

Independent Shorts

• The St. Marys portion of the Thames River cleanup takes place tomorrow, Saturday, April 18, with registration beginning at 9:00 am at Milt Dunnell Field. Children under 18 must have a parent or guardian sign for them. The rain-or-shine event runs until 1:00 pm with a free barbecue taking place at noon. Gloves and garbage bags will be provided. Student volunteer hours and raffle prizes are available. For more information, call 519-229-6926 or visit ThamesRiverCleanup.ca.

• The St. Marys Tennis Courts are open today and for the next month for free public use. They will be available until the last week of May when they will be closed for a week for a full repainting, as the lines did not set when they were painted last fall. Players are reminded to wear running shoes on the courts and to keep them tidy. The public is also reminded that the courts are exclusively for tennis. Visit StMarysTennis.ca for information on how to become a member of the St. Marys Social Tennis Club. An intro to tennis camp is scheduled to run from July 20-24 for kids aged 9 to 12. The cost is \$100 and includes swimming at the Quarry.

• The St. Marys Memorial Hospital Foundation gala fundraiser is just over two weeks away, taking place Saturday, May 2. The evening's theme is "Under the Big Top" and will feature a gourmet, multi-course meal and both live and silent auctions. Live entertainment will be provided by MC Landon Hoare, guest auctioneer Mike Shackleton, and music by The Chris Brine Band. Lucid Musing's photo booth will also be on hand to capture mementos of this formal evening. Dinner tickets are still available, at \$75 each, as well as \$25 dance-only tickets which allow for entry after 9:30 pm. Both tickets are available at Sam's Home Hardware, the Municipal Operations Centre (on James Street South), or at the hospital foundation office on the lower level of the hospital (519-284-1332, ext. 3306). All proceeds benefit the hospital foundation's Someone I Know capital campaign, which was launched in February. The \$5 million campaign will allow the foundation to improve local healthcare through new equipment and technology.

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BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

Carpe Vinum



Our Business of the Week is the winemaking supply store Carpe Vinum, located at 12 Water Street North in St. Marys and owned by "Liquid Personality Enhancement Specialists" Becky and Rene Castillo. The Castillos have been in the winemaking business since taking over Carpe Vinum August 1, 2007.

Becky said she and Rene made their own wine in their home in Nova Scotia, where they lived until 2001. "We had three pails and three jugs, and we made it in our pantry, a good separate area in the house," she said. "But when we moved here, our house didn't have a good set up to do it, so we started coming in here as customers to make it."

The previous owners had started their shop in July 2000, but they approached the Castillos in early 2007

about taking it over. "They were going back to university and said they wanted someone as passionate about wine as them to take it over, and apparently I was pretty passionate," said Becky. "So, we took it over."

At Carpe Vinum, the Castillos provide the ingredients, space and instruments necessary to make a wide variety of red, white and fruit wines. Customers just bring their enthusiasm and, of course, their wine bottles

(washed and sanitized on site). The process, from placing the base ingredients in a pail to ferment, to transferring the partially completed mixture into a 23-litre jug for secondary fermentation and clarification, then finally transferring the filtered, finished product into 30 wine bottles takes between six and eight weeks, she said.

From there, customers can customize their bottles with personalized labels or various coloured cork shrink

wraps, or simply cork up their libations and go.

The possibilities range from fruit wines, including strawberry, apple and peach (and beginning at \$125 for a batch), to whites – including Pinot Grigio, Riesling and Chardonnay – and reds – including Cabernet, Chianti and Barolo (ranging from \$135-\$175 per batch).

Carpe Vinum also offers a range of wine-themed gifts and glasses for the wine lover in your life.

Their hours are Wednesday-Saturday 10 am to close, with flexible closing hours, and Tuesdays by appointment only. "I usually stay until about six but often there are evening appointments," she said. "A lot of people can't come through the day to bottle because they work."

Cheers!

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Tree Tips: Planting is for the Birds



One of the most enjoyable signs that spring is here to stay, is the return of migrating birds. This week we are going to examine 3 of the best ornamentals to plant (in our opinion), in order to attract a wide variety of birds. Though there are many different species of trees and shrubs that provide food for your birds. Many are highly invasive, which is why they are not included in this list.

The first is the Elderberry, it is fairly low maintenance, and versatile in many different settings. Not only does it provide your birds with nutrients, it also has large white flowers and its berries can be used in jams, jellies, tea, pies and wine. It attracts Warblers, Orioles, Tanager, Catbirds, Thrashers, Mockingbirds, and Waxwings.

Next up is the Viburnum; it is one of North America's most

popular flowering landscape shrubs. Fairly easy to grow in most growing zones it can handle a wide range of temperatures. Some varieties are able to tolerate virtually any garden condition: wet or dry, sun or shade, natural or formal. It also has amazing blossoms, and of course produces berries.

Lastly, Holly is an excellent choice for attracting birds. However, it may not be the best choice to have around children, as it is poisonous for humans to eat. Holly is an evergreen and provides food for a number of different birds, especially throughout the winter. There are of course many other plants that are excellent for attracting birds, but the subject is far too extensive to cover in just one article.

If you have a question, you can email me at jtsquote@gmail.com, and I will respond either by email or in a future



article. If you would like me to come and assess one of your trees, you can call me at 519.272.5742.

Joel Hackett is a Certified Arborist Residing in the St. Mary's Area. Spending most of the year running Joel's Tree Service, he also teaches Arboriculture during the winter at Lambton College. Joel Hackett does not assume any liability for any information in this article.

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