fog" at the poetry event. "Alizon, our fearless leader, really works hard to organize these events."

In addition to the original poems read by Bosgra and Cull, other St. Marys Poetry Circle members who read original poems at the event included Beverley Blair with her poems, "In Cold Stillness" and "Tree," Kate Orland-Bere with her poem, "Little Shadow," Dan Welcher with his poem, "Changing with the Weather," George Allan Tucker with his poems, "Riverwalk" and "A Window Weather Perspective," Rosemary Radcliffe with



St. Marys Poetry Circle member Sylvia Bosgra reads her poem, "Time Capsule," at the group's Weatherludes event at Riverwalk Commons April 27. Photo by Galen Simmons

her poem, "Princes on the Straw," and Sharun with her poem, "Anti Spring."

"I put out the call by email ... to find out who actually wanted to perform because it's not everyone's cup of tea," Sharun said of arranging the program for Weatherludes. "So, first of all we got a group of people who were interested in reciting at a venue like this, and a lot of people are quite experienced at it because we used to do open mics. Rosemary (Radcliffe), actually, often produces us. She's a professional actor, so we've taken ad-

vantage of her. She's really developed our presentation skills.

"So, I get a list of people who want to do it and I said, 'Come up with some weather poems; either one of yours' or someone else's.' Then we met here a couple of times to share what we had."

After sharing the poetry that was brought forward, Sharun picked which pieces would be appropriate for the Weatherludes evening and curated those selected pieces for the

poetry circle's friends and family who gathered at Riverwalk Commons to hear them read.

"Weather affects everyone, and it not only makes you think about what's going on, but it creates a lot of emotions," said poetry circle member Paul Stevens, who read "My Country" by Gilles Vigneault and "On the Death of the Port Franks Worthies" by Robert McBride. With poetry in general, that's one of the things it does; it touches the emotions of the human heart. Beyond that, poetry isn't just an emotional thing. It can also, according to the nature of the poem, make you think or use your imagination as well in the way the words are written."

Sharun and the members of the St. Marys Poetry Circle are welcoming of new members no matter their experience or talent with poetry.

"It's absolutely an encouraging circle," Sharun said. "We don't critique each other; we encourage each other. People are encouraged to bring their own poems. We just sit around at Barista's – they open up specially for us once a month – and we offer either our own poem or other poems that might be our favourites. It might spark a bit of chatter afterwards, but otherwise we're always very open to new members."

For more information on the St. Marys Poetry Circle, their monthly meetings or upcoming events, email Sharun at alizonsharun@gmail.com.

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Thank you to the Community

McCully's would like to thank the local volunteer groups that assisted with serving our maple syrup brunch in March. We are pleased to make a donation to each of the groups for their involvement in our popular annual event.

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SPORTS

Lincs to meet Cyclones in Sutherland Cup Final

By Spencer Seymour

For the first time in the trophy's history, the Sutherland Cup will be decided in a battle of two finalists from Perth County as the St. Marys Lincolns will meet the Listowel Cyclones for the GOJHL championship.

The last time the Lincolns were one of the final two teams in contention for the Sutherland Cup was in 1976 when the Lincs beat the Collingwood Blues for the title. The Cyclones last appeared in the Sutherland Cup Final in 2018 when they won the trophy against the Caledonia Corvairs.

The intercounty championship series became locked in last Friday when the Lincolns picked up a 3-2 win over the Golden Horseshoe Conference champion Fort Erie Meteors. Though his team got the win, head coach Jeff Bradley felt his players didn't turn in their most complete performance.

"I don't think it was our best game but we're happy we won, obviously," Bradley told the Independent. "I'm not sure if I can really put my finger on (what wasn't working), but certainly we lacked a strong start, that's for sure. I thought our second period was much better and, in the third, we held them at bay pretty well."

Bradley analyzed the differences between the first 20 minutes when he felt the team had a lacklustre showing, and the final 40 minutes when the bench boss felt the Lincs played better.

"At times in the first period, it looked like we were trying to do a little bit too much. We were foregoing the easy play to make a more difficult play and it just wasn't working. We had a tough time getting pucks out. We weren't completing passes. We weren't finishing checks. Just a lot of things that we need to do to achieve our goals, we weren't doing."

"We were fortunate enough to get a lucky break on the first goal and then we had a pretty effective forecheck that resulted in the second one. There were some nice things that happened, especially in the second and third, but overall, we didn't play up to our standard."

The fortunate bounce Bradley allud-



Jaden Lee scores the first goal of the game during the St. Marys Lincolns' 3-2 win over the Fort Erie Meteors last Friday. Photo by McGinny Photography

ed to that led to the game's first goal came just five minutes into the first period when a misplay by goaltender Charlie Burns behind the net resulted in Jaden Lee finding the puck right in front of the crease and easily burying the game's first goal.

Six minutes and 10 seconds later, Zac Mizzi fired a long-range shot into a heavy screen and it found its way by Lincolns' netminder Brandon Abbott. Less than five minutes later, Luke Bogart fired a shot that hit off some bodies in front and deflected into the Meteors' net to restore the one-goal lead for St. Marys.

Just two minutes and 16 seconds into the second period, the ever-aggressive penalty killing of Lee and Luca Spagnolo resulted in a turnover by the Fort Erie powerplay, which Spagnolo tucked through the five-hole of Burns. The goal snapped a six-game goal drought for Spagnolo who only had one goal in his previous 11 games.

At the 15:48 mark of the second, Blake Hall capped off a perfect passing play to cut the Lincolns' lead back to one, but St. Marys held on to their one-goal advantage to secure the 3-2 victory and, in doing so, eliminate the Meteors from Sutherland Cup Final contention. Abbott made 33 saves in the Lincs' crease to earn the win.

Coach Bradley praised the forward

trio of Ryan Hodkinson, Ryan Cornfield, and Matt Prendergast who he thought did a great job playing the roles they were assigned.

"The Hodkinson, Cornfield and Prendergast line was really good. They had a good

bounce-back game as a whole. They understand their roles and they execute what they need to execute. They are physical. They play hard on the forecheck. They didn't make any mistakes. It was a really good game by those guys."

With the win, the Lincolns punched their ticket to the Sutherland Cup Final for the first time in 48 years where they will meet the Midwest Champion Cyclones of Listowel. Bradley himself enjoyed a special moment after the game with his assistant coaches as the team celebrated reaching the GOJHL's final series of the year.

"I always say it's not time to reflect but we put a lot of work in and the relationship I have with Mike (Herman) is really important to me as he's been really important to my growth as a coach. And then, there is Mike (Siddall) who has been here with me for three years and was the one that stuck by me when other coaches left. I hope this is a special moment in their coaching careers as it is mine, so to be able to share that with them

is pretty special."

Tired Lincs fall 5-1 in round-robin finale

With a few players battling through some nagging injuries and the only thing left to be decided being home-ice advantage for the coming series, the Lincolns elected to rest several players when they went to Listowel for the sixth and final game of the round-robin.

The list of lineup changes included Lee and Maddox Callens as well as defenceman Josh Cornfield drawing out of the lineup while Blake Elzinga stepped into the lineup along with affiliate players (APs) Chase McDougall and Hayden Barch.

With the Lincs' spot in the Sutherland Cup Final guaranteed, it made sense to not take unnecessary risks with players who were battling through injuries that could have more detrimental impacts on the upcoming best-of-seven.

"Obviously, we wanted home-ice advantage but we felt that resting certain guys was really important too. With how important the games we're about to play are, you have to consider at what cost do you keep certain guys in the lineup. A lot of things have to happen for it to get to game seven where home ice is a factor, even though it's still a possibility, but we thought resting guys was the right thing to do looking at the bigger picture."

Bradley was pleased with the efforts of the two APs who suited up for the Lincolns, crediting both McDougall and Barch for their physicality.

"Chase was really good in his first playoff game for us. He played at a high pace. He was very physical. He didn't seem to have a problem with the pace at all so that was nice to see. Same with Hayden; he was also playing his first playoff game with us. He was physical and did everything we asked him to do. Seeing some of our APs have good playoff performances was good to see for the future."

A sleepy start by the Lincs was capitalized on by the Cyclones in the form of two goals in the first four minutes and 57 seconds of the game, includ-

Continued on page 18



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SPORTS

DCVI Sr. Boys split double-header to begin season

By Spencer Seymour

The regular season got underway for the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys soccer team last Tuesday when they played a doubleheader at home against St. Michael Catholic Secondary School and Listowel, the latter of which they defeated 3-1 for their first victory of the season.

Head coach Richard Farmer acknowledged their win over Listowel was very hard-fought.

"That was a tough game," Farmer told the Independent. "Listowel is a solid team. I watched them play St. Mike's and they were very compact. They closed the ball down quickly and didn't give our guys much time on the ball. I think at the end of the season, they will be in the hunt for the top spot. We played what should be our two hardest games of the season today. It should be easier after this, but you never know what you're going to get from each game, so we have to play with the same intensity every game that we did today."

The day began with the Salukis taking on the high-powered St. Mike's squad, with the visitors edging out St. Marys by a score of 3-2. DCVI's goals both came off corner kicks and were scored by Carson Brock and Peyton Lobb.

According to Farmer, the loss in their first game of the day made getting a victory over Listowel even more im-



Arthur Douglas scores a goal on the Listowel goalkeeper during the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys soccer team's 3-1 win over Listowel last Tuesday. Photo by Spencer Seymour

portant.

"It's the first day of the season and we're playing the two toughest teams, so it's very reasonable to go down two games and be 0-2 to start the season. It doesn't matter how good of a team you are, that's tough on you mentally. If we had gone down two games going into our games next week, even though we should be better than the teams we're playing, the boys would have had that in the back of their heads and that can mess with you, so avoiding that was big for us."

In their second game, great solo efforts by Hayden Brintnell and Arthur Douglas, along with Brock burying on a penalty kick for his second goal of the day, propelled the Salukis by Listowel 3-1. Coach Farmer credited his squad for using their speed along the outside of the pitch.

"We found that their left back and right back were a little slower than our forwards and so we were able to beat them down there. Our breakthroughs came when we were playing out wide. We tried to bring the ball up

the middle a few times and nothing happened. Our gameplan is to play wide. When we play wide, we win games."

Farmer, who coached the team to an OFSAA birth a year ago, believes his mostly returning team can reach the same heights they did last season.

"I want to go to OFSAA again. I need another shirt," laughed Farmer. "We went to OFSAA last year and finished sixth, which is pretty impressive. We have that as our standard. We expect to get to WOSSAA because this is essentially the same team as last year. We lost a few good players

but the majority of the core of that team is still here so we should get to WOSSAA and, from there, we should be able to get to OFSAA."

Farmer added his team's mental fortitude makes them a serious contender for a long post-season run.

"This group of boys has been playing together for years. They have an incredible drive and determination. They don't allow things to get them down and mess with their heads. They're good at pumping each other up and keeping themselves positive, even today when we went down a goal. The defence made a mistake. They know they made a mistake, but that just pushed them even harder to fight and go after the ball and get back the goal."

St. Marys Bowling Lanes host Mixed League awards



The St. Marys Bowling Lanes' Mixed League wrapped up their season last Tuesday with their yearly awards banquet. Pictured on the left is the Women's High Average award winner, Dawn Collins, with the Men's High Average champion Derek King on the right. Both are pictured with presenter Chris Collins. The overall team winner was the Pin Ticklers, made up of Sabrina Billing, Jesse Brockman, Sophie Brockman, Natalie Oesch, and Spencer Seymour. Other awards included Kaitlyn Fares winning the Most Improved award and Jacqueline Waugh taking the Women's High Single With Handicap title. Billing and Jesse Brockman won the Women's and Men's High Triple Flat, while Fares and Chris Collins won the Women's and Men's High Single Flat. The Men's and Women's High Triple Flat With Handicap winners on the Men's and Women's sides were Phil Dellio and Anita Gregory. Photos by Spencer Seymour

SPORTS

The growth of St. Marys Minor Soccer

By Spencer Seymour

As the organization hosts a pair of player-development camps, St. Marys Minor Soccer is taking a moment to acknowledge the incredible growth of the association over the last half decade.

According to the president of minor soccer Nathan Brown, it wasn't too long ago that the association was close to going under.

"In 2018, the whole program almost folded and that spurred the change," Brown told the Independent. "There was a flip in the executive team and we took that winter and the following year to try to figure out how to rebuild the program. I was nominated in 2020 to take over as president and my first order of business was to cancel the season due to COVID, so it's taken a few years to get this program where it is."

And where it is, as Brown alluded to, is pretty impressive. In 2020, 174 players registered to participate in the minor-soccer program. That grew to 229 in 2021 followed by a big jump to 374 in 2022. With the introduction of the organization's under-three (U3) program last year spearheaded by Jeff Hiscock, the number of registrants increased to 460 and now with the new season about to begin, 533 players make up the local youth-soccer scene.

The association has also signed an agreement with the Juggernauts and Chargers teams allowing minor soccer's senior players to play with the adult teams when needed.

Brown explained the early stages of the organizational rebuild that really started taking shape after the worst days of the pandemic had passed.

"As things ramped up after COVID, we needed to get back to being in our regular league. We've always been predominantly in house league, so a lot of discussions were had about whether we stay in house league or do we go higher, and I think we've found that happy medium between house league, Tier 3, Tier 2 and now, this year for the first time, we've got our first team in Tier 1."

One of the biggest factors in increasing their registration numbers came when a technological shift was made that allowed for easier sign-up by parents.

"The biggest thing that we found helped was once we started digitizing everything, that made the registration process much easier. We started doing things online and now we're fully bought in and affiliated with Sports Engine for our registering, rostering and sending teams for approval."

The original core of executive members who, along with Brown, were the guiding forces behind the rebuild included Ian McKichan, Carrie McKichan, Rachel Mahaffy, Kevin Thompson,

Maryjane Littlejohn and Michelle McKeen. Some of the other most-important contributors to the minor-soccer renaissance, according to Brown, have been the individual coaches.

"If we're not getting the coaches, none of this is happening. We've got close to 80 coaches on our registration list who are helping out in some way, which is awesome. We went from being in the neighbourhood of 30 home games that had to be scheduled back in 2019 to, this year, we've got to find referees for 123 home matches."



Additionally, massive impacts have been made at the organization's executive level who have worked incredibly hard to help rebuild the program, including the introduction of training sessions currently underway and being run by a life-long player and skills developer from Stratford.

"One of the biggest things we did was have a player-development position on the executive. Ian McKichan has taken the lead on both coach and player development, and he now has a committee which drives that player development and, from that, was born these development camps that we're running. Matt Simons has done a goalie clinic for the last couple of years and now he's part of our player-development committee for the goalkeepers."

Brad Wittig, who joined the executive earlier this year, helped introduce the development camps led by Eddie McKenna and believes they offer tremendous value for local soccer players.

"It's a great opportunity for the competitive side of soccer here in town to take that next step in terms of the skill level of our players," Wittig said. "It adds good value to their training and the overall development opportunities of the program which haven't been here before."

Wittig explained why McKenna is a great resource for St. Marys soccer players.

"They're being given access to someone who has been an Academy player throughout his youth and played competitively in his adult life. I think the structural training he's had combined with his ability to present and demonstrate what he knows make this a great opportunity for our players. He's got an ability to make a connection with the kids and that different voice will be a bonus for the coaches and the kids."

As for Brown, he believes the camps will boost the excitement of local soccer players.

"They are getting kids more excited about the game. It allows kids to learn from an instructor that specializes in this, and it allows our coaches to watch an instructor who does this for a living. We're all volunteers, same as every other minor sport in town. Everybody's working full-time. Everybody has their lives and still, the number of hours put into all volunteer sports is incredible. But it's always a great opportunity to have the

professionals come in so we can watch what they do and apply that to our own teams and practices."

When asked about the motivations at the core of the minor-soccer organization, Brown explained how the youth playing on the pitch are always front and centre in everyone's mind.

"We're getting people on board who are passionate about the kids. It's cliché to say, but it's not about the name on the back of the jersey, it's about the crest on the front of the jersey. We rebranded to become the Storm and came up with a new logo to make it a little more fresh and current. Now, we've got kids buying Storm shirts, Storm windsuits and Storm hair bandanas. Seeing the hoodies, t-shirts and the like being sold at Dunny's is awesome."

"There is now a group of executives who are all rowing in the same direction. They all have a passion for the kids, first and foremost, and then they all have a passion for the game, obviously. For me, it's always been about the kids and how we get these kids having fun, out with their friends and on the field running around."

Above all else, Brown is thrilled about how Minor Soccer is now thriving to the point of having games going on almost every day.

"Five years ago, the schedules were Monday to Thursday and that was it. There was nothing on the weekends. Now that we've grown so much, we've got kids on the fields almost seven days a week. It's awesome. There were always the kids in town, but now we've got them out playing minor sports. Regardless of what sport they're playing, we want this to be a town full of athletes. It's a sight to be seen standing up at the top of the hill at Meadowridge on a Sunday and just watching how many kids are on the fields."



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The St. Marys Bowling Lanes hosted their end-of-year YBC Awards day last Saturday. Pictured from left to right are Erin Slaney, Leia Slaney, and Landon Ball, all of whom won awards for excellent attendance. Ball also captured the award for Most Improved Bowler.



The youth bowlers of St. Marys in the different age groups were recognized at the conclusion of the awards banquet for everyone's season-high score. Each received a trophy for bearing the highest score they recorded during the season.



Each age category had Bowler of the Year awards handed out. Pictured from left are Brendan King and Kinsley Kusluk, who won in the Bowlasauras division.



Pictured from left are Aisla Fisher and Jase Robertson, the winners of the Bowler of the Year awards in the Bantam category.



Pictured from left are Natalie McKeen and Nathan McKeen, who were the Bowler of the Year award winners for the Junior age bracket.



Pictured from left are Rory Brockman and Garrett Steffler who claimed the Bowler of the Year awards for the Senior division. Photos by Spencer Seymour

SPORTS

DCVI Sr. Girls open season with home win over Listowel

By Spencer Seymour

The St. Marys DCVI Senior Girls soccer team began their regular-season schedule last Tuesday when they hosted teams from St. Michael Catholic Secondary School and Listowel, and came away with their first victory of the year.

Their first game of the day saw the Salukis take on St. Mike's and the tight contest ultimately went in favour of the visitors from Stratford, with St. Mike's winning 1-0.

Head Coach KayLee Sykes told the Independent she saw positive trends developing during the game against St. Mike's that were crucial in finding victory later in the day.

"Our game against St. Mike's was their first of the season on a full-size field," said Sykes. "They worked really hard right until the final whistle. I think the team was playing as if they were on the smaller fields we practiced on. I would say, about three-quarters of the way through the game, they started to use the size of the field to their advantage and I think that carried over when it came time to play Listowel."



Kiara McGregor scores a goal during the St. Marys DCVI Senior Girls soccer team's game against Listowel. Photo by Spencer Seymour

A few hours later, the Salukis were back on the pitch taking on Listowel and, with goals from Sydney Grant and Kiara McGregor and a much more well-rounded performance from the team as a whole, DCVI came away with a 2-1 victory.

Sykes noted how the team's rapidly growing chemistry was on full display in the second half of their double-

header.

"Against Listowel, they started to work more as a team and were getting a better idea of where to go to receive a pass," Sykes explained. "They were communicating with each other more and going for rebounds off of teammates' shots. I think once they started to take a second to think and got more comfortable with what they could ex-

pect from their teammates, they were able to work as a unified front, which we were missing for part of the first game. It was truly a team effort. Every player on the team brought something to the game that helped us get the win."

According to Sykes, her team can achieve great things this season.

"I think we've got a great season ahead of us and I know that this team is dedicated to working hard to get ahead and make it as far as possible. This team works well together. They get along on and off the field, which definitely helps their game. I know the team wants to get a banner to hang in the gym. Whether that's the Huron-Perth Championship, WOSSAA, or OFSAA, the team is dedicated to pushing themselves. I'm hoping that, as the season progresses, the team continues to get more comfortable with what they can anticipate from their teammates and uses this to their advantage. I want it to be second nature for the team to have some set plays that they can use confidently on the field."

Lincs to meet Cyclones in Sutherland Cup Final

Continued from page 14

ing a goal by Bensen Moore just 37 seconds into the game. Tate Brenner scored just under five minutes into the period to extend the Listowel lead to two. The Cyclones outshot St. Marys 17-8 in the opening frame, which Bradley felt was corrected somewhat in the second before a parade to the penalty box in the third.

"We got off to a slow start and then picked it up in the second, but then we got into quite a bit of penalty trouble and then the game was over. That's one game that I think you try to wash your hands of a little bit and just focus on the first game of the

best-of-seven coming up."

The last four goals of the game all came on powerplays including the only tally of the second stanza scored by Jordan Alexander. In the third, Noah VandenBrink tipped a point shot home for the Lincolns' only goal of the contest, while Jack O'Donnell and Ben MacRobbie each added a goal for Listowel.

One potential factor for the Lincolns' less-than-stellar game after playing some of their best hockey these playoffs when the pressure was highest was the relative lack of pressure given that the game's only stake was home-ice advantage for the Suther-

land Cup Final.

"When you've got something to play for, whether it's your hockey lives or your place in the standings or a spot in the finals, motivation is going to be different for everybody," Bradley recognized. "On that particular night, both teams wanted home-ice but Listowel showed they wanted it more."

Bradley explained the focal points his team has as they make final preparations for their final playoff series of the season.

"We're going have to make a couple of adjustments. They were getting onto our powerplay break-out a few times so we had to switch it a cou-

ple of times and it seemed to work. Going into this series, it's just about confirming that we're prepared for every situation with options that we can turn to if one thing isn't working.

"We know we have to play with desire," Bradley continued. "Against a team like Listowel, you're not going to have time to settle in. You've got to be prepared to play 60 minutes every night and make sure your game is in order while you're doing it. There are things to key in on with the group, but mostly it's just about making sure our game is in the right spot for the biggest series of our lives."



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ARTS & CULTURE

The Arts – An Economic Engine

By James Giles, edited by Alice Rixson

All forms of art are expressions of ideas and emotions be they through the medium of painting, sculpture, film, dance, writing, photography, or theatre. The Arts serve as a unifying force, bringing diverse communities together and cultivating social cohesion. Festivals and exhibitions provide platforms for those of various backgrounds and cultures to converge and celebrate shared interests.

The Arts impact the financial life of urban and rural areas nationwide and contribute to the provincial and municipal economies directly and indirectly. Thriving cultural life generates income, jobs, tax revenue and profiles communities.

For more than 50 years, the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) has collected data on the return on Ontario's investment in the Arts and its impact of Ontario's arts sector. The OAC reports that arts and culture sector in the province represents \$28.7 billion or 3.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 301,495 jobs. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Arts, culture and heritage improve the ability of municipal governments to influence local economic development by attracting and retaining a skilled and talented workforce." The majority of Ontarians agree that arts

and cultural activities are important to a community's economic well-being.

A 2017 report funded by the OAC revealed that Arts and Culture tourists have triple the economic impact compared to other tourists. There was a total of \$11.4 billion spent on arts and culture, with \$5.7 billion direct value-added to Ontario, which directly supported more than 77,000 full time jobs. Of those Ontarians surveyed 80% agree that an active local arts scene helps communities attract business while 93% of them believe that arts activities help enrich the quality of their lives.

For some, it may come as a surprise that 86% of Ontario residents attend live arts events or performances, such as music concerts, plays or visual arts exhibits, at least once a year. Many include St. Marys' neighbour Stratford as their destination for live arts.

The Stratford Festival was founded 72 years ago to provide stimulus to a struggling local economy. Many questioned Tom Patterson's vision that a Shakespearean festival could revive an economy. However, the Stratford Festival has since welcomed more than 29.7 million visitors and sold more than \$1 billion worth of tickets since its first season in the summer of 1953.

This past season, the not-for-profit charitable organization commissioned its first economic impact study since 2017 to gain an accurate picture of just how much it contributes to the economy of its home city, province, and country. The analysis pegged the economic impact to the city, province, and country at \$276.7 million in 2023. The Festival supports 1,466 full-time-equivalent jobs, 1,038 of those in Stratford and the total of local wages and salaries is approximately \$95.3 million.

In a recent interview, Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce operations manager Shannon Stewart stressed, "The recent economic impact study vividly illustrates the Festival's monumental contribution to our local economy, underscoring its status as a cornerstone of our community's prosperity. By boosting sectors from hospitality to retail through visitor spending, the Stratford Festival not only enriches our cultural landscape but also drives significant economic activity (and) exemplifies the powerful energy between the arts and economic development."

Sadly, in many communities, The Arts programs are frequently the first on the budget chopping block. Fortunately, St. Marys offers a wealth of culture and heritage opportunities

including regular art exhibitions at the St. Marys Station Gallery, historical features at the St. Marys Museum and Archives, along with summer concerts and other seasonal events.

Luckily, as with the Station Gallery, St. Marys has in its community several prominent Arts supporters. Setting the example and heading the list is our municipality, followed closely by numerous local businesses, a service club, and a number of individuals.

Station Gallery Curator Cameron Porteous proudly boasts that individual art exhibits are attracting about 350 viewers, a number he expects will be surpassed in 2024. He estimates that up to 85% of these visitors are from out of town and the Station's guest book indicates they come from all Canada's provinces and territories.

Forming a group of like-minded and innovative people as forerunners to seek out new and innovative artistic ventures will continue to breathe life and potential prosperity into our community. Let us ensure as a community that The Arts continue to be an economic engine in St. Marys, supported and funded well into the future.

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COMMUNITY

St. Marys youth participate in educational expedition to Peru

By Niko Taylor

Lined with towering mountains and full of vibrant colour, food and music, the country of Peru unfolds a breathtaking land of wonders to its visitors.

Over March break, I had the opportunity to embark on a service-learning trip to Cusco, Peru, alongside a group of youth from St. Marys and dedicated chaperones Nicholas Seebach and Jessica Chateauvert. The trip was led by the MEDLIFE movement, a non-profit organization with the objective of raising awareness of and improving access to health care, medicine and education across low-income communities in Africa and Latin America.

After a couple of days of adjusting to new environments and the strikingly high altitude of Cusco, a reality tour began which exposed us to the many barriers, inequalities and issues faced by those living in rural, low-income communities outside of the city – one of the most prevalent being health-care and education disparities. For those seeking health care living outside of Cusco, it means travelling for hours, even days, solely to reach a medical professional. Additionally, we gained insight from a MEDLIFE leader on how it is incredibly difficult to study medicine and become certified as a physician in Peru as tuition is exceedingly costly and university acceptance rates remain disproportionately out of reach.

To assist those directly affected by these issues, two days of our trip were dedicated to assisting with mobile health-care clinics, where we had the opportunity to work alongside local medical professionals consulting and treating patients located in rural communities outside of Cusco. The clinics consist of a series of stations and specialties including triage, hygiene/toothbrushing, education, dental, pharmacy and OB/GYN. In total, we were able to see more



Group members pose prior to entering the sacred Macchu Picchu site, an ancient Incan city set high in the Andes. Contributed photo

than 200 patients during the clinic days.

The impact of this service-learning trip went beyond providing medical treatment. The opportunity to connect with locals and gain insights on their ways of life, culture, struggles, but also their resilience, allowed me to recognize the vastly different lives we live, but also how we were able to form meaningful relationships despite language barriers.

Some particularly memorable moments of this include playing tag and other games with local elementary school children on the mobile-clinic days, as well as the opportunity to partake in a scavenger hunt around Cusco, where we were educated on the history of the Incas by local people.

On the last full day of our adventures, we travelled on one final bus ride through the mountains to another rural community. With a beautiful view

of mountains and cattle in the distance, we spent the morning preparing soil and planting a variety of produce to build greenhouses for two rural families, which will provide a stable and healthy source of food and nutrition for locals. Following the completion of the project, the community generously thanked us with a local celebration where we paraded around a tree adorned with gifts as we took turns swinging an axe at its trunk (almost like a pinata and Christmas tree combined). It was during this celebration when I enjoyed one of my most memorable moments of being decorated in colourful, traditional clothing by the women of the community.

As we journey back home with a lifetime of memories and gratitude for the opportunity to visit the beautiful country of Peru, we must continue to protect access to healthcare and education one clinic at a time.

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, May 3

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog/sausage lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Listowel Cyclones at Steve Kerr Memorial Complex - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 4

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon
- Parks Lawn Bowling Club open house - 9 a.m.
- St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary sale of books, bags & bling at Thames Valley Community Centre, 77-30 Ann St - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Celebration of Life for Marie Cortez at the Legion - 2 to 4 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.

Sunday, May 5

- Firefighters Breakfast at the Fire Hall - 8 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Listowel Cyclones at the PRC - 2:30 p.m.

Monday, May 6

- Community Dinner at St. Marys United Church - 5 p.m., Sponsored by the Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, May 7

- Stonetown Travel info night on Rome & Amalfi Coast trip at 150 Queen St E - 6:30 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Listowel Cyclones at Steve Kerr Memorial Complex - 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 8

- Free Kids Bowling at St. Marys Bowling Lanes - 6 to 8 p.m., Sponsored by Optimist Club of Downie, Please pre-register at stonetownbowlinglanes@gmail.com or call 226-661-1100

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COMMUNITY

Parks Lawn Bowling hosting open houses



With their season on the horizon, the Parks Lawn Bowling Club is inviting you to come out and sample the game of Lawn Bowling with three open houses. The open houses will all be hosted at the Club's pitch at Milt Dunnell Field. The first two sessions will run on back-to-back Saturdays, first on May 4 and then on May 11, both from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. That will be followed by a third open house on Wednesday, May 15, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The open houses are open to those who have played before and those who are interested in trying the game for the first time. Attendees should wear flat shoes.

Kirkton - Woodham Optimist Club Fish Fry



The Kirkton-Woodham Optimist Club held their Annual "All you can Eat" Fish Fry on Sunday, April 28. Over 900 tickets were sold for this very popular event. It is always held on the fourth Sunday in April every year. Photo by Nancy Bickell

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HISTORY

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Building With Brick

By Mary Smith

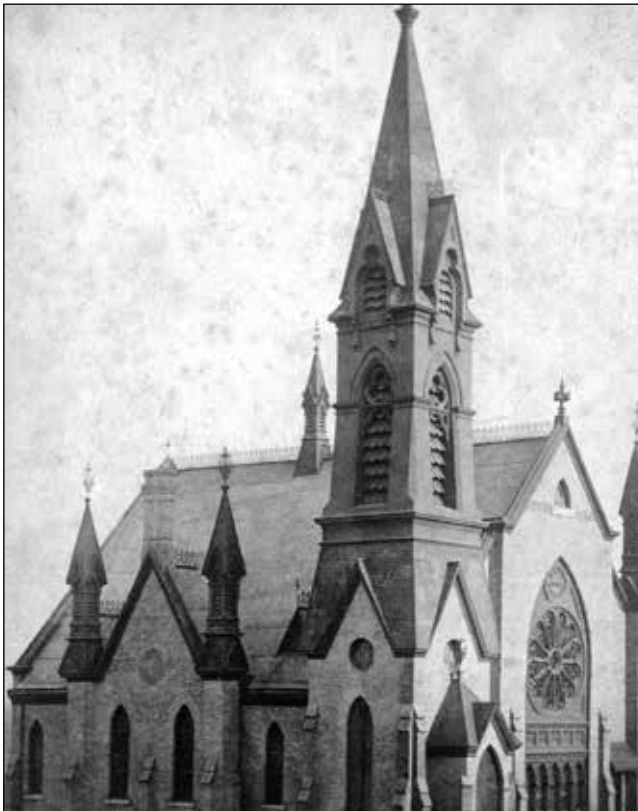
St. Marys is known as the Stonetown. Certainly the lovely limestone buildings in the town core not only attract the admiration of visitors but also give pleasure to local residents. But while limestone creates a strong impression, St. Marys also has many fine houses, two historic churches, and a number of 19th century commercial blocks built with brick. When the first settlers arrived in St. Marys, of course they constructed shelters for themselves and their families from the materials at hand. As they began to clear space in the forest, the logs and branches from the felled trees were used to construct temporary shanties. Trim log cabins came next. Then, as soon as sawmills were established to produce boards and structural timbers, frame buildings followed.

Those in St. Marys who wanted to move towards even more permanent buildings looked to another material at hand: limestone close to the surface to be quarried along the banks of the Thames River or cut right out of the riverbed. Thomas Rogers, born in 1847, remembered when he was a little boy watching men using pry bars to extract large limestone slabs from the river and oxen dragging the stone to the construction sites. People arriving in Canada brought brick-making technology with them. But in the very early days of St. Marys, brick buildings were rare. Although there were apparently a few small local claybeds, there were no sources of adequate brick-making materials close at hand.

One of the questions asked on the early Canada censuses as a measure of the country's progress was the type of dwelling for each household: brick, stone, frame, log, shanty or other kind of residence. In 1851, the people in the small settlement of St. Marys were counted as part of the entire township of Blanshard. The population of the township (plus St. Marys) was 2,780, the average household containing six people. There were 35 households living in frame houses, 11 in stone houses with another seven houses made of roughcast (probably plaster over the original building material.) The 460 remaining households lived in either log houses or shanties. There were no brick houses in Blanshard at the time of the 1851 census.

By 1861, this had changed. St. Marys had attained official village status and was separate from Blanshard in the census. The village's population was 2,728: within a few years, it would attain the status of a town. In general, the buildings within the village were now more refined. According to the census, there were 200 frame houses and 90 built of stone. These were mostly single-storey buildings but there were a number of storey-and-a-half and a smattering of two-storey houses. More than 100 households were still living in log houses and 50 were still in log shanties. Brick houses remained scarce – there were only ten of them in the village. A number of these early brick houses are still standing, recognized by the pleasant reddish tinge to their yellow bricks. The colour is attractive but these old bricks had not been fired at the high temperatures that later kilns were able to produce. As a result, they were softer and less weather-resistant. Some homeowners painted their early brick houses to try to keep the bricks from deteriorating.

By the later decades of the 19th century, building in brick became much more feasible for St. Marys and area. Large brickyards could be found in nearby communities such as Elginfield, just 14 miles to the west. The 1879 Belden Historical Atlas shows a brickyard just south of Stratford, on the east side of Highway 7. But although building bricks were produced relative-



The congregation of Knox Presbyterian Church built this beautiful white brick building on Church Street South in 1879-1880. From the St. Marys Museum's historic image collection.

ly nearby, it was still a major challenge to transport them to the right location. Old photographs show that many farm families lived in their houses before their exteriors were completely finished. The outer walls were covered in wood planks but a bricking ledge can be seen on the concrete or stone foundation. When there was enough time and money, these exterior walls were covered with a brick veneer. This not only improved the appearance of the house but also made it more weather-proof. For many farmers, winter was the season for drawing bricks to their farmsteads.

In a 1980 interview for an oral history project at the St. Marys Museum, Elizabeth Marriott Constable (1905-1997) recalled how her father, George Marriott, described bringing bricks from the Crediton area in Huron County in the 1870s for the farmhouses all along the Woodham Road in Blanshard Township. "My father was one of the ones that drew the brick from Crediton, I think it was. They drew the brick for all those houses toward this side of Woodham. They'd get three or four neighbours together and they'd go off in the wintertime with sleighs. Of course they would have to leave early in the morning. That would be a long drive for horses and sleighs. They had to stop part of the way home somewhere. There were hotels everywhere in those days. They had to stop to water their horses and feed them. Then they'd go into the hotel and raise the devil!"

Apparently, although drawing bricks from Crediton involved hard work for the men and their horses, there was an aspect of that trip to anticipate with pleasure – although maybe not for the owner of the crossroads hotel! The bricks were stockpiled at each farmstead to be laid when the weather was warmer. Houses built in the late 19th century from the yellow-coloured brick from Huron County can still be seen on a drive between St. Marys and the lake.

Of course, the arrival of the railway made the delivery of bricks much easier. Railway carloads could

be shipped from brickworks in the Toronto area at a reasonable cost even before the famous Don Valley brickworks began production in 1889. In 1879, J. D. Moore, a prominent businessman and a member of the building committee for the new Knox Presbyterian Church in St. Marys, undertook the task of finding the best bricks for the best price for this important project. His committee finally decided to order from a Mr. Stevenson in Drumbo. On April 1, 1879, J. D. Moore wrote the following letter that included orders for both inside and outside brick. Outside brick had a superior glaze finish and was suitable for the outer surface of double or triple brick walls. At that time bricks were priced by the thousand. Mr. Moore, the master of the run-on sentence, wrote:

"At a committee meeting last night we accepted your offer \$5.75 F.O.B. Cars in Drumbo, half inside & half outside brick I expect we will require between 150,000 and 200,000 according to how much of the Church we finish you understand you have only the committee to look to for your pay & when you ship your first car, start at your best Kiln & put in all outside Brick as the first Car is generally very closely inspected by all parties & I wish to make a good impression to start with for both your interest & my own as we were offered brick cheaper from Park Hill."

Mr. Stevenson of Drumbo might have been hesitant about the terms of this order. But the brick was shipped, inspected and eventually paid for. J. D. Moore's church is shown in the photograph with this week's column. Knox Presbyterian Church was an impressive building with a graceful spire, steep gabled roof with cresting, and a large rose window in the east wall. The St. Marys Argus called it "a beautiful and unique edifice, one which does immense credit to the liberality and taste of the members of the church." Unfortunately, this beautiful church was part of the St. Marys landscape for only a few years. It was heavily damaged by fire in 1891. The members of the congregation rallied to rebuild, choosing again white brick for the second Knox Church on that site.




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The Rinky Dinks celebrate 75 years



Pictured in back row from left are Rinky Dink Euchre Club members Johanne Smith, Marlyn Brady, Pat Redman, Berniece Harris and Joyce Robinson. Seated around the table from left are members Linda Davis, Gayle Ivins, Yvonne Elliott, Helen Hartwick, Verna Davis and Louise Egan. Absent when this photo was taken was Dorothy Elliott. Contributed photo

By Nancy Abra

In October 1948, 12 young, stay-at-home moms from the village of Thorndale decided they needed a little social time out so they formed a euchre club.

One of these ladies' husbands made comment about this newly formed group, saying "this looks like a group of Rinky Dinks." And from that time forward, they were called the Rinky Dinks Euchre Club. Over the years, members have enjoyed getting together for social time and playing euchre on the second and fourth Thursday each month from October to April.

Last September, the Rinky Dinks started their 2023-2024 season with a special float in the Thorndale Fall Fair parade to celebrate 75 years of their club. Over the course of the fall and winter, they meet regularly enjoying their euchre games and fellowship. Last month, the Rinky Dinks gathered at the Nissouri Manor for an afternoon of euchre and a special luncheon before breaking for the summer to resume in the fall.

Even though members have come and gone, the fun and camaraderie of this club has prevailed, with plans to continue.

Women's Institute Middlesex District meeting hosted by Thorndale chapter



Pictured in back row from left are Thorndale Women's Institute (WI) members Ruth Gourley, Berniece Harris, Corrie Sireon and Annie VanHooydonk. Pictured in front row from left are president of Middlesex District Marilyn Howey from the Harrietsville WI, Thorndale WI president Lorraine Schertz and Middlesex District secretary-treasurer Nancy Urquhart from the Crumlin WI. Contributed photo

By Nancy Abra

Last month, the Thorndale Women's Institute (WI) hosted the Middlesex District Women's Institute' regional spring luncheon meeting at Thorndale United Church with clubs from the Middlesex District consisting of Crumlin, Harrietsville, South Lobo and Thorndale in attendance.

After the luncheon, guest speaker Jen

Parson from The Local Community Food Centre in Stratford gave a presentation.

The focus for the WI branches and its membership for 2024 is "reducing food waste." In Parson's presentation, she explained The Local Community Food Centre is a good example of working to eliminate food waste in their education and services and, most important, for the community and its support.

Thorndale and Area Horticultural Society update

By Liz Iglesias

At our meeting April 10, Jennie Girard spoke to us on native bees, including bumble bees.

Girard, a lifelong gardener, landscape designer and lecturer is passionate about all bees, as we could see by her enthusiasm and delight while sharing her experiences with us. We learned how to create small spaces in our gardens for the bees to thrive and were surprised at the many ways they inhabit our plants.

The changing environment is affecting their survival, and many species are endangered. Her photos of the bees were

beautiful, and I believe we all came away with a different opinion of bees. Thank you, Jennie.

Our next meeting is May 8 at 7:30 p.m. Dr. Andrew Peregrine is our guest speaker and he will speak about "Lyme Disease: What is happening in Ontario?" Also, mark your calendars on May 11 for the Thorndale Horticultural Society annual plant sale at Thorndale Farm Supplies from 10 a.m. to noon. If you have some plants to donate to our sale, please drop off plants between 9 and 10 a.m. Another special date on our Thorndale Horticultural Society's calendar is our annual Green Thumb Garden Tour June

23 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Adult passports are \$10 each and children 12 years and under are free when accompanied by an adult. Passports will be available at our May meeting, the plant sale and the Cenotaph on the day of the event.

Our Thorndale Horticultural Society meets on the second Wednesday of every month, except in January and July, at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre. New members are encouraged to join. Guests are always welcome.

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COLUMN

HOSTING UKRAINE: The Rotary Club

By VJ Knutson

Lesia Danyliuk and Tetiana Romaniuk both presented at the Rotary Club of St. Marys' dinner last Monday. Their talks included images of their beloved cities in Ukraine and everyone in the room could feel the loss behind their pride.

The Rotary Club has been sponsoring the English Support lessons since March of 2023, and Linda Schulyer and I thought it appropriate that these two women demonstrate their progress by sharing a bit of their life stories. They had attended a meeting with me in January of 2023, where I shared my involvement helping Ukrainians. At that time, neither woman felt comfortable with the English language.

So, you can imagine how proud we all were when these two faced an audience and presented their moving stories. Lesia, never one to complain, told of her decision to leave Ukraine, and short life in Poland until the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel program opened up. Her presentation included her many publications, and her love of architecture, history, and the performing arts. Such a contrast to her present life.

Tania also spoke about her beautiful city, and her many years spent building a career. She talked about the miracle of birthing twins and how



Rotary Club of St Marys' dinner.

she and her husband had so many dreams. The start of the war, for her family, meant separation. Tania and her three children fled to Poland, while Mykola stayed behind. She told of how the twins would cling to one another with terror when the sirens rang out. They too applied for the CUAET program to come to Canada, but a clerical error with her daughter's name meant a delay, and Tania would make the decision to return to Ukraine to reunite with the father of her children, so that they could all travel to Canada together.

As Diane O'Shea rose to thank the guest speakers, we were all feeling the emotion. Tania and Lesia are just two in the close to 300,000 Ukrainians who have chosen to relocate to Canada; a tiny fraction of the 18 million displaced by this war. Their bravery, determination, and resilience is deeply moving.

There was more to the Monday night dinner, prepared by the way, by Tania. The Rotary Club of St Marys, who helped clothe our first wave of families, who initiated the Saturday English classes with Ukrainian teacher

Tetiana Pipus, and whose support meant ongoing resources for our other volunteer teachers: Barb Reinwald and Sonia Waind; as well as much needed help for accessing health care for two of our newcomers; chose to honour me with the Paul Harris Fellow award. I am humbled and grateful to be acknowledged in such a prestigious way, and will wear the honour on behalf of all the volunteers who have helped accomplish great things on behalf of the Ukrainian families in our midst.

Thank you to Linda Schulyer for nominating me and to President Mark Oliver and other members of the executive for supporting the nomination.

Tatiana Pipus also sends her thanks and appreciation to the Rotary Club. When she applied for the position of ESL teacher in March of 2023, she was alone with her six-year-old daughter, wondering how she would make ends meet. "You gave me a chance to survive," she wrote recently. The Saturday class has wound down now, and Tetiana is now fully employed in London, where she has been joined by her husband.

A new Saturday English support class has started up in Stratford. It is open to all. Email me for more information.

Until next time.

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



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Sincerely
Dorothy

Dear What To Do
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If a vertical crack starts to widen or turn black that is concerning. Also, if water is leaking out of the crack,

or if there is a lot of weight involved, there definitely is a concern and danger of structural failure. Horizontal cracks on the other hand are very dangerous, and the tree should be removed immediately as it almost always leads to failure.

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

WHAT'S FOR DINNER: Making use of that family rhubarb patch



By Lauren Eedy

Rhubarb season officially commences in May!

A family member provided me with a 24-year-old clipping from my Grandma Dorothy Eedy's 'Eat at Our House' column, and I thought I should share her recipes here.

Growing up, we always had a patch of rhubarb at the family homestead, so this was a constant presence in the kitchen from May through July and often after that, provided you cut and freeze. Rhubarb is also a rich source of nutrients such as vitamin K, C, A folate, riboflavin, niacin and magnesium.

I am no longer so lucky to have

a patch of my own, but I do have wonderful neighbours who don't mind sharing their yearly bounty. Alternatively, you will start seeing rhubarb at both country markets and in grocery stores very soon.

Rhubarb Crisp

The following is a change to traditional rhubarb crisp as the brown-sugar-oatmeal topping is replaced with bread-crumbs.

Serves: 6

- 1 package frozen or 1 lb fresh rhubarb, cut up
- 2 tbsp orange juice
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp grated orange rind
- 3/4 cup white breadcrumbs, dried out in a 200° F oven
- Pinch of salt
- 4 tbsp butter

Method:

- Place cut up rhubarb in a shallow casserole. Pour orange juice over. Mix half the sugar and rind together and sprinkle over.

- Mix bread with the rest of the sugar, salt and butter to make crumbs. Spread over rhubarb.

- Bake at 350° F for about 35 minutes if frozen fruit is used and 60 minutes if fresh is used. The top crust should be golden brown.

Rhubarb Cake

A simple cake in which the moisture of the rhubarb is absorbed by the batter. This cake can be made two days in advance of serving.

Serves: 12

- 1/4 cup butter (room temperature)
- 1 1/2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 4 cups rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 1/2-inch pieces.
- 1 cup sour cream

- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg, freshly grated if possible

Method:

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter a 9x13-inch pan and set aside.

- Beat butter and brown sugar until well mixed. Add egg and vanilla, mixing until combined.

- Sift together flour, baking soda and salt. Stir in butter-and-sugar mixture followed by rhubarb and sour cream. Make sure it is well mixed.

- This mixture will appear dry. Spread as evenly as possible into prepared pan. Sprinkle with sugar and nutmeg and bake 40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Let cool and cut into squares.

Quick Pickled Rhubarb

This comes together in less than 20 minutes and is super versatile. Add it to cheese plates, use it as a relish for

grilled steaks and pork chops, with yogurt and honey or top a fresh salad.

12 oz of tender red rhubarb cut into 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch thick pieces

3 medium cloves of garlic smashed

1 1/4 cups distilled white vinegar

1/3 cup sugar

1 1/4 tsp kosher salt

1 tsp whole black peppercorns

1 tsp yellow mustard seeds

2 star anise pods

Method:

- Fill a quart jar with rhubarb and garlic; set aside.

- Add remaining ingredients to a saucepan and bring to a boil. Immediately and carefully pour boiling liquid over the rhubarb. Let cool completely, then cover and refrigerate at least 24 hours, up to 1 month. Pickled flavour and softened texture will increase with time.

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Jeff and Sylvie

Riddles

- How do you make a hot dog stand? **Steal its chair.**
- What did the mother broom say to the baby broom? **It's time to go to sweep.**
- What do bees do with their honey? **They cell it.**
- Why was Cinderella thrown off the basketball team? **She ran away from the ball.**
- What do you call a pig that does karate? **A pork chop.**
- What do you call a song sung in an automobile? **A cartoon**
- What do you call the best butter on the farm? **A goat**
- Why did the Vampire want to get the St. Marys Independent? **He heard it had great circulation.**
- What is a vampire's favourite holiday? **Fangsgiving.**
- What is a ghost's favourite mode of transportation? **A scareplane.**

- Word Search -



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APRIL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

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

Word List

- Carbon tax
- Solar eclipse
- OJ Simpson
- NHL to Utah
- Iran vs Israel
- Lincolns win title
- Trump on trial
- Thames cleanup
- Volunteer week
- Raise your vibe
- Leafs vs Bruins



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

How do you make an egg laugh?



Tell it a yolk

Rosalie Mills (4)

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Our Pet of the Week is Emmie Grace, a seven-year-old West Highland Terrier. She is the little love of St. Marys Vet Clinic Manager, Shandra's life. She is a ray of sunshine to all she meets. Emmie often visits the clinic and gives Ace a little attention competition!



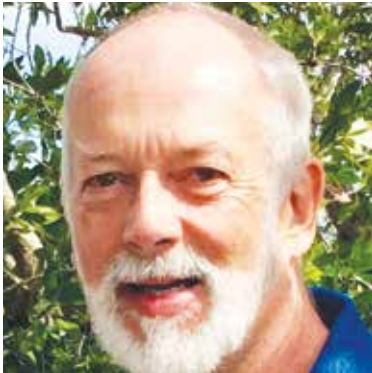
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COLUMN

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Working to tell the truth at Mount Vernon



By Paul Knowles

It's a stereotype, but one that contains a fair amount of truth; Canadians and Americans are very different from one another. I feel that distance has increased over the course of my lifetime, although that may or not actually be the case.

At any rate, we certainly seem to deal with the problematic issues of our histories quite differently. Here in Canada, we have seen powerful push-back against putting historic figures on pedestals. In the U.S., the misdeeds of historic American heroes have often been swept under the carpet.

Or maybe less than I thought.

So, when we were invited to visit Mount Vernon, I agreed with some considerable trepidation. Mount Vernon was the home of George Washington, hero of the American Revolution and the first President of the United States. He was also a lifelong slave owner. So, which Washington would we meet as we visited his estate in Virginia, only minutes from the United States capital that bears his name?

It turned out, both of them.

And that openness to often ugly realities turned my skepticism into a forthright recommendation that Canadians should, indeed, visit Mount Vernon. Go for the history, for the honest attempt to deal with a horrendous heritage, and for the sheer beauty of the place on the banks of the Potomac River.

The site is huge. You can walk as much as you want – though there is also a shuttle service from the lowest parts of the estate – near the wharf on the river, to the high ground where the house is situated. The highlight may be the house itself, which was occupied by George and Martha Washington for almost 45 years and contains authentic and often original furniture. But there are many outbuildings, some housing farm animals and some with interpreters like the working blacksmith.

There are gardens, a demonstration farm, Washington's tomb and, close by, the Slave Memorial and Cemetery.

I say the house – accessible via scheduled tours – is the highlight but, in truth, the real high point for us was in a small outbuilding where a wonderful actor in costume and character as Martha Washington, regaled us with the story of the place, added an unending supply of personal anecdotes about her "husband" and confronted the terrible reality of being a slave owner.

She told us Washington had personally owned 123 enslaved people at the time

of his death. Mount Vernon guides share the information that the phrase, "enslaved people," has been adopted wherever possible in an effort to acknowledge their humanity. He reportedly treated them humanely and Washington's will freed all his slaves.

Martha honestly noted the irony in this – a man who had lived his entire life owning enslaved people finally set them free only after his death. In fact, they were to remain in slavery until Martha died, but she freed them early on Jan. 1, 1801, just over a year after George Washington's passing. Martha died in 1802.

And the story is even more complicated because there were actually 317 enslaved men, women and children at Mount Vernon in 1799. Those not owned directly by George Washington were attached to Martha, but she did not own them. She was a widow when she married George, and the enslaved people remained the property of her husband's estate, managed by her, but leaving her no authority to free the slaves.

She appealed to her grandchildren to set them free, but they refused. George even tried to buy them from the estate, but that effort failed. The majority of Mount Vernon's enslaved people remained enslaved after both George and Martha were gone.

All of this is acknowledged at the Slave Memorial and Cemetery – to me, the most moving site on the property.

Surprisingly, Mount Ver-



The striking front view of George Washington's Mount Vernon home. Photos by Paul Knowles

non is not a government-owned-and-operated place. In the mid-1800s, with the place falling into disrepair, it was purchased and restored by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, which continues to own the estate and receives no government funding.

This Ladies' Association made an historic decision in 1929. A marker was placed on the property in the location of the slave cemetery. It honoured an unknown number of enslaved people – certainly well over 100 – who were buried in the area in unmarked graves.

In 1983, the present memorial was added as "a lasting tribute to the memory of those individuals who lived and toiled in bondage here."

The whole of Mount Vernon is fascinating. And yes, you learn a lot about the first president of the United States, the man

who led the American forces to victory in the Revolutionary War. But you also learn so much about the issues that have caused deep divisions in that country, from then to now.

It's a place where there is at least a sincere attempt being made to tell the whole of the story. And it's also an entirely beautiful destination where visitors feel free to stroll, to relax on chairs on Washington's porch or on the nearby lawn, and enjoy the striking view of the Potomac River.

In short, it is very much worth a visit.

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



The Slave Memorial and Cemetery at Mount Vernon.



A blacksmith at work in one of the many outbuildings on the property.

OBITUARY

Squire



Betty (Mawhinney) of St. Marys and formerly of Granton and London.

Sadly, our mom, Betty Squire of St. Marys passed away peacefully at the age of 95 on April 23, 2024. Betty was an only child of Jim and Rotha Mawhinney. She will be lovingly remembered by us four girls, Sharon (Wilson) George, Marion (Jim) Blake, Colleen (Mike) Wraith, and Valerie (Chris) Bradley and her many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren.

Our Dad, Harry Squire, preceded her in death in 1999. Never too old to fall in love again, she and her companion Jerry Stapleton enjoyed several years together until sadly Jerry passed away in 2017. Mom enjoyed watching all sports on TV but was a faithful Maple Leafs, Blue Jays, and London Knights fan. She was never one for sentiment and had a knack for telling it like it is.

One might call her feisty. We loved and will never forget her tenacity, wit, and amazing sense of humour. Our family sends a special thank you to Dr. Burley and the staff at Kingsway Lodge for their care and compassion. In keeping with Mom's wishes a private family graveside service was held at Granton Cemetery. Haskett Funeral Home, LUCAN entrusted with arrangements. Donations to Kingsway Lodge would be appreciated by the family. Condolences may be forwarded through www.haskettfh.com.

Our Dad, Harry Squire, preceded her in death in 1999. Never too old to fall in love again, she and her companion Jerry Stapleton enjoyed several years together until sadly Jerry passed away in 2017. Mom enjoyed watching all sports on TV but was a faithful Maple Leafs, Blue Jays, and London Knights fan. She was never one for sentiment and had a knack for telling it like it is.

THANK YOU

Bickell



A Special Thank you to all our family and friends for making our 50th Wedding Anniversary very special.

Thank you to everyone that came to help us celebrate and those who made phone calls, sent messages, texts, gave cards and gifts and all those that helped in so many ways.

We love you all!

OBITUARY

Facey



Reta Ila Facey passed away at St. Marys Memorial Hospital on April 26, 2024 at the age of 92. Predeceased by her husband Ray Facey (2021), married for 71 years.

Loving mother of Lorne & Linda Facey, Donna Munro, Janis Kapp & Rich Parsons, and Marie Facey & Gus Fraser.

Proud Grandma to five granddaughters: Kathy, Karen, Rebecca, Jennifer and Crystal, and survived by 10 great grandchildren: Jade, Ares, Ryder, Austin, Myles, Oliver, Charlotte, Emma, Isabella and Addison. Survived by her sister Vera Haves and in-laws Pat Monteith, Ivan & Joan Facey, Helen & Barry Dickson, and many nieces and nephews, including Kim & Lyndon Kowch. Predeceased by her brother Ken Mainprize and Marian Mainprize and brother-in-law Bill & Marion Facey, sister Erma & John Sutherland, brothers-in-law Jack Facey and Edmund & Caroline Facey and David Monteith.

Reta worked at Staffen's for 15 years. She loved spending time in the garden and helping out with Horticulture Society events. Member of the McConnell Club for 68 years and long-time member of the St. Marys United Church. A Celebration of Life service was conducted at the St. Marys United Church on April 30, 2024 Interment took place in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to Golden Years Wildwood Care Centre or the St. Marys United Church. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Humphries



Daisy Viola Humphries (nee Juby) passed away at Freeport Hospital in Kitchener on April 24, 2024 at the age of 97. Predeceased by her husband James E. Humphries (2015). Mother of Hal (deceased) and his wife Judy of Gravenhurst, and daughter Catherine of Waterloo. Grandmother of Gillian (Matthew) of Gravenhurst and Mark (Lianne) of Waterloo and great-grandmother of Benjamin and Paige. The funeral service was held at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home on April 29, 2024. Interment in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial Donations may be made to Heart & Storke Foundation. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

Daisy Viola Humphries (nee Juby) passed away at Freeport Hospital in Kitchener on April 24, 2024 at the age of 97. Predeceased by her husband James E. Humphries (2015). Mother of Hal (deceased) and his wife Judy of Gravenhurst, and daughter Catherine of Waterloo. Grandmother of Gillian (Matthew) of Gravenhurst and Mark (Lianne) of Waterloo and great-grandmother of Benjamin and Paige. The funeral service was held at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home on April 29, 2024. Interment in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial Donations may be made to Heart & Storke Foundation. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Cortez



Marie Jennifer Muir Cortez, passed away on March 17, 2024 at the age of 48. A Celebration of Life will be held at the St. Marys Legion, 66 Church St. N. St. Marys on Saturday, May 4, 2024 from 2 - 4 pm with Words of Remembrance at 3 pm. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Tri-County Foodgrains project, East Nissouri Union Church, Canadian Mental Health Association or Stratford Perth Shelterlink. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

Marie Jennifer Muir Cortez, passed away on March 17, 2024 at the age of 48. A Celebration of Life will be held at the St. Marys Legion, 66 Church St. N. St. Marys on Saturday, May 4, 2024 from 2 - 4 pm with Words of Remembrance at 3 pm. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Tri-County Foodgrains project, East Nissouri Union Church, Canadian Mental Health Association or Stratford Perth Shelterlink. Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

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By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Celebrate the mother-figures in your life with our Mother's Day Craft on Saturday, May 11! Make a paper flower craft with or for your mom by dropping into the Library between 10 a.m. and 4p.m. This program is free to attend, and no registration is required.

This Week's Recommendation

For a 12-year-old, Zoey has a lot of adult responsibilities, namely caring for her younger siblings while their mother works shifts at the pizza parlour. Zoey must also deal with her mother's controlling boyfriend, Lenny, whom they live with in his trailer. These complications and more have Zoey wishing she was an octopus so that she could effortlessly multitask and easily hide from the world when needed. "The Benefits of Being an Octopus" by Ann Braden is a chapter book that tackles big issues from the perspective of a child thrown into the middle of it all. You can find this book in eAudiobook form on Libby.

Up This Week

Friday, May 3: Open 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday, May 4: Dungeons and Dragons (10:30

a.m.)

Monday, May 6: Open 10:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

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

Wednesday, May 8: 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.), Books and Brews^ (7 p.m.)

Thursday, May 9th: Scrabble (6-8 p.m.)

*Registration Required

^ Held at Broken Rail Brewery (480 Glass St., St. Marys)

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Solutions on page 31

LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

Car vs. Buggy

25 years ago (1999)

St. Marys DCVI principal Terry Boyce has decided that the 98-99 school year will be his last as a principal. Boyce will retire in June after a 32-year career in education. Taking his place at the helm of the local high school in September will be Patrick Moore, currently principal at a school in Moose Factory, Ontario.

Janet and Bob Jenkinson, owners of J.J's Country Kitchen, received two awards at the Canadian Fine Foods show held recently in Toronto.

The Grand Trunk Trail Committee needs help from a few handy volunteers. More than 1,000 name plaques need to be affixed to the planks on the Sarnia Bridge. Work will likely start in May.

50 years ago (1974)

Eighty-five trees were planted recently in various locations along Trout Creek, the Quarry, Flats, Water Street parking lot, and other locations. Nobody seems to know when, or from where, replacement trees are due to appear along the main street downtown.

The story of the old St. Marys Opera House was televised from Kitchener last week with St. Marys' own L.W. (Curly) Wilson answering all questions.

Installation of a new fire siren at the James Street North firehall should be completed this week. If you hear an unfamiliar screech from the south, that's it. Repairs to the old siren atop the Town Hall are still stumbling due to difficulty in securing replacement parts.

75 years ago (1949)

A lively debate took place at the regular meeting of the St. Marys Town Council on Monday evening regarding whether the Little Theatre organization was to pay for use of the Town Hall on Saturday nights when that group uses the auditorium for their open and free entertainments.

A North Ward lad who is an enthusiastic golfer found that the backyard is no place to give golf instruction to his young friends. One day recently, one of his pupils drove a ball through a neighbour's living room window and now, the practicing is said to have been called off for a while.

Numerous loads of clay fill dug from the new St. Marys Memorial Hospital site were dumped at the head of the Flats this week to be used in future repairs to the dike which has been badly damaged by recent floods.

100 years ago (1924)

The news of the death of the late Joseph Meighen, a native of St. Marys and father of the Right Honorable Arthur Meighen, former Premier of the Dominion, reached town on Sunday. Mr. Meighen was born in St. Marys nearly 78 years ago, his father being the late Gordon Meighen, an Irish school teacher who taught the first class in St. Marys, that being in the old stone school that used to stand opposite the water tower.

One of the most popular displays at the British and Colonial Exhibition, which opened at Wembley, London England on Wednesday last, is the Canadian butter exhibit, which takes the form of a model of the Prince's Alberta home, with the Prince in the foreground standing with his horse. The Prince and his horse are life sized, with the remainder being in proportion.

Mr. Quentin Berryhill of Blanshard received a broken rib, and three other occupants of his buggy were shaken up when their vehicle was struck by a car at the corner of Salina and Queen Streets on Monday morning. The buggy was damaged, one window of the car was broken, but the horse escaped injury.

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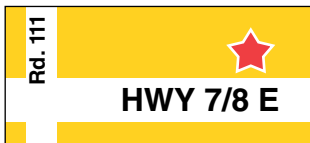


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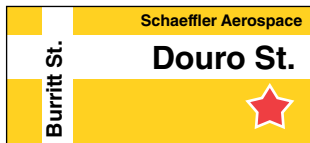


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