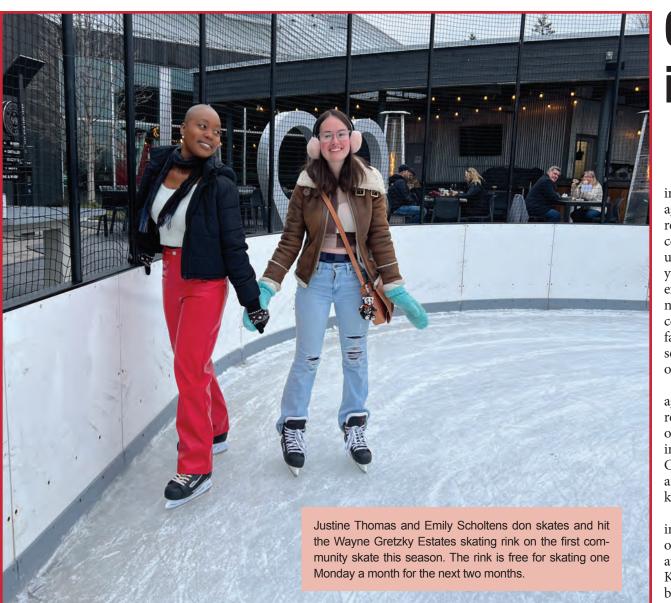




Mystery stones remain unidentified at least for now page12

notllocal.com JANUARY 10, 2024 Volume 6 • Issue 2



COVID-19 spikes in long-term care

Penny Coles The Local

There has been a spike in COVID-19 cases in Niagara long-term care and retirement homes in recent weeks, but that is not unexpected at this time of year. Over the holidays, explains Dr. Azim Kasmani, Niagara's medical officer of health, as visits by family members increase, outbreaks.

On Monday, the Niagara Region website was reporting 16 outbreaks of respiratory illnesses, COVID, four influenza A and some with causes unknown

"We often see a rise in influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory disease at this time of year," says Kasmani. "People want to be with their loved ones over the holiday, and this

gives viruses a chance to spread. This tends to happen in the community as well."

There are many factors that impact the spread and severity of these illnesses, such as built-up immunity from infections and vaccinations, he says. Wastewater data, which has been used by public health experts to track and monitor COVID as the number of so do respiratory illness tests administered and reported dropped, hasn't been updated recently to quantify the numbers in the community.

"When testing availincluding 10 related to ability changed, reporting changed as well. Not everyone who gets COVID gets tested. The vast majority of the cases reported come from long-term care homes, hospitals or emergency rooms. Most people are using rapid tests, and

Continued on page 9

Residents battle removal of eight mature trees

Kris Dube The Local Local Journalism **Initiative Reporter**

More than 700 people who signed a petition that began circulating less than two weeks ago have called for the town to stop a dehomes on the property. public meeting was held to bylaw amendment was aphear questions and concerns proved by council - but with tee meeting. about site owner David an amendment directing Funk's request for a zon- the committee of adjust- cial Plan, which says existing ing bylaw amendment that ment, who will evaluate the trees "must not be unneceswould allow the homes to be next steps of a consent ap- sarily removed and wherever said McCormack in Novem- are a priority to be uprooted. constructed.

veloper from cutting down forward opposing the proj- preservation of all trees the that taking down the trees staff this week. eight mature trees in the Old ect, with the focus of their developer says could be de- would go against provincial comments on preserving the stroyed. trees that are planned to be

mittee-of-the-whole plan- 30, delivered a presentation November committee-of-In early November, a ning meeting, the zoning at the November meeting, as the-whole meeting, one of

He cites the town's Offiplication for the property possible should be preserved ber, reiterating his position About 10 people came and severance, to consider and protected," also noting when before councillors and down in order to build drive-

well as at Tuesday's commit- the eight trees is more than 100 years old.

will not replace the existing healthy ones in our lifetime,"

Burroughs about whether the trees have to come down, William Heikoop, a planner speaking on behalf of the "Any replanted trees property owner, said at the earlier meeting that there are three in the front yard that

They need to be taken

Town.

The trees are on a lot at 474 Simcoe St., the site of a removed. proposal to build two new

created the petition that

Stuart McCormack, who to climate change.

According to an arbor-

and regional policies related six silver maples, an English "it would be very difficult to walnut, and a honey locust.

Fielding questions at that At Tuesday night's com- started circulating on Dec. ist's report included in the meeting from Coun. Gary

ways and to allow services to The trees in jeopardy are be installed. Given their size, keep the three in the front,"

Continued on page 3



NOTL'S Dr. Peter Simon named to Order of Ontario

Mike Balsom The Local

As he retires from his role as president and CEO of the Toronto-based Royal Conservatory at the end of August 2024, Dr. Peter Simon may not have much time to prominently display in his office the official Order of Ontario insignia badge he will soon receive from the Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Chancellor of the Order of Ontario.

Niagara-on-the-Lake А resident, Simon is one of 25 new Ontarians named to the province's highest honour on January 2.

"I am deeply honoured to be acknowledged for the work I've done over 33 years," he says. "It's very special, and I am very grateful. I happen to know several of the people on this year's list, too. These are all people of great achievement, and they are very good people who care about their community. I am happy to be included among them."

For Simon, a highly educated and accomplished pianist himself, his career with the Conservatory has been all about using the arts to further the personal, intellectual and social development of all people in Canada and beyond.

"I believe that music is the most important means that we have to develop both individual



Dr. Peter Simon, a Chautauqua resident, has been named to the Order of Ontario. (Supplied)

lives and society itself," Simon ception in 1994, more than Leon Fleisher. tells The Local. "There are immense benefits that studying music brings to young people. It opens their minds and their hearts to creativity and selfexpression. It develops discipline and makes them problem-solvers. It allows one to enter the sublime realm of imagination."

With retirement looming, Simon has had much time to reflect on his more than three decades leading RCM through an extended period of rapid growth and expansion.

launched its Learning Through hta. As well, Gould School fac-The Arts initiative that sought ulty have included the likes of to put the arts at the centre of Paul Kantor, Andrew McCandpublic education. Since its in- less, Andres Diaz and the late

300,000 students in over 300 schools and communities have benefitted from the program.

Three years later, Simon launched the Glenn Gould School, now one of the most outstanding performance training institutions in the world for exceptionally gifted musicians, most of whom receive a full-tuition scholarship. Each year the school offers as many as 150 master classes with some of the world's greatest performers and conductors, including Sir Andras Schiff, During his tenure, RCM Riccardo Muti and Zubin Me-

greatest living musician in the world," Simon says of Fleisher, under whom he studied at the University of Michigan in the 1980s. "I later persuaded him to teach at the Glenn Gould would have access to the greatest mind in music of our time." In 2013, Simon led the re-

structuring of the Royal Conservatory's young artists programs, renamed The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists, that provides mentorship and training for 90 highly gifted young musicians between the ages of eight and 18 each year.

He oversaw the fundraising for the 2009 opening of the new TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning and Koerner Hall, as well as a new Performing Arts Division at The Royal Conservatory which presents and oversees more than 300 concerts and events dent. Three years later Simon each year.

seen the launch of RCM's Early Canadian institution.



Childhood Music Education tification program, a new digexpansion south of the border, where RCM's structured curriculum and assessment model has been adopted by more than 100 schools, 6,000 independent teachers and approximately 10,000 students.

Simon never set out to become an arts administrator. meant everything to him, going back as far as when he took his Grade 2 exam through the Royal Conservatory at the age of eight.

He studied at the Conser-Berlin, whom he considers an agent of change in his life, his "He was in my view the first major influence before meeting Fleisher.

> "He allowed me to achieve my potential," Simon says. "He gave me the confidence to move forward."

With the goal of becoming School so that our students a concert pianist, Simon went on to study music at New York's Juilliard School and in London with Louis Kentner. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the University of Michigan while studying under Fleisher, then divided his time between performing, teaching at the University of Western Ontario and overseeing the artistic direction of Preview Concerts in Toronto.

His move into arts administration began in 1986, when Simon returned to The Royal Conservatory as its director of academic studies. In 1989 he moved on to the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, where he became presiwas back at RCM to take the And the past 10 years have helm of the newly-independent

"I really felt that the nation programs, a new teacher cer- needed a strong Conservatory," he recalls, "because it really is ital learning division and an the foundational base of music education across Canada. Hundreds of thousands of students study every year through our learning system. It connects communities in every corner of the nation. There's really no other institution like this in any other country."

With Simon's retirement Music, though, has always nearing, he and his wife, Canadian pianist Dianne Werner, moved to the Chautauqua area in 2021 with their German Shepherd/Rottweiler-mix rescue dog named Scoob.

"We love Niagara-on-thevatory as a student of Boris Lake," Simon says. "We think it's a fantastic community, and we're very grateful to be here. And our daughter and her husband and their two kids (Peter and Maggie) were already here."

Simon and Werner are enjoying the quieter life in NOTL, though they still maintain an apartment in Toronto close to the Conservatory, which he will need for at least another eight months as he winds down his presidency.

"It's been an all-consuming role," he says of his 33 years at the Conservatory. "It literally is a 24/7 job, and I've enjoyed every minute of it, but it's the right time to go. It's emotional thinking about all the lasts that are coming in the next little while."

At the same time, he knows he will never be fully disconnected from the Conservatory, and he hopes that he can use his decades of experience there to help other arts organizations thrive in the future.

"I'm a strong believer that you cannot focus just on survival," he says. "You have to focus on growth and success."

And on his own success, and that of The Royal Conservatory, as well as receiving the Order of Ontario this week, he sums it up simply.

"Music is a transformative power that has no equal," Simon says, "and the things that I have done have been based on that profound belief about the benefits that music can pro-



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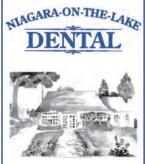
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Developer wants trees removed for driveways, servicing

Continued from page 1

Canada Consultants.

The removal of the mature trees, which provide shade along Simcoe Street, Wendy Cheropita.

"These are pretty significant, and that I find a little troubling," she said.

After Burroughs raised questions Tuesday about the town's next steps and the committee of adjustment's role in a decision, clerk Grant Bivol drafted an amendment for council, which Burroughs did not support he wasn't satisfied with the be made in aligning drivewording – that the committee of adjustment consider protecting the trees, but not that councillors direct the trees be protected.

The motion was moved by Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, who said the report mentions the trees in question on several occasions.

"I'm very comfortable with that going forward," said Zalepa

Planning director Kirsten McCauley said the decision before committee-of-thewhole Tuesday night was related to the zoning bylaw amendment, and that the mended the property ownconsent application process er's zoning bylaw amendis when more direction can ment be approved. be given to the developer.

tions," she said. The staff report on last

night's planning agensaid Heikoop, from Upper da says there is a total of 11 trees that could be removed out of 21 on the property. Eight were identified for removal to acis also a concern for Coun. commodate the new homes, and three were slated to be taken down due to their poor health, says the report.

> The three mature trees along the front of the property contribute to the streetscape of Mary and Simcoe Streets, but the report says some tree removal along this section may be needed for servicing and driveways.

> However, efforts "should ways and servicing to retain as many mature trees as possible," says the staff report.

The applicant has said additional trees will be planted on the property to compensate for the removed trees, reads the report.

"Town staff remain of the opinion that an effort should be made to preserve as many mature trees as possible, particularly those fronting the lot and any boundary trees shared between the subject lands and the nearby property at 464 Simcoe St."

Town staff had recom-

Dock area resident Ron That would be the vehi- Simkus is also a critic of the district that combines the vides comfort, and somecle to impose those condi- proposal to remove eight legacy of distinctive old times envy, to our visitors multiple driveways, he add-



Rene Bertschi got this photo of the tree canopy on the Simcoe Street lot proposed for development. Residents were hoping the town would not allow the trees to be cut down.

weekly email blasts, usually about water levels, to make people aware of the request son for millions of tourists to remove them.

across southern Ontario.

"There is a good rea-Old Town is a heritage because this little town pro-

decades-old trees from the homes that are more than that there is a place, with- ed. "The loser in every one of property, and reached out 200 years old, he told The in reach of the GTA, that these proposals are the trees, through his list of about Local, with a tree canopy that symbolizes what everyone 100 residents who receive his has survived deforestation wished their community could actually strive to be," he said.

> It's not uncommon for coming to NOTL each year, new developments to involve lands being subdivided, which results in a need for

particularly the large old ones that take up too much space, restrain construction access and block the way for multiple driveways."

He also worries that proposals such as this one will open the floodgates for similar requests from developers.



566 LANSDOWNE AVENUE \$3,495,000 MLS 40522978 – Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft	215 KING STREET \$2,900/MONTH NET MLS 40523800 – Weston Miller	22 WEATHERSTONE COURT \$1,200,000 MLS 40503026 – Patricia Atherton and Caroline Polgrabia
2 MILLPOND ROAD	225 JOHNSON STREET	41 RICARDO STREET
\$2,150,000	\$3.495.000	\$1,495,000
MLS 40525314 – Thomas Elitoft and Jane Elitoft	MLS 40481110 – Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft	MLS 40520055 – Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk
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	\$3,495,000 MLS 40522978 - Thomas Elitoft and Kim Elitoft Image: Constraint of the image	\$3,495,000 $$2,900/MONTH NET$ $Bt 40522978 - Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft Bt 40523800 - Weston Miller IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII$

Town has three top positions to fill in coming months

Kris Dube The Local Local Journalism **Initiative Reporter**

Niagara-on-the-Lake's new interim chief administrative officer says he looks forward to working with a small team at town hall — one that is currently operating without two recentlydeparted senior staffers.

Bruce Zvaniga was appointed by council late last year to the top staff position on a temporary basis, replacing Marnie Cluckie, who announced in early December that she would be stepping down as CAO to take a role with another municipality — city manager in Hamilton.

She is technically employed with the town until Jan. 14 but is using two weeks of vacation before that date, explained town mitted to filling these positions spokesperson Marah Minor.

Senior heritage planner Denise Horne and director of operations Rome D'Angelo have also both decided recently to part ways with the town.

Zvaniga started his role on Jan. 1 and told The Local that the town is equipped to serve residents with the group it has in place, and that he looks forward to both vacant positions being filled soon.

"Although the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has a lean staff force, it has good bench strength," he said in a statement to The Local, adding that the current team will manage the town's day-to-day operations despite the two short-term vacancies.

"Nonetheless, we are comquickly and further strengthening our team to ensure that we continue to provide highquality services to the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake," he said.

Minor said Horne's last day with the municipality was Nov. 17.

A posting to replace Horne closed Dec. 8, and recruitment is underway. The municipality hopes to fill this position in the coming weeks, Minor said on Jan. 4.

Another heritage planner with the town is working on several files that Horne previously was lead on, which are five heritage permit applications, five designation reports, three designation bylaws, and six heritage grants.

ing, including reviewing heritage aspects of development applications and working with the Municipal Heritage Committee, said Minor.

local government was Jan. 5. His role is being taken temporarily by Darren MacKenzie, the town's current manager of public works serving as acting director of operations.

The recruitment process for the director of operations position will begin shortly, said Minor.

"Both positions are of great importance to the Niagaraon-the-Lake community," said Zvaniga, referring to the void left by Horne and D'Angelo.

Finding a new director of operations will be a "rigorous"

volving heritage staff are ongo- date to fill this significant role, consolidated Niagara Transit added Zvaniga.

"We are seeking an individual who has the expertise and experience required to continue the progress made by Mr. D'Angelo's last day with the D'Angelo and who will continue to work with the great team in operations to provide service to the community."

"I look forward to working closely with staff to ensure we choose the right fit for Niagaraon-the-Lake," he added.

A town news release said Zvaniga has 40 years of experience leading municipal government services and critical infrastructure projects for various municipalities.

His executive leadership "spans multiple municipalities," where he has overseen trans-Several other projects in- process to hire the right candi- formative projects such as the the permanent CAO position.

Commission, South Niagara Falls Wastewater Systems, Hurontario Light Rail Transit, Burlington's Prosperity Corridor and Toronto's Waterfront Revitalization, said the news release.

Zvaniga is a licensed professional engineer and has held significant roles in transportation organizations, including serving as the vice-chair of Intelligent Transportation Systems Canada.

It is estimated it will take several months to find a permanent CAO, the only staff role municipal councils are responsible for hiring and firing.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa told The Local when the interim position was filled that Zvaniga would not be seeking

'Evening with captain' fundraiser for summer students

Kris Dube The Local Local Journalism **Initiative Reporter**

An inaugural event about the War of 1812 and its naval history will also help local students make sure their ship is sailing in the right direction as they look for employment during the summer months.

On Jan. 20, Friends of Fort George will host an inaugural fundraiser to raise money to

fill and potentially increase the number of youth summer staff positions at Fort George, one of have not been out in the pub-Niagara's best-known sites tied lic before," said Zalepa, noting to the War of 1812

The Naval Dinner will feature Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa as the evening's "captain," leading a program that will centre on the off-land action that took place on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

Parks Canada will be bringing artifacts and sharing information about the activity that dinner at Navy Hall.

took place on Niagara waters. "Some of these exhibits

his office is delighted to be involved with the event as an effort to raise money for local student employment positions, ones that could lead to extensive careers with Parks Canada.

Summer student positions are funded solely by the work of Friends of Fort George, who is the lead on the upcoming

Winter Prix Fixe

While Zalepa is also an avid sailor in his free time, he's also interested in the naval history of Niagara, he said, adding that *Lords of the Lake*, authored by Robert Malcomson, is possibly the most informative read available about how the war was fought on Lake Ontario.

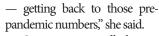
"It's a pretty unknown feeder of action," he said, adding that everybody "always seems to focus on the ground campaign of 1812" when discussing the war.

Zalepa has sailed recreationally for about 20 years and his family is involved with Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club, an organization that also pays great attention to supporting youth.

The work by Friends of Fort George to help young people get involved with Parks Canada is "vital for setting up and creating future leaders," he said.

Friends of Fort George executive director Amanda Gamble said the fundraiser, new this year, will hopefully provide for additional youth staffing in the summer, returning to pre-COVID-19 numbers of about 15 to 20 students per summer, as opposed to the less than a dozen put to work the last two summers.

The student hired will work



Summer 2024 will also see a return of a full schedule of re-enactments, which has been shortened since the 2020 season

"This is the first year we've been able to dive back into those events," said Gamble.

Tickets to the naval dinner are \$160 and will include a charitable receipt for the donation portion of the ticket. Tickets must be reserved in advance as space is limited. For more information, contact the Friends of Fort George at 905-468-6621 or email admin@friendsoffortgeorge.ca.



Historic Navy Hall will be the site of an event to raise money for summer students and awareness of the importance of naval battles that took place during the War of 1812. (Sharon Burns)



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at Fort George as well as Brock's Monument.

Tall ships came to NOTL in 2012 for re-enactments of the "This will be helpful for that War of 1812. (Tall ship photos supplied)



Members of the public were able to board and tour a tall ship that docked at Navy Hall in 2012.

5

ENTERTAINMENT SPOTLIGHT: FIRSTONTA Just like pianos, we all exist with our written by Mitchell Cushman Director of Lessons in Temperament own unique elements of disharmony. + Artistic Director, Outside the March

Developing and continuing to revisit Lessons in Temperament with James Smith over the past seven years has been one of the great privileges of my creative life. To me, the show has always served as a testament to how little is required for a theatrical exchange to take place between a storyteller and their audience.

When we originally premiered at the SummerWorks Festival back in 2016, we played exclusively in people's houses and apartments: ten evenings, ten living rooms, home to ten outof-tune pianos. Each night, James winning run, we've worked to would approach the instrument, and begin to play a Beethoven sonata-which wouldn't sound very good. The piano clearly needed some love and care. Then he would remove his tools from his kit, and methodically begin to bring the instrument into tune - while teaching those gathered - both about the art of piano-tuning, but also about his family's extensive journey with neurodiversity.

Over the course of ninety minutes, James gives voice to a subject that is often left unspoken - telling the story of four brothers living with obsessive-compulsive disorder, autism, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Through the power of his storytelling, James is able to conjure true transformation - underscored by him finally once again playing that same Beethoven sonata, this time now on an instrument now perfectly in balance.

Since that initial, awardshare James' family anywhere there was a piano in need of tuning, and an audience we could congregate around it - venues as unexpected as a Loblaws in midtown Toronto, as prominent as the Stratford Festival and National Arts Centre, and as far-flung as Calgary's High Performance Rodeo, and a month-long run off-Broadway at the Signature Theater. A few years back,

we also adapted this piece into a feature film-now available to watch on TVO, and stream through iTunes. In every instance, the core elements are the same - the basic building-blocks of theatricality as far as I'm concerned-someone with a personal story to tell, and a unique way of sharing it that only they could harness.

In all the places we've played, both the live show and the film, one thing has remained constant. Almost without fail, at least one audience member after the show will come up to James and open up to him about their own personal journey with mental health -theirs or someone's close to them. Often these sharings come along with the phrase: I've never told anyone this before.

Two things I didn't know about pianos before working on Lessons in Temperament. 1) A piano goes out of tune whether or not anyone plays it. 2) It is impossible to perfectly

2 1000

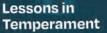
Lessons In Temperament is the story of four neurodiverse brothers, told through a theatrical escape into the art and science of piano tuning. The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre presents this awardwinning production on THURS 1 FEB.

tune a piano-instead, the task is to make sure each part of the instrument is proportionately out-of-tune, so that things sound in balance. Just like pianos, we all exist with our own unique elements of disharmony. I hope that you'll be able to come and join James around the piano. And stick around afterwards, to be a part of the beautiful discord.

Get tickets at firstontariopac.ca or call the box office at 905-688-0722.







Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn



In Stand

LESSONS IN TEMPERAMENT A memoir of minds gone out of tune 1 FEB CIRCA! HUMANS 2.0 Boundary-pushing circus 2 FEB 14 FEB KANDACE SPRINGS A Valentine's evening of Jazz 29 FEB CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! Mamma Mia! The epic ABBA Singalong 6 MAR CHERISH THE LADIES Grammy-nominated Celtic Supergroup 26 MAR THE PEKING ACROBATS Redefining Chinese acrobatics 10 APR BÉLA FLECK & ABIGAIL WASHBURN King & Queen of the banjo



EDITORIAL notllocal.com Lots of chatter about trees, heritage trail and housing

There are several important issues facing Niagaraon-the-Lake residents at the moment, issues that can set a tone for the future of the town.

One is the almost crusadelike effort to save eight mature trees on a lot proposed for the development of two houses. It's not just about those eight on Simcoe Street, however, it's about a town's commitment to preserve trees, except when they are on property to be developed. It seems residents who

yards have to jump through hoops to remove a tree, often being refused a permit — that is, after all, the intent of a tree bylaw — but if it's for driveways and new houses, it seems the trees are too often doomed to destruction.

days is the town's "resolution," offered in an unusual manner after a closed session, to offer a developer access to his proposed subdivision across a porwant to install a pool or have a tion of the Upper Canada Her- side to this suggestion it is that

little more shade in their back- itage Trail, which continues to it will have to be heard in the ering information that could be restored with public donations, for the benefit of cyclists, dog owners and anybody who enjoys a nice, safe walk away from traffic.

The offer has drawn strong opposition, understandably, and because the discussion was Also in the public eye these held behind closed doors, and is likely related to a legal issue, we aren't privy to the reasons anyone on council could possibly have thought this was a good idea. If there is any bright

court of public opinion, and it is likely council will be left with no doubt where the public stands — if it even gets that far. There is no word from the developer at this point about whether he is interested in pursuing that avenue of access.

On a brighter note, residents can be grateful that a group of volunteers is tackling the housing problem facing local seniors, who want or need quantify the issue. It is also gath-

guide solutions. The possibility of survey results impacting future development is a win-win for everyone, as NOTL faces the same housing crisis that has emerged in Niagara and across the country. As the volunteers have stated, finding solutions for seniors would help free up housing stock, the shortage of which helps to drive up real estate prices.

This is not going to happen to downsize, with a survey to overnight, but at least there are efforts being made to tackle the

issue locally. If you are a NOTL resident 55 or older, taking the survey could help that cause. Look for more information in this edition of The Local — the survey will only be available for another couple of weeks.

So we have it — NOTL 's level of public engagement is evident. These are three concerns in town that merit residents making their voices heard, so feel free to shout it out.

> Penny Coles The Local

COVID-19 and long-term care in Niagara

MPP Wayne Gates Niagara Falls Riding

Like many members of our community, I was disturbed to see a recent alarming rise in COVID-19 and respiratory virus outbreaks in long-term care homes across Niagara and the province.

We've lost 260 residents over the last four months - and there have been 850 confirmed outbreaks and nearly 16,000 cases of COVID-19.

We also know that from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic until April of 2022, we lost more than 4,300 longterm care residents and 13 staff members to COVID-19.

I want to be clear — these residents are our mothers, our fathers, our grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, neighbours. They are people who have worked their entire lives to make this province a better place for everyone. They deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and to receive a basic standard of care in their

golden years.

Our number one priority must be improving quality of care for patients in long-term care, home care, and retirement homes. As your Member of Provincial Parliament, and the Official Opposition Critic for Long-term Care, Home Care, and Retirement Homes, this is an issue I am working on daily.

Seniors in our community

It is also particularly concerning for our community here in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We know that over 36.2 per cent of our town's population is 65 years of age or older, and that the town has struggled to access front-line healthcare services in recent years.

We have been proud to work together to address concerns around healthcare and longterm care for the community. This includes working together with the Lord Mayor and town council to get a nurse practitioner back in the town, advocating for Niagara to receive an appropriate distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in earlier ting shovels in the ground for our new South Niagara hospital last summer.

But this news highlights the need to remain vigilant in protecting seniors and long-term care residents. And it comes on the heels of a damning report released by the Ontario Ombudsman in September of last year.

Ombudsman report

The Ombudsman called for significant changes to Ontario's long-term care system after he found that there were no inspections of long-term care homes in the first wave of COVID-19 in 2020 for seven weeks. The Ombudsman also found what was called a "complete system breakdown," where inspections had to be halted because there was no planning from the Ministry on keeping inspectors safe on the job.

The report included tragic stories, including of family members who contacted the Minister several times in the initial wave of the pandemic about the conditions at the long-term care homes where their parents

View from the couch

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

Canada

Donald Combe Special to The Local

In Live Italian, Jack Whitehall, Maya Jama and Lawrence Dallaglio visit Italy to investigate what it means to be Italian.

abundantly proclaims the joy that Italy gives to the world. In my favourite episode Jack Whitehall is witty, funny and a bit naughty as he delves into the *ly agreed to share his opinions*, mysteries of Italian food. If you through "short and sweet" exclu-

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to the movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciouslove the spirit that is Italy, this sives, of online series and movies

individuals did not hear back from the ministry until several months later, after their loved ones had passed away.

Unfortunately, the provincial government has not treated the long-term care file with the seriousness it deserves. There has been five different Long-term Care Bill alongside my colleagues at Ministers in just over four years.

Accountability

The provincial government has refused to hold the bad actors in long-term care accountable - including going against the wishes of local communities and municipalities to grant private companies like Southbridge Care Homes 30-year licences and taxpayer subsidies. One of Southbridge's homes, Orchard Villa, had to have the military step in during earlier outbreaks to protect residents. The military detailed "horrific" conditions of bug infestations, residents being left in soiled diapers and sleeping on bare mattresses, and an incident of resident choking. More than 70 residents died in the early part of the pandemic, including some of dehydration.

The provincial government has also passed legislation, Bill 161, that makes it much harder for families to hold long-term care homes liable for any potential harms to residents.

Finally, the provincial government simply refuses to address the staffing crisis in healthcare and long-term care. They have no central plan to

their unconstitutional wagesuppression law, Bill 124.

We have offered solutions to the provincial government, to help retain staff and hold longterm care homes accountable.

Legislation

I was proud to introduce a Queen's Park last year that would treat healthcare workers, including PSWs, with respect and dignity, and address the gaps in care our system is currently facing.

This bill would have ensured that PSW jobs are good jobs full-time, permanent, with decent wages and the opportunity to earn a pension and benefits. This would bring thousands of workers back into the profession, which in turn will enhance quality of care for residents.

I have also worked on legislation that would ensure quality of care for long-term care homes by ending the usage of private nursing agencies.

We know that agency nurses are being paid more than double what full-time, permanent nurses earn for their work, con-

waves of the pandemic, and get- or relatives lived. Some of these to fight nurses in court over tributing to the staffing crisis and leading to worse quality of care for residents.

> We have also worked to urge the provincial government to stop issuing more licences to for-profit long-term care owners who have track records of putting private profits ahead of the well-being of our seniors.

> We know of all the residents who lost their lives during the pandemic, 78 per cent were in private, for-profit homes.

> Finally, I am asking all residents and community members to do their part: please, if you have not done so already, get your flu shot and COVID-19 booster and help to ease the strain on our healthcare system.

> Working together, we must treat all healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses and PSWs with respect, hold the bad actors in long-term care accountable, make sure inspectors have the tools they need to do their jobs, and get every single resident to a standard of fourhours of care a day.

Our seniors deserve nothing less.

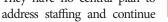
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905-351

Where's **Ben?**

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal. com.

Last week Ben visited the Queen Street cenotaph on New Year's Eve. Either his location stumped readers, or they felt it was too easy - not sure which. Either way, we didn't get a correct response.

P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, LOS 1TO

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COMMENT - *Pocal* LETTERS Council must revoke easement offer immediately

my concern about council's on April 24, 2023. decision on Dec. 15, 2023 to offer an easement over council would make an unthe Upper Canada Heritage Trail to facilitate access to the proposed subdivision on the Rand Estate.

The developer's current proposal does not contemplate an easement, nor was the possibility of an easement raised by council, staff or the multitude of experts offering their considered opinions during the public nesses who donated mon- 176 John Street. Yes, there

solicited offer that fundamentally alters the nature and use of the trail without who use this trail because prior public consultation it is a rare safe space, free and without regard for the from vehicular traffic. interests of:

• the adjacent homeowners who will be direct- provide access to the proly, negatively impacted by posed subdivision through such an easement;

I am writing to express special session of council ey, and the volunteers who is a significant financial cost donors whose money was cation. As an experienced donated time, to create a of providing this access, but collected by the town in It is concerning that recreational heritage trail that is part of the lucrative trust for a specific purpose, where vehicular traffic is business of property develprohibited; and

• the public of all ages

Through a related company, the developer can the historical John Street • the residents and busi- access, between 144 and

opment.

The town's offer of an and easement on the trail to permit vehicular access:

• amounts to "corpoquired:

• will lower the property values and the use and enjoyment of adjacent property owners;

which will be breached if the easement is granted;

• disregards the safety of trail users.

It is troubling that counrate welfare" that is not re- cil decided to offer a massive financial benefit to the developer without receiving anything for the town in exchange, not even the resolution of the costly con-• is a betrayal of trail tested development appli-

dispute resolution professional, the offer is bizarre, to say the least.

I call upon council to immediately revoke the town's offer of an easement, before it is accepted, and before the town's legal counsel files and/or appears before the Ontario Land Tribunal on OLT Hearing OLT-22-003603.

> **Kathryn Podrebarac** NOTL

Pocal LETTERS Motorized vehicles not allowed on heritage trail

The Upper Canada Heritage Trail (as it is now known) was established as a greenway in 1984. Since 2016, the Heritage Trail Committee has spent years fundraising from residents and businesses to ensure that residents and visitors to NOTL could access this shared-use path that has been set aside for recreational use and environmental protection. The trail in NOTL is used by cyclists, runners, walkers, cross-country skiers and for riding horses. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the heritage trail, or on any trail system.

any citizen input — to grant this town were not consulta developer (Solmar Development Corp.) an easement place behind closed doors. that would allow for motorized vehicles over a portion cil would make an offer that of the heritage trail.

I am a homeowner that backs on to the heritage trail and want to express to the council that the offer of an easement over the trail is unacceptable on many fronts, does reducing access to a including the following:

1. In a statement issued by council: "WHEREAS the Town sees the Charlotte Street access, if requested by Solmar, as an opportuni-On Dec 15, 2023 in a ty to celebrate and improve

ed, and this meeting took It is problematic that counimpacts the public and fundamentally changes the heritage trail. There has not been a proposal for an easement put forward to the public by Solmar or the town. How greenway and the safety of those travelling by bike, foot and horse become an opportunity to "celebrate and improve" the existing heritage trail?

2. The Upper Canada closed session, the NOTL the existing Heritage Trail at Heritage Trail explicitly does

council voted — without this location." The citizens of not allow for vehicles. There own property to provide ac- public trail. are other options available cess and support his lucrative for this developer including business deal for his own real putting in an easement on estate development, so the his own adjacent property. town's response is to give up However, council notes in its limited greenway that has its statement: "WHEREAS always banned motor vehi-Solmar is unwilling to secure cles. Why is council letting the Historical John Street the tail wag the dog? The Sol-Access from its related cor- mar team has other options poration." So, to be clear, the - and the town must not developer refuses to use his give up any amount of this

Town council must revoke this offer of an easement. Taking away public access of a greenway is not something that should be dealt with in a confidential manner in a closed "incamera" meeting.

> Cathy van Ingen NOTL

_ *Letters* Watch out for _____ speed camera in Virgil

driving through Virgil where We have all seen one and rethe Crossroads School is, your sponded accordingly when apgetting a speeding ticket in the mail the following week. It will take your plates' picture wheth- isn't directly tied to the signs, er coming or going.

In a comparable community to that of Virgil, located in Ottawa, there have been close to 10,000 tickets issued in a speed camera's more than two month period of operation.

This is considered a ruthlessly effective speed camera by that community. This camera

efforts have been made to ex-

pand their speed sign program,

a non-intrusive method of re-

minding drivers of their speed

If you see a flash while rary traffic calming procedure. data collected from them is shared with authorities. Inforlicence plate has just been proaching the heritage district lice and the best enforcement is photographed and you will be on Mississagua Street at the then determined. community centre.

While police enforcement

mation is passed onto the po-

Derek Insley NOTL

*Geal*LETTERS Closing Upper Canada Lodge is a mistake

read about the impending closure of Upper Canada Lodge and the relocation of the remaining residents to Fort Erie.

The demographics of Niagara-on-the-Lake make it obvious that this is the wrong decision, which was clearly made by another non-resident expert who based their find-

It is with dismay that we ings on the age of the plumb- commons. All Upper Canada ing rather than those who are, Lodge needs is some TLC. in this town, simply aging!

There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the structure or the concept of separate wings with a central dining room and courtyard which keeps people engaged with others.

The location is perfect, close to town and on the

If the council and the residents of our town lack the will to try to save this remarkably appropriate building, then just remember that every day that passes we all get a little closer to Fort Erie.

Hamish Kerr

is located right across from a middle school in Barhaven. Would not a police presence benefit at protecting this community? It was found that radar speed signs are most effective in the first month or so of being in a neighbourhood. After that, people get used to them.

Alternatively in Windsor,

Niagara's own Rick Mills. us to believe in and laugh at Retired from more than ourselves. Following is his 30 years of management inaugural rap for The Local, within the steel industry, he although he has published continues pastoral ministry others on Facebook.

1. Little over a year ago I posted 10 random thoughts on my social networking platforms, titling it, Ricky Rap.

Ricky's Raps

Ricky's Raps are 10 here in town. Ricky's Raps,

thoughts and offerings from he says, are intended to help

- 2. A one off.
- 3. Many commented and messaged to do more.
- 4. A few suggested weekly.
- 5. Gave it a try.
- 6. Some Raps started becoming thematic.

NOTL — *Letters* Council, please — retract offer of heritage trail

me that behind closed doors our elected officials would offer access to a subdivision development via one of our public spaces. This portion of the Upper Canada Heritage Trail, recently improved in the Pfaffard/Charlotte to East and West Line section with funding support from private donors, stands at vision. It seems reasonable

It is deeply concerning to risk of being compromised by increased traffic and construction. This decision might also discourage future private donations for such initiatives.

> Solmar has at least two other options through their bordering property on East West Line or John Street to access the proposed subdi-

that they assume the responsibility and costs associated with construction traffic on their own land.

as they approach a commu-I am asking you, our nity, as an expedited, tempoelected officials to recon-

sider and retract the offer of granting Solmar any easement via the heritage trail.

> **Frances Boot** NOTL

Yocal LETTERS Belated thank you to King's Point residents

checking it twice," one significant group was missing from the Newark Neighbours Christmas thank you ad published last week.

Newark Neighbours re-

from the King's Point residents. We are fortunate to receive donations from this group each year that are always appreciated very much. Thank you King's Point

Despite "making a list and ceived a generous donation residents and please accept our apologies.

> **Cindy Grant**, Board Chair & Manager, **Food Bank** Newark Neighbours

- 7. Worked hard not to opine or self promote unless it took others with me.
- 8. To lift up, challenge and laugh.
- 9. It all seemed to work.
- 10. See ya next week.

AY IN THE LOOP

If you haven't already signed up for our daily newsletter, with all the latest headlines from Niagara-on-the-Lake, you're missing out!

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Library interview with Margaret Huber

Dr. Robin Williams NOTL Library board member

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library board and staff are interested in exploring the special place books, reading, storytelling and libraries hold in the hearts of our community members. *The power of the written and* spoken word, the enchantment of libraries and childhood memories of time spent with books, creates a profound tapestry of emotions and experiences. This questionnaire prompts introspection and reflection, offering *a unique lens through which* to examine the bond between readers and their connection to books, storytelling and libraries.

Watch this space for interviews with an array of interesting community members.

I met with Niagara resident and former diplomat Margaret Huber to talk about her love of libraries and reading. Margaret and I sat in her very book-filled living room and she cited a quote from her favourite T-shirt: "If it's books, it's not hoarding."

Margaret had returned to Niagara after an illustrious Canadian diplomatic career that spanned 40 years, taking her around the world. During many assignments, in Japan, the Philippines, European Union headquarters, Pakistan, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, Jordan and Iraq, she served as ambassador in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, concluding with a three-year posting in Ottawa as chief of protocol for Canada. She loved her career and reflected on how lucky she had been to have represented Canada in many ways, but particularly in promoting education and cultural ties. She 'retired' in 2013 but immediately undertook a 2014 fellowship with the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative, an innovative year-long program

to tap the potential of sea- favourite genre? soned leaders. This experilifelong learning, and she I do enjoy biographies. I am continues to maintain ties currently working through to this vibrant network.

book you remember reading?

I have always been an omnivorous reader, but clearly remember one of my earliest book series ... the illustrated *Raggedy Ann* Stories. As former refugees from ethnic cleansing in Europe, my parents greatly guest speaker for the Canavalued education and encouraged all six of us children to become readers. I I have maintained involvehave a poignant memory ment. of the red-letter day at age five when my oldest brother George helped me obtain my first library card. It changed my life as I learned around the world on my early on that books open diplomatic duties, I used doors and windows to a to stop at a favourite bookwider world.

did you read?

John, and I were thrilled by the library's *Hardy Boys* and Tom Swift adventure and science fiction series (I especially remember Tom Swift and his Flying Lab, a book credited with inspiring many young scientists or inventors). We read through the library's entire youth sci-fi section. And what an exciting day when we discovered an adult sci-fi section in the second floor of the library. It was as if we had discovered gold in the Klondike, we were so excited.

Q: What is your favourite book of all time?

There are so many favorites — but I think it would be The Tale of Genji, by Lady Murasaki Shikibu. In the early 10th century, she wrote a fictionalized account of life at the Japanese court. It is a bildungsroman (coming of to expand youth learning age book) in that it follows support through a Port a young man, Genji, from Colborne High School his youth through his adulthood. Full of adventures, Awards program. However, and a fascinating read.

Not really, as I said, my ence reinforced her love of tastes are quite eclectic, but the Stephen Kotkin trilogy **Q:** What was the first on Stalin, and eagerly await publication of the third volume. An American professor currently at Stanford, Stephen Kotkin has a profound knowledge of Russian history, of Stalin and of other authoritarian figures, still topical today.

> Kotkin has twice been a dian International Council, an organization with which

Q: What happened with your reading in your busy adult life?

When I was bouncing store, Hatchards, whenever Q: What other books I was in London. This bookstore dates back to 1797 and Another older brother, is still located on Piccadilly Circus. Over the years, long before books online, Hatchards shipped boxes of books to me wherever I was in the world. Books provided inspiration, solace and company.

Q: When do you read, and where?

Although quite tied up with family, with a couple of boards and with mentorship roles, I enjoy reading in evenings when I have more time. Although preferring print books, I do use eBooks and always have an audiobook in the car when distance driving.

Q: Can you talk a bit about philanthropy and libraries?

I am a strong supporter of libraries, particularly my first library, in Port Colborne, and currently am engaged in an initiative Century Scholarships and I am in awe of others who



Margaret Huber travelled the world during her 40-year career as a Canadian diplomat. (Supplied)

of learning and libraries. My hometown benefitted greatly from Port Colborne businesswoman Arabella Williams, who bequeathed her entire estate in 1950, including downtown property which now houses the town library. Andrew Carnegie, an American philanthropist, seeded libraries across North America in the early 1900s - 125 in is the current role of li-Canada, including five in Niagara (Niagara Falls, St Catharines, Thorold, Welland and Grimsby).

books from a library?

Despite having many books in my personal collection, I often go to the library, because I like being surprised. When wandering through the stacks, I am tempted to read things I in Makery workshops or in wouldn't normally order or Moms and Tots programs. pick out. I also benefit from And one thing that strikes word of mouth recom- me in particular these days mendations of friends, for is that the library is no lonbooks that I might not oth- ger a sacred silent space, but

recognition of the power ploring the archives in local libraries and most recently delved into the historical records related to Arabella Williams. Fascinating to read source materials, media coverage and court documents of the day, trying to piece together her story and perspective ... challenging as she left no diaries or personal papers.

Q: What do you think braries?

Libraries have re-invented themselves, and now are not just purveyors of books Q: Do you still get but are community hubs. They sponsor initiatives like evenings with authors, Wine and Words or Beer and Books. I have appreciated even more library community services in helping elderly folks with technology, Q: Do you have a have gone before in their erwise read. I also love ex- is filled with kids squealing,

and daycare folks wandering through. It is refreshing and shows that the library is meeting, creating and anticipating new needs. Those who would cut funding for libraries or even worse, tell libraries what they should have on their bookshelves ... are threats to society, reprehensible dangers to democracy. Libraries enrich everyone's lives - even if individuals themselves don't use the libraries very much, and they don't even have to go in now, they can access libraries electronically. We all benefit from living in a society that treasures what libraries have to offer openings to new worlds.

Q: What is your favourite quote from a book?

Oh, that would be from Cicero: "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."

And on that note, I left Margaret with my arms full of borrowed books and Apple jam from her orchard's windfalls.

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NIAGARA'S BOUTIQUE BROKERAGE, BOUTIQUE EXPERIENCE

January 10, 2024

Vaccinations, routine precautions still the order of the day

Continued from page 1

those results won't get captured in the same way."

While there are a number of people in critical care, as well as in intensive care units, and "some are unfortunately dying," the numbers aren't what they have been in previous years, he says. "However, there is certainly a significant amount of COVID-19 in the community, and we can all take steps to protect ourselves."

In December, Niagara emergency departments were reported by public health as feeling the stress of an increase in respiratory illnesses in the region, resulting in more visits, more hospital admissions and longer wait times. While the number of patients seeking care was increasing, the severity of the illnesses Niagara Health was treating has been lower than in previous years, the report said.

Kasmani emphasizes vaccinated, still the most combat the disease, for those who haven't had



the importance of being Dr. Azim Kasmani, Niagara's medical officer of health, says COVID still needs to be taken seriously. (Supplied)

effective tool we have to become ill will be less im- wash your hands frequentpacted by the disease.

COVID or a vaccination in tions also remain changed you're sick. the last six months. With - in addition to being

ly, cover coughs or sneez-Other recommenda- es and stay at home when ness across the commu- with the same urgency as community."

"And some may choose the vaccination, those who vaccinated, he stresses, to wear a mask," he adds.

most vulnerable." Although

nity, and that protects the it was in the past, what COVID past infections and vacci- take it seriously."

Taking those steps has passed the pandemic nations. "The level of im-"should help prevent ill- stage, and may not be seen munity affects the entire

However, Kasmani has changed comes from says, "we do still need to





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What to do if you accidentally click that phishing link

fishing is a treasured pasto get caught in a "phishing" scam. That's when cyber criminals send you try and remove the mala message, like an email, text message, or something on social media, pretending to be someone you know or someone in authority. They try your passwords on your they land in your inbox. to trick you into clicking most important accounts. on a link or downloading an attachment, which turns out to be malicious software - or "malware" - that can take control of your computer.

(NC) For many of us, work to try to prevent external storage device or other devices from being in a cloud-based system time. But none of us wants infected. Next, you'll need so that you can return aca malware removal tool or cess and restore your sysa computer technician to tems after an attack. ware.

> sensitive or financial information at some point, incoming messages for you'll need to change potential threats before Let your financial insti- that you've confirmed tutions know about malware on your systems, so they can monitor your on anything suspicious. accounts and prevent further damage.

What to do if you fall victim to the attack

If you downloaded malware, step one is to ing it, you should regular- to protect yourself at getdisconnect from the net- ly back up your files to an cybersafe.ca/ransomware.

How to prevent future

attacks If you're not already do-

You should also install anti-virus and anti-mal-Then, if you provided ware software on your computer. This will scan

> Only download files came from a trusted source and avoid clicking Check the email address that the file came from - often the details don't match who it's supposed to be coming from.

Find more tips on how



Living better with arthritis

(NC) Dealing with arthritis can make anything from enjoying a meal to tying your shoes more difficult. It's something that more than 5.5 million people in Canada face every day.

Fortunately, there are many ways to help those of all ages living with arthritis. Here are a few ideas:

Take advantage of tools

Simple tools can make everyday tasks easy to master. Everyone's level of ability is different, but people living with arthritis may consider using assistive devices to help with everyday activities.

Learn new techniques

Aside from tools and

be simple shifts to how Based on your needs, a new ways to perform acsomething gets done that health professional can tivities that are important technology, there can make it more possible. work with you to develop to you.

Ask an expert People living with arthritis want to be able to information at coto.org.

do the things they need or want to do with confidence. To help make that happen, work with an occupational therapist.

Known as OTs, occupational therapists are licensed health professionals who help people affected by injuries and various conditions. They are skilled in working with you to develop strategies and adaptations to perform everyday tasks and achieve your goals.

You can find an OT through the College of Occupational Therapists. The College protects you and your family by ensuring all licensed occupational therapists in Ontario are trained and qualified to offer safe, competent and ethical services. Find more

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Don't miss opportunity to have your say Senior housing survey is about to wrap up

Penny Coles The Local

A survey to quantify Niagara-on-the-Lake residents' needs for housing as they age is closing soon, but there is still time to have a say in its outcome.

comprehensive The survey was designed by local research professionals, who, along with a group of community volunteers, think that NOTL seniors looking at appropriate options as they downsize may not find what they need in for. town, despite a desire to stay in their community. But the group decided they needed to quantify that issue, and have had a survey open to NOTL residents since November.

Steve Ferley and Michael Ennamorato, experts with extensive national senior management experience in building, mounting and analyzing opinion surveys, volunteered their time and expertise to create a survey, and have partnered with Niagara they are looking forward College School of Business analytics program head Nick Farnel and his graduate students to help shape tool.

Ennamorato says while they are satisfied with the number of surveys filled out to date, they want to be sure everyone in NOTL over the age of 55 has the opportunity to respond. In addition to providing valuable data, he says, completing the survey will help further the considerations and conversations of those in that age group. It's not forward." only to their benefit, he explains, but it's valuable for the next generation, and for the town, to have a better understanding of how to keep seniors in their a massive change when type of housing might be community.

town wellness committee would think any inforlast term of council, is one mation like this would be of the volunteers behind useful. If people say 'I rethe survey. As that council ally want to stay here if I wound down in 2022, she can' that's an opportunity reported her findings that for developers. The results seniors ready to downsize should have some value to were having to leave town them." to find the kind of housing they required. However, before the survey results that report went no fur- are ready to be made pubther, and last spring, she lic, says Ennamorato, 'but and a few others decided we'll have a sense of what's to take it upon themselves going on with the story beto gather hard data on fore then." what seniors are looking

before the end date.

"We want to give everyone a chance to have their do their own analysis on say on a very important this in regards to undersubject," says Ennamorato. "It would be a shame results show what is hapfor anybody to lose their pening with people. It will discussed their options for having as many surveys chance to be heard."

The feedback the group has received from the community has been very positive, he added — residents have seen the survey "as being relevant, and to hearing the results."

likes talking about aging, data," they will begin to but it's something they questions into an online need to think about, "and we hope this is spurring if it's consistent. If there are on discussions about the differences, he adds, they type of housing that's im- have to decide what to portant to them. It's not do about it — the answer as bad as doing taxes," he could be nothing. says, "but it's something you need to do. And some analysis, creating tables of the options you might across each question, and choose may not be available if you wait too long. much an issue this is, how If you even get some preliminary planning done in whether residents feel they your head, that's a big step have options available to

also be useful tools for to stay here and what town planning, and for de- trade-offs they'd be willvelopers.

you look at the population required."

He and Ferley will continue to work with Niaga-The committee is now ra College, while students hoping for "a last push," incorporate data with their program, using the data in their work. "They will standing how the survey give them a good building and have already made filled out over the coming block to learn from."

The next steps, says Enlook at the data and eliminate respondents who don't qualify for the survey — those are pretty easy to identify — and once they He notes not everyone know they have "clean look at it across different age groups, and determine

"Then we start our see what the story is, how much concern there is, them in NOTL, and the The survey results can extent to which they want ing to make. They will give 'We're on the cusp of us information as to what

ate for seniors, they can place to go with that?" approach local developers.

happens next until they could change any deci-It will likely be spring have that information, sions seniors might have swers may vary depending on age of respondents, Something that might not gender and their where- have seemed to be a big older woman living alone deal." might not have the financial resources that a couple survey results, Ennamwould have.

couples."

Even those who have plans, "something could happen that they may have

The group may make that? As you age, healthpresentations to coun- care and housing are con-Cindy Grant, chair of a of age groups," he says. "I cil and share their infor- nected, including their mation with the region. proximity to each other. Should the survey show You may feel a sense of the need for more housing community is important, options that are appropri- but are all the supports in

Mobility may also be It's difficult to say what a consideration, and that says Ennamorato. The an- made. "Your world can start closing in a little. withal. For example, an deal may become a bigger

One expectation from orato emphasizes, "is that However, he adds, "I'm there is not going to be sure there will be surprises, one solution. This is a things we hadn't thought very complicated story, of. Not everybody thinks and having more than one the same way, including solution will be critical to scan the QR code in the success."

That's another reason weeks as possible, he adds. "We want a diversity

namorato, will first be to to reassess, and do they of opinions and we want have the dexterity to do people to have their say.

The better the sample, the better our analysis will be, and what we can do going forward. We think this information can help everyone, not just seniors today but future generations, by allowing resources to be spent in the most efficient way, and freeing up resources for other things."

And, although this committee's focus is on NOTL and its residents, "it's really something that can address the housing crisis the region, and in fact across the country. If we have appropriate options for seniors so they can downsize, it doesn't just help seniors, it helps the housing crisis for everybody."

To fill out the survey, poster below with a phone camera, or link to the survey at forms.office.com/r/ fqxerb7fJv

Those without internet who want to respond can call Cindy Grant at 905-458-7498.



Tell us

A comprehensive survey is now available, asking Niagara-on-the-Lake residents about their housing needs as they age. The survey is available online and for those without a computer or internet access. It is completely



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Option 2: Link to the survey with your browser using this URL: https://forms.office.com/r/fqxerb7fJv **Option 3:** Respondents without the internet, please call 905-468-7498

Origin of stone remains a mystery

Sharon Burns The Local

Local entrepreneur Peter Donato has a mystery he would like solved.

Donato, owner of Niagara Cycling Tours, was on a bike ride recently and saw an interesting square stone on a property under development on the river side of the Niagara River Parkway near Queenston.

"I saw this stone sort of by arro fluke, caught out of the corner of my eye," said Donato. "It have was one of the rare moments stan where I was just enjoying myself, minding my own business, and I just happened to be looking in this spot."

Donato said that the stone would normally not be seen from the pathway in the spring, summer or fall, when foliage would have covered it. He happened upon it on a day without snow cover.

Thinking it was an ordnance boundary stone, Donato sent pictures to local resident Ted Rumble, who, with Richard Larocque, an Ontario land surveyor, last year discovered ordnance boundary stone #1 on the Niagara River Parkway near John Street.

Ordnance boundary stones

were used to mark the boundary between town land and military reserves almost 200 years ago. To date, 19 of the 37 stones have been found.

Rumble, board member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, said the mystery stone is not an ordnance boundary stone. It doesn't follow the pattern of the others, which are nine inches square, made of white limestone with a broad arrow marking it as British property. Nor does this stone have the initials B.O., which stands for Board of Ordnance, carved on it, or a number indicating which of the 37 stones it is.

It is also "in the wrong place," said Rumble.

The stone Donato is curious about is "roughly a foot and a half wide but longer in length and all around not square, and possibly much larger in depth as it's covered by dirt and I can't tell what, if anything, it's built on," said Donato. It also appears to have a manufactured indent carved along one side.

"It has very faint markings," said Donato. "If you look carefully at some of the close-ups, when I brought a little ruler, it definitely looks like there were



in length and all around not It is just the right time of year to see the stone among the square, and possibly much trees. (*Photos by Peter Donato*)

some markings but they're to said, adding there probaheavily faded." bly was never a home on this

Donato noticed a sign for a contractor on the property, reached out to the company and was given permission to approach the stone to take measurements and photographs.

"It's an empty lot," Dona-

bly was never a home on this site. "The builder suggests that 25 years ago the lot was purchased and now, after all these years, the owner is going to build. That might explain why that stone has been there for a long time and explain why it's gone unnoticed."



Peter Donato could see markings on the stone, but they are too faded to make out what they are.

to said, adding there probably was never a home on this site. "The builder suggests that 25 years ago the lot was purchased and now, after all these

> Perry Hartwick, chair of the Niagara Geopark, said it's difficult to identify what kind of stone it is. "It's hard to tell because it has moss on it, and

it's sitting in leaves, but looks like it could be a granite of some kind."

Hartwick, working from photographs, noted that the stone "is made up of a coarser grain which doesn't look like limestone. If that's the case," he said, "it didn't come out of any quarries around here."



Red Roof Retreat receives financial boost from Rotary

Sharon Burns The Local

on-the-Lake Rotary Club the Hiscott House. presented Red Roof Retreat executive director an organization that we've \$23,000, surpassing their the Rotary club regularly noted that all food was tion will go into their "fu-

cheque for \$11,500. The years at The Rotary Club," were split between Red Rotary's Icewine Cocktail the community services activities-based organiza-Recently the Niagara- Party held in September at committee at the Rotary tion for youth and adults

"Red Roof Retreat is

Club.

The event raised Steffanie Bjorgan with a been supporting for many goal by \$3,000. Funds invests in.

donation was raised by the said Chris Hatch, chair of Roof, a local respite and committee will decide how sic was supplied by The with special needs, and international projects that ty co-chair Stewart Istvan the event, said the dona-

"The overseas," said Hatch.

Icewine Cocktail Pardonated by several local ture expansion fund."

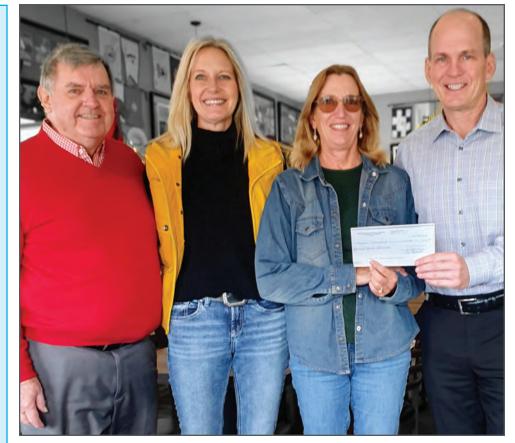
international restaurants and live muthose monies get spent Athertones for the second year in a row.

Bjorgan, who attended

Great way to start the new year



Sophie Szczesniak, Dr. Jessica Toth and Trevor Kwolek of Great North Physiotherapy in Virgil present a poppy donation of \$2,250 to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 poppy chair Chris Toye and president Al Howse. It was great way to start off 2024. with positive vibes and financial support from the community, said Howse. (Supplied)



Ward Simpson, Christa Rawsthorne and Steffanie Bjorgan of Red Roof Retreat accept a cheque from Rotarian Stewart Istvan. (Melanie Purdy)



Arts Collective exhibition opens at Pumphouse

Local Staff

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is starting the new year with a group exhibition featuring a diverse selection of artworks by professional artists from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Running from Jan. 2 to March 24 in its Joyner Gallery, the NOTL Arts Collective Group Exhibition will showcase the exceptional creativity of its member artists, says a Pumphouse news release.

for the upcoming exhibi- Julie Forrester Clark, who site, niagarapumphouse.ca/ Arts Centre offers visual arts community by providing action, Pumphouse art director joined the collective last year. exhibitions. Rima Boles emphasizes the significance of this annual event as it enters its third year. "This show has become calibre artists in my town," a reflection of the vibrant artistic pulse thriving within tion highlights why NOTL Niagara-on-the-Lake. It not should be considered a preonly highlights the growing mier destination for visual recognition of visual arts arts in Ontario." in the community but also stands as a testament to the collective exhibit, the Walkrich talents of the growing er Room Gallery will dis-NOTL Arts Collective," says play artworks by instructors Boles.

Participating in the ex-



Sailboat Sunday by Julie Forrester Clark is one of the NOTL Arts Collective members' works on display at the Pumphouse. (Photos supplied)

"I'm so happy and grateful to showcase my artwork alongside these very talented, high says Clark. "This exhibi-

At the same time as the offering classes and workshops at the Pumphouse. Expressing anticipation hibition for the first time is The Instructors Group Show presents diverse artistic styles and mediums, providing a glimpse into the breadth of creative talent and the art centre's robust program offerings, says the news release.

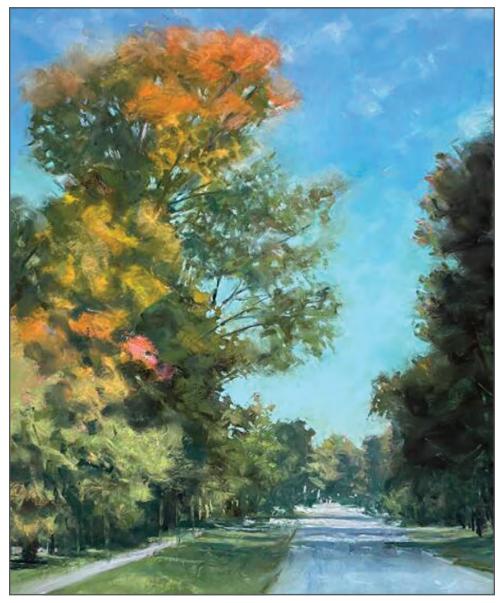
The opening reception on Sunday, Jan. 14, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., offers an opportunity for those who appreciate art to meet and engage with the exhibiting artists and view their works. Complimentary refreshments will be provided during the event, courtesy of Château des Charmes Winery.

All are invited to welcome the new year by celebrating the local arts community at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. Further information regarding exhibitions can be found at the art centre's web-

The Niagara Pumphouse events, and gives back to the need.

programs, exhibitions and cess to the arts for those in

notllocal.com



Beauty Day by Cathy Cullis is included in the Pumphouse exhibition, on until March 24.

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For questions and pre-registration, contact Verne Chant at vernechant@outlook.com

Fundraiser helps feed three farmworkers' families



Families sent these photos of three little girls who are being helped by the grocery fundraiser to Jane Andres to be published in The Local, with assurances that their names would not be used. (Supplied)

Jane Andres The Local

Thanks to local residents, the year ended with a glimpse of hope and comfort for three Jamaican families.

fundraiser held in December was to provide one month of groceries to were drastically impacted by the deaths of two fathers and a permanent injury to another while on the seasonal farm work program.

The families of 31-year-Kemar Campbell old and 34-year-old Daniel Brown, two coworkers who passed away in their sleep, are the first two fundraiser recipients. Kemar's daughter celebrated and would often connect munity cared.

about the joys of fatherhood and the worries of recipient was the family family separation.

When KerriAnn, Kemar's partner, answered her door and saw a stranger offering an envelope she had no idea it would The goal of an online be the first piece of good news since the loss of her partner eight months ago.

A typical day for her three families whose lives involves getting her toddler up and ready for daycare at 5 a.m. before heading to work. When Kemar was alive she could budget properly and count on his WSIB cut off compensasupport for necessities.

KerriAnn has received no support from the Jamaican or Canadian government agencies that were in Canada. administer the farm work program since his death in very grateful to receive the early May 2023.

her first birthday recently KerriAnn's trials well. KerriAnn: " I want to exand was only four months Grieving the loss of her press my deepest gratitude old when her father left for husband Daniel while for your generous monethe farm work program raising a toddler and a tary contribution during last spring. Daniel leaves newborn without his this difficult time of loss. behind two young daugh- emotional and financial Your support means a ters, a four-year-old and support has often been great deal to me and my a baby daughter who was overwhelming. When she family, and it provides born a few weeks before received an unexpected a comforting reminder he was to return home in phone call in December of the kindness that sur-September. Kemar and explaining the fundraiser rounds us. Thank you for Daniel were coworkers it was a comfort to learn your thoughtful gesture; on the same work crew that people in our com- it has truly touched our

The third fundraiser of Jeleel Stewart, who was permanently injured on the job at a local nursery in 2008. Suffering from severed tendons and nerves in his hand has prevented him from working for the past 15 years, resulting in the severe decline of his health. He has remained in hospital for the past three months, an incredible hardship for his wife and children. The entire family has suffered since tion and therapy in 2010, ascertaining there was work he could do, even though the suggested jobs

The three families were money and expressed the Kaniesha understands thoughts summed up by hearts."

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Jazz singer Juliet Dunn has a secret to share

Mike Balsom The Local

Jazz singer and promoter Juliet Dunn has a secret, but she's willing to share it with you.

The tireless co-creator and executive artistic producer of the TD Niagara Jazz Festival is organizing a series of Secret Salons that will give her a chance to get back behind the microphone a bit more regularly.

"I don't usually sing during the festival," she says. "Peter (her late husband Peter Shea) and I created the festival to promote other musicians. But I decided that it's finally time for me to do my own thing outside of the festival in some more intimate settings."

Her first series of three such events kicks off with her own Le Trio Parisien, led by Dunn in her French chanteuse persona, on Sunday, announced.

"That's the 'secret' part of this," she laughs. "People do like pop-up things. I won't announce where it is until two weeks before the event, which will give people enough time to plan for dinner and other things around would be fun."



Jan. 28 in a venue yet to be Juliet Dunn is greeting the new year with a Secret Salon series. (Photos supplied)

followed by two more. On resident of the Netherlands Frankie Valli, Della Reese, Feb. 18, Dunn will do a cou- wowed the crowd with his and Mickey Rooney. ple of songs with Wojtek virtuosic guitar playing Justyna and the PowerHouse during a set of jazz fusion TreeOh!, and on March 3 numbers. Covey, who plays she will guest with multi- saxophone, clarinet, flute instrumentalist Bryan Covey. and other wind instruments,

the evening. I just thought it ognize Justyna from his ap- Europe, North America and pearance at Simcoe Park last China, with notable per-The January gig will be summer. The Polish-born formers such as Joan Rivers,

Jazz Festival fans will rec- has performed on stage in

RIVERBRINK ART MUSEUM SAMUEL THOMAS New Beginnings NOVEMBER 17, 2023 - MARCH 30, 2024 Image detail: Samuel Thomas, Stone Giant Bag

"He's calling his show Lush Life — An Odyssey of Love," says Dunn, who is clearly energized by the chance to get back in front of jazz fans. "I'm really enjoying the chance to learn some new tunes for this. I've had to an Elvis Costello tune called March 3. Baby Plays Around. And I'm doing some blues songs with venue within the series." Wojtek's group."

January and March shows the TD Niagara Jazz Festival. will definitely be in St. Catharines, and there is a high possibility that the PowerHouse shows on its Twilight Jazz show will be somewhere in and Blues Series beginning Niagara-on-the-Lake.

private homes," she explains, The Hare Wine Co. "especially when we do these in the summer months, in series continue with three people's backyards. Sometimes it might be a winery, or tory and culture to mark a brewery, or other traditional venues. We plan on doing four series of three events Egbo Trio appears at The

NOTL'S FAVORITE REALTOR® FAMILY TEAM



On Feb. 18, Dunn will do a couple of songs with Wojtek Justyna and the PowerHouse TreeOh!



learn the song Lush Life, and Dunn will guest with multi-instrumentalist Bryan Covey on

She stresses that the Salon Dunn gives away that the Series is not officially part of That, by the way, is already in full swing for 2024, with four Jan. 22 with Garnetta Crom-"The venues can include well and DaGroovmasters at

February will see that shows celebrating Black his-Black History Month.

The Thompson Egboeach, and we won't repeat a Hare on Monday, Feb. 5.

Juno Award winner and speaker Carlos Morgan will open the show by sharing his in-depth knowledge on the history and contributions of some of the best Black artists and musicians in Canada.

Acclaimed Toronto composer and pianist Egbo-Egbo, originally from Nigeria, will follow that talk with his jazz trio, featuring Randall Hall on bass and drummer leff Halischuk.

Morgan will return on Thursday, Feb. 15, this time as a singer at Table Rock Restaurant in Niagara Falls. The restaurant will be transformed into a grand jazz club, where Morgan will perform original songs and numbers by Prince, Luther Vandross, Stevie Wonder, Barbra Streisand, the Beatles, and James Ingram. The Jazz and Blues Series concludes with another Juno Award winner, blues guitarist Harrison Kennedy, formerly of the band Chairmen of The Board, on Sunday, Feb. 25 at the Niagara Artists' Centre in downtown St. Catharines. Information on the a Twilight Blues and Jazz Series is on the Jazz Festival's website at niagarajazzfestival. com. But to be in on the secrets. Dunn invites vou to contact her via email at julietdunn33@gmail.com or you can purchase tickets at buy.pressplaytickets.com/ jade-salonseries/.





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U18 Wolves turn focus on league title, OMHAs

Mike Balsom The Local

His U18 Wolves rep team may have returned to Niagara-on-the-Lake from last weekend's International Silver Stick Tournament in Forest, Ontario, without any new medals or a banarena, but head coach Devon Neudorf knows they brought home something just as important.

"It was a great weekend overall," Neudorf said Monday. "Ultimately, it provided us with more confidence and understanding, and reinforced the fact that we are one of the best teams in the province. We can compete with any team that we meet on Wolves blanked the Ca- 3-0. NOTL is currently the ice. That's a great thing heading into the playoffs and hopefully the OMHAs (Ontario Minor Hockey Association Championships) in April."

The Wolves qualified for last weekend's tournament by winning the Bob Merkley Memorial Regional Silver Stick Tournament in Midland back in November, emerging from that weekend undefeated.

They followed that this weekend by going 3-and-1 in pool play, finishing cas Roberts Ramos both matters. You just have to second in the U18B division out of six teams, and taking the Metcalf Castor River Canucks to triple overtime in the semi-final before losing that game 3-2. The Canucks went on to lose the championship game to the host Lambton the preliminary round, the the ice." Shores Predators 3-0.

the tournament with a 5-4 come-from-behind victory over the Petrolia Oilers Friday morning.

ture game against the host third overtime period the team, with the local Legion Canucks were able to push Pipe Band bringing all the a rebound over the goal players into the Shores line to escape with the 3-2 Recreation Centre Arena win. and NOTL captain Marco Gruosso taking the cere- and devastating," Neudorf monial opening faceoff.

"We came out a litner to hang in their home tle flat in that game," said all five games. The boys Neudorf of the Wolves' 6-2 loss. "We weren't quite as they really were able to disciplined as far as our dig deep throughout the forecheck and taking the weekend. As we move tostick defensively. Ultimately, we didn't quite have it."

loss, Neudorf reminded his team why they were at the tournament, and to keep their minds on the the ice Monday night to next day's games.

nucks 1-0 Saturday morn- in first place in the Niaging, then dominated the ara District League with Mooretown Flags 6-0 lat- a record of 13-3-3, three er that afternoon. NOTL points up on the Port Colgoalies Quinten Davis borne Sailors. and Braden Sawyer each picked up shutouts in the will start in early Februwins.

on a shot from the point in 5 through 7 in Kingston, the 1-0 win," Neudorf explained. "And in the game against Mooretown, the Neudorf said. "The boys boys came out right from know what they have to the puck drop ready to do. In the playoffs, every play. Dylan Price and Lugot shorthanded goals on do those extra little things. the same penalty kill in the When you think you can't third period, too. It was a get a stick on something, big win for us heading into you just do what you have Sunday."

Predators and Canucks all tra five or 10 per cent effort had 3-and-1 records after every time you step onto Predators received a bye The Wolves opened into the final game based on head-to-head scoring by period.

"If we had picked up one more point against "Petrolia was ranked Lambton Shores in the the number one team in third period we would the province," Neudorf have had the bye to the fisaid. "We were down 3-2 nal," Neudorf said. Instead, after two periods. At inter- the Wolves were to have a mission we told the guys to rematch against Metcalf

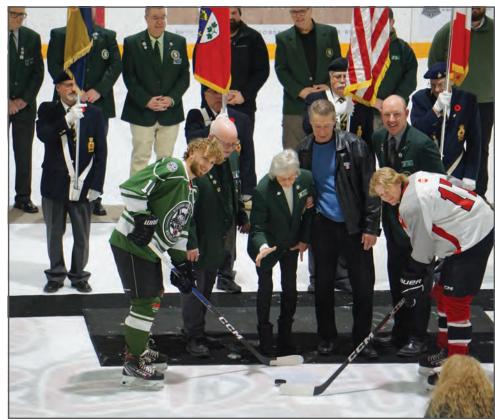
for the tournament's fea- seconds remaining in the

"It was heartbreaking, said. "But we didn't give up a powerplay goal through played with discipline, ward the OMHAs, we can remind them how it felt After the disappointing to lose such a meaningful game in such a heartbreaking fashion."

The team was back on begin the push to the pro-The talk worked, as the vincials, beating Thorold

The league playoffs ary, while the OMHAs "Calo Zambito scored are scheduled for April Ontario.

"That's our focus now," game matters, every shift to do to make it happen. Though the Wolves, It's about bringing that ex-



THE NOTL Gocal

The U18 Wolves at the Silver Stick tournament, with captain Marco Gruosso taking the ceremonial first faceoff in Friday night's game against Lambton Shores. (Supplied)



The Wolves at the Silver Stick, with Nicholas Munera chasing the puck and a Lambton Shores player attacking.



dig deep the last 15 minutes. Petrolia scored again a minute into the third, which was deflating. But we came back with three unanswered goals to win it."

Andrew Bain notched the winning goal for the Wolves in the final minute of the game. It was Bain's first goal and his first game in three months for NOTL, after nursing a broken collarbone during that time. three goals over the weekend, tying with a couple of tournament.

The Wolves were back

Castor River.

"We decided to start Ouinten in net because he got the shutout against them Saturday morning," Neudorf explained. "He played well Sunday, too. We had two power play goals, from Logan Rossi and Ed Friesen, and we never had a lead in the game. We came back from 1-0 and 2-0 to tie it up both times."

Regulation time end-Bain ended up scoring ed in a 2-2 tie. Overtime was a back-and-forth battle, with the referees goplayers from other teams ing light on their whistles for the most goals in the through all three extra frames. The Wolves hit the post three times and the on the ice Friday evening crossbar once, but with 34

Samantha Frydryk, Alexx Hill, Liza Butko and Kayla Thwaites from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Skating Club competed at the Stratford December Classic competition recently. Thwaites earned gold assessment in the STAR 3 division, Butko silver assessment in the same division, Frydryk came third in STAR 5, and Hill seventh in STAR 8 and 12th in STAR 9. (Supplied)



Preds hope for turnaround in weekend games

Mike Balsom The Local

After being behind the bench for four games in four days with his Niagara Predators, coach Kevin Taylor was

to get little rest Tuesday. He All-Star Games. and team president and owner Robert Turnbull had to make the trip to the Marcel and Jane Labbe Arena in Sturgeon Falls for the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's annual

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After losing three of those four games, it was a welcome diversion, especially with Predators' players Logan Baillie, Zane Clausen, Aidan Jones and Isaac Locker scheduled to take the ice, with Taylor himself selected to help guide the South Division's U18 squad.

But it was clear the coach was itching to get some practice time to prep his team for this weekend's home-and-home tilt against Northumberland.

"It was a long weekend," Taylor said during the nearly four-hour drive through Tuesday's winter weather. "The guys were coming back after two weeks off, and what made it even tougher is we didn't get any ice time because of the holidays. They worked hard, but the schedule did us in more quickly than you might expect."

The weekend started out well enough, with a 5-4 home victory Friday over Tottenham.

Declan Fogarty opened the scoring for the Predators with a power play goal in the first, but Tottenham's Emile Martin replied three minutes later to tie it up near the end of the period. The Railers went ahead 90 seconds into the second on the strength of a goal by Matthew Prock, but Georgy Kholmovsky tied it up with about the same amount of time

remaining in that frame. In the third, NOTL native Josh Frena scored an exciting short-handed goal on a partial breakaway, and Niagara's top scorer Luca Fernandez put the team up 4-2 with just over 10 minutes to play. But the Preds left the door open for the Railers, and Prock and Ezra Baer took advantage to tie it up four minutes later. Fernandez responded not long after, potting his 20th of the season, and the Preds were able to hold on for the win.

As has been the case for much of the season, Niagara played well against first place North York Saturday night for Renegades exploded for four goals in the second period despite stellar play in goal from Predators netminder Zane Clausen. Defenceman Nick Savoie's power play goal midway through the third was all the Preds could muster in the 4-1 loss on the road, their seventh loss this season against North York. "I thought we played a great first period against them," Taylor said. "We didn't come out as strongly in the second period, and we won the third period. They are a good team, the best team in our division, if not the league. We get to play them one more time this year." Following Friday's script, the Predators took a 4-2 lead against the Flyers in Toronto Sunday, with goals from Rhys Jones, Isaac Locker and two



Declan Fogarty picked up the Predators' first goal of the game on this backhand past Tottenham goalie Nicolas Perrault. (Photos by David Gilchrist)



Georgy Kholmovsky celebrates scoring the Preds' second goal near the end of the second period.



almost 30 minutes. But the Georgy Kholmovsky tries to slip the puck past the Tottenham goalie.

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first period. But they allowed the Flyers to get back into the game with two goals to tie it in the second.

Kholmovsky scored earresponded with three of their almost 57 minutes. own to take a 7-5 lead. Fernandez added another for the Preds with 45 seconds remaining, but it was too little too late.

"We were up 4-2, but we got sloppy, sat back and didn't stick with the game plan," lamented Taylor. "We took way too many penalties, 49 minutes of them. It's tough when you're missing certain guys for a long period of time, with back-to-back-toback penalties. It makes us put out guys for more shifts than they should be out there."

The four-game stretch ended

from Declan Fogarty, all in the Monday night in Oshawa, when some of the other teams do." the Preds lost a 6-2 decision to the Durham Roadrunners. Nolan Wyers and Kholmovsky picked up the goals for Niagara Falls. in a game where they were out-

ly in the third, but the Flyers shot 50-33 and were trailing for

The Preds now sit in seventh place in the eight-team South Division, a point behind this weekend's opponent, the Northumberland Stars. Because of that, the home-andhome series is an important one for Niagara.

"We can't take them for granted, we can't take anything for granted right now," said Taylor. "We have to stay out of the penalty box, we can't get involved in extracurricular stuff, because we don't have the bod- at the Meridian Credit Union ies. We don't have the depth Arena is 7:30 p.m.

In the meantime he was looking forward to Tuesday night's festivities in Sturgeon

"It'll be something different for the guys," he said about the four Preds participating. "They'll get to experience it, talk to some of the other players, see what it's like on some of the other teams. It's my first All-Star Game, too, and I'm happy to be out there to help coach."

Taylor was also looking forward to this Saturday. After hosting the Stars Friday night in Virgil, the players have invited their dads to ride the team bus to Colborne, Ontario, for the team's annual fathers trip.

Game time Friday night

January 10, 2024 19



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OBITUARY

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- 10 Parched
- 11 Small lake
- 12 UN nuclear watchdog
- 13 Swirl
- 19 Warning signal

- 21 Touchdown forecasts
- 24 German state
- 26 O founder
- 27 Temporary peace
- 29 Single-masted sailboat
- 31 Electrically charged particle
- 32 Maritime refugees
- 33 Tea-growing Indian state
- 34 Inclines
- 37 Southern hemisphere constellation
- 40 "He'd make a lovely corpse" (Dickens: "Martin Chuzzlewit")
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With profound sadness, we announce Ian "Scotty" Murray passed away peacefully with family by his side in London. Ontario on Sunday, December 3, 2023 at the age of 91 years young.

Loving, loyal and proud father to daughters Colleen and Heather. Adored by his cherished grandson Spencer Cradduck. Devoted and caring husband to the late Emily

Jane (died July 28, 1995). Predeceased by four brothers, one sister and parents. Brother-in-law and Uncle Ian to many relatives in Scotland and Ireland who remember his kindness and thoughtfulness. Scotty is missed by London friends and neighbours who fondly recall driveway chats and visits, as well as life time old town friends in Niagara-on-the-Lake who would meet to catch up at the local coffee shop.

Our dad was born at Rosehall Cottage, in Drumoak, Scotland. He grew up in the seaside town of Buckie. He often spoke of his adolescent life experiences growing up during the war years and recounted listening to Churchill over the radio. At the age of fourteen, he began a six year apprenticeship building wooden fishing boats at Jones Shipyard in lanstown. His mother sent him to Canada when he was twenty years old with \$54 in his pocket. He stayed with a brother in Toronto for three months. One weekend they drove to Niagara Falls to take in the attractions and returned home along the Niagara Parkway. By chance, they stopped in at Shepherd Boats and my dad got hired that very day in 1953 and began work the following week. One afternoon, while driving down the dock hill, he met our mother outside her nursing residence and they were married in 1961. In 1966, he erected a small garage at Gillingham Yacht Basin where he established Murray's Boat Repair. Over the years, he moved to a larger shop at the marina, where he continued to work on wooden boats and became an expert craftsman in the repair, painting and maintenance of fibreglass boats. After running a successful company, where business was done by a handshake as a true gentleman, Scotty retired in 2009 at the age of 77.

During retirement, our dad enjoyed memorable family summer vacations to his hometown in Scotland. When relatives visited him in Niagara, he delighted in touring them around sharing the local sights. While in London, Grandpa Scotty could be found cheering for Spencer at whatever sport he was playing each season. We often went out for a coffee and a drive to the park to see the geese. He enjoyed feeding and watching wildlife in the backyard garden.

Dad had a strong will, determination and resilience. Anytime he was challenged by medical issues, he always rallied back. We used to joke that our dad was like a cat with 15 lives! He always had a smile on his face and a story to tell. Dad was a great teacher of life and a genuine friend. We miss him terribly but we carry loving memories that will remain forever in our hearts and minds. Thank you dad for those valuable life lessons and always being present for us.

Cheers to you, dear dad, for a life well lived. Till we meet again. Love always.

We would like to extend our gratitude to friends, family and the endless list of exceptional health care providers who have loved, supported, cared and advocated for our dad and family throughout the years.

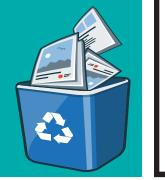
Cremation has taken place and upon our father's wishes, there will be no funeral or Celebration of Life. A private family interment will take place at St. Mark's Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the spring. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions to the charity of your choice would be welcome expressions of sympathy. Arrangements entrusted with Cremation London & Middlesex, 519-858-2467. Online condolences shared at www.cremationlondon.com

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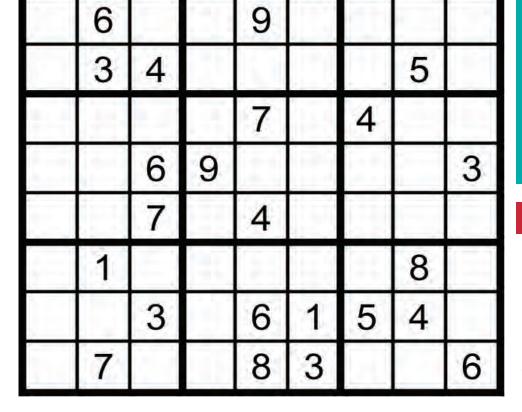


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Gretzky's offering free community skates

Sharon Burns The Local

Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery and Distillery is once again offering free skating on its outdoor rink in an initiative they call Community Skate Day.

This past Monday was their first free skate of the season.

"This year's been a bit of a struggle with the weather," said Mark Vaiana, estate manager. "It's the latest start we've had to a rink season just because of the warm weather. The rain was making things a little more difficult too, but we're finally rocking right now, so hopefully it stays that way."

the winery since it opened in 2017. A refrigeration system under the rink allows it to stay frozen "up to about 5 degrees, but the sun sometimes can have an effect if it's warmer," explained Vaiana.

cher was tending bar and handing out rental skates on Monday, and said he noticed an increase in skaters from previous outdoor history behind him." days this season. It costs \$10 per person to rent skates, and in cesca Puccinelli, from Missisthe past, said Vaiana, "Gretzky's donates proceeds from skate rentals to local charities, such as Newark Neighbours, but has not yet generated enough for a donation this year."

Skaters of all talents were on the ice on Monday afternoon. Some were hugging the side boards while others skated hand-in-hand or showed off their stopping skills.

The rink has been a part of Niagara Falls, and Tracie Donais from Beamsville, usually skate for exercise at the Beamsville community centre a couple of times a week, but heard about community skate days and chose to change things up by coming to Gretzky's. "It's just the vibe," said

Estate mixologist Alex Ar- Donais. "You can come here and Owen Lockyer met his girlyou have the outdoor fire and the ice rink, and just the whole hockey Gretzky legend and the

> Nick Antonacci and Fransauga and Toronto "always stop at Wayne's when we come into Niagara" and just happened to be in town on community skate day. Celebrating Francesca's birthday, the pair planned to watch the NCAA football championship from Niagara.

"One day, I'll probably move here," said Puccinelli. "We're engaged to be married and when the day comes to get married, Friends Steve Paget from it'll probably be in Niagara, so we'll be back."

> "I'm tired of the traffic and we kind of want that small town feel," added Antonacci.

> A group of 18 retired educators from Niagara Falls decided to make the community skate day one of their regular planned outings.

"We came because we heard that there was a community skate day and all the people in our group are retired teachers from Saint Paul High School in Niagara Falls, and we have a habit of getting together," laughed John Zeman who was proudly sporting a Buffalo Bills toque. It was their first time at the rink, but former vice-principal Tom Marshall vowed it wouldn't be their last. "Live life," he said. "Everybody's friendly here and they make us feel very welcome."

St. Catharines resident

friend Jordan Mathis while at university in Texas. "She's in town for a few days, visiting from Texas, and we thought it would be a fun Canadian activity to come skating. We saw that Gretzky's was free today as a community day, so we thought we'd check it out," said Lockyer.

Mathis noted that it has been a couple of years since she has been on ice, "so I'm a little bit rusty, but I'm excited to be back out here. We tried to go into the city to one of the public rinks, but the line was so long that we couldn't even get in during their public skating hours."

Emily Scholtens and Justine Thomas, friends from Niagara Falls, also came to skate. "I use the rental and Emily has her own pair" of hockey skates, said Thomas, who got on the ice "for the first time in a really long time, for me, so we'll see how this goes."

Vaiana pays attention to the weather as much as anybody else does, he said. "You don't always have a ton of confidence in what the extended forecast is. It doesn't look like a really promising season, but again, I don't hold too much weight to that. The past couple of weeks have been great, so I'm just hoping that it continues that way."

Community skate days are every Monday for the duration of the season. "We always try to get into March Break, but that's easier said than done," said Vaiana. The cost for skating on other days is \$5.



John Zeman and Tom Marshall enjoy Monday's community skate day at Gretzky's.



Nick Antonacci and Francesca Puccinelli say they expect to be back visiting NOTL — the engaged couple hope to be married in town.



Mixologist Alex Archer noticed an increase in the number of skaters over earlier outdoor days. (Photos by Sharon Burns)



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