

Independent Shorts

• St. Marys native Jo-Anne Vanstone is holding a fundraiser dancer at the Stratford Optimist Hall Saturday, June 6 from 8:00 pm to 1:00 am to raise money for the after care needs of her boyfriend Darryl Claeys, who needs a heart transplant.

Claeys, 51, has a hereditary condition that has affected the heart of numerous males in his family including his father, uncles and grandfather, Vanstone said. He is unable to return to his job at FAG Bearings until after he gets a new heart, and has lately been tired and unable to stay active as he used to, she added.

“After he gets his heart, he’ll have to stay in the hospital for about 1–2 weeks, then after that, he has to stay in Toronto to go to 3–4 doctor’s appointments per week for some times,” she said. “The money raised will support that.”

Tickets for the event, which includes music from Top Hat Foot Loose DJ John MacArthur and other diversions, can be purchased for \$10 from Vanstone by calling 519-275-1062, or for \$15 at the door.

• Induction weekend is just one week away! See page 20 for the full list of events.

BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

St. Marys Optometry

Our business of the week is St. Marys Optometry, your local eye-care and eye-wear specialists, owned and operated by Dr. Carol Venn and located at 151 Queen Street East in St. Marys.

Dr. Venn has been an optometrist for 17 years and, on June 14, will be celebrating the five-year anniversary of her downtown business.

She said that her parents first moved to St. Marys when she was in university and, though she thought she was a big city girl at heart, “It wasn’t long living here before I put down some roots and was surprised to find that this was my home,” she said. “Now I couldn’t imagine being anywhere else.”

Dr. Venn called the space she’s operated in for the past five years “big, bright, inviting and happy.” “Being on the main street with the visibility is, of course, excellent,” she said. “We’re very fortunate that this space was available. I really enjoy being here.”

She sees around 12 to 15 patients per day and said she is “still growing.” Her patients represent “the full



spectrum,” she said: “from infants to seniors, contact lens wearers and people who need glasses, people who have eye diseases and people with healthy eyes. A little bit of everything every day.”

While most parents don’t consider having their children in for an eye exam until they’re old enough to know the alphabet and read the letters on an eye chart, Dr. Venn said parents should be bringing kids in for their first eye exams when they’re about

six months old. “I really feel passionately about children’s eye care,” she said. “Many optometrists are not comfortable working with babies that young. It’s a much different eye exam than most people we see on a regular basis, but I love it.”

As we enter the summer months, more people should be taking care to protect their eyes from the sun, she said. People squinting without sunglasses as they drive and walk around downtown are risking exposing themselves

to easily-prevented eye disease, she said. St. Marys Optometry offers a range of popular sunglasses brands from Oakleys to Ray-Bans to Maui Jims. They can be fit to a prescription or bought as non-prescription sunglasses.

“Even if you don’t need prescription eye wear, or if you’re not a patient in this office, you can come in here and get sunglasses,” she said. “We’re working hard to have the biggest sunglass inventory in town. We want people to be able to shop here without having to go into the city to get great quality eye wear.”

Last fall, Dr. Venn also began selling other accessories, including jewellery and purses from the office as part of what she called “an experiment” to change peoples’ perceptions. “We want to change people’s mindsets, make it seem a little bit more fun in here and make them realize this is a place where they can shop comfortably,” she said. “It’s not our focus, but hopefully it makes people see eye wear in a bit of a different way, as more of a fashion item and less of a functional piece of equipment.”

On that note, St. Marys Optometry is currently running a contest where the first 500 people who ‘Like’ Dr. Carol Venn’s page on Facebook will be entered into a draw to win a Guess purse. “We spend a lot of time on Facebook letting people know things they might not think about in regards to eye care, nutrition and the eye, and taking care of them,” she said.

St. Marys Optometry is open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm Tuesdays. To contact Dr. Venn, call 519-284-4144.

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