



**Two NOTLers  
named to  
Order of  
Canada**  
**pages 8,10**

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## Enjoying the outdoors

On a beautiful sunny day, with kids still enjoying their Christmas break, Simcoe Park was a popular place for tobogganing.  
(David Gilchrist)

## Community outbreaks put long-term care homes at risk

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Niagara Long Term Care is experiencing its second COVID outbreak, very different from the one a year ago.

The good news is those who have tested positive in the Wellington Street facility are showing mild symptoms, or none at all, says executive director Chris Poos.

While that seems to be the nature of the omicron variant, it is likely also due to most residents having been vaccinated, 96 per cent with two doses, and 70 per cent with a booster shot, he said.

Beginning Jan. 6, Niagara Public Health is allocating resources so those still in need of a booster shot will be able to receive them.

On Tuesday, Poos reported 14 staff members had tested positive, with one resolved case, and 14 residents with active COVID-19 in the home. That was up from 11 staff and 12 residents testing positive Monday.

Poos says residents are being encouraged to receive third and even fourth shots, while staff and essential caregivers are being asked to get their booster shot, if they haven't already.

"We know the vaccines are having a very positive effect, along with rapid testing and great infection and prevention control training, in minimizing the impact of the virus."

The home, with a fairly consistent total of 101 residents, will be able to receive them.

**Continued on page 3**

## NOTL loses family man, community supporter

**Mike Balsom**  
**Special to The Local**

After an almost year-long battle against pancreatic cancer, 54-year-old Charlie Burland of St. Davids passed away Dec. 23.

The father of three boys was well-known in the community as a long-time St. Davids volunteer firefighter, and as an employer of many locals

through the years via his role as president of Niagara Clifton Group, a family business which owns and operates a number of properties on Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls.

In both her current role as president of Niagara Falls Tourism, and her former one as president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, Janice Thomson knows well of his importance

in both communities.

"The loss is doubled due to the massive impact Charlie made on two communities," Thomson told The Local in an email, "the tourism district of Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls, where he built on the strengths of almost 100 years of family success in the tourism attraction businesses, and the community of St. Davids in Niagara-on-the-Lake where he and

his wife Lisa raised their sons."

"He was a generous contributor to both communities," Thomson continued. "His dedication to the St. Davids volunteer fire department was long-term, and his care for his community genuine. He will be missed by many."

In 1925, his grandfather, Charles Inglis Burland, bought the property that is now operated as the Travelodge hotel on Clifton Hill. Over the years the family acquired more real estate on the north side of the popular tourist destination,



**Continued on page 3**

Charlie Burland (Photo Supplied)

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# Restaurants react to sudden closure of indoor dining

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Business owners are fed up. Especially restaurant owners, who learned Monday they will have to close their indoor dining Wednesday, says Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce.

“What I’m hearing is that everyone is fed up, we all are. We keep hearing the provincial people trying to explain what they’re doing, in some cases really going back to the worst part of the lockdown.”

It’s always a struggle when announcements are made to work through them

and figure out who has to do what, he said.

Chamber staff were busy dismantling their computers to take home, where they will be working for the next few weeks, their office shut down. Their icewine festivities, which have been in the planning stages since August, including an almost sold-out gala, have been postponed, and staff are busy refunding ticket sales.

Although all restaurants have to close indoor dining, at least until Jan. 26, some are opting to continue to use their outdoor patios, and offering takeout, while others are shutting down completely.

On King Street, The Irish

Harp will keep their heated patio open, which has continued to be popular, and offer takeout and delivery, says owner Jovie Joki.

Caroline Cellars, on Line 2 in Virgil, is shutting its restaurant completely, says front of house manager Justine Lakeit, with no takeout, but will keep its wine boutique open for purchases only.

With most winter activities now cancelled, there won’t be a lot going on in town, and some restaurants wouldn’t be doing enough business to justify staying open, says Lafforgue.

“Some of the restaurants are closing completely because of COVID, but it’s the

slow season, and January activities are being cancelled. For some, there won’t be enough takeout customers to make it worth staying open.”

One difference from the previous lockdown is the province is also shutting down short-term rentals. “That is very unfair. They did a great job of sanitizing and following all the protocols.”

Although this is difficult for everybody, Lafforgue says, “what I don’t hear is despair. I don’t feel that right now. But it may come to that if this continues throughout February and March.”

Maria Mavridis, general manager of two family businesses, Corks Wine Bar & Eatery and the Firehall

Flame on Queen Street, says she closed down the smaller of the two restaurants two weeks ago and moved all her staff to Corks. Now she is shutting down everything. Corks has a great patio, but it’s considered enclosed, so she can’t keep it open, and Queen Street doesn’t attract enough takeout business to make staying open worthwhile.

Also an organizer of events and fundraisers, Mavridis is busy cancelling all the arrangements for them as well, including the popular Icebreakers Comedy Festival later this month, and a Boyz II Men concert that was scheduled for Feb. 5 at White Oaks Conference

Centre and Spa.

Mavridis acknowledges people are sick of restrictions, but says, “I hope people will do what they need to do. If everyone does their part now we’ll be okay. Let’s play it safe, and hope to see the ‘end-demic’ in April. And let’s remember why we’re doing this. It’s because of the shortage of staff in hospitals, in health care, in all businesses. We’ve had it happen here with staff — I had to send staff home, and we’re not the only restaurant in town doing that.”

Although “it sucks to be going through this, we’re all in it together. Do what you have to do, stay home, and we’ll get through it.”

# COVID cases likely much higher than reported

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

As COVID infections surge in Niagara and across Ontario — Premier Doug Ford is calling the current wave of omicron “a tsunami” — the real numbers are likely much greater than being reported.

While there were 492 new cases reported in Niagara Monday and 4,405 active cases — 165 in Niagara-on-the-Lake — Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara’s acting chief medical officer of health, said although it’s hard to get a good sense of the true numbers, with the rapid spread of the omicron variant and a limited capacity for testing, “it’s probably at least two or three times higher, if not several times higher.”

The province announced new restrictions Monday to be enacted Wednesday, weeks too late, said Hirji, calling the measures reactive rather than proactive, and suggesting the delay “has allowed the virus to disrupt our economy, instead of being able to proactively address it.”

Hirji disagreed with what he called the defeatist attitude of those who say it’s inevitable they’ll get COVID as the omicron variant races across the community, so

why bother with restrictions. He cited other countries that have quickly moved to restrictive measures and managed to blunt the omicron effect.

Canada could have done the same, but although that hasn’t happened soon enough, he said, we need to be concerned about hospital and intensive care unit admissions.

The hope that we could at least keep the number of people requiring hospitalization low “was overly optimistic,” as the lag of new infections sending people to the hospital is starting to catch up. Although intensive care admissions are not rising as quickly, that could change within the next week or two, he said.

He advised we buy some time by getting first, second and booster vaccinations, for all eligible ages, avoiding large gatherings, or any gathering that isn’t essential; staying outdoors if possible or if gathering inside, making sure it’s in a well-ventilated area; wearing good-quality masks; and doubling down on physical distancing.

While Niagara has been administering about 2,000 vaccinations daily, that is ramping up to about 7,000, including those offered in public health clinics, and by primary care physicians and

pharmacies. New appointments are being offered daily, and those hoping to book one should check the provincial online booking portal in the evening and again in the morning.

Schools are essential, he said, and “unfortunately will be delayed in re-opening,” even after trying to do everything possible to keep them safe, with measures that

worked relatively well. But with cases spreading quickly, schools are not going to be as safe as they were, and in the coming weeks, hopefully measures can be put in place to make them safer, “including closing other places,” Hirji said.

Schools are scheduled to begin a week of virtual learning in Niagara Jan. 10, with a return to classrooms Jan. 17.

Hirji is recommending more vaccinations for students; limiting class sizes, perhaps by offering the choice of virtual learning; providing good-quality masks; and hepa filters in every classroom. He also said he would favour limiting parents’ ability to choose for their kids not to wear masks, with exceptions for health reasons.

Hirji suggested that in the future, the province should look at including COVID vaccinations with others mandated in schools, such as measles and mumps. It would not be intended to prevent attendance for those unvaccinated, he said, but would provide a record of students who are unvaccinated, should an outbreak occur.

# Caution urged for drivers at gas bars

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

An incident at Gales Gas Bar in Virgil Sunday has resulted in a plea from the owner for drivers to be more cautious around the gas pumps.

Jessica Gale Friesen, owner and CEO of Gales Gas Bars, says an attendant was sweeping away snow Sunday morning when a car driving up to the pumps hit him.

He wasn’t hurt, just badly shaken, and was able to continue working his shift.

A Facebook post describing the incident left the impression that it was more serious, and the comments raised some questions about whether it was

a gas and dash, which it wasn’t, Friesen said — the driver paid for his gas and left.

She explained that whether it’s a cash transaction or paid by a card at the pump, the attendant has to authorize the sale, which he did.

It was the attendant’s decision not to call the police, since he was not injured. He told his boss he believed the driver didn’t see him, because the windshield had not been properly cleared of snow and visibility was limited.

“My concern is for the physical and mental health of the attendant. We’ve ensured he feels safe enough and wants to finish his shift,” says Friesen.

Although the attendant wasn’t hurt, it was still a serious situation, and could have been much worse, she added.

“The gas bar attendant was just doing his job, but the driver wasn’t paying attention. People need to be more careful when they drive into and out of a gas station. They often drive too quickly and recklessly, and aren’t paying attention.”

Drivers getting out of their car and walking to the booth to pay should be cautious of others not paying attention, she says.

Friesen would love to see legislation such as in the U.S., where people getting gas have to pay ahead of time. The number of

people who gas and dash, pumping and leaving without paying, has escalated during COVID, and that also creates an unsafe situation at the pumps, as drivers leave in a hurry.

Although it’s never happened at a Gales Gas Bar, there have been cases of attendants being killed by a gas and dash driver, she says.

Although this was not a situation of a driver not paying, it’s a reminder to drivers “to treat gas stations seriously,” says Friesen.

“A lot of people are in a hurry and might not be paying a lot of attention, to other customers or anyone outside a car. It’s important to understand how dangerous that can be.”



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# Family appreciates outpouring of community support

Continued from page 1

and today Niagara Clifton Group has a mix of more than 15 attractions, accommodations, shops and dining facilities.

After spending much of his youth learning the ropes of the family business from the ground floor up, Charlie took over the reins from his father, Dudley, in the 1990s. During his tenure at the helm he was able to transform the business from a strictly seasonal operation to a successful year-round destination, weathering the storms of downturns in 2001 and 2008, as well as the challenges caused by the current pandemic.

The family-owned business regularly employs between 250 and 300 people. Charlie was known to treat each of them as if they were part of his own family. In fact, he met his wife Lisa when she was a 21-year-old summer employee working at the group's Superstar Recording

Studio.

"He was a very jovial guy who loved to chat up a storm," Lisa said. "He was very, very down to earth. He took pride in treating his employees very well. He was very well-liked throughout the entire company."

The couple's three sons, Geoffrey, 23, Evan, 20 and Blair, 16, all work in the family business, each starting when they turned 13 years old. Lisa says they complement each other and work very well together. They will continue to help run the company and to extend the family legacy into the fourth generation of the Burland family.

Despite the demands of their larger business holdings, family was always the focus for Charlie. He loved to spend time at their St. Davids home puttering around on his tractor and tinkering in the garage alongside the boys.

"He was a tool time kind of guy, and he instilled that with the boys," says Lisa. "The kids are very handy with tools, very

mechanical. He would spend a lot of time tinkering there. He was a very adventurous guy who liked to keep us on our toes all the time. We worked well with the boys together, and we did a lot of things together."

NOTL's 2020 Citizen of the Year Debi Pratt remembers teaching Charlie at the old Brockview School, at the corner of Line 3 and Concession 1.

"I knew Charlie first as this skinny little kid in Grade 2," Pratt laughs, "and he was pretty shy back then. You had to work at getting him to express himself. Every time I saw him (as an adult) I would think of what he was like back then."

Pratt kept in touch with him and his family since those days, enjoying periodic get-togethers with Charlie and a number of his old school friends, the most recent one at Silversmith Brewing Company in Virgil.

"It was just so much laughter," Pratt remembers. "A lot of stories came up. Charlie would

just nod and listen, then share some of his stories. We would never talk about business when I would see him. He was a likeable, friendly young man right from the first time I saw him to the last."

"He had that kind of personality, an easy-going, friendly way about him," continues Pratt. "I was pleased that he went into the family business. He was kind, he just treated people so well. And as a businessman, he knew he had to get involved. He stepped up and did what was good, not just for his company but for the whole tourism component in general."

Aside from the time he spent at his business, he was also a pilot, earning his license to fly at only 16 years old. He also served 17 years as a volunteer firefighter in St. Davids until he retired from that role a few years ago. He was a fixture at the annual turkey rolls, and the Burlands spent a lot of time with other firefighter families.

NOTL Deputy Fire Chief Darren Trostenko was with

Charlie for each of his 17 years at the St. Davids station.

"Charlie was a good guy, a character," Trostenko chuckles. "He was easy-going and fit in with everyone else. You never would have guessed he was such a successful businessman as well."

Trostenko says Charlie leveraged his businesses to help with some of the charitable work of the firefighters' association.

"He was a very good supporter of our initiatives. He would take care of ordering the turkeys for the turkey roll, and he would store them at one of his facilities on Clifton Hill. And then he would deliver them down to us the day of. He helped out immensely, and supported the association in a quiet and appreciative manner."

Since his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer in March, 2021, Lisa says, their three boys have all been home spending quality time with their father. The announcement of his passing has sparked many online trib-

utes from the community that have helped her and the boys deal with the difficult times.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake, what a great community," she says. "The outpouring of support, prayers and messages is very comforting and heartwarming. At a time like this you are hurting, and can feel so lost. To have all the outpouring of the community, it's really touching and greatly appreciated."

Charlie Burland is resting at the Patterson Funeral Home in Niagara Falls. Visiting hours are Sunday, Jan. 9 from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. A graveside service will be held at Fairview Cemetery Jan. 10 at 1 p.m., with a funeral procession leaving the funeral home at 12:30.

Word is the procession will wind its way along Clifton Hill. A fire truck from the St. Davids station will be part of it, and at the front will be one of Charlie's beloved tractors. It will be one last time for him to survey the properties that have been in his family for close to a century.

# Residents experiencing mild cold-like symptoms

Continued from page 1

dents, had that number reduced last year from 120, when wards in the older building were eliminated so that rooms are limited to either one or two people. Currently there are 100 residents — one passed away recently, although not from COVID, explained Poos.

He doesn't know how the outbreak started, he said.

Those deemed "essential caregivers" have been able to visit residents, one at a time, after a negative test and in full protective equipment. but there are no general visitors allowed. Instead, staff have been assisting residents with Skype and FaceTime calls with their families.

Staff levels have been ramped up to provide extra care during this recent outbreak, which was announced by the region Dec. 27, when one resident and two staff members tested positive.

By Monday, across Niagara there were 15 long-term care and hospital facilities with outbreaks, the longest going back

to Dec. 2, and the two most recently identified on Dec. 31.

"We've been learning and better understanding this virus over the last two years," says Poos. "We're always learning best practices from each other. All of us, including the community at large, are learning and supporting and helping one another."

There is new information about the severity of the disease, patterns of infection, and testing, he said, with more tools at their fingertips than during the January 2021 outbreak, especially the availability of rapid tests to use on anyone who comes into the building.

"Because of the nature of this virus, things are changing quickly, and it's very important to try to stay in front of it."

That has included going from testing staff every two or three days to daily rapid tests and PCR tests twice a week. Residents are also given rapid and PCR tests in all areas of the home, and symptoms are being closely monitored.

"It's important to note," said Poos, "that as the community experiences an increase in

cases, the risk in long-term care also increases."

Outbreak protocols throughout the home include isolating residents in their rooms, where they receive their meals; suspending group activities; increased cleaning; ongoing hand hygiene and PPE audits; and staff cohorts limited to specific areas.

On Tuesday, the region's website was showing 492 new cases in Niagara, and 4,405 active cases.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake there were 165 people with an active COVID case, up nine from Monday, and 87.5 per 1,000 people infected, with five municipalities in the region showing a higher percentage of cases.

It's now widely expected, with the rapid spread of the omicron variant and limited capacity for testing, that the number of cases is actually much higher than recorded — Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara's acting chief medical officer of health, estimated Monday it could be as much as two or three times higher, although it's difficult to have a "good sense" of how many community cas-

es there are in the region, he said, advising people to stay home, limit social contacts, and follow all the precautions we've become accustomed to.

Poos knows that's what's needed to prevent outbreaks in long-term care.

"My hope is that everyone follows the guidelines set out

by Public Health, and that more people in the community will get vaccinated, including receiving their boosters when appropriate."

## Welcome to NOTL New Year's baby

### Local Staff

A Niagara-on-the-Lake couple have had one of the first babies of 2022.

Of 11 babies born on New Year's Day in Niagara, Gabriella Barde was one of them, born at Niagara Health on Jan. 1, 2022, making her grand debut at 7:14 a.m. She weighs 6 pounds, 4 ounces and is 49 cm long, says a press release from the health system.

She is the first child of proud parents Jenny Rose and Michael Laurence Barde of NOTL, who moved to Canada from the Philippines in August, 2021.

"Before I gave birth, I was really nervous to deliver the baby, but when I saw her, everything changed," says Jenny Rose. "It's worth the wait and the pain. It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be."

Jenny Rose says her water broke almost immediately after the clock struck midnight.

Due on Jan. 11, Gabriella surprised her parents early, giving her family two reasons to celebrate Jan. 1, and was also a welcome surprise regardless of her birthday.

"We've been married for about three years and thought we couldn't have

children," says Michael Laurence. "Around the same time we were approved to move to Canada, we were surprised and so excited to find out that we were having a baby. I'm super happy. I was crying in the room too during the delivery. Honestly, we were quite surprised and didn't expect it to be on New Year's Day. It's a memorable day."



Gabriella Barde was born New Year's Day, at 7:14 a.m. to proud parents Michael Laurence Barde and Jenny Rose of NOTL. (Photo supplied)

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# Irish Harp raises funds for Red Roof Retreat

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

While Monday wasn't a great day for restaurants, Jovie Joki, owner of The Irish Harp Pub, was celebrating a successful fundraising drive for Red Roof Retreat, a cause the local pub has supported from its earliest days.

Having just heard the news that indoor dining will close Wednesday, Joki was preparing to pivot to outdoor dining and takeout — her patio has a heated tent that has become a popular extension to the pub.

Throughout the month of December Joki held a 50-50 raffle each band night, typically Thursdays and through the weekend, and any time there was a special event, raising \$9,000 for Red Roof, which provides respite and recreational programs to children, youth and young adults with special needs and their families in the Niagara region.

Ward Simpson, chair of the board of RRR, says with two of the organization's annual pasta dinner fundraisers cancelled, each of which would have raised about \$100,000, the ongoing support from The Irish Harp has



Ward Simpson, Steffanie Bjorgan and Claire Ellsworth were at The Irish Harp Monday to very gratefully accept a cheque from pub owner Jovie Joki (second from left). (Penny Coles)

been very much appreciated. Red Roof has also developed a Red Rovers monthly giving program, which provides the organization with a dependable base of support towards offering their services. It's been very helpful

for them to know they have that money coming in every month, says Simpson, and it's a program they would like to expand. For more information visit [redroofretreat.com/redrovers](http://redroofretreat.com/redrovers). Joki says her goal for the

Red Roof draw was to raise \$10,000, but once restaurant capacities were lowered mid-December, she knew she couldn't make that target, and matched the fundraising portion of the draw to get closer to it.

"Our guests have been very generous," says Joki. "Some just gave money and didn't stay for the draw or want their share, and at least 10 times people gave their entire winnings back to Red Roof."

There was one draw that was won by the staff, who had each put in \$20, and they too gave back their winning portion, says Joki.

"It's a great cause, one everybody believes in," she says, adding she was proud of her great staff for also personally supporting the organization. "It was really touching. They work for their tips, and the prize would have been a nice little bonus."

It was the staff who sold the 50-50 tickets, and as busy as the pub has been, they seemed happy to do it, says Simpson, making it look like fun. "It looked like a real labour of love for them."

The association with Red Roof goes back to Trevor Smyth, who opened the pub, and became close friends with Simpson, sharing a love of all things Irish. Smyth passed away in 2013, and Joki has continued to carry on with support for the local charity.

She has several special events planned for the coming months, including a bingo night with Simpson as the bingo caller, which will make for a fun evening when it's allowed to happen, she says.

She was also planning an event for the Icewine Festival that was supposed to happen later on this month, but that has been cancelled.

"We're always looking for other forms of entertainment during the winter months. We had a Yuk Yuks night planned, but we've had to cancel that as well."

The Irish Harp has its regulars, both locals and those from across the region who come for the atmosphere and great food, and for the coming weeks, the restaurant will turn to outside dining, takeout and delivery, hoping to resume its special events and indoor dining before too long.



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## Ring in the New Year



It's a yearly tradition to gather at the Queen Street clock tower at midnight to welcome in the New Year, and this year drew a good crowd, which dispersed about 10 minutes later. (Mike Balsom)

## CADET BOTTLE DROP OFF

### January 8



**Locations:**

- Legion 124 - 410 King St, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- St. Davids Lions - 1462 York Rd, St. Davids
- Cornerstone Church - 1570 Niagara Stone Rd, Virgil

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# Local BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Safe Tree

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## Gypsy Moth: Suppressing the Invasive and Devastating Insect

The snow has just begun to fall across the Niagara Region, which means the annual gypsy moth caterpillar feeding frenzy is only a few short months away.

If you're in rural Niagara chances are that you have already experienced this problematic pest, whether it be the annoying and constant sound as they destroy our trees or swarming our yards and patios, moving us inside.

Gypsy Moth, in their caterpillar stage, can defoliate a mature tree in a matter of weeks. The species of tree affected are native to the Carolinian forest and include maples, oaks, beech, and birch trees. Over time, this insect has adapted and will now feed on apple trees, and some coniferous species. Needless to say, they are invasive to our habitat.

Safe Tree is excited to now offer one of the most effective treatment techniques - aerial applications for caterpillar suppression. This method is ideal for rural properties, or properties just outside city limits that may be excluded from municipal spray programs.

Tree defoliation can be devastating to trees. With-



Gypsy Moth

out leaves, the tree will not be able to produce sugar through photosynthesis, thus stunting growth. Stunted growth will make trees more susceptible to other pests and diseases, causing the tree's health to decline further. Energy reserves are used to produce new leaves, which will likely be consumed by gypsy moths as well. The tree

will continue to produce new leaves as long as it is able, but eventually this vicious cycle will take its toll, killing the tree.

"An annual treatment plan or program is the most effective way to mitigate gypsy moth and their damage. The end goal isn't to eliminate the species; that's merely impossible at this point. However,

suppressing the species to a degree where it can coexist within our forests is achievable." – Kaitlyn Simpson, Plant Healthcare Specialist.

Safe Tree has always been committed to protecting your trees and helping your property thrive. There are a wide variety of techniques that can be used to suppress gypsy moths, depending on

the season and life cycle of the insect. From egg mass removal to pheromone trap supply and installation, our team is always prepared to protect your trees.

"We are ecstatic to provide aerial applications – it's the most effective way to treat and protect thousands of trees. Together, we're able to save and protect our urban

canopy." – Kaitlyn Simpson

A helicopter is used to apply the product, exponentially expanding the amount of land, or specifically trees, that can be protected. The product used for this treatment targets gypsy moths, ensuring that other plants and animals are not harmed during application. Businesses such as wineries, farms, campgrounds, and conservation areas, can significantly benefit from this treatment as their properties may be too large to protect using alternative practices.

Gypsy moths can cause issues for humans, too. If their small hairs come in contact with skin, we potentially can experience mild to moderate pain, rashes, stinging, welts and blistering. They are also quite the nuisance when you're trying to enjoy the forest view from your patio, or a weekend away outdoors.

We are thrilled to support Niagara's urban forest and protect the beautiful scenery that surrounds our homes. If you would like to book your aerial treatment for 2022, please contact Safe Tree by calling (289) 650-1775 or by visiting [savemytrees.ca](http://savemytrees.ca)



# SAFE TREE

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# EDITORIAL

## We know what we have to do, and do together

Sorry to be so pessimistic, but it will come as no surprise that the pandemic news is getting worse, when we are all more than ready for it to be over.

There is a record number of people testing positive, and we are hearing that's a drop in the bucket compared to what is really happening, the extent of which we'll never know, with testing capacity stretched to the max.

Ontario reported at least — those two words are being repeated often these days

— at least 11,352 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, and another rise in hospitalizations and ICU admissions on Tuesday, a day before new public health measures and restrictions begin across the province.

The news from hospitals and our health care system is becoming frightening. Doctors are stretched thin, and nurses, who help keep our health care system running, are exhausted, leaving the system pretty drastically short-staffed. Thanks to all of you

who are looking after us, in any capacity, COVID-related or otherwise.

Did anyone else see a Toronto ICU nurse on CBC Tuesday, crying as she explained the nursing shortage? Nurses are "completely broken," crying and quitting because of the intense pressure they face due to a severe nursing shortage. They show up for a shift, she says, and they're treated so poorly because of the nursing shortages they don't show up the next day.

Dr. Mustafa Hirji, our acting medical officer of health, was right to say the measures being put in place today should have been enacted weeks ago, as soon as we understood the rapid transmission of omicron. He's always on the side of being more cautious, and he's always proved right.

So now that we're here, where we didn't need to be, let's work together to get out of this. We need our nurses healthy and back to work. We need our kids safely back

at school. We need our businesses open, permanently, and without restrictions.

As Hirji says, now more than ever, we need to stay home as much as possible, limit contacts, get whatever level of vaccination is needed, and take all the other precautions we've been asked to follow since this pandemic's inception — we know what we're supposed to do. And for now, we're asked to self-quarantine with even mild symptoms. That's a little more difficult, especially for those

alone without a support system, but for those who need help, reach out and ask for it. This is a wonderfully caring, supportive community, full of people who will respond wherever there is a need.

This could go on for another two or three weeks, or if we don't do what we're asked, it could be for much longer. Each of us has a choice to make. Please, make the right choice.

Penny Coles  
The Local

## A look back at 2021 and what to expect in 2022

Lord Mayor  
Betty Disero  
Special to The Local

On our mild and misty Christmas day, I took my mother's dog, Bella, for a walk. I just wanted to clear my head and think about the events over this past year. The streets were quiet, with just a couple of cars passing from time to time.

What a year we have been through in 2021! Being in year two of the pandemic, we have learned a little about what works and what doesn't. We have made some adjustments to make living and working in the town a little easier, understanding how frustrating this pandemic has been.

But through it all, with perseverance, faith and determination from all of us in our town, we achieved quite a few milestones.

We thought it would be a very quiet Christmas, but again, people thoughtfully celebrated while we continued to protect each other. Wearing masks, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce hosted a candlelight stroll, Chautauqua still had their carolling in the park while ensuring proper physical distancing, the farming community held a fabulous

tractor parade, people installed extraordinary holiday lighting on their homes, residents illuminated The Village more spectacular than ever before, we had a visit by 250 masked Santas, and shops went above and beyond to express the Christmas spirit.

This year, council's planning continued, adding to the new proposed official plan, strategic plan, wellness recommendations and economic development recommendations. The town completed our new irrigation master plan and enhanced the asset management plan. In 2022, we will complete the transportation master plan, zoning bylaw and heritage and character studies, do a large part of the tourism plan and start the recreation master plan. Once these plans are complete, our staff will have the guidance they need to go forward over the next 10 to 20 years.

In 2021, I was pleased to have council cut the ribbon on the new modern Niagara Nursery School space at the community centre, be part of the sod-turning for the new doctors' offices in The Village, and assist in the construction of some rental housing units in the town.

In 2022, I am optimistic that the Community Church/Community Centre in Glendale will open, and Pleasant Manor can finally have a sod-turning for the Pleasant Manor expansion. I know council supports these projects wholeheartedly and is ready to assist where necessary.

In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, council built budget improvements into parks in all areas of town, Glendale playground and basketball, Queenston Common, St. Davids - Cannery Park, Virgil Skateboard Park and Old Town tennis courts. This past year, being a maintenance year, we relied more on fundraising efforts and volunteers to assist with many initiatives, such as installing the backboard at the tennis courts in St. Davids, completing phase one of the Heritage Trail, and building the outdoor skating rink at the Virgil Sports Park (if it gets cold enough).

Thank you to all the donors and volunteers who helped. I also want to give a special congratulations to Crossroads Public School on an amazing inclusive playground.

Niagara has approved a 2.87 per cent budget increase

for the 2022 year, and I believe the town will achieve approximately the same level. I continue to promote a sustainable town budget. Let me explain what I mean by 'sustainable.' Currently, we only have three sources of revenue: upper government grants and transfers, user fees and service charges, and property taxes. While we have to watch our expenses, those three revenue sources pay for our core service and operations.

Sustainability is not about increasing taxes by an overwhelming amount every year. It is not relying on the province to decide how much money you will receive.

The province allowed us only one other tool, and we must use it. A municipal accommodation tax (MAT) is another way to raise revenues. So, if we want more flowers, public washrooms, events and festivals or capital for tourism enhancements, this is the only alternative source currently from where the money can come. The town's operational budget will be completed and approved in the first quarter of the new year. There will need to be some tough decisions.

You have often heard

me talk of finishing unfinished business. Well, we won't complete it all, but we should acknowledge some of the items that we have achieved and others that are well on their way. The cannabis zoning bylaw is complete. The short-term rental bylaw will be completed, and enforcement has been significantly improved. We will complete the discussion on the grinder pumps by the spring. This year we also received a report that our beach water meets standards.

Let me give you an advanced warning now: there will be construction on Niagara Stone Road between Four Mile Creek and Penner Road. The region will be restructuring Niagara Stone Road. NOTL Hydro and the town have contributed money to place the hydro lines underground, add decorative lighting and place-making benches, widen sidewalks, plant trees and place parkettes along the road. Virgil will look fantastic once it is done, but there will be construction!

The gateway in Glendale will also have construction. The town also added funds to this initiative for decorative lighting to enhance the roundabout.



Lord Mayor Betty Disero  
(Photo supplied)

I have enjoyed my time with the region, and I am proud the region approved a regional transit system, as did town council. I want to thank our CAO for the work she did keeping the payment level for NOTL at the same amount, so we will not see a big bump in 2023. The approved financial model is quite different from our payment for the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS). I have been looking at other regions to see what system they are using; even when the OPP is used in some local municipalities, payment for policing is still pooled and paid region-wide.

Apart from some of the issues I have mentioned, I

Continued on page 7

The Niagara-on-the-Lake  
**Local**  
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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## COMMENT

## Progress made in 2021; more to come in 2022

**Gary Zalepa**  
NOTL Regional Councillor  
Special to The Local

Last year at this time I reflected on why and how governments needed to align themselves on addressing public policy issues, such as housing affordability, long-term care, homelessness, sustainability in protecting our environment, mental health care, and sustainable government.

To date, some advancements have been made but many issues remain a work in progress. Gains are possible when governments act in partnership with local and both the federal and provincial governments. Here are a couple examples:

Regional council has made investments into housing affordability a priority. Over \$30 million has been committed to new affordable housing units and more supportive housing for homelessness. New facilities open as soon as Jan 2022. The support facility for the homeless was the result of governments collaborating. Niagara Falls had surplus property, the region had expertise in delivering social services, and operating funding, while the province provided funding

for capital improvements to make the facility functional. This has been possible due to the alignment of government objectives at all levels and redevelopment of existing public assets. Further progress will come in January, when regional council will consider a housing master plan. This policy document will provide a detailed affordable housing plan by identifying potential lands for development and financial models for future projects. This will serve as a key public policy document that will guide improvements to the affordability of housing for Niagara's most vulnerable.

Environmental disasters have filled our news media, especially of late. Municipalities are at the forefront of efforts to ensure long-term sustainability of our environment. Alignment with all levels of governments here has not happened, although progress is occurring. Local governments manage massive, critical pieces of public infrastructure; think about our drinking water systems, waste-water treatment plants, waste collection services and systems, roads and bridges, and natural environmental systems, such as creeks, wood lots and drain-

age areas. Local governments also manage local planning applications, through tools such as official plans, zoning bylaws, urban design guidelines, and natural heritage system guidelines. Through asset management plans and public planning policies, local governments can greatly impact environmental protection and sustainability.

Through the region's asset management plan there are over \$7 billion in assets with long-term capital requirements. Council has made adequately funding these requirements a priority, so as to limit the burden of future taxpayers with unfunded liabilities. This is not an easy decision. It requires addressing these funding pressures by providing long-term commitments from tax revenue and allocating that to capital reserves, so funds are available when needed. A prudent decision today, that will be more popular in the future. Too many previous administrations deferred this commitment and now the needs are critical, but we can still avoid a future financial disaster by committing today. Just look at the B.C. lower mainland and the failure to address funding of the levees and dams which led to the recent extreme flooding.

Some infrastructure highlights of the region include 770 kilometres of roads and 130 bridges since 2018; millions of dollars in

upgrades to water treatment plants, and waste water treatment plants; regional road infrastructure enhancements for GO Train expansion; waste collection changes have diverted 12,000 tonnes of garbage from landfill sites and increased green bin use by 24 per cent.

On the public planning side, regional council is in the final process of a full update to the regional official plan (ROP), with council endorsement planned for June/July 2022. Contained in that ROP is policy which will add 70,000 hectares of green space in Niagara. Including new natural heritage features protecting 38,000 hectares and policy direction for growth corridors to manage our population growth and employment creation. All of the above will go a long way to secure a sustainable environment and economy here in Niagara.

Another matter that has arisen in the past few years has been the concern with safety on our roads. In NOTL, with our predominantly rural road structure we are witnessing increased car volumes, pressure on design capacity and unfortunately less than careful drivers, to the point of distracted drivers and those not obeying recommended speed limits. When a location is identified as problematic, regional staff, including professional road engineers

and experts in traffic analysis, review data that comes in from various sources and begins to monitor the situation and communicate concerns to the Niagara Regional Police. Recommended actions for correction are developed by regional staff and brought forward through a delegated authority given by council. An example of this is the recent intersection enhancements brought forward for York Road and Concession 6, including improved road markings, speed limit adjustments, and installation of a four-way stop. In reviewing this intersection, driver error including speeding, failing to stop and distracted driving were the leading cause of collisions at this intersection. We must demand more attention while driving and have cause for consideration of the safety of others.

As council begins 2022, I plan to bring more attention to opportunities in service delivery efficiencies. Identifying services that can be more effectively delivered by one level of government versus the current two-tier delivery method. Council has some victories already in this area. Niagara is close to integrating the multiple transit systems serving 12 municipalities into one. With economies of scale, improved routes, a single fare box and OnDemand services, we will begin to service residents with improved



Regional Coun. Gary Zalepa  
(Photo supplied)

mobility and transit across all Niagara. Regional council has passed a motion that directs staff to continue investigating opportunities in service delivery review. Opportunities exist for corporate management functions, including human resource management, payroll, legal, asset management and other corporate functions of a municipality. Other opportunities exist, including 9-1-1 service, EMS and fire dispatch; procurement services, including tendering and contract bidding.

These suggestions all possess the opportunity to improve service delivery for residents, find efficiencies in resource allocation, and modernize local government.

Further details on some items mentioned above can be found here:

Council Priorities <https://www.niagararegion.ca/priorities/>

Regional Services <https://www.niagararegion.ca/about/default.aspx>

## Would like to keep patios beyond COVID

Continued from page 6

would also like to see these two other items discussed. These items have not yet come before council:

1. Provide more sidewalk space on Queen Street so we can keep the patios beyond COVID. I hear people like them; I do.

2. Enlarge the pay-parking area while giving enhanced free parking to local residents. This will help ensure shopping locally in all parts of NOTL, particularly in the off-season. Too many NOTL residents leave Town to eat and shop. It actually may have something to do with pay parking. Let's make it easier for residents, not more difficult to park.

Well, your prediction is as good as mine on what 2022 will bring. I hope and pray that the pandemic will soon be behind us and town hall will open up.

It is an election year, both provincially and municipally. More and more people will be jockeying for positions, rumours will be flowing, political aspirants

will be taking new stands on old items and expounding the importance of change.

As your Lord Mayor, I will remain laser-focused on continuing to move forward on three essential items I have always believed in: planning for our future, sustainable budgeting and finishing unfinished business.

Together, we have accomplished much over the past 12 months. I am proud of the work we have collectively achieved and how we have supported one another through the challenges of the pandemic.

As 2021 concludes and 2022 begins, I want to thank our community for its ongoing diligence in keeping our community healthy and safe. Your efforts and sacrifice have helped prevent the spread of COVID-19 and saved lives. As we look to the year ahead, I see many opportunities to continue the significant initiatives we have begun.

I look forward to the exciting things the New Year will bring. Happy New Year, everyone.

## Local LETTERS

### Thanks for support of Nyanyas

The Nyanyas of Niagara want to thank Sweets & Swirls Cafe for all they did to make our holiday cookie fundraiser so successful. It was a real family affair! Erinn and James were at the helm but they were helped by some wonderful Christmas elves: Erinn's mother, Sylvia, and Steph, Alysa, Liam, Sophie, and Daphne.

Two thousand cookies were made and packaged

in decorated holiday boxes. A real team effort and it paid off because we raised \$1,000 that will go to the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign.

We are very thankful to our community for purchasing these delicious cookie boxes and supporting this incredible cause. Your ongoing support continues to make an impact.

Since 2007, the Nyanyas have raised over \$120,000 through small grassroots projects to help the grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa who are caring for their orphaned grandchildren due to 2 pandemics – HIV and AIDS and now,

COVID-19. Through all the grandmother groups that are part of this campaign, over \$36M has been raised since 2006.

**Happy, healthy 2022 to you all,  
Nyanyas of Niagara**

## NOTL should have a park to recognize LGBTQ community

From reading our community newspapers I see that there are issues over whether the rainbow colours should be painted on an Old Town street for a crosswalk to show solidarity with our fellow LGBTQ citizens.

Frankly, I don't understand why our LGBTQ neighbours should be happy with the rainbow colours being painted on asphalt for cars, horses, and people to trample, as a sign of solidarity no less. There exists no people

more persecuted in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada, and the world than the LGBTQ.

The town has previously "set aside a significant site in the heart of the Old Town to understand, celebrate, and honour its Black history," resulting in the Voices of Freedom memorial park. To not happily and willingly do the same for my people is simply insulting.

**John Boydell  
St. Davids**



Nyanyas Marlene Bridgman, Sandra Hardy, Heather Hall and Stephanie Dunits receive a cheque and thank Erinn Lockard (centre) of Sweets and Swirls Cafe for her assistance with the Niagara Nyanyas holiday cookie fundraiser. (Photo supplied)



# Far-reaching contribution to music industry recognized

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Duff Roman is one of 135 new appointees named to the Order of Canada on Dec. 29, 2021.

Born David Mostoway in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Roman can now add the C.M. designation to the end of his name, bestowed upon him for his contributions to the Canadian music industry as a broadcaster and executive, and for his lifelong efforts to promote Canadian talent.

“I was pleasantly shocked to get the news,” Roman says. “I had heard that my name had been put forward to the Governor General’s office. But I wasn’t anticipating this. The importance of this award dawned on me and to be the recipient is quite stunning.”

Roman’s career in radio began as a 17-year-old disc jockey at Medicine Hat’s CHAT radio in 1955, where he went by the name Digger Dave. He spent a year there before moving to Winnipeg’s CKRC. In 1957 he returned to Medicine Hat, this time to work as their first television announcer at CHAT-TV.

“I hosted the Supper Club show. It aired at supper time, and I did interviews and covered local music. And I did

all the straight announcing - commercials, station IDs, etcetera. The only two live people there were the news reporter and me.”

In the meantime, Frontier Broadcasting, led by Bill Forst, was granted a licence in 1956 to start CKSW-AM radio in Roman’s hometown Swift Current. In April, 1959, Roman succumbed to overtures from his mother to return home and accepted a position as morning show host and program director at the local station.

“I realized immediately I had made a horrible mistake,” he laughs. “I was now working for the smallest station in Saskatchewan, maybe in Canada, after having worked in major markets. I had been on the upswing of my career. I worked as hard as I could to figure out a way to get out of Swift Current without breaking my mother’s heart.”

In the fall of that same year, he was discovered by Jerry Forbes during one of the CHED radio owner’s drives along the Trans-Canada Highway. He accepted a job at the Edmonton rock and roll station, but didn’t last long there.

Roman sent a tape over to CKEY radio in Toronto, the city’s number two station behind CHUM. The tape impressed legendary



Duff Roman displays photos from his past in his NOTL den. (Photo supplied)

Canadian businessman Jack Kent Cooke (he later gained renown as the owner of the NHL’s Los Angeles Kings, and what is now known as the NFL’s Washington Football Club), who personally invited him to work at CKEY. Before the end of 1959, Roman’s meteoric rise had taken him to Canada’s biggest radio market. It was at Cooke’s urging, by the way, that Digger Dave became Duff Roman.

While at CKEY, Roman opened an after-hours club called A Brave New World across the street from the radio station. It was the early days of rock and roll, and the Yorkville section of the city was the music’s epicentre.

One day in 1964, a young man named David “Sonny” Thomsett walked into the club, fresh out of a stint at the Burwash Prison. Thomsett would continue to drop by after his gigs at local high schools and pester Roman to let him get up on stage.

One night a couple of members of Roman’s house band were sick, so he invited Thomsett, who had changed his name to David Clayton-Thomas, and his band The Shays, to fill in.

“I had never heard any-

one sing the way that young kid could sing,” Roman says today. “The best blue-eyed soul singer I had ever heard in my life. The whole club went crazy.”

Roman tried to get local record labels to take an interest in Clayton-Thomas, but when that failed, he booked

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# 'Consummate entrepreneur' still pursuing new ventures

Continued from page 8

studio time to cut two songs with the singer and the band. He shopped the record to rival radio station CHUM, and it quickly climbed up the charts.

A new record label, Roman Records, was born. He and his brother Dan were major players in the Toronto music scene, recording singles and albums by Clayton-Thomas and the Shays, as well as Little Caesar & The Consuls and the Paupers. The label had a string of five consecutive hits on the CHUM charts, the major arbiter of music trends at the time.

Roman Records also worked with Levon and the Hawks, the backing band for Arkansas native and rockabilly legend Ronnie Hawkins, who had settled in Canada.

"I cut six sides with them," says Roman. "They were used by Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm as their calling card with the New York office of Bob Dylan's manager, Albert Grossman. They became the back-up band to take Dylan from acoustic to electric."

Of course, they also became successful as a five-piece on their own known as The Band.

While all this was happening, Roman finally gave in to CHUM program director Allan Slaight's attempts to

woo him to the competition. Roman accepted the offer of a weekend job there, and eventually disbanded the record label as he became more serious about his radio career.

Roman continued on air at CHUM until 1968, when he transitioned into management, working his way through the ranks for more than three decades. Roman became the program director of CHUM-FM in 1974, guiding them through revolutionary format changes. He added the duties of vice-president of industry affairs and digital radio operations for CHUM Limited in the 1990s. With the acquisition of CHUM by CTV in 2007, he was appointed Head of the CHUM Radio Network Division, retiring in 2009.

During his time in the executive suite at CHUM, Roman acted as chairman of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) and oversaw Digital Radio Research, a joint venture of the CAB and the CBC to review and develop policy for the development of digital radio in Canada.

He was heavily involved in the CRTC hearings that eventually resulted in the implementation of Canadian Content (Cancon) regulations, and the MAPL (Music, Artist, Production, Lyrics) system of qualification which took effect in radio in 1971. The regulations continue to

be a major factor in the promotion and success of Canadian musicians.

As well, in 1982, he was a co-founder and founding president of FACTOR (The Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings), an organization that continues to fund recording projects for Canadian artists today.

"I named FACTOR, along with Earl Rosen," Roman remembers. "We went from roughly \$200,000 collected from radio broadcasters to annually, today, a budget of \$23 million. I did all the politicking, up to Ottawa to get the government interested, up to Montreal and Quebec City to get the Francophone support for their version, Musicaction."

The Order of Canada is just the latest honour to be bestowed upon the radio and music industry legend. The 83-year-old is a member of the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame and has also been honoured by both the Canadian and Ontario Associations of Broadcasters. At the 2019 Juno Awards in London, Ont., Roman was named that year's recipient of the prestigious Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award.

Roman and his wife Sandra moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake about five years ago from the Oakville area. He says it was the uniqueness, climate, histor-

ical character and the laid-back wine culture that drew them to town.

Sandra volunteers with the Shaw Festival and is an active member of the NOTL Newcomers Club. Duff has been an original and active member of SORE (Save Our Randwood Estate), and can be found most summer days on the greens of either the St. Davids or Queenston Golf Clubs with his regular foursome.

The consummate entrepreneur is now involved in a venture that is developing a new technology called e-Radio, which repurposes FM radio waves to remotely activate and deactivate energy sources such as hot water tanks to reduce electricity waste. He has also begun a venture called Roman Records Presents. It's an effort to restore the works of Ontario-based bands from the 60s and 70s rock eras.

His son Joel is now 50, working as a senior satellite analyst with the Ministry of Natural Resources in Peterborough. Joel and his wife Diana have two daughters, Caroline, 15, and Emily, 13.

His younger son John, 32, is completing his PhD in philosophy this year at University of Pennsylvania. And John is another young musical artist that his father is proud to have supported through the years. Besides his expertise in philosophy,



Duff Roman with an El Mocambo poster signed by The Rolling Stones following their infamous 1977 concert.

John Roman is well-known as an electronic musician, remixing tracks by the likes of deadmau5 and Nouveau Yorican.

Asked which current Canadian artists he wishes he could have worked with, Duff names off Rob-in Thicke, Shawn Mendes, Diana Krall, Michael Buble, and Alessia Cara.

And on the subject of the state of radio and the music industry today?

"I'm not sure that any traditional media — radio, TV and newspapers — could

have reversed the impact of the internet and digital technologies," he says, going on to stand up for the continued relevance of the airwaves. "My mantra for radio is local, local and more local, with strong personalities."

Roman has opted to receive his Order of Canada directly from Governor General Mary Simon in Ottawa some time later this year. Maybe by the time he's back on the golf course this spring he will be able to affix his Order of Canada pin to his golf shirt.



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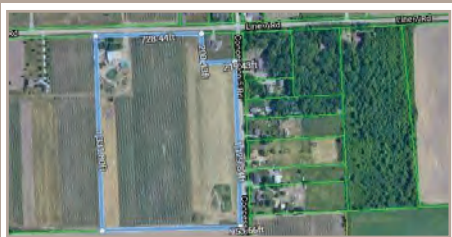
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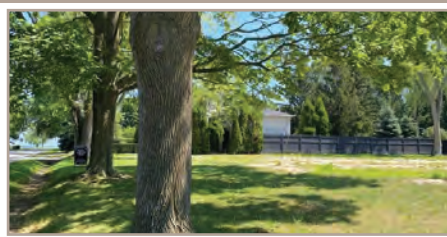
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# Support for women leads to Order of Canada

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

When the list of this year's Order of Canada recipients was posted last Wednesday, Harriet Stairs was one of them, appointed, as the announcement said, for improving women's opportunities in business, and helping women and youth through inclusive policies, in both the corporate world and through community projects.

Although Stairs is listed as being from Toronto, she and her husband have a home in the Old Town they purchased 21 years ago, and have had "one foot in both places" ever since, she says.

Stairs, then 55, was retiring from a 32-year career with the Bank of Montreal. Her husband, Edward Mooney, was not yet ready to retire. A chartered accountant, his career was with major corporations as a financial advisor on real estate issues, before starting his own consulting business. His work, plus Stairs' shift to working with the not-for-profit sector and various positions on boards and committees, has made it helpful to have a base in Toronto.

They also have four adult children between the two of them, all living in Toronto — Mooney has two sons, she has a son and a daughter, with a combined total of 10 grandchildren, ranging in age from 17 down to two years old. Keeping their city home allows for more occasions to gather with family, although, with the arrival of COVID, she and her husband are spending more time in Niagara than previously.

"Life is so much more simple in NOTL," she says. "During COVID, Toronto has continued to be such a busy place. NOTL is beautiful, and we love our home here. We saw it, we liked it and we bought it, and we've fallen in love with the community."

Stairs, like others who receive the Order of Canada and wear the iconic snowflake pin representing the honour, is considered to have "changed the nation's measure of success, and helped build a better Canada," the motto of the Order.

"I am honoured, and very thrilled," she says, "but also surprised. It's a great honour, one I never, ever dreamed of receiving."

Stairs' career with BMO

began in 1967, after graduating from McGill University in Montreal. Her first job, she recalls, was as a host for the bank at Expo '67, an exciting time to be a Montrealer. After a time in marketing, she moved to human resources, and began to work her way up. There were no women in front of her in senior management, making each move "a bit of a challenge," as she broke through the glass ceiling "one slot at a time."

After becoming a vice-president, she reached the position of executive vice-president of human resources, which came with a role in senior leadership.

One of Stairs' many significant accomplishments with the BMO was creating a strategy for flexible benefits, which allowed employees some choice about what was better for them in their individual circumstances. Women made up 70 per cent of the bank's workforce, at a time when benefits and pensions were created for men, and while the flexibility benefited both men and women, it was especially helpful for women, who were able to choose benefits to suit their needs, which were very different from men.

ferent from men.

She went on to play key roles in training for young people, and the advancement of women in management roles.

Although she says she doesn't have her fingers on that pulse any longer, "things have changed tremendously for the better. Women can and should aspire to senior jobs." There is still more work to be done though, she adds, specifically mentioning there is not a female bank CEO, "although I don't think it will be long before we see that. It's been an effort to change that culture, but there has been great progress made."

When she retired from the bank, she felt she had earned the right to take life a little easier, but also wanted to put her free time to good use. "The first part of my life was all about climbing the corporate ladder, creating new, more modern policies that were future-oriented," and having learned a lot about management along the way felt she was young enough to use her skills "doing something worthwhile for others."

Her next move was to Portage, a not-for-profit established in 1985, to help give youth struggling with drug addiction a fresh start. As chair, she was able to convince the provincial government to create more beds for young people. "If you're ready to reach out for help, you don't want to sit around waiting for a



Order of Canada recipient Harriet Stairs is proud — and surprised — to be able to wear the pin that represents the prestigious honour. (Photo supplied)

bed," she says. "That was key."

After about 15 years with that organization, she moved to work with the Psychology Foundation of Canada on a program called Kids Have Stress Too, helping to develop policies and plans as it grew to include families, adults and children dealing with stress and mental health issues.

She has also worked with Sheila's Place, for people with eating disorders, and a program called Deaf Futures, through the Canadian Hearing Society, which devised educational programs to help young people who are deaf or hard of hearing, preparing them for success.

There have been other

organizations and boards to which she has given her time, skills and fundraising efforts, but most recently, and continuing through to the present, Stairs has become involved in the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts, a non-profit organization that promotes knowledge of the visual arts through education programs, and provides support and recognition for emerging artists and art organizations.

There are about 250 members, mostly women, who like her have been interested in art all their lives, and now want to give back.

At the age of 75, she says, "this one is me giving myself a treat. It gives me a lot of pleasure."

She is now a McGill Emeritus Governor, after two terms on the board of governors, and her volunteerism with the university continues long-distance. She also spent two years on the board of Ryerson, as it transitioned from a polytechnic institute to a university.

Continued on page 11



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# Stairs' achievements were in corporate and non-profit sectors

Continued from page 10

When she and Mooney decided they were ready for a little slower lifestyle and a second home outside Toronto, “we thought NOTL was a lovely town, with all sorts of nice things to it. We love the theatre, and when we moved, I did two terms on the Shaw (Festival) board. I learned a lot about theatre, and about the community.”

They have met a large number of interesting people, and both love to golf, making the most of the great golf courses in the area. Mooney jokes in his Irish brogue (they share Irish roots, evidenced by an interview that featured Stairs on CHIN AM radio during last Sunday morning's Irish show) that “now I'll be expected to walk five paces behind her on the golf course.”

In addition to being a get-away, and a place for family to visit, their home on the corner of Dorchester and Johnson has an interesting history. It was built in 1820 on a lot at the southeast corner of Queen and Simcoe Streets, and was moved — for the first time — along Queen Street to Victoria Street, ironically, Stairs believes, to make room for the Bank of Montreal building. It was then moved again to its current location.

When family come to visit, they love to walk, play tennis, and in the summer visit the Virgil Sports Park, says Stairs. Pre-pandemic, they enjoyed the Shaw plays and events for young people.

Through her work with Portage, Stairs and her family developed a tradition of participating in an annual fundraising bike ride for the organization, and with it cancelled for

two years, have created their own fundraiser, each family member riding a certain distance to raise funds (donated by Stairs) for Portage.

It's important to her, she explained, for children to learn early in life to give back to their community. It's a lesson she learned from her mother and mother's family, who were very supportive of their Montreal community, from her father, a surgeon, and from the private school she attended, the Sacred Heart School, founded in 1800 in the wake of the French Revolution, and run by nuns.

“Their mandate was to teach women to be leaders,” she says. “They had a culture of doing things for people and being aware of and looking for social justice. The nuns were great people, and well ahead of their time.”

Her recent appointment to the Order of Canada, Stairs says, has given her an opportunity to talk about her career, after a lifetime of working quietly, without seeking or receiving much public attention.

These days, google anyone who has done as much in their career and for their community as she has, and you will learn all about them. But not Stairs — she has chosen to work behind the scenes, not looking for

recognition.

When Mooney speaks of how incredibly proud he is of his wife, he describes her as “an elegant lady who has worked with quiet power and design in her various roles, with the BMO and the community-based organizations where she has served.”

Although there has been no decision on how the award will be delivered, Stairs says she is hoping it will be in person later this year, in Ottawa, handed to her by the governor general, Mary Simon.

As gratifying as the prestigious appointment is, Stairs says, what means as much if not more to her are the phone calls, emails and Facebook posts from many women in the corporate and not-for-profit sectors, “some I've known, and others I've only known about,” who have reached out to thank her for her support.

The milestones in her career didn't come easily, but as she was reaching them, she was aware of her responsibility to ease the way for the women who would follow her. That she continues to hear from them, “from all times in my life,” telling her how much she helped them, is evidence of how successful she has been at building a better Canada, fulfilling the motto of the honour she has received.



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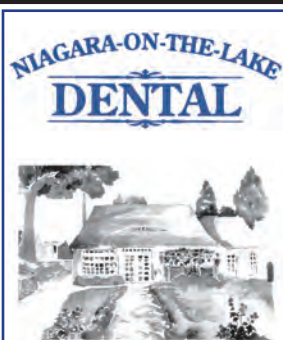
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Actual Kid-Friendly News

# Kids

GAZETTE



**SILLY PET PHOTO**  
This silly pony at Red Ribbon Stables testing out whether or not the grass is actually greener (and tastier) on the other side.

JANUARY 2022

Volume 2 • Issue 1

FIND THE SMILEY FACE HIDDEN ON THIS PAGE!

## Local News

We might not have had a white Christmas, but with a windchill as low as -20 Celsius in Niagara-on-the-Lake last week, it sure is starting to feel like winter! Please bundle up and stay warm when heading outside in such cold temperatures, and

send us pictures of your fun winter activities!

It looks like schools will be online again when classes resume next week. Good luck in the second half of this year and have a safe and healthy rest of the school year.

## DECODE THE EMOJIS

Figure out the movie titles by decoding the emojis.

Send in your answers for a chance to win a

**\$25 gift certificate for The Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe!**

Send in your answers to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com. The first 10 kids to send in the correct answers will be put into a draw, and the winner will get \$25 to spend at the candy shop.



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**Q. What do you want to be when you grow up?**

**A.** A zoologist. I want to help out mammals and take care of animals in need. I want to do that because I love animals and taking care of them. When I retire from that I want to open a restaurant or cafe in NOTL.

**Q. How would you change the world if you could?**

**A.** I would change the world by lowering the risk of animals getting extinct and keeping the food chain in order.

**Q. What is your ideal day in NOTL?**

**A.** First I would go to Sunset (Grill) and grab a pancake. Then I'd head to the Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe and get some candy. After that I'd head to Starbucks and get some hot cocoa and drink that at the lake. Then I'd swim and paddleboard. I'd finish the day by playing with my dogs, reading a book and listening to music.

**Q. What is your favourite book?**

**A.** My favourite book is Wings of Fire book 10, Darkness of Dragons. I love this book because it is very long, action packed and dramatic. Also, it is about dragons and I love dragons. My favourite movie is Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, which also has a dragon.

**Q. What do you do to help others?**

**A.** I help them by lightening up their day with some jokes. And, I help them with stuff at school that they need help with. With little kids at my school I always like to give them high fives and make them laugh.

**Q. What is a fun family tradition you have at home?**

**A.** Every year at Christmas we do a gingerbread house-making contest. We split up into groups and each group makes a gingerbread house. We text the photos to Mom's

family to have them judge who the winner should be. It's usually a disaster, but that's what I like about it.

**Q. What is your favourite thing about NOTL?**

**A.** A lot of people know a lot of people and everyone really gets to know each other. I love how they do the flowers in summer, that

really peaks my interest.

**Q. How did you keep yourself busy during COVID lockdowns?**

**A.** By playing video games, doing a lot of art, and reading . . . like a lot a lot of reading. In about two weeks I did about 3,000 minutes of reading. I had to log it for school so I remember the exact amount.



Saxon Reese, II

## RESTAURANT REVIEWS Gyros on the Lake



**Gabe Sentelli, II**  
Kids Gazette

Gyros on the Lake, also known as gyro, is one of my favourite places to eat. They serve shawarma and French fries. There are different types of shawarma, like chicken, lamb and beef. My favourite is the chicken shawarma with lettuce, tzatziki and French

fries. They have really nice employees. One time I went there and they gave me lollipops for free. Their shop is located near the Court House and Hatley. My mom gets falafel with greek salad, which is all vegetarian. I love this place because they make such good food. Well, that's my food review. Also they have good prices.

## NIAGARA TRIVIA

The Town of Niagara was the site of the 8th World Scout Jamboree in 1955. Over 11,000 Scouts from 71 countries attended the Jamboree.



## The Joy of Gingerbread

**Taleah Bucci, II**  
Kids Gazette

On Saturday, Dec. 18, my dad and I built a gingerbread house kit. It came with a few gingerbread men and Christmas tree cookies, too. The smell of ginger and icing sugar filled the air and Christmas music played in the background as we worked. We decorated using red, green, and white icing. Then we added on some candies: candy

cane pinwheels, sugar-coated jelly stars and trees, a holiday mix, and holly-shaped candies. We also decorated the cookies, squirting on icing and pressing on leftover candies. We stood the cookies up outside the gingerbread house. The end result looked and smelled delicious.

(Some of the candies mysteriously disappeared as we were building, but my tummy and I know exactly where they are.) I had lots of fun.



**Happy Birthday to all our Joyous NOTL Kids!**

Elwood D. turned eight on Jan. 1.  
Patrick Elrod turned 13 on Jan. 3.  
Trinity Claus turned six on Jan. 4.



## RIDDLE

**Q. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?**

**A. Footsteps.**

## SUBMISSION INFO

The hope for this page is to get kids involved and interacting with the community in a positive way. We welcome submissions for all categories from kids of any age. Please keep the reviews positive and all submitted content appropriate for kids of all ages. Please send all submissions to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com and in the subject line please put the category for which you are submitting. Thank you



# Town explains current provincial restrictions

## Local Staff

The town has responded to the restrictions laid out by Ontario Premier Doug Ford Monday, to take effect Wednesday, Jan. 5, with the goal of curbing the transmission of the omicron variant and preventing any further overload of the health care system, which is at risk.

The additional public health and workplace safety measures include:

- Reducing social gathering to five people indoors and 10 outdoors.

- Limiting organized public events to five people indoors.

- Ensure employees work remotely unless their work requires them to be on-site.

- Limiting capacity at indoor weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites and ceremonies to 50 per cent capacity of the particular room. Outdoor services are limited to the number of people that can maintain two metres of physical distance.

- Retail settings, including shopping malls, permitted at 50 per cent capacity.

- Personal care services permitted at 50 per cent capacity.

- Closing indoor meeting and event spaces with exceptions, permitting outdoor spaces to open with restrictions.

- The NOTL Public Library is available virtually, although across the province they're limited to 50 per cent capacity.

- Closing indoor dining at restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments. Outdoor dining with restrictions, takeout, drive-through and delivery is permitted.

- Restricting the sale of alcohol after 10 p.m. and the consumption of alcohol in businesses or settings after 11 p.m. with

delivery and takeout, grocery/convenience stores and other liquor stores exempted.

- Closing indoor concert venues, theatres, cinemas.

- Closing indoor sport and recreational fitness facilities including gyms. Outdoor facilities are permitted to operate with restrictions.

- Public and private schools move to remote learning starting Jan. 5 until at least Jan. 17.

- School buildings would be permitted to open for childcare operations, including emergency child care, to provide in-person instruction for students with

special education needs who cannot be accommodated remotely and for staff who are unable to deliver quality instruction

from home.

- Visit [covid-19.ontario.ca](https://covid-19.ontario.ca) for the most up-to-date information from the province.



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# LocalSPORTS

## Former hockey player becomes Predators' trainer

### Samantha Marson also named team's assistant general manager

**Mike Balsom**  
**Special to The Local**

Samantha Marson would not set aside her hockey dreams after suffering a career-ending injury during a tournament.

In her last year playing midget (under-18) hockey in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, three girls crashed her net, pushing goaltender Marson hard back against the post. She came off the ice, but stuck around to watch the rest of the tournament.

The Cambridge native went home, telling her mother that she was fine. But the next morning she had trouble getting out of bed, so they went to the hospital.

Marson spent about three months mostly confined to her hospital bed, wondering if she would ever walk again, let alone skate. The incident had damaged her spine, from the L3 to the L5 vertebrae, or the lower lumbar region.

Doctors told her she might need surgery, but within a few weeks she was able to move her toes, and her journey to getting back on her

feet began. After months of physiotherapy, she was able to finally lace up a pair of skates again.

Today, Marson is behind the bench for the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's (GMHL) Niagara Predators. She has taken on a double role as athletic trainer and assistant general manager, both of which represent her new goals in the hockey world.

"I know physically I won't be able to play anymore," she tells The Local. "I want to be a general manager and a sports lawyer. Having control and being able to run a team is something I've always wanted to do. Being a woman, and taking that next step in women's hockey, if girls can't play there are other ways to still work in the sport."

Marson says she started playing hockey at two years old and signed up for minor hockey as soon as she was old enough. She first took her position between the pipes because her older brother Shawn needed a goalie to shoot on. A fierce competitor, Marson says her fearlessness

in goal comes from stopping shots by Shawn and his older male friends, both on the ice and in the driveway.

She played hockey alongside boys until she was 14, when she switched over to girls' leagues in Kitchener-Waterloo. While attending Preston High School, her girls' team coach was short on skaters, so she split her time between goaltending and playing forward for the Panthers.

After her injury, Marson felt strong enough to spend a season playing goalie while attending Lakehead University. She backstopped the Thunderwolves in nine games during the 2018-2019 season, finishing with a goals against average of 1.98 and recording 3 shutout victories.

But she felt she was risking her health too much in the goal crease, so she switched to playing forward permanently. She also left Lakehead to attend Paul Smith's College near Lake Placid, New York. Marson recorded the first-ever goal for that school's women's hockey Bobcats team on Oct. 26, 2019, the first of her



Samantha Marson on the bench with Predators players. (Ann Shipton)

three goals that night.

"It's the atmosphere," Marson says, about why she loves the game so much. "When it comes to hockey, you always have that second family with you wherever you are. You don't get that anywhere else."

A friend told her the Predators were looking for a trainer when the team moved from Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake. She had some experience helping out in that role previously for other teams, so she reached out to owner Robert Turnbull to express her interest.

The 21-year-old had already been attending Niagara College's sports management program, and had previously earned a few credits in kinesiology at university. She had her first aid training, then went through the process to earn her trainer's certification through the GMHL.

Turnbull and general manager Johan Eriksson quickly noticed how valuable Marson was becoming to the franchise, and the assistant general manager title was bestowed upon her to more accurately reflect her contributions.

"She did a ton of extra work over and above being a trainer," Turnbull says. "She was doing so many jobs that Johan called me to ask if she could be given the assistant general manager title. She transports players everywhere, she follows up on players' needs, she trains timekeepers and works with

(play-by-play announcer) Mike Frena. She's invaluable."

Turnbull says Marson has an excellent starting skill set to become a general manager. He's been working with her to guide her toward making the right moves to get into position to realize her dreams.

"She's a 21-year-old with a 30-year-old's work ethic," adds Turnbull. "To me, age and gender mean absolutely nothing. If they can do the job and I can trust them, then they are the people that I'm going to move forward."

When told about Turnbull's comments regarding her work, Marson becomes humbled on the phone.

"The fact that he doesn't see my gender, but instead looks at the way I work and my skills, it makes me feel really good about it," she says.

In her travels with the team for Predators' road games, Marson runs into very few other women in roles like hers. She feels like a bit of a trailblazer of sorts because of that.

"Having the general manager title, it makes me feel that I'm making a difference," Marson says. "I want more females to feel that they can be included, beyond being just a scorekeeper or a trainer."

But make no mistake, she takes the trainer's role seriously. Marson had to help defenceman Logan Baillie deal with a knee injury suffered during the Predators' second game, a 4-2 loss to St. George

on Oct. 3. He subsequently spent a number of weeks on the injured list.

"The biggest challenge is when you have to tell a player that he can't go back on the ice," she says, "You see it on their faces, they just want to play. But you have to be firm, and tell them their health comes first."

Recognizing that she might be a role model herself, she's quick to give credit to those who have inspired her along her hockey journey.

"I'm pretty close friends with (three-time Olympic and four-time World Championship medalist) Sami Jo Small," says Marson. "I work at her goalie camp every summer in Oakville. I look up to (four-time Olympic medalist) Jennifer Botterill as well. I met her through Sami. Both of them have helped and inspired me. They've shown, even after they finished playing, that women can do this."

Beyond her own potential role model status, Marson hopes this season with the Predators is the first step toward her one day dropping the assistant from her general manager title, while adding contract negotiation to her duties. And she doesn't rule out her skills and experience qualifying her for the role of league commissioner somewhere in the future.

One thing is certain about Samantha Marson. Nothing will stop her from achieving her goals.



Predators trainer Samantha Marson escorts injured player Josh Davidson off the ice. (Photo supplied)

## LocalWORSHIP

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### Meet the Predators

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Jersey number: **10**  
Age: **21**  
Birthdate: **Nov. 7, 2000**  
Hometown:  
**Geneva, Switzerland**  
Nickname: **HP**  
Favourite hockey player:  
**Kasperi Kapanen**  
Other sports you play:  
**Soccer and basketball**  
Favourite "cheat" meal:  
**OvoMaltine**  
**Biscuits (Swiss version of Ovaltine)**





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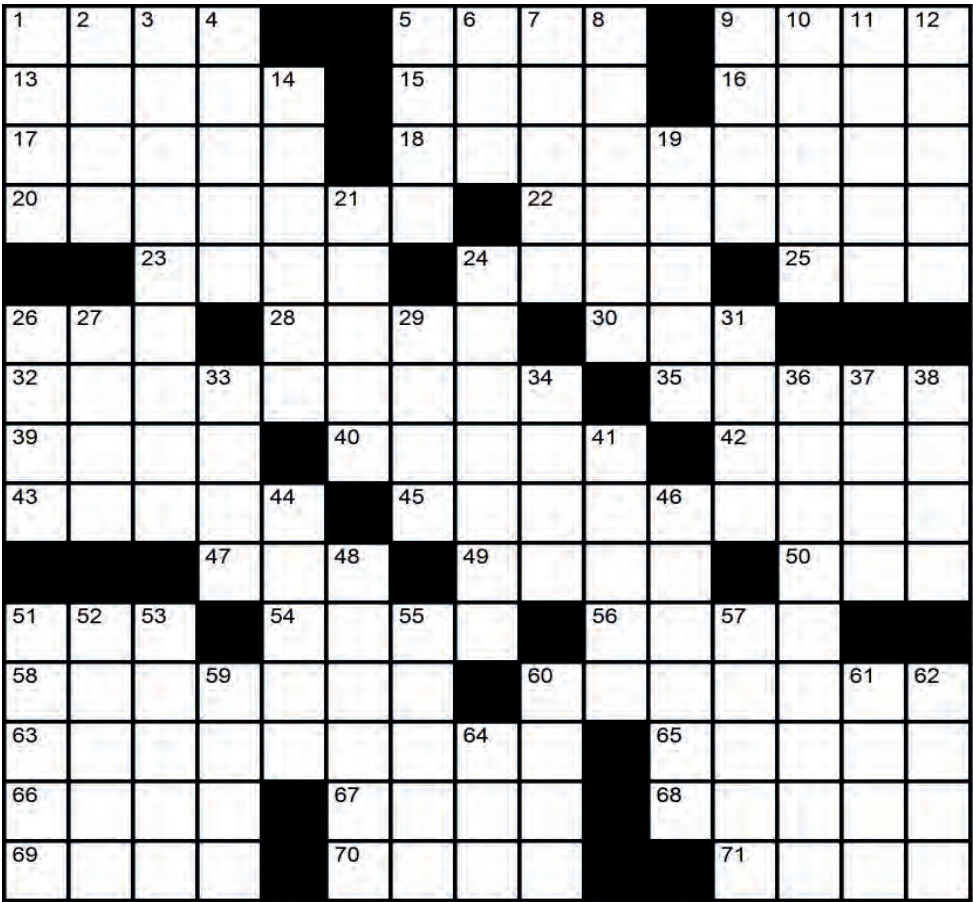
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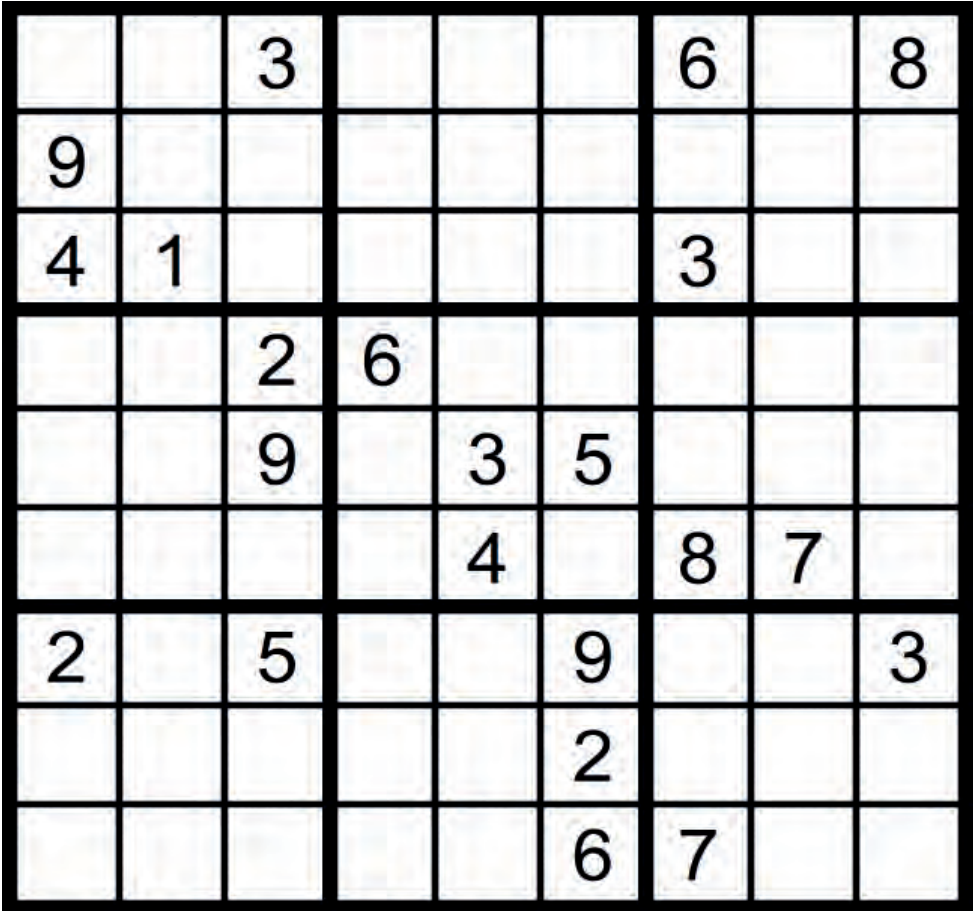


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16 Turns  
17 Weighty  
18 Thought transference  
20 San ---, California  
22 Correction  
23 4th largest Great Lake  
24 With regard to  
25 Place  
26 Contains Jets and Texans  
28 Composure  
30 Small cell  
32 Paces  
35 Common subjects in life classes  
39 Zits  
40 Delhi wraps?  
42 S M S  
43 Additional clause  
45 Financial holdings  
47 Doze  
49 Calf meat  
50 Tennis player's org.  
51 Drop in value
- 54 Small pool lining slab  
56 Burrow  
58 Unworldliness  
60 Storm  
63 Truce  
65 Ace golfer --- Els  
66 Amount  
67 "Born Free" lioness  
68 Lucifer  
69 Was completely certain  
70 Raised platform  
71 Thanksgiving dish
- Down:  
1 "Quantum of Solace" actress --- Kurylenko  
2 Ripped  
3 Very soon  
4 Cut  
5 Either a male or a female voice  
6 Recline  
7 Filmmaker Woody ---  
8 Jagged mountain range  
9 Turkish rulers  
10 Asleep  
11 Long narrow jacket with a high collar  
12 So far  
14 Ancient artifacts  
19 Song of praise  
21 E.g. venison, beef, pork etc.  
24 Better  
26 A long way off  
27 An ellipse has two  
29 Spring  
31 Not manual (Abbr.)  
33 Person between 12 and 20  
34 Father  
36 Dominican-American fashion designer Oscar ---  
37 Way out  
38 Cease  
41 Not fresh  
44 Assesses  
46 Online attacks  
48 Pockmarked  
51 Nibble  
52 Moses' brother  
53 Easy putt  
55 Bizet's priestess in "The Pearl Fishers"  
57 Start of a divine appeal  
59 Perspective  
60 E.g. Oolong, Darjeeling  
61 Now Thailand  
62 Sawbucks  
64 Long-running Ted Danson show



OBITUARY



**TSUGIO 'ROBERT' MORI** — March 23, 1926, Vancouver, BC - December 29, 2021, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

With great sadness, we announce the passing of Tsugio 'Robert' Mori in his 95th year on Wednesday, December 29 in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Beloved husband of the late Ryuko 'Ricki' Mori (nee Ayukawa), father of Christine Mori, and 'Papa' of granddaughter Alexis Kimiko Spieldenner.

Predeceased by his parents Hachizo and Masa Mori, sisters Fujiko, Fusako, and Yaeko, and brothers Kazuo, Shozo, and Yoshio. Survived by brother Shigeru and fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Tsugio 'Robert' (Bob) Mori was born on March 23, 1926 in Kitsilano, BC. During World War II, he and his family were uprooted from his childhood home and interned in Grand Forks, BC. Despite the injustices endured by the Japanese Canadian community, Bob strove to create a better life for himself and his family.

Post-war, he set out for Toronto to begin anew and soon married his wife Ryuko (Ricki) of 57 years. They met on a "streetcar named desire," as he often fondly recounted. Driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, ingenuity, and a tenacious work ethic, Bob and Ricki started and successfully built their own business, Mori Safety, designing and manufacturing safety harnesses.

In his retirement years, some of Bob's favourite memories were travelling with Ricki and their dogs Koko and Daisy in their motorhome and spending time with their daughter and granddaughter. For the past ten years, he called Niagara-on-the-Lake home. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Special thanks to Dr. Timothy Bastedo and caregivers Grace Nunez and Amy Lagrimas. A private memorial service will be held at a later date. Private family arrangements in care of the Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in memory of Tsugio Robert Mori.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



To place an obituary  
in our Classifieds,  
please contact Julia at:  
[julia@notllocal.com](mailto:julia@notllocal.com) or  
905.934.1040  
Deadline is Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from  
December 29, 2021

8	4	6	5	7	2	1	3	9
2	5	3	8	1	9	4	6	7
9	1	7	4	6	3	5	2	8
5	7	2	3	9	8	6	1	4
3	6	9	1	2	4	8	7	5
4	8	1	7	5	6	3	9	2
7	9	5	6	8	1	2	4	3
6	3	8	2	4	7	9	5	1
1	2	4	6	3	5	7	8	9

**Across:** 1 Otis, 5 Alias, 9 Anna, 13 Loner, 15 Lili, 16 Goes, 17 Grave, 18 Telepathy, 20 Anselmo, 22 Erasme, 23 Ere, 24 In re, 25 Put, 26 A F C, 28 Calm, 30 AAV, 32 Footsteps, 35 Nudes, 39 Acme, 40 Sars, 42 Text, 43 Rider, 45 Portfolio, 47 Nap, 49 Veal, 50 A T P, 51 Sag, 54 Tile, 56 Lait, 58 Naivete, 60 Tempest, 63 Amistice, 65 Ernie, 66 Come, 67 Elsa, 68 Satan, 69 Knew, 70 Dais, 71 Yams.

**Down:** 1 Olga, 2 Torn, 3 In a second, 4 Sever, 5 Alto, 6 Lie, 7 Allen, 8 Sierra, 9 Agas, 10 Not up, 11 Nehru, 12 As yet, 14 Relics, 19 Paean, 21 Meats, 24 Improve, 26 Afar, 27 Foci, 29 Leap, 31 Auto, 33 Teen, 34 Sire, 36 De la Renta, 37 Exit, 38 Stop, 41 Stale, 44 Flames, 46 Pitted, 51 Snack, 52 Aaron, 53 Glimme, 55 Lelia, 57 I pray, 59 View, 60 Teas, 61 Siam, 62 Tens, 64 C S I.

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