

# Independent Shorts

- St. Marys Minor Ball and the Toronto Blue Jays are hosting the Honda Instructional Clinic at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in St. Marys on Saturday, May 14 starting at 10:00 am. Toronto Blue Jays Honda Instructional Clinics will be taking place throughout Ontario from April to July. Registration is open for players aged 8 to 14. The fee is \$55 plus HST. St. Marys Minor Ball will receive \$25 per registration, after the first 25 registrations. During the four hour clinic, players will rotate through drills that will work on fundamental baseball skills such as hitting, throwing, fielding, pitching, and baserunning. Each participant will receive a Blue Jays hat, T-shirt and baseball manual. You can register online at [toronto.bluejays.mlb.com/tor/baseball\\_academy/honda\\_instructional\\_clinics.jsp](http://toronto.bluejays.mlb.com/tor/baseball_academy/honda_instructional_clinics.jsp).
- Also upcoming at the Hall of Fame is the 2016 Scotts Pitch, Hit & Run skills contest, being held Saturday, May 7 at 10:00 am on King Field. Boys and girls aged 7-14 will be given a chance to showcase their skills. The players are divided by gender, and the four age categories are 7-8, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14, as determined by the child's age on July 17, 2016. The champions from the four age categories will advance to a regional showdown. The winners of the regionals, set to be held at the Hall of Fame Saturday, May 28, may advance to compete at the Rogers Centre June 11. The champions from the Rogers Centre competition may advance to the North American Championship Finals, being held during the 2016 MLB All-Star Game in July. There is no cost to participate, but players must pre-register by emailing [scottscrawford17@rogers.com](mailto:scottscrawford17@rogers.com).

## Business of the Week

### Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum



The Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame held its annual volunteer appreciation dinner at the Stone Willow Inn's Wildstone Bar & Grill on Wednesday night. Pictured are, from left, Hal volunteer Tom Osgerby, director of operations Scott Crawford, volunteer Maurice Oliver, hall of fame board chair John Starzynski, and volunteers Nelda Oliver and Ena Kearney.

By Dan Rankin

Our Business of the Week has made St. Marys into a national destination for baseball lovers young and old since it first opened June 4, 1998. It's the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, located at 386 Church Street in St. Marys and overseen by director of operations Scott Crawford. Since its opening, the Hall of Fame and Museum has been located at the end of Church Street, near the crest of a hill overlooking the 32-acre site which was donated by the St. Marys Cement Company. Beginning in May, the museum will be open weekends, 10:30 am to 4:00 pm. Then, on June 1, it will be open seven days a week through to the end of August, at which time it reverts to being open Thursday through Sunday until Thanksgiving. So, it won't be long before the Hall's many artifacts are on display to the public, including some that date back to baseball's early days in the late 1800s, as well as some of the game's most famous artifacts – like a Babe Ruth-autographed baseball and bat, and the home plate and Joe Carter's batting helmet from his legendary 1993 World Series home run.

Crawford said the newest artifact they've acquired is the complete set of Russell Martin's catching gear from the 2015 MLB playoffs. "We got that last week," he said. That unique memento from Toronto's exciting playoff run is just one aspect of what Crawford calls the Hall's "fantastic" relationship with the team. "They've been huge supporters for many years, and even more so the last couple years, with the Street Festivals on Induction Weekend, and allowing us to set up displays about 15-20 times each year at the Rogers Centre for their games," he said. "They also do a lot of promotion around Induction Weekend on the radio and television. The last few

years it's been tremendous."

But the Hall's connection to the MLB doesn't end with "Canada's Team."

"We'll be going down to Cincinnati this weekend to give Joey Votto the Tip O'Neill Award on April 23," Crawford said, adding that earlier this month representatives from the Hall were in Montreal to present longtime Expos beat writer Serge Touchette their Jack Graney Award for excellence in Canadian baseball media. "Major League Baseball is great with us. I've been in touch with all the teams this spring who have Canadians on them, including Brett Lawrie of the Chicago White Sox, John Axford with the Oakland A's and all the others."

Votto, who has been named the Tip O'Neill Award winner a record fifth time, seems a shoe-in to one day be inducted into the Hall, joining the 117 others to have impacted the sport in Canada (including this year's Induction Class of Dennis Martinez, Wayne Norton, Tony Kubek, Pat Hentgen, William Shuttlesworth and Howard Starkman).

This year's induction ceremony is set for Saturday, June 18. It will take place under a big tent in the usual spot, and be preceded by a Downtown Family Street Festival as it has the previous two years. However, this year's downtown

street fest has been moved to Water Street, extending south from Queen, due to the roadwork taking place downtown, Crawford said.

Before then, the Hall is also involved with a great deal of other baseball-related events. "We're the home to St. Marys Minor Ball and St. Marys Slo-Pitch, so it's quite busy just with those two groups on our site," said Crawford. "But, then, the rest of the time we host other groups. We're booked every weekend from this past weekend right through until probably mid-August right now."

Some teams who will be playing on St. Marys' highly-regarded fields include the elite Ontario Nationals squads (16U White, 16U Red and 18U), the Great Lake Canadians, the Ontario Expos, and a trio of teams from Quebec who were won over by the facilities last year. "They were here last year and they're coming back to play six double-headers over two days at the end of April again because they enjoyed St. Marys and the ball fields," Crawford said. "There are also a variety of other people looking to come to St. Marys and book nice ball fields."

But it's been no secret for the past few years that the Hall of Fame has been looking into expanding, to provide even more displays and interactive

exhibits for visitors. "Currently we have about a third of our artifacts on display," Crawford said. "We probably have about 10,000 artifacts, plus about another 5,000 or 6,000 books. So, it's quite a large display."

A strategic master plan regarding such an expansion, and many other plans, has recently been completed and board-approved. It was presented to Council in February. The plan includes a new 7,100 sq. ft. museum on Hall of Fame property overlooking Water Street South, as well as upgrades to the current museum building for storage and archive purposes, a pavilion located atop the berm between the four diamonds, an equipment shed and historic plaques and seating for walking trails throughout the site.

"Now our architect Terry Marklevitz from Stratford, and BaAM, out of Toronto, the museum interior design company, are putting together some visual aspects for us, for people to look at when we talk about the future of the museum," Crawford said.

Admission to the Museum is \$7.50 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$3.75 kids and \$15 for a family. Memberships are also available, offering a graduated series of benefits, mainly focussed around Induction Weekend, Crawford said. They range from \$50 all the way up to \$1,000. "There's quite a variety," he said. "Some of the benefits include reserved seating at the induction and early autograph session access. With the higher memberships you can have dinner with the inductees, or attend the golf banquet on Friday, June 17."

For more information, like the Hall of Fame on Facebook, follow them on Twitter (@CD-NBaseballHOF), visit their web site at [BaseballHallofFame.ca](http://BaseballHallofFame.ca), or call 519-284-1838.

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