

# Independent Shorts

• St. Marys Public Library began its free educational 'Home Improvement Series' last night. It continues for the next three Thursdays in April, with sessions running from 6:00 pm to 7:45 pm each night. The public is invited to these free events with no registration required April 16, 23 and 30 to "learn valuable tips, tricks and strategies for improving your home from various local home improvement experts and retailers." The theme for April 16 is "Get Organized with Emily LaGace." On April 23, learn about "Staging your home for resale with Sue Fowler." On April 30, the theme is "Permits: what you need to know for your next project." Each home improvement guest will give a presentation followed by a Q&A. For more information, visit [TownofStmarys.com/public-library](http://TownofStmarys.com/public-library) or call Rebecca Webb at 519-284-3346.

• On Saturday, April 11 from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Thamesford Arena, the Thamesford Lions Club will be holding a Recycle Day for collecting waste electronics, metal and vehicle batteries. They plan on diverting the waste in an environmentally friendly manner. Proceeds from this waste recycling day will support local community activities. Pre-arranged pick-up services for smaller items will be available, as will student volunteer hours.

• Congratulations to the St. Marys Recreation Department, who have won an award for their swimming program. They are the recipient of the award for "Top Swimming & Water Safety Training Partner award for 2014; under 10,000 population." The Recreation department trained the highest number of participants in the Red Cross Swim program for 2014. The award will be presented to a member of the staff at the annual Training Partner & Volunteer Awards Banquet on May 6.

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## BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

### Heritage Renovations

Our Business of the Week is Heritage Renovations, owned by Brian Harris and located at 70 Huron Street in St. Marys. Harris started Heritage Renovations in June 2004, after retiring from Magna in St. Thomas where he served as a production supervisor and senior area leader. Nearly 11 years later, business is booming for the second generation St. Marys area carpenter, whose father ran Reg Harris & Son General Carpentry in St. Marys from 1953-1994.

"We've got a great spring ahead of us," he said. "We're really booked up. We just finished up booking a job for November."

Heritage Renovations has been hired to handle some high-profile projects



for local institutions and the City of Stratford, Harris said. That includes refurbishing the bridge to Tom Patterson Island and the band shell in downtown Stratford, as well as the barrier-free access ramp into the sanctuary at the St. Marys United Church.

However, they also offer a wide range of services to private homeowners, such as exterior doors, steps, porches, roofs, fences, floors, ceilings, entertainment units, kitchens, bathrooms and house additions. "Last year we also added new compact backhoe

service," said Harris.

The business also offers "Assisted Living" services, to make small changes to homes to help people with physical disabilities "enjoy life as it was intended."

Anyone interested in getting in contact with Harris can find Heritage Renovations online at [HeritageLiving.ca](http://HeritageLiving.ca), or call them at 519-284-0293. "If someone wants to call, we can get together for a free estimate and to talk about the project," he said.

Heritage Renovations currently has three employees, but is on the lookout for another carpenter with "a minimum of two years experience, with own tools and transportation." Anyone interested is invited to contact Harris at 519-272-6034.

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## Tree Tips: Syrup From Sap



One thing that I really enjoy about spring is fresh Maple syrup. Every few years, I like to take some time and visit a sugar bush, to watch the syrup being made. Humans have been tapping trees and enjoying syrup for hundreds if not thousands of years. Canada produces more maple syrup than any other country, with Quebec being the largest producing province.

If you have never been to a sugar bush, it is well worth the visit. Sap is taken from taps in the Maple trees, through vacuum pumps, back to the main area, where it is boiled down to syrup. It takes a large quantity of sap to produce a small amount of syrup, normally it is a ratio of 40 liters of sap, to one liter of syrup. But most people would agree it is worth the wait.

Maple sugar is a complex

sugar, and surprisingly contains many nutrients, such as magnesium, calcium, potassium, and zinc. Because Maple sugar is complex sugar, it is often eaten in the place of processed sugar, by people with diabetes. However please consult you doctor, if you wish to use it.

All maples can apparently be tapped for syrup, though the sugar content varies with the type of maple tree. Maple trees are not the only trees to be tapped. Birch and Hickory make an excellent syrup as well. However when tapping trees, you do need to be careful, tree identification and proper knowledge of a species is needed. It is important to remember though many plants are edible, there are some which can be poisonous.

If you have a question, you can email me at [jtsquote@gmail.com](mailto: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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