

Independent Shorts

St. Marys Men's No-Body Contact Hockey League is looking to expand by another two teams for the 2016/17 season, thus bringing the total to eight teams, reports convenor Adam Zurbrigg. League games are contested on Sunday nights, with games running from 6:45 pm until 9:45 pm. If you are interested in putting in a team, or are an individual looking to join a team, contact Zurbrigg at 519-536-0270.

A number of fun family events are taking place in Thorndale on Saturday, starting bright and early with the Thorndale Town Wide Yard Sale (7:00 am – 2:00 pm) and a Bacon on a Bun and Bake Sale put on by the Thorndale United Church (7:00 am – 12:00 pm). The Thorndale Farmers Market runs outside the St. George Anglican Church from 8:00 am to noon. Then, beginning at 10:00 am, the Epic Scavenger Hunt for youths age 11-17 kicks off at the Thorndale Library.

Perth County is partnering with Environment Canada to expand its "CANWARN Weather Spotter" network. CANWARN volunteers are trained to look for clues in the sky as to which storms may produce damaging weather. They can also report important information on hail size and any damage that has resulted from the passage of a storm. Members of the general public who have an interest in weather are welcome to attend the next severe weather spotter training workshop on Wednesday, Aug. 17 at the Perth County Paramedics Headquarters (480 Douro Street, Stratford) from 7:00 pm until 9:30 pm. To register for free, sign up at perthcounty.ca/emergency.

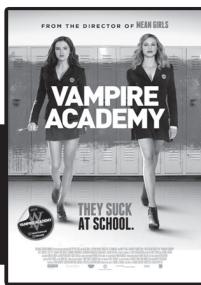
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Business of the Week

Coldwell Banker Homefield Realty St. Marys

By Dan Rankin

Our Business of the Week is Coldwell Banker Homefield Realty St. Marys brokerage, located at 150 Queen Street in St. Marys and owned by broker of record Ron Morrison.

Morrison, who grew up in West Perth and attended secondary school in Mitchell, first got involved with the business in 1979 when it was known as Norm Clarke Real Estate Ltd. and operated out of an office on Wellington Street. He bought 55 percent of the business in 1988, one year after he got his real estate broker license. It began operating as Coldwell Banker Homefield Realty St. Marys Brokerage in 1996.

"We are independently owned and operated, but we operate under their banner, so to speak," said Morrison. "It gives us global recognition and access to their tools, web sites and things like that." On the window of their St. Marys office can be seen the company-wide slogan 'Expect the Best.' More than that though, it's also a philosophy they take to heart in their office, Morrison said, noting that they've received awards of excellence for their office for the past five years, and that their agents have also been recognized with awards.

Today, Morrison (who is now a grandfather) is one of seven agents at Coldwell Banker's St. Marys office who specialize in selling rural, small residential, farm and commercial real



estate in a roughly 50-mile radius around St. Marys, including communities such as Stratford, Kirkton and Mitchell.

New technology has made it easier for agents to know more about housing markets that are farther away from their home base he said. "We're getting a little farther afield now," Morrison said, commenting on their growth. "We've got a couple of agents that work in the Stratford market a little bit and some who are comfortable working in London too."

With a number of agents having over 30 years of experience, such as Morrison himself, sharing an office with some other newer, tech-savvy agents, the owner said he believes they are diverse enough to cover the full age spectrum and the vast majority of types of property in the area. "We've got probably the most experienced staff of any company in the local St. Marys market," he said.

As well as selling homes to prospective home owners, Coldwell Banker also offer investment opportunities, Morrison said. "Right now, with the return on your investments such as GICs, being so low, a lot of people are looking for alternatives there," he said. "They're looking at perhaps buying rental properties – duplexes, triplexes, some commercial buildings with rental possibilities both downstairs and upstairs."

Morrison said they deal in a wide range of properties, and that he has recently personally showed a property in Kirkton priced at \$80,000 and another in Stratford for almost \$2 million. "It's all over the map," he said. "But every deal is important; every seller and every buyer. It's all very serious business and we take that into consideration to protect everybody's rights and their money. We try to advise them as best we can."

Currently, we're in a "seller's market," Morrison said, noting that, as a result, prices may have

been pushed up slightly in the area. "Buyers are scrambling to buy things and there's not a lot available," he said. "In other areas that's caused a fair bit of a swing, but in St. Marys we tend to be pretty stayed in terms of our pricing. We do see ups and downs, but they're more gradual than in big cities like Toronto or Vancouver. We have a very stable market here. Conversely, if and when prices tend to slide a little bit, we don't see these dramatic upswings or declines that some of the city people do."

Coldwell Banker Homefield Realty St. Marys Brokerage is actively looking for listings of all types, Morrison said.

Their hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday and 9:00 am to noon on Saturdays, though agents are available 24/7 Morrison said. For more information, call 519-284-2381, email cbhome@execulink.com, or visit St-MarysRealEstate.ca.



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