



**Turmoil
continues at
native centre**
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Erin Baker, Marnie Syer, Cathy Gallagher, Rona Yardley and Lynne Newmaren, a group of friends enjoying a women's weekend in NOTL, spent Saturday afternoon in the VIP lounge at the Icewine Festival on Queen Street. (Penny Coles)

Popular Icewine Village continues this weekend

Penny Coles
The Local

The first day of the 2023 Icewine Village in Niagara-on-the-Lake couldn't have been better — the weather was perfect, Queen Street was busy, but not overcrowded, and it was evident people were enjoying the icewine and the experience.

Minerva Ward, president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL, organizer of the event, was thrilled with the number of people who turned out to enjoy the festival, and the vibrant, exciting atmosphere of the crowd enjoying the day — the icewine, the fire pits, the food and the music provided by George St. Kitts.

"I saw this band a while ago, and I just knew we had to have them for the festi-

val," she said. "They're perfect for this kind of event."

The Sparkle & Ice Gala which opened the festival Friday night was just as successful, she added.

There were more people on the street Saturday than Sunday, Ward said, and the crowd was "a little more enthusiastic. I think the crowd enjoyed the Saturday band better."

A couple of the sculptures were damaged and won't hold up for next weekend, she added. "The snow started out nicely but ended up being a rain-snow mix, so not the nice fluffy snow we wanted."

Next weekend the village continues, "and I'm most looking forward to the cocktail competition," she said.

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Community grows with new arrivals from Ukraine

Penny Coles
The Local

As the war against Ukraine continues to rage, more and more people, alone or with families, are turning to Canada as their safe haven.

The Folk Arts Centre in St. Catharines, which tracks and helps new arrivals to the region, has seen about 500 Ukrainian arrivals in Niagara since February 2022, who have found homes in all corners of the region, including Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Emily Kovacs, executive

director of the centre, provided some information to The Local about the assistance they are offering, and said they "have noticed the number has increased greatly from the end of September." And there are likely others they haven't seen.

Those who are arriving are not, according to the federal government, identified as refugees. They are given \$3,000 per adult and half that for children, and are not considered here permanently, although some have received a three-year working visa.

They have come from var-

ied backgrounds, made their way to Canada under different circumstances, and many live in fear for those left behind. Some plan to return home as soon as it's safe. Others, despite missing family members, hope to make a life here.

Shirley Madsen is a local woman who, as regular readers of The Local will know, has been offering all manner of assistance to recent arrivals from Ukraine.

Last February, as the world watched the news and hoped for a speedy resolution to the Russian attacks on Ukraine, Madsen and others in Canada

began looking for ways to help. Her first thought was to find a way to send money, and she devised a website to sell sunflower seeds, the Ukrainian national flower, as a fundraiser.

But when it was evident there would be no quick resolution, and more and more people began fleeing to Canada, the need became one of finding homes, household items, clothing, food and even jobs for those settling here. Some Ukrainian churches began organizing food and clothing drives, and a Help Boutique opened in St. Catharines.

The Folk Arts Centre in St. Catharines also geared up to help, and now has language classes at several levels and many services to assist new arrivals, including six Russian/Ukrainian-speaking volunteers to help deliver those services.

Madsen has become a local source of assistance for several Ukrainians who have settled in town and in the region, her daily life transformed by a schedule of who needs a drive to an appointment, to Newark Neighbours, to shop or to a job interview.

She gets calls from people who have items to donate that

she often picks up and then delivers to either a specific family or the Help Boutique. It's not unusual for her to visit someone who happens to need something, such as one request recently for a coffee-maker, and say "Just a minute, I've got one in my car."

Madsen has introduced some of those she has met to The Local, and helped as a translator. She describes the Ukrainians she has come to know as warm, gracious, friendly and generous by na-

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Turmoil continues at Niagara Regional Native Centre

Mike Balsom
The Local

An attempt by former executive director of the Niagara Regional Native Centre Karl Dockstader to have a discussion about the future of the organization Monday night was put on hold.

On his Facebook page last week, Dockstader had posted an invitation to the community

interested in helping the native centre on

Airport Road to, “come and have a dialogue about what we would like to see come from the Feb. 8 emergency members meeting.”

He promised that he would share a public statement with the community during this week’s regular Monday drumming night.

Dockstader, who had

planned to resign earlier this month from his post at the centre, was walked off the property by board president Lacey Lewis and treasurer Wanda Griffin on Dec. 16. Shortly after that, three other board members resigned from their posts, leaving the board with only four current members. According to the centre’s bylaws, the board needs nine members but is allowed to operate so long as a majority of

five members are present.

The board has since scheduled a special membership meeting in less than two weeks to update the organization’s bylaws and to fill current board vacancies.

“We are seeking dedicated volunteers that wish to create a lasting impact for community today and tomorrow,” says a statement on the Centre’s Facebook page, inviting applications for the vacancies.

When Dockstader arrived at the centre Monday evening after his shift at CKTB Radio, he was met by Lewis and other officials in the parking lot. Lewis expressed her feeling that drum night was not the proper time to have a potentially incendiary discussion, especially with many youth members there for the drumming.



Karl Dockstader (Photo submitted)

“I attempted to address the community,” said Dockstader. “But I wasn’t allowed to finish. I was interrupted by Lacey. Once she interrupted me, people interrupted her, and everything broke down. There was really no opportunity to talk.”

Though Lewis had offered to come up with an alternative date and time to hear Dockstader’s concerns, no progress was made on that front.

“I am hoping, I’m more than willing to have a conversation with the board between now and Feb. 8,” Dockstader said. “I need to be able to assure people who have approached me that the members’ meeting

is going to be conducted in a fair way, in accordance with our bylaws.”

Dockstader recognizes that he has no legal standing since leaving his post as executive director. He plans to attend the Feb. 8 meeting as a member of the native centre.

He added that he will not share his statement to the general public until he has a chance to present it to what remains of the current board.

“As a measure of good faith, I have to see if there’s any path to an open line of communication.”

At press time, attempts to reach Lewis for follow-up comment were unsuccessful.

Youth Collective offers first certification course



A group of local kids received their babysitting certificates through the NOTL Youth Collective, spending six hours last Friday with Michelle, a St. John Ambulance instructor. The program was paid for by NOTL Realty sponsorship. Kids must be registered with the collective to attend certification courses. On Thursday, Jan. 26 the collective will offer a ‘Let’s Talk’ Session with Rachel DeBon, starting at 5 p.m. DeBon is a local certified yoga instructor, and will offer mindfulness yoga instruction, then facilitate a ‘Let’s Talk’ session about what kids want to see at the campus for programming and services. To register visit [waiver.smartwaiver.com/e/Q8JKFkGrhbWBDdu3ATYHDcl](https://www.smartwaiver.com/e/Q8JKFkGrhbWBDdu3ATYHDcl). (Photo supplied)

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Council given low-down on municipal budget process

Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local

In municipal governance, the start of a new year means one thing: budget time. For Niagara-on-the-Lake, which is welcoming some new councillors to the table this year, the town kicked the annual process off with an educational meeting on how a municipal budget is created.

"Our budget is more than just a budget," said CAO Marnie Cluckie at the special council meeting on Jan. 10. "It is a key planning document for us, and that helps guide the decisions that we make."

Their budget training session covered the fundamentals of organizing municipal finances, including operating and capital budgets, what the town spends money on and where it gets money from, how the property tax levy for residents is decided and how that money is allocated.

Councillors were engaged and asking questions about the budget proceed-

ings throughout the meeting, in preparation to help put a budget together for a proposed final approval date of Feb. 28.

"I think we've got some good tools that will help us offset a lot of costs, especially with the municipal accommodation tax funding," said Coun. Maria Mavridis. "I want residents to know we are going through (the budget) with a fine-tooth comb."

Budget discussions will be going through a different process this year, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa told The Local. Instead of an audit committee of just a few councillors that reports to council, Zalepa suggested the town follow the regional procedure, which is to have a budget committee made up of all councillors, as part of the committee of the whole.

It might mean a few extra meetings, he said, but councillors will all have the same information when discussing and approving the budget — it's a process that works well for the region,

and should work at the municipal level as well.

Here are the details on how the budget is created, as outlined by director of finance Kyle Freeborn:

What are the rules?

The town must have a plan to spend as much money as they will receive, and vice versa, in their annual. If there is a deficit in the budget, the amount owed is automatically added to the next year's budget.

In order to avoid running a deficit, Freeborn outlined the three strategies to finding savings: reducing costs by coming up with new, innovative ways to deliver municipal services; reducing service levels by either scaling back operations or increasing the length of time to provide a service; or charging user fees to cover the costs (examples including recreational programs and short-term rentals).

What are operating and capital budgets?

The operating budget is a plan for providing day-to-

day services, including revenue sources such as property taxes, user fees and upcoming expenses such as contracted services, materials and supplies, and salaries and wages. In 2022, the total operating budget was \$40.2 million, with a tax levy of \$13.7 million, and 67 per cent of its expenses paying employee salaries, wages and benefits, and for contracted services.

The capital budget is a plan for town projects that require a significant amount of money: plans to acquire, build or improve municipal assets such as land, buildings, machinery, equipment, roads, bridges, and water and sewer lines. In 2022, the capital budget was \$10.2 million, with the largest amount spent on the municipal water system (an environmental service).

How are taxes calculated?

The municipal tax levy is decided annually by assessing the value of properties in the neighbourhood against the cost to provide

services in town, according to the annual budget. In 2022, the municipal tax levy was \$13.7 million.

The cost to provide services per homeowner is divided by the total value of every home in town, resulting in the municipal tax rate, which is then multiplied by the value assessment of each home, to get each homeowner's property tax levy for the year.

If the value of a home changes, then the levy changes in proportion to each property. If service costs go up, then the tax rate increases across the board.

Where do my taxes go?

Fifty-eight per cent of the money collected through property taxes goes to the Niagara Region as part of the regional levy, while 22 per cent goes to the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The rest goes to the province for public education services (15 per cent), regional waste disposal, the town's storm levy and the Niagara Health System levy.

What new factors are there in 2023?

In assessing property values, the town uses value assessments completed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, or MPAC. While reassessments are normally carried out every four years, they haven't been done since 2016, postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2022, MPAC announced reassessments will be completed this year. Freeborn notes the new MPAC assessments are more likely to affect properties that have had significant changes since 2016.

The municipal accommodation tax, launched last July, will mean a new pool of money available for the town to fund capital projects that support local tourism, which will be transferred into reserves for specific projects, like redoing roads and sidewalks or updating tourism-related infrastructure: "It'll free up funding previously allocated to those items, to try and keep the taxes even," Mavridis said.

New amalgamated transit raises costs across Niagara

Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local

Big changes are coming to Niagara in the world of public transit.

For every community in the area, including Niagara-on-the-Lake, joining the new regional transit service means phasing out their local system and passing the cost onto the Niagara Region — which will be passed back down to taxpayers.

When NOTL councillors took part in an orientation session for 2023's budget proceedings, director of finance Kyle Freeborn shared how the town plans to adapt to the increasing regional tax levy as a result of its new transit operating budget.

Starting this year, the region has taken over transit costs for all 12 municipalities. Those costs will be added to the region's annual tax levy, with a line in the tax bill indicating how much transit will cost taxpayers this year.

Each municipality's share of the estimated \$55 million operating budget for 2023 has been determined by combining assessments and the hours of transit system usage in each community.

As Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa explained for The Local, each municipality will have a different number of hours the service is used. For example, in NOTL, the municipality asked for greater coverage than it had

during the OnDemand pilot project. The OnDemand service now reaches every corner of NOTL, and two extra vehicles were added, for a total of four — during the pilot project, NOTL had only two vehicles and very limited coverage.

The projection for NOTL is for 16,000 hours of service.

Pelham, also with OnDemand service, is projected to have 5,600 hours, and Thorold 15,000 hours, similar to NOTL.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's approved base budget for 2023 comes in at \$2.58 million: \$1.14 million is based on the service hours and \$1.44 million on assessment. For comparison, the other municipality with the closest budget is Fort Erie, at \$2.87 million.

This means an increase in the region's levy for transit. However, Freeborn said the municipality is planning a way to help offset those costs for taxpayers.

"We have an opportunity to fund that net increase in the region's budget by leaving available funding in transit as a general subsidy for the town's budget," Freeborn said.

In 2022, the town paid approximately \$900,000 to operate its municipal public transit services, including the local OnDemand service. Funding came from parking revenues at the Fort George National Historic Site and a provincial gas tax program.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa was one of several regional councillors last term who pushed for the Niagara Transit Commission (NTC) to include the hours of usage as a factor in the budgeting process, rather than have costs shared based solely on assessment.

Zalepa told The Local that while "it's not the greatest solution," with assessment still being a factor, "it could have been a lot worse."

Fortunately, he added, the "good news" part of the story is that the other municipalities agreed with the concept of adding hours of usage to the equation of costs.

At the region's budget review committee of the whole meeting on Thursday, Jan. 19, the NTC shared the details of its 2023 operating budget: the estimated \$55 million budget is an increase of \$6.48 million from the budget estimated back in February 2022.

The majority of expenses will go to pay for labour-related costs and operating expenditures. The increase, according to the NTC, is because of 2022's reduction in farebox revenue, and for service enhancements.

While the region's budget review committee of the whole approved the proposed operating budget for 2023 during its Jan. 19 meeting, the region's general council voted later in the evening to defer its motion to vote on approving the budget.

Frank Campion, the mayor of Welland, raised concerns about the rising cost of transit and said he and other councillors should have more time to review the figures.

"We're getting some surprises in the budget now," he said. "Currently, I'm not willing to approve it because of the impact on our municipality and our ratepayers — and they've got enough problems already with financial issues and inflation."

Alongside the \$55 million net levy, there will be a one-time special levy in 2023 for employment liabilities.

According to the NTC,


this is for the "significant cost" of employees in public transit transferring to its organization and receiving medical, dental and long-term disability benefits.

"Previous providers have not budgeted for this cost, nor set the funding aside in reserves, representing a significant risk to the NTC," stated its Jan. 19

presentation.

The presentation didn't share how much the one-time levy will cost. The NTC has created an estimate subject to further evaluation. That levy will be recovered from St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland and put in a "special purpose" reserve to fund these expenses.

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All appreciate welcome received from Canadians

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ture, even if they themselves have little. They find it difficult to accept help easily, she says. They are hard-working, wanting desperately to be independent, look after their families, and give back to the community that has welcomed them. Although they may be very well-educated and have left good jobs when they fled, many are willing to work at whatever is offered. She helps with that as well, writing resumes, taking them to job interviews and trying to ensure they are treated fairly — she has learned of two women who were not. One business owner of a coffee shop hired this woman as a manager and then told her that, among other duties, her job was to clean toilets.

Another woman was hired to work in a retail store in St. Catharines. When she opened her first pay cheque she cried, and asked the owner why it was short hundreds of dollars, explaining she couldn't pay her rent without the money owed to her. When she said she would report him, Madsen relates, "he started yelling and belittling her," and she quit. Madsen has contacted an employment legal firm for help, and is gathering further information for them.

She has recently been helping a family of four, Valeriia and Vitalii, and their two daughters, 11 and 14, who arrived in November with little except some clothing. They were fortunate to have a relative living on Four Mile Creek Road, who welcomed them into her home.

Madsen has taken them to ServiceOntario for a Canadian driver's licence, arranged and taken them to job interviews, delivered food and household items and taken them to Newark Neighbours for assistance.

"She's our angel," Valeriia tells The Local.

When Madsen learned they needed a lift to Laura Secord Secondary School in St. Catharines to enrol their older daughter, and she was busy and couldn't help, she posted on a few Facebook pages that she needed someone who could drive them. "In five minutes," she says, "I had seven responses from people offering them a lift." She regularly posts on NOTL Buy Nothing and a couple of other sites about items that are needed, and always has a very generous response, she says. She has recently called St. Michael Catholic School and the District School Board of Niagara to get information for their younger daughter to register for school.

If there is one thing the new arrivals to our community have in common, it is gratitude for their new home, the friends they are making, and all those who reach out to them with a helping hand, says Madsen, who first began supporting the Ukraine when the first bomb



Martin Mazza welcomes Pavlo Pervoy to Italian Pizza and Subs. (Supplied)

was dropped by Russia.

"Once Ukrainian immigrants started coming to the Niagara area I started volunteering with the Niagara Ukrainian Canadian Congress and St. John's Church. I felt then that I needed to do more."

Since there is no central registration for the newcomers from Ukraine, "you have no idea who is here unless you hear through groups like Newark Neighbours, or word of mouth," she adds.

"Newark passed my name and phone number to these families and from there, I have not stopped."

What Madsen is doing now, she explains, is "filling my life and heart in such a way I can't imagine or explain. No, I am not retired. I still work and run a business, however I am fortunate I can do this in between. The families I have gotten to know and their stories are unimaginable, and keep pushing and motivating me to do more."

If there is anything she can do to make their lives and this new journey easier, she says, "I need to be there for them."

After a recent phone conversation with one woman who is having very difficult time and needed some moral support, Madsen says, when she hung up, she had an overwhelming, warm feeling that her mother, who passed 51 years ago, said to her, "you are doing the right thing...keep on doing it." And it is her Ukrainian roots and strength that keep her going, she adds.

She also credits "the countless number of people over the last few months that have given and given."

She has "pages and pages" of names of locals who have donated, "and some went above and beyond to ensure these families had a plethora of gifts for their kids and families, especially at Christmas time. I have never in my life encountered so many generous and giving people," calling them, and those who keep giving, her angels.

"We still have Ukrainians arriving weekly, the need is still there."

One of the many people

who Madsen has helped includes a woman in another corner of town, without a car and depending on public transit, at \$6 a ride, to get to work or anywhere else.

She calls herself Halia — she is afraid to use her real name. A chemical engineer at home, she struggles here to make ends meet. A single mom, she works hard and often long days cleaning at a hotel, and goes home exhausted — it takes her 30 minutes to walk to and from work — and doesn't get to see as much of her daughter as she would like. But the shy young girl is adjusting well, and her English is improving. Halia laughs and says all they do at school is play. Her daughter was accustomed to working hard, doing homework every night. This is too easy, her mother says. But her daughter loves it, she is making friends, spending time with them and enjoying all the activities other kids take for granted — she's been to Sky Zone in St. Catharines with a friend, and had her first sleepover.

Madsen is doing all she can to help Halia and her daughter, treating them recently to their first Swiss Chalet meal to celebrate the young girl's 11th birthday. Like other Ukrainian newcomers who have settled in NOTL, Halia has been given food from Newark Neighbours, which frees up some of her income for other needs. However, without a car, that's tough for her, and Madsen helps her with transportation when she can, and has reached out to others to help.

She says some of the recent arrivals from Ukraine who have cars are now helping others without transportation.

As little as Halia earns, she sends money and items home when she can. Her sister came here with her two sons for a time, but didn't stay long. Both their parents were injured in a bombing, their mother losing both legs, their father losing one, but he is now suffering from gangrene in the other, and expecting to lose it as well. They were having great difficulty looking after themselves, and Halia's sister decided she needed to return home to help, and took her



Halia was able to show her sister, her daughter, and her sister's two sons a little bit of Toronto while they were in Canada. (Supplied)



At The Local office, Vitalii, Shirley Madsen, and Valeriia chat with Pavlo Pervoy, comparing their different experiences of coming to Canada and Niagara-on-the-Lake. (Penny Coles)

boys with her. The youngest boy cries and wants to come back to Canada, she says — he asks if the gifts he received at Christmas are still there. Halia told him she's saving them for when he returns. Her sister's older son wanted to go home to help his family and his country. He will turn 18 soon, and if he doesn't return to Canada by May, when his visa expires, he will have to join the military. "I'm so scared for him," says Halia, as is her sister. "I hope he can come back here." His father has been fighting since the onset of the war, and was injured — he was shot nine times, but only seven of the bullets could be removed. Halia shows photos of a young man before the war began, and of him now, just a year later, looking like a different person and 20 years older. He still has a bullet in his spine, and one buried in his cheek, that can't safely be removed, yet he has returned to fighting, she says.

She learned recently her brother-in-law and two of his fellow soldiers were without sleeping bags, so she bought three and shipped them home.

When Madsen heard, she said, "I told her if she needs anything like that to let me know. She shouldn't be spending her own money. She can't afford to."

Halia's story of coming to Canada is a difficult one. She first arrived here almost 10

years ago, looking for a better life. She ended up being intimidated, mistreated and taken advantage of, and when she could get away, returned home. In the intervening years, she says, she has gone back and forth, wanting to improve her life, but also missing her family. And although this has been a better experience — she is here with her daughter in a home where she can stay while the owner lives elsewhere, with good, kind neighbours — it is still extremely difficult for her. She is physically exhausted by her work, and emotionally drained from worry. She has an app on her phone that notifies her every time a bomb goes off in Ukraine, and where. It notified her twice of bombings during the hour or so she was speaking to The Local.

She talks of going home to fight. Many women are fighting, and she should be too, she says — but her daughter is terrified at the thought, and doesn't want to leave.

Last week, a casual conversation in a line-up at the Virgil Avondale turned into a meeting with a man who had been in town just two days. Pavlo Pervoy had arrived in Mississauga from Ukraine a few weeks earlier, but hadn't settled, instead looking for a place that didn't seem so full of new, tall glass buildings, lots of traffic, and so cold — he describes his

impression of Mississauga as a "cold Dubai." After looking at many options in southern Ontario, including St. Catharines, he discovered NOTL — neither new nor cold — and decided to call it home for now.

He dropped in to The Local office for a chat, and while there, Valeriia and Vitalii arrived with Madsen. They had a good hour or more trading stories and laughing, enjoying the chance meeting and the opportunity to speak of home, and also share information about some of what they have to do here, such as the need for a Canadian licence and organizing insurance.

Pervoy's story is different again. In Ukraine, he worked for a multinational data storage company. He and his wife Anna decided to leave their community south of Kyiv, the ancient and beautiful city of Vasylikiv located on the Stuhna River, which was home to a military airfield with barracks, when it became a target for Russian attacks.

Pervoy said it's hard to describe the devastation of his country and its people to readers in Canada in a way they can really understand, and instead wanted to focus on a positive message.

"We decided to come to Canada because it's a big coun-

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Icewine Village open again this weekend

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Many of the guests at Friday's gala and those enjoying the Icewine Village had come from the GTA, Oakville, Burlington and around the region, "which is great for Niagara-on-the-Lake," said Ward.

The Icewine Village will be open Sunday, Jan. 22,

from noon to 5 p.m., Jan. 28 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Jan. 29 from noon to 5 p.m.

The cocktail competition is Saturday, Jan. 28, from 7 to 10 p.m. in the Court House. It's presented by Spirit in Niagara, and includes a DJ and music while local wineries compete for the title of best icewine cocktail.

Also in the village next weekend are informative

speaker series, and culinary and mixology demonstrations. A VIP Lounge area offers an exclusive experience which includes fire tables, private seating and an icewine cocktail bar, with a great view of the street and the entertainment.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call 905-468-1950 or visit www.niagaraonthelake.com.



Singer George St. Kitts joins the crowd on the street. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Angela Sacco and Johnny MacDonald, with Nappy, on Queen Street Saturday.



George St. Kitts and his band perform at the Icewine Festival.



Dalia and Luay Putris from Burlington enjoy their icewine.



Steven Danyluck and Tonia Veenstra share a moment at the Icewine Festival.

Hoping for 'brighter future'

Continued from page 4

try with friendly people. We have that image of Canadian people saying 'thank you,' or 'I'm sorry,' that Canada is a country of very polite people."

He has colleagues who live in Europe and the U.S., and when they reached out to him, "they told me the most compassionate people are Canadians. They said when they have job interviews, they are asked 'what do you bring to the company.' They would say they've been interviewed by several people who asked questions about their profession. But Canadians ask about the humanitarian side. They ask 'how can we help you and your family.'"

That is how he and Anna decided to come to Canada, he says. He left her in Romania and came to find a place to settle, first going to Mississauga, where he has colleagues who were very helpful and showed him around, and he visited other cities on his own, and after visiting other cities, St. Catharines.

"We just wanted a small, detached house," he says, but most of what he looked at were either townhouses or too large for them. Then he headed to NOTL, and found what he wanted on The Promenade — an older home that was for rent. "My wife fell in love with the house" through the photos he sent, he says.

At the moment she is waiting for the documentation that will allow her to bring their dog here, an adorable Pomeranian — Valeriia and Vitalii laughed when they heard that, because they have also brought their Po-

meranian to Canada, and pictures came out and were shared.

From his first day in town, Pervoy says, he was already enjoying the quiet, and "meeting so many good neighbours, so many good people." While waiting outside the Avondale to get his Canadian licence at ServiceOntario, only to find he had to get a post office box on Queen Street first, he met Martin Mazza, who invited him for pizza — he quickly understood he had made a friend who could tell him pretty much everything about the town.

He will continue to work for the same company, which is based in California, and Anna, who was self-employed at home — she loves to bake, and made beautiful cakes for special occasions — is looking forward to baking again. For the last year, he says, "there have been no good occasions."

She also loves to garden — he does too, he says, but jokes that means "she tells me where to dig, and I do what I'm told." And the home they are renting has a big garden, so he expects to be kept busy.

While here, Pervoy is helping his home country, and says since arriving in Canada, with support from his family, he has been buying huge batteries and shipping pallets of them to Ukraine, to be used during power outages. He has also sourced and sent drones, "not military grade, but ones that can be used for scouting." He ships goods to Ukraine through Meest, a shipping company based in Mississauga, founded by Ukrainians — Madsen uses it as well, because the owner

offers them very good prices to send much-needed items home.

Although Pervoy is looking forward to settling here for a time with Anna, he says, they hope eventually to go home.

"My outlook is for a brighter future for Ukraine, and for Ukrainians in Canada. We're super thankful to everyone for opening their hearts and their doors to us, but we don't want to overstay our welcome. I hope to get as much out of this experience as I can and to help Ukraine as much as I can now, and when victory comes I hope to use my experience at home in Ukraine. I want to be useful in my home country. I'm not a fighter, at least I'm not a soldier. But I can fight for my country in different ways."

After meeting Madsen at The Local office, he said, "we're fortunate to have a person like her, who is our advocate and is helping out. I know of people who have been taken advantage of but they don't know how to fight back. It's good to have people who go the extra mile, explaining to those who need help what they have to do and how to do it."

Everything he was told about Canada to make him decide this is where he and Anna would find their new home, even if only temporary, "is true" he says. "What is said about Canadians is not only true, they are even better."

With his positive outlook on life, Pervoy adds, "you don't have to search for the good — you find it everywhere."

As for returning home, he says, "I want to believe that, like a fairytale, there will be a good ending."

EDITORIAL

What's with all the weather advisories?

As I sit down to write this, the Weather Network has issued a special weather statement for Niagara for Wednesday, Jan. 25 into Thursday, Jan. 26. Expected: total snowfall accumulations near 10 centimetres from Wednesday morning into Thursday morning.

For those of you used to imperial measurements, that converts to 3.97 inches. In 24 hours. Going back to the metric system, that works out to less than half a centimetre per hour.

Am I completely missing something here? Not even a quarter of a foot, and spread out over a 24-hour time span? Is this something that really requires a warning?

Forecasts changed throughout the day Tuesday and different sources were warning of up to 15 centimetres, which is obviously a little more troublesome.

But still, what would our neighbours across the border think of this? You know the ones I mean, those Yankees that Rick Mercer used to be able to find just about anywhere in that country on his CBC television show Talking to Americans. The ones who believe that we Canadians all wear mukluks, live in igloos and drive snowmobiles to work.

The fact is, we are Canadians, and it would take more snow in 24 hours to alarm us. It shouldn't require any special notice or preparation.

I may be crazy, and many have accused me of just that, probably for near-valid reasons, but it seems that we receive more and more weather statements and advisories these days than ever before.

Perhaps that's a sign of global warming. Yeah, I know, how can it be blamed on global "warming" when we're talking

about snow? But there's no denying that over the past few years we've seen more and more extreme weather events at both ends of the Celsius and Fahrenheit scales.

But what is extreme? I'm not one to mistrust the judgement of experts, but four inches of snow seems like a walk in the park compared with the situation faced just a few weeks ago by our neighbours in south Niagara.

Maybe the increased number of advisories is just a result of constant improvements in technology, both at Environment Canada and the Weather Network, and right here in our homes and cars, with our 24-hour connectedness.

And other than the snow and ice we saw in late December, it has been a mild winter thus far. Perhaps the special weather statements are a way of just waking us up from our complacency to get ready for more winter-like weather.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with being prepared for what Mother Nature is about to bring us. Every fall, just after Thanksgiving, I fish out the snow shovels from our shed, placing one in its perch to one side of our garage door, the other just outside our patio door to shovel a path in the backyard for the dogs.

If I had a snowblower (a constant bone of contention

at our house — I want to buy one, but my wife keeps telling me they are too expensive and that besides, I'm still able-bodied enough to use the manual option), I would gas it up, give it a test run and clear a spot in the garage for it.

Perhaps you think I doth protest too much, that I'm making much ado about nothing. But I think that's my point, exactly.

I've been living in Ontario for all 60 of my years. I've

seen much worse than what we're being warned about in 24 hours. I know how to deal with it, I know how to navigate my car through it, I'm ready for it. In fact, I'm ready for much more than that.

Bring it on. Special weather statement be darned.

And if it turns out to be a serious accumulation, and more problematic than it sounds as I write this, be careful out there!

Mike Balsom
NOTL Local

Bjorgan describes some of his favourite 'tree friends'



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

My extensive time logged in Niagara's forests has allowed me to recognize some of my favourite tree friends, even when their most defining features are invisible in winter.

If you were to imagine someone you recognize on a daily basis, you'd know their hair, their height and other features.

However, could you identify the person if they only showed their eyes, with absolutely everything else obscured? This is much like identifying tree bark in the winter. You only need the bark to understand which species of woody giants you are sharing

space with.

I have highlighted a handful of native tree species that you can find in most forested environments in southern Ontario, and I hope you can share a moment with them on your next nature excursion.

Let's start with my pal 'Shaggy,' a tall and lanky individual also known as the shagbark hickory. The bark is flippy like a surfer dude's, with vertical slats that curl outwards away from the main body. No other healthy tree in the Niagara Region has bark that radiantly flips off like this.

One theory pointing towards the peculiar shagginess is that this particular hickory evolved to produce a much more finicky bark that made it difficult for squirrels and other small mammals to climb. That's because Shaggy wants to protect his nuts — quite seriously, located at the top of the tree.

These edible hickory nuts

are an ecological staple for squirrels, chipmunks, mice and even black bears where they still roam. The nut is edible to humans as well, and was a known source of protein and healthy fats for Indigenous peoples, ranging from the Cherokee in the southern Appalachians to the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples here in Niagara.

Now, for my next friend in the forest, it only makes sense to go from Shaggy to the 'Beech Boy.' No, this is not a typo.

The American beech is yet another local tree species that is easy to pick out of the crowd, even in the dead of winter. The bark is an enormous departure from the Shaggy's style, as we are now looking for an impossibly smooth, grey look and texture. The only interruptions on this unusually smooth bark are these large

Continued on page 7

View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

The Phantom of the Open (Netflix, 2021) is the true story of Maurice Flitcroft, a crane operator who is both a dreamer and an optimist. In

spite of never having played golf he decides to enter The British Open Golf Championship. The tale unfolds delightfully and we learn the importance of focusing on pursuing your dreams.

Donald Combe is a retired

English teacher who loves to go to the movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.

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Where is Ben?

The Local co-op student, Ben Foster, is discovering new locations in NOTL and wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. The Local had more responses last week than for any other Where's Ben photo. One was from Teresa Bell. "He is in my driveway, on Field Road in Virgil," she said.

COMMENT

Local

LETTERS NOTL's systemic tourism issues 'hidden and ignored'

We understand that the lord mayor and council have decided to address the topic of tourism by handing the responsibility over to consultants who employ an expert. The definition of an expert, by the way, is "an ordinary guy 50 miles from home!"

During the past 35 years most lord mayors and councils had the topic of tourism

in Niagara-on-the-Lake high on their agendas. Multiple consultants have been involved without any specific plan emerging.

Most of us who are, or have been, in business here have been faced with the same issues. Without any long-term plan, tourism has emerged like a camel, which is a horse designed by a committee. Thus

there is a huge dichotomy between the high-end Shaw Theatre, luxury hotel and winery customers and the mass market 'drop'n gobble' bus crowd. This has caused a confused market on Queen Street, where Mom 'n Pop specialty stores have, and will be, squeezed out by multi-chain groups.

Outrageously high rents and taxes on Queen Street

compound that trend, which is an insurmountable problem, unless the market collapses entirely and multiple stores lay empty for years.

The rise of Airbnb and vacation rentals has hollowed out the full-time resident population and those of us left live between sterility and chaos.

Can this council decide to act when others failed to

think about the long-term effect of short-term decisions ... such as building a big bus park and buying a fleet of shuttles, which changed the whole ballgame?

The 'expert' must be from this area and have the ability to understand that Niagara-on-the-Lake is different from anywhere else and has serious systemic issues which have

been hidden or ignored for decades between the ever increasing hordes and a declining Old Town population.

They have to talk to all NOTL businesses including wineries, theatre, hotels, B&Bs, retailers and NOTL residents to avoid yet another 'camel'.

Hamish Kerr
NOTL

Local

LETTERS 'Private' isn't a scary word in healthcare debate

Is it too much to ask for a balanced editorial on privatizing healthcare?

I was pleasantly surprised to read your editorial headline, Will private clinics save public healthcare or destroy it? (NOTL Local, Jan. 18).

Finally, an editorial that might look at the pros and cons of private healthcare. But boy was I in for some disappointment.

Now, I'm not here to defend

Doug Ford's plan - in all likelihood it will increase government spending in healthcare which will lead to waste and mismanagement. See industries that are heavily subsidized or controlled by government, e.g. housing, universities, etc. But at the very least there will be notable positive changes - e.g. better services, shorter wait times, etc. - from this government's actions that should not, "be a hard sell."

Why are we listening to nurses and their unions on how to fix our "broken system?" Like it or not, they are part of the reason why it's broken. When a company is going bankrupt do we ask the employees to fix it or do we clean house and hire a new team?

Also, please stop making "profit" a scary word. Profit is simply providing a good or service that has more value for the consumer than what it costs to

produce. In a purely free market companies compete to obtain those profits but to do so they have to provide more value at a lower price.

I was shocked to see you disparage the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are responsible for the greatest advancements in human history. It should be no surprise that where healthcare entrepreneurs are left free - i.e. the U.S. - we see most of the world's medi-

cal advancements. Entrepreneurs don't just take profits and sit on them or buy big yachts - though they've certainly earned the right to - they reinvest these profits in new ventures and goods and services. Just look at how pharmaceutical companies have been investing in new treatments from the profits they made from their COVID-19 vaccines.

All this said and I haven't even gotten into the moral rea-

sons for private healthcare.

Look I get it, I understand that the current culture is afraid of privatizing healthcare. In our current culture I'm surprised Canadians haven't demanded more industries be nationalized. But please, let's try to have a balanced debate on private healthcare in Ontario and Canada.

Alexander Evans
NOTL

Take a winter walk, check out some tree bark

Continued from page 6

and uncannily familiar eyeball markings. Shaped remarkably like a human eye, you can almost get the sense that the Beech Boy is taking a look at you.

Another winter giveaway for this tree, sometimes described as an elephant's foot, is how it retains its copper coloured leaves throughout the cold months. The leaves rustle quietly in the indifferent winter winds, and won't be dropped to the forest floor until spring, where it is believed they give

the tree a nutritional boost in the soil.

This is just one of many tricks the Beech Boy does to stay healthy. Now, speaking of healthy, what did you have for breakfast this morning? Perhaps corn flakes. What about 'Burnt Cornflakes'?

Notably, this is not an admirable or appetizing nickname for the black cherry tree; one of the most delicious trees present in the forest. No tree has bark like the black cherry tree, especially when you consider imagining one of the most ubiquitous cereals burnt

to a black crisp. The bark is a series of little black ovals, with an undeniably rough touch for an otherwise sweet tree.

The tree has a history of odd timing and major developmental changes, though, much like some people. We are all built to experience life differently!

The bark is actually smooth and speckled for its first 10 years or so of existence, and then it changes to Burnt Cornflakes as we best recognize it. Once the black cherry begins producing tasty and edible cherries for people and wildlife alike, it undergoes a fruity

eruption every four years where an exceptional batch is produced in big numbers.

Wood thrushes, woodpeckers, orioles and bluebirds are just a handful of bird species that enjoy the berries. Interestingly, an individual nickname like Burnt Cornflakes shouldn't be entirely trusted, as the leaves, young twigs, and hard pits contain traces of cyanide and have been known to harm or kill livestock.

The final tree friend I would like to mention for the sake of winter identification skills, I must confess, is camouflaged.

You might be wondering how on earth this makes picking this next tree out easy, but I should rephrase; this tree is the camouflage.

The unmistakable and strikingly beautiful American sycamore has bark patterns that look like half of the Bass Pro Shop clothing section. The bark is truly special in both appearance and function. Not only does it look like the classic camo pattern of army and outdoor wear, it is also one of the only tree species on the planet to exhibit photosynthesis through its bark.

'The Camouflage Tree' is a fun one to pick out deep in a winter forest among crowds of oaks, maples, ashes and elm. There is always someone who comes dressed for the party, and people can't help but turn their heads.

On your next winter hike, see if you can familiarize yourself with the most unique barks of the vertical wooded world. The shagbark hickory, American beech, black cherry and American sycamore are all unique individuals that you don't have to be a botanist to get to know and love.



This is the 'Beech Boy' — the American beech. (Photos by Owen Bjorgan)



'Burnt Cornflakes' is how Owen Bjorgan sees the black cherry tree.



Owen Bjorgan has a nickname for this tree — he calls the shagbark hickory 'Shaggy'.



Owen Bjorgan calls the American sycamore 'The Camouflage Tree', for obvious reasons.

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Joy Ormsby: respected by all for commitment to heritage

She had a brilliant mind and loved to do research

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake has lost one of the most important keepers of its heritage and history. Long-time official town historian and 2008 Citizen of the Year Joyce (Joy) Ormsby passed away at Upper Canada Lodge after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. She was 94 years old.

Ormsby leaves behind two sons, three grandsons and three great-grandchildren, as well as her beloved second cousin and friend Julia Owen and her three daughters Meghan, Emma and Elizabeth.

Born in 1928 in Preston, U.K., she emigrated to Canada in 1952 with her husband John. They first lived in Belleville on a farm with Joy's great-aunt Maggie. Joy and John raised their two boys, Stephen and Robin first in Belleville, then in Trenton.

Educated in the U.K. as an elementary teacher, Joy was hired to teach history and english at Trenton Collegiate. John's career was in public works. In 1976, he was recruited to work in Petrolia. Three years later he took a position in NOTL and they bought a house on John Street West.

She threw herself into the history of the town from day one.

"That seemed to be something that she really occupied herself with," her son Robin

tells The Local. "She did a lot of house searches, and she had people writing to her from all over the world. Working at the museum probably meant more to her than anything."

Managing director and curator at the NOTL Museum Sarah Kaufman met Joy in 2009 when she was working on digitizing War of 1812 property research, focusing on war loss claims.

"I got to know her really well," Kaufman says. "She spent time on the collections committee, and she helped our other volunteers identify new items that would come in. She came in every Monday. I would chat with her and ask her my research questions. She had such a wealth of knowledge."

Kaufman was immediately struck by Ormsby's passion for the town's history. She pointed out how adamant Ormsby was about finding the exact location of both the Indian Council House and hospital on the Parks Canada land. Both locations are now marked by installations.

"She wouldn't stop until she found the answer," adds Kaufman. "She'd go up against people who weren't necessarily happy with the answers she found. She saved a lot of heritage homes in our community just from her work."

On a personal note, I knew Joy as my next door neighbour for 14 years. She was the sweet lady who watched my wife Mishka and I bring our chil-

dren home for the first time. Through the years she brought over birthday cards and gifts for them, and she kept a container of boiled carrots to give as treats to our dog Cocoa.

As she threw herself into research projects she would often share her findings with me in conversation. After John passed in 2010 and she got rid of their car, I would see her regularly don her floppy hat and arrange a bag on her shoulder as she would walk to the library's old archive room or the museum on a regular basis.

She often spoke of her post-war life in Britain and the decision to come to Canada. That experience seemed to have instilled a sense of austerity and practicality in her that lasted to her final days.

And it was always clear to me that she was brilliant, and that she did not suffer fools. Her tenacity in saving the Butler Homestead site was proof positive of that.

Author and heritage consultant Richard Merritt worked with Ormsby on several projects and publications and remembers that time well.

"Her real coup was proving that she knew where Colonel Butler's homestead was," Merritt claims. "There had been an archaeological survey done by one company that didn't find anything. She just didn't believe it."

Ormsby, remembers Merritt, convinced the town to hire another company to do a second archaeological survey.

"Of course, they almost immediately began to find artifacts, and they found the foun-



John and Joy Ormsby on a trip to the Czech Republic. (Photos supplied)

dation. It proved her theory. I personally consider that one of her greatest accomplishments."

Ormsby was the co-author of a book, with former managing director of the NOTL Museum Clark Bernat, called *Looking Back: Niagara-on-the-Lake Ontario*. The copy she gave to us is inscribed with a message for our son Sebastian.

She also contributed the first chapter to *The Capital Years: Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1792-1796*, edited by Merritt, Nancy Butler and Michael Power.

Merritt and others pointed out her willingness to help anyone with her research talents. One of her final projects was assisting a neighbour on Mississagua Street dig into the history of his own home.

"She contributed so much," Merritt says. "Her forte was research and she was really good at it. She was a wonderful resource and we're very fortunate to have had her. I consider her my mentor, really."

Ormsby helped her close friend, Dr. Elizabeth Oliver-Malone, conduct research for her book *Recipes & Remedies In Upper Canada*, based on the archives of Hannah Peters Jarvis, who lived at Willowbank for over 10 years, and was the mother of Hannah Owen Hamilton, the first mistress of Willowbank.

"She loved researching the title deeds and getting into the details of financial land transfers," says Oliver-Malone. "She had quite a mathematical mind. But when we were researching the history of the Hamiltons she would find these lively little side stories about domestic life."

Oliver-Malone found a special bond with Ormsby, too, when she discovered that Joy had taught for many years at Trenton Collegiate. Oliver-Malone, coincidentally, had graduated from that same school just 10 years before Ormsby began there.

Gary Burroughs was lord mayor when Ormsby was named citizen of the year. He had also worked with her on past historical projects with the Niagara Foundation.

"She worked with anyone who was interested in our history," Burroughs says. "She knew everything about everything. With the work we are doing right now on finding information about some of our old cemeteries, Joy would have been an incredible resource. She would have known where they all were, and she would have loved to work on it. She would know the stories behind it."

Besides that citizen of the year honour, Ormsby was an honorary life member of the Niagara Historical Society. In addition, she won the Ontario Historical Society's Janet Carnochan Award, the Ontario Heritage Trust's Lifetime Achievement Award, and was named a Living Legend by the Niagara Foundation.

When Julia Owen moved to Toronto in the 1980s, she often visited Joy and John in NOTL.

"I would come down to visit. They took me in," Owen says. "She encouraged me to move here. She was my rock. We used to take walks all around NOTL. I am certain she had a photographic memory. She remembered everything."

Owen says Joy was com-

pletely passionate and dedicated to history.

"It oozed out of her," she insists. "But she always said this town gave more to her than she gave to it. She got a thrill finding out different things that nobody else had found."

Owen remembers Joy's work researching the William and Susannah Steward House just down the street from Ormsby's home. She adds that her great-aunt was an avid reader and was truly passionate about the Shaw and theatre in general.

"And she was so proud of her grandkids," adds Owen, "and so proud of my daughters. She loved kids, and wanted to help them find their passion and pursue higher education."

Kaufman gets emotional thinking about the influence that the first official town historian has had on her career.

"She always believed in me," Kaufman recalls. "She helped me dig my feet in, get to know the history a bit more. When she came on Mondays I would have a slew of questions to ask. To have one of the most knowledgeable people in the community believe in me and support me was amazing. I felt very lucky to know her and to have her guidance."

There's no doubt that Ormsby has left a lasting legacy in town. Her research files and archives remain at the museum and are still regularly used by anyone looking for historical information.

"She was the one that everyone went to, even all the museum staff," says Kaufman. "She was always digging and finding answers to our questions. We'll be using her research for decades, for generations to come."



Joy Ormsby with her niece Meghan.

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NOTL wins big with regional design awards

Mike Balsom
The Local

Three Niagara-on-the-Lake locations took home honours Tuesday evening at the second Niagara Biennial Design Awards held at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery.

Spirit in Niagara Distillery, the Gardens at Pillar and Post Inn and the Poppy Project for Remembrance Day at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum were recognized in three different categories.

Originally submitted to the Urban Design category, the jury of five architects, urban planners, visual artists and landscape architects moved the NOTL Museum's entry to the Outdoor Art category, where it earned an award for Outstanding Achievement.

"It was more than just art," community engagement coordinator Barbara Worthy tells The Local about the sheet of thousands of poppies that cascaded from the museum's roof to its flagpole. The winning submission was for the 2021 display, designed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the poppy.

"It signifies something that is hard to put words to," adds Worthy. "We saw people standing, staring, looking at the garden, and looking at the poppies. It reminded them of something that is really important to remember. It shows how outdoor art can be important in celebrating commemoration."

Worthy is adamant that the award is only possible because of the work of the many volun-

teers who poured their hearts and souls into the eye-catching display that was expanded to include an installation at the Court House on Queen Street in November 2022.

"We had 40-plus volunteers, ladies and a few gentlemen," Worthy explains. "We called them the Poppy Brigade, as an honour to all those women who sewed quilts and socks during both wars. They put in over 1,000 hours of logged time, probably much more than that. We used over 10,000 zip ties and over 400 square feet of netting."

She also lauded Davey Tree Service, who donated the use of one of their cherry-picker trucks and staff to help with the installation.

Of receiving the award, Worthy says, "We feel so proud. Especially because it really comes down to the heart of all those volunteers. Their dedication and commitment is incredible."

She added that for November 2023, they are looking to expand once more with the Poppy Project, and are in early talks with Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 for an installation there.

Not yet two years old, Arnie Lepp's Spirit in Niagara Distillery on Lakeshore Road has already earned two major regional awards. In 2022, Lepp's dedication to sustainability in the distillery's operations was recognized with a Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Award of Merit. He can now add an Award of Excellence for Architecture to his mantle.

"I wanted the building to fit into the Niagara-on-the-Lake ar-

chitectural landscape," Lepp says of the 18th century-style building that greets visitors. Much of the interior utilizes pine that was repurposed from a 150-year-old fruit packing barn on the property.

"I have to mention Michael Miryneck and Eduardo Hernandez of 2M Architects," adds Lepp. "I knew what I wanted to build, but they took the idea and went with it. They made it submissible for the building permits and made it look great. They did a fantastic job."

Lepp's use of the old pine board is a continuation of the theme of sustainability that defines Spirit in Niagara's production values. His facility was purpose-built to process some of the thousands of tonnes of over-ripe tender fruit that usually goes to waste yearly in the region. The jury found those aspects of the design admirable.

"There's a lot of validation in this award," says a very happy Lepp. "Everything here adheres to that concept. We live it every day with the alcohol we produce from wasted fruit. What's happening in the entire world when it comes to waste needs to be addressed."

And the awards keep coming for Lepp. Shortly after the Ravine ceremony, he got word that Spirit in Niagara has won a bronze medal for its whisky at the 2023 Canadian Whisky Awards, the first such honour for the distillery's products.

"We're proud to be amongst the Museum and Spirit in Niagara as winners from Niagara-on-the-Lake," says Paul Mac-

Intyre, vice president of operations at Lais Hotel Properties, operators of Pillar and Post Inn. "This is a spectacular place, and these are great projects. We are happy to be beside them."

The Garden at Pillar and Post Inn won the Outstanding Achievement in Landscape Architecture Award.

"We were surprised about it," MacIntyre concludes. "But it's something that we're really, really proud of. It's amazing how this addition has been great for the community and for our visitors who are coming here from all over the place."

MacIntyre says his contribution to bringing owner Jimmy Lai's Monet-inspired concept to fruition is by far the most fun he's ever had in his work. The jury called the almost six-acre garden a primary example of a privately owned public space.

"Our guests walking through the gardens are awestruck," adds MacIntyre. "They can't believe that it's there once they get here and see it. And they walk alongside community members each and every day. Today, they're skating right beside them on our rink."

The project team included ACK Architects, Oakridge Landscape Contractors and Sefarian Design Group, an award-winning landscape architectural firm based in Burlington.

"They all did a spectacular job," states MacIntyre. "It took a commitment from them to the vision of our owner and our company to see through what he wanted to achieve. They listened

to us and helped us form the vision. We all got along and worked through the obstacles. They were a great team to work with."

By happenstance, the garden opened just as the COVID recovery was starting. MacIntyre says having the outdoor space across the road from the inn was ideal.

"It allowed us to recover more quickly because outdoor spaces were critical," he says. "People were able to escape from their hotel rooms into this massive garden, where it was safe outside. We were able to have small events. The guests absolutely loved it."

The Niagara Biennial Design Awards were established in 2020 to recognize and celebrate the region's design excellence. The purpose of the awards is to promote a range of design fields and to highlight the contributions to the region's culture made by de-

signers and patrons.

The jury for this year's second awards ceremony evaluated 35 entries in eight different categories. A total of 11 awards were distributed at the ceremony at Ravine.

Two Grand Prize Awards were given Tuesday. The Niagara Parks Power Station in Niagara Falls earned one for its adaptive reuse of a 115-year-old building, acting as a cultural heritage artifact of the early electrical era. The other Grand Prize winner was the new Neil Campbell Rowing Centre at Henley Island in St. Catharines, built for the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games.

"I was blown away by the quality of everything we were seeing up there," says an awestruck Worthy of the fellow award winners. "Every project that was awarded was tremendous. It shows the depth of what we have in the Niagara Region."



The NOTL Museum's Sarah Kaufman and Barbara Worthy accept an award for outstanding achievement in the outdoor art category for their 2021 Poppy Project. (Photo supplied)



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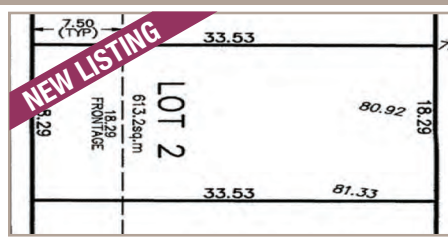
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The buzz on pollinators: Planting with purpose

Sandra Ozkur
Special to The Local

Gardening should be a fun and rewarding pastime, and by adding native flowers and plants that will attract beneficial insects like bees and butterflies, your yard will soon be filled with songbirds and other beautiful creatures

for your enjoyment. January is the perfect time to start planning for spring, so consider creating a pollinator patch or adding some native pollinator plants to your existing garden. Every plant you add will help expand the pollinator corridor where insects can find food and refuge. It is wise to plan your plant se-

lections before heading to the nursery so you choose purposefully, not impulsively. Choose plants that serve a purpose, such as providing food, pollen, nectar or habitat for pollinating insects, birds and small animals. Purposeful planting requires a shift in thinking. Choose native plants that haven't been treat-

ed with pesticides, that are pollinator-friendly, and support the ecosystem.

It can be overwhelming to get started, so I asked two local experts, George Scott, beekeeper and pollinator conservationist, and Betty Knight, Master Gardener, about their approach to planning and planting a more pollinator-friendly garden. They each have a very different strategy, so choose which one suits your taste.

Scott starts by considering the needs of the wildlife he wants to attract. His main aim is to provide proper habitat for the bees and wildlife on his property, so he chooses his planting accordingly. "As a beekeeper, my goal is to make sure there will be an abundant nectar and pollen supply throughout the entire season. Beekeepers understand the interdependence between insect and plant life cycles, and we plant strategically to ensure both wild bees and honey bees will have ample food throughout each stage of their life. The key is to have plants that provide a nutritious food supply from the minute the bees emerge in spring, right up until they seal up their hives for winter hibernation," he said.

"When you have created a biodiverse habitat for bees,

the butterflies just naturally show up to feast on the pollen and nectar too. Once you have bees and butterflies, other insects will also move in, which attracts birds who feed on the tasty bugs, caterpillars, insects, seeds and berries. It doesn't take long before your yard is filled with beauty and life."

When choosing plants, his first consideration is their blooming periods, he said. "We select a variety of trees, shrubs and wildflowers that will bloom at different times. I start with keystone trees and plants; these will provide everything an insect needs to support its entire life cycle." Then he adds shrubs, ground cover, grasses and wildflowers to provide more rare sources of pollen. "This will attract the specialty bees, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds. It's also important to provide clean water in a shallow container with stones for bees and flying insects to perch upon while drinking."

Adding bird nesting boxes will encourage birds to set up house and raise their young in your yard, he adds.

"Twenty years ago, we purchased a barren soybean field and began to restore it as a wildlife habitat. Today the field is full of trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers, bees, butterflies, songbirds, rare field birds, raptors,

frogs, fish, turtles, deer and wild turkeys who roam freely at Niagara Beeway. It's been very rewarding."

Scott's favourite plants that are particularly good for attracting bees, and hosting caterpillars:

Eastern redbuds — bumblebees, butterflies, moths and leaf rollers;

Pale purple coneflower — bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinators. The seeds are consumed by finches;

Butterfly milkweed — butterflies, bees, host plant for the monarch butterfly larvae;

Black-eyed Susan — butterflies, hummingbirds, insects and songbirds, caterpillar host;

Big Bluestem tall prairie grass — butterflies, pollinators, habitat for songbirds;

Tall ironwood — attracts butterflies and bees;

Common elderberry — favourite of more than 48 species of birds;

Spicebush — host to the spicebush swallowtail butterfly, and used by songbirds, upland game birds and white-tailed deer;

Bloodroot — various kinds of bees, including honeybees;

Serviceberry — berries attract birds, pollinating in-

Continued on page 11



Honeybees search for nectar as early as March, when snowdrops emerge from under the snow. (Sandra Ozkur)

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Virginia creeper a native vine that acts as caterpillar host

Continued from page 10

sects, small mammals, larval host to many moths and butterfly species, leaf rollers and sphinx moths;

Fruit trees — wild cherry, native plum, and apple attract bees and pollinators, bird nesting habitat;

Borage — used for bee medicine;

Parsley and dill — habitat for butterflies to lay their eggs;

Clover — ground cover attracts bumble bees, honeybees who make delicious honey from it.

Master Gardener Betty

Knight takes a more integrated approach to creating a pollinator garden. “Most people already have established gardens, so my approach is to introduce a few new native plant species every year, gradually replacing invasive and exotic plants with eco-friendly choices. We have to redefine beauty when it comes to the outdoors. If your garden isn’t being eaten, it isn’t contributing to the ecosystem.”

Start by surveying your yard and determining which plants are non-native. Many imported plants and trees, which were once considered exotic, may now be regarded

as invasive species, said Knight.

“For example, English ivy is now considered invasive because nothing eats it, so it can eventually take over your entire garden by choking out other plants and trees and even destroying brick siding as it climbs. A great replacement is Virginia creeper. This native vine is a nice substitute that will provide a luxurious green carpet in summer, and if left to climb will turn brilliant colours in the fall without destroying the brickwork.”

It acts as a caterpillar host for sphinx moths and attracts fruit feeding birds, such as

chickadees, nuthatches, catbirds, finches, flycatchers, woodpeckers, tanagers, swallows, vireos, warblers, mockingbirds, and thrushes, explained Knight.

“Replacing a few plants and shrubs, and gradually converting more and more lawn to garden each year makes for an easy transition. I love flowers, so I plant a large variety of unique native species that are aesthetically pleasing, then wait to see who shows up to feed on them. An unchewed garden is not a useful garden — I love watching the leaf cutter bees make burrito blankets out of red-

bud leaves for their larvae.”

Starting seeds or plant plugs in a little nursery bed alongside your house is a great way to get to know the plants, their blooming period, shape and size. Once they are established you can transplant them to your main garden according to height, sun exposure, and blossom colours.

Some of Knight’s favourite pollinator plants:

Prairie smoke — bumbles love them and the flowers have personality;

Kinnikinnik — attracts moths, including brown elfin, hoary elfin and Freija fritillary

butterflies;

Wild columbine — dusky-wing butterfly, pink patched looper, tobacco budworm and moths;

Wild strawberry — specialist bees, Andrena melanochroa, skippers, darts and butterflies.

A native plant list can be found at https://npca.ca/images/uploads/common/Native_Plant_Guide.pdf.

Tip of the week: Create more purposeful and natural gardens, and mother nature will thank you!

Send us your questions and our experts will try to answer: penny@notllocal.com.

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Pure Persona exhibit opens at Ironwood Cider House

Mike Balsom
The Local

With last Friday evening's opening of their exhibit entitled Pure Persona at Ironwood Cider House, young artists Dillon Douglas and Chris Louis are looking to disrupt and reinvent Niagara's culture.

The works on display from the two friends and collaborators are at the same time both complementary and in stark contrast to each other. Stylistically different, they take on similar themes of ambiguity, identity and, as their artists' statement says, "the ideological, existential and social predicament of living within an epoch of a technologically advanced stage of capitalism, social media and neoliberalism."

There's a rock and roll element to the art they both make. Colourful, striking masks, evoking African themes, punctuate much of Louis' work. In contrast, Douglas' art often mixes Picasso-like shapes and colours with a sensibility pulled from graffiti.

"We started more similarly, because we were both influenced by (American artist Jean-Michel) Basquiat," Douglas tells The Local. "Chris dove deeper into primitive neo expressionism, and I started getting into cubism and realism. We both experiment in different styles."

Louis says he rarely uses a brush in his work, instead relying on more tactile tools such as pallet knives, painter spatulas, charcoal and oil pastels.

"A lot of it was inspired by



Dillon Douglas and Chris Louis, friends who share a love of art, are sharing an exhibit of their art at Ironwood Cider House.

the Harlem Renaissance," Louis says of his work on display at Ironwood. "Post-World War I Black art was starting to make it to the forefront. It was them taking ownership from the colonizers, retelling their story. That's why my figures are black, while the reds represent the Apollo Theatre and the Cotton Club."

"We're less influenced by Canadian art," says the 29-year-old Douglas. "I think that's where our disruption comes in. We don't do a lot of landscapes. There's a lot of influence from street culture."

Louis, 30, picks it up, "For

us, the message a lot of times is more important than the actual skill set or technical ability. That's always at the forefront of our work. We try to do things a little differently."

Neither Douglas or Louis set out originally to become artists. They both attended A.N. Myer Secondary School in Niagara Falls and took very different paths after graduation.

Douglas earned a BA in English literature, then followed that up with a Masters degree in political science and philosophy from Western University. He was on track to pursue a

PhD when he became disillusioned with academia and began looking for something else.

Meanwhile, Louis was a scholarship basketball player studying sales and marketing at Niagara College. When his basketball career was over, he felt he needed an outlet to express himself.

The two friends came together under the banner of a creative design and marketing studio called Krank Media House. Much of their work centred on helping kickstart the careers of other creatives, including artists, musicians and animators.

When they began renting a studio space in Niagara Falls, the creativity began to flow and the art started pouring out.

Louis still has studio space there, while Douglas has created a studio of his own in a house he rents on Victoria Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They are also working out of a space in the new cultural hub currently under construction in Niagara Falls.

On a visit to Ironwood last summer to support a friend whose work was on exhibit, they met marketing and events manager Robyn Brown and

expressed their interest in an exhibit of their own.

"We're kind of opportunistic," Douglas says. "Once something comes up we bite into it, sink our teeth into it to make sure it happens."

Their opening event was a party, complete with their friend DJ Rennie spinning the tunes while the cider was flowing. It was a decidedly young crowd who showed up at Ironwood Friday night.

"If you look at the European scene," Douglas says, "they have a different culture around art. We don't have that here, really. We're trying to build that up. The audience doesn't always pre-exist. We're trying to build it. That's another disruptive thing, building an audience of younger people who are now thinking about art in a new way."

The Ironwood show is the fourth exhibit for the pair, their second in NOTL.

"Our work has been well-received," says Louis. "It's been refreshing for most people who have come to see our work."

With Pure Persona on now until Feb. 28, both artists anticipate spending a lot more time at Ironwood in the coming months, walking collectors and other visitors through the exhibit. And they're working on creating a collective art show in Niagara Falls for some time in 2023.

"It's about making Niagara a cultural force to be reckoned with," says Douglas. "That's the mantra, that's the goal, that's the idea."

Niagara College tracking tower for birds

Sharon Burns
Special to The Local

A new tower atop a building on the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus of Niagara College supplies data about migratory bird patterns, helping scientists understand the effects of climate change.

The Motus tower tracks different birds, such as the yellow-bellied prothonotary warbler, red-tailed hawk and loggerhead shrike. Birds tagged with micro transmitters ping

the tower, one of a complex network of towers throughout North and South America, linking data to the Birds Canada server. The tower was installed last year at the campus, and has just recently become operational and online. According to its website, Birds Canada is the country's only national organization dedicated to bird conservation.

Professor Martin Smith, coordinator of the ecosystem restoration graduate program, explains, "The tower is

equipped with an old-fashioned AM/FM receiver which picks up signals from birds with radio transmitter tags so small a songbird or butterfly can carry it. As the bird flies, different towers ping the identity of the bird, for example from Toronto, to Niagara College, across the escarpment, over the river to Buffalo and the University of Buffalo tower."

In 2020, students from the ecosystem restoration program began creating and executing a plan for the tower, as well as securing resources for the project.

From the data collected, researchers can track where a bird species is, how long it stays there before moving on, and "unfortunately, where it was last heard, if killed. This gives us information about where they're not surviving, and allows us to identify weaknesses in the life cycle," Smith said.

As one example, fish flies hatching en masse in lakes and rivers provide migratory birds ample sustenance to move on to the next habitat. However, "if fish flies have already hatched because of climate change, the birds' cycles

are out of sync," said Smith. Data collected from the Motus tower allows scientists to see where birds are dying and allows for improved habitats.

"Historically, we were very simplistic. The more we study birds, we see some individual birds take migration very seriously. For example, take two red-tailed hawks," Smith says, one who flies to Venezuela and one, like the one recently tagged at the NOTL campus, who stays here for the winter. "As a species, it is their insurance policy to stay where they can find food and raise a family. However, in another year, the food source may not be here and it may die, whereas the hawk which flew to Venezuela would survive. Motus helps us with these matters."

Those in Smith's program are most often graduate students learning practical applications of technology to prepare them for the workforce. A recent donation from the Niagara Falls Nature Club allows student researchers at the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus to net and tag species.

Ecosystem Restoration student Christa Jackson is gaining experience with the Motus

tower as she monitors the prothonotary warbler for her wild species management class.

Jackson lives in Lincoln, but went to Niagara District Secondary School in NOTL, and graduated from the environmental technician department at Mohawk College.

"Because we have the tower up we now have access to previous history and data," she told The Local.

"We can better see flight patterns" such as where migratory birds breed and winter, she explained, and which help determine if a decline might be due to something en route, such as habitat loss.

She is studying the prothonotary warbler, which she calls her "nemesis bird," so named because, in the bird world, once you choose to research a certain species, that species becomes elusive — you hear of a sighting, but it disappears just before you get there.

After graduation in April, she hopes to land a job either working with birds or in ecosystem restoration.

"The Motus system is an amazing opportunity to learn more about birds and their migration habits and possible

routes," she said. "Working with the Motus system has left me wanting to work with birds even more."

Thanks to the Niagara Falls Nature Club and their generous donation, students will be able to learn "in a real-world way," said Alan Unwin, dean of business and environment, in a news release from the college.

The tower "also connects us into a larger, more expansive database network that will benefit others, even outside of the college, as the data the Motus unit will produce will feed into the broader monitoring network," added Unwin.

Currently, there is one other operational Motus tower in the region, at Brock University. Smith hopes that one day a Motus tower can be installed at Niagara College's Welland campus, allowing researchers and ornithologists to gather data from the north, central and southern parts of Niagara.

Ecosystem Restoration is a one-year graduate certificate program within the college's School of Environment and Horticulture, based at the 125-acre Daniel J. Patterson Campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



The red-tailed hawk is one of the bird species being monitored by the Motus tower. (David Gilchrist)

Rangers U-19 girls win in final seconds, 49-48

Mike Balsom
The Local

After a challenging but very successful 2022, the Under-19 Niagara Rangers girls basketball team is rolling into 2023 with eight new players and some renewed optimism.

Coach Shawn Pylypiw took a skeleton team to the Ontario Basketball Association (OBA) championships last year and came home with an Under-17 silver medal. He's hoping to repeat or, better yet, improve on that finish when things wrap up later this year.

The Rangers took their first step toward that goal Friday night at Crossroads Public School. After a close back-and-forth battle in the first half, the Rangers lost ground in the third quarter to the visiting Ancaster Magic, finding themselves 12 points behind.

But the girls pulled together in the fourth, holding the Magic to only six points.

"We were able to transition to our offence and we scored 19," Pylypiw tells The Local. "We won the game in the final seconds, 49-48."

Ava Froese came through for the Rangers in that final quarter, dropping 10 of her 17 points in that eight minutes. Point guard Mikayla Wallace led the way with 20 points in the game for the Rangers and played tenaciously on defence as well, with five steals. Kyla Pylypiw matched Wallace's five steals and added nine rebounds for Niagara.

"Amy Venneri and Tiana Hicks also made significant contributions to the victory through their grit and hustle," Pylypiw added. "One of



The U-19 girls are starting 2023 with optimism for the season. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

our smallest players, Melia Kotsanis, was manhandled most of the game, even thrown to the ground multiple times. But she bounced back up and pushed through. This was an important first step in the right direction for our season."

Having 13 players on his roster this year must feel like a luxury for the coach, after taking only six girls to the Ontario championships in 2022.

"It was our first year back post-COVID," Pylypiw explains. "Province-wide, teams were collapsing and we were hanging on by a thread. We went for gold, though, against the Scarborough Barons. It was awesome. I couldn't have asked for anything more from the girls last year."

"We were limping down

the court by the end," St. Francis Catholic Secondary School student Kyla Pylypiw says of playing four games in two days at the OBA finals. "It was definitely a relief to get more girls to play this year. We know now we're going to have support on the bench."

Also returning from last year's team are Froese, Hicks and Wallace. They're joined by some new girls playing out of Niagara-on-the-Lake for the first time or others returning after having moved to other teams.

"Some other teams collapsed," Pylypiw says, "while I think because of what we achieved last year our team might have been a bit of a draw for some girls. A couple of the new girls I coached the very first year

we played. They didn't have a home, so they wanted to come back and play again with us."

Pylypiw got his start with the Rangers when Kyla was part of the house league skills development program that still runs out of Crossroads. He's been at the helm of the travel team since his daughter made the leap to competitive ball.

"Kyla is in Grade 11 this year, so we have one more year with most of this group," he says. "Some of the players in Grade 12 now will still be able to play with us next year depending on their age."

Pylypiw was expecting scouts from Niagara College and Brock University to be in the crowd at the opposite side of the court Friday. Wallace and Froese have al-

ready captured the attention of Chris and Mike Rao, the father and son who coach the Niagara Knights and the Brock Badgers, respectively. Wallace, a Grade 12 student at St. Francis, has already earned a spot at Niagara.

"I'm hoping to take child and youth studies there," Wallace says. "I've been to a few of their practices. I haven't had a signing session yet, but that's coming soon."

Wallace will be following in the footsteps of fellow former Rangers Beth deBoer and Mackenzie Schroeder, who debuted with the Knights in 2019.

Froese, the tallest girl on the team, didn't start playing basketball until she was in Grade 8. The Grade 11 student at Smithville Christian High School has been in regular contact with

Mike Rao and is hoping to catch on with the Badgers.

"I'm excited to see where my future takes me with basketball," she says.

Unable to get regular practice time in the Crossroads gym, Pylypiw moved their sessions to Port Weller Public School. The facility there is much smaller, but they are making do with what they have.

"We've been used to Crossroads, with the bigger gym and hardwood floors," says Pylypiw. "We're happy to have a gym, and the staff here have been great. The facility is able to fit our needs for now. Most of our games, though, will either be at Crossroads or at a high school, for the bigger facility, and some stands for our spectators."

The U-19 girls have been the only travel team in the Rangers system for a few years now. But, with 44 kids from Grade 1 to 6 currently involved in the Rangers Saturday morning house league run by Genille Kroeker, Pylypiw is optimistic that after next year there will be some younger players interested in playing travel ball.

"Having that core group out there is important," the NOTL resident says. "For that to happen, there would have to be someone who wants to take on the coaching responsibilities and everything that goes along with it. That's where the starting point would be."

The road to the 2023 OBA championships continues for the U-19 Rangers when they host the Grimsby Grizzlies this Friday night at Crossroads. They then travel to Grimsby for a tournament the weekend of Feb. 4 and 5.



Mikayla Wallace drives to the Ancaster basket.



Ranger Amy Venneri gets set for a shot while Ava Froese takes care of the post.

LocalSPORTS

Preds can't find enough TNT to drop Roadrunners

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara Predators are still searching for the magic formula to beat the top three teams in the Greater Metro Hockey

League's Southern Division. After Friday night's 6-3 loss to Durham, they are a combined 0-10-1 against the Roadrunners, the Bradford Bulls and the first-place North York Renegades.

The latest loss to the

Roadrunners might have head coach Kevin Taylor feeling a little Looney Tunes. Taylor's refrain after the game was a familiar one, heard often this year after failing to reach the Acme against the cream of

the GMHL crop.

"We're not good enough to make mistakes against a team like that," Taylor said. "If you want to compete against the top teams you have to be almost perfect. It comes down to whatever team makes the fewest mistakes. We made some costly ones, high slot mistakes, that they were going to capitalize on."

Those errors leading to goals tilted a close game in visiting Durham's favour. After losing to the Roadrunners 4-1 and 6-1 back in October, Taylor wanted to make a statement this weekend in Virgil. His team, including a number of new players acquired at the deadline, fell just short of proving his point.

The Roadrunners opened the scoring 3:45 into the game when a pass in the Preds' defensive zone was cut off at the blue line. Durham's Trevor Urquhart took the puck behind the Niagara goal, skated out and passed to Mikael Simon-Serroul, who was unguarded in front of the crease.

Simon-Serroul slipped the puck past outstretched Niagara goaltender Ryan Santini, who was slow to get up from the ice. When he did, he skated toward the bench, signalled to the coaching staff, then turned and immediately skated toward the dressing room. Taylor sent backup goalie Cameron Huff out to play the rest of the game.

"I'm hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst," Taylor said of his top goaltender, who missed four weeks earlier in the season with a shoulder injury suffered during a practice. "He has an appointment to go back to Montreal to see his doctor. We'll find out more then."

Huff did his part the rest of the way to keep the Preds in the game, blocking 26 of

the Roadrunners 30 shots on him. The final Durham goal came on an empty Niagara net.

Urquhart put Durham up 2-0 at 11:05, but defenceman Nick Savoie scored a power play goal for the Predators with just 52 seconds left in the first period, taking the wind out of Durham's sails just before the horn blew.

A missed check along the boards in the Niagara end on a Durham drive early in the second resulted in a goal by the Roadrunners' Parker Burns. Burns and Urquhart assisted on Simon-Serroul's second of the game about eight minutes later to put Durham ahead 4-1.

But 28 seconds later the Predators closed the gap again. Cole Ellis led the charge into the Durham zone, with a move around a defender followed by a backhanded shot that goaltender Cameron Carvalho kicked away. Nick Savoie intercepted Durham's attempt to clear the puck out of the zone and unleashed a blistering slapshot from the point. Carvalho stopped that one, but Leo Savin was unchecked at the goalie's left pad side and he was able to deposit the rebound into the Roadrunners net.

A highlight of the game came in the last two minutes of the second period when Preds forward Declan Fogarty was called for slashing with 2:05 remaining. Niagara mounted probably their best penalty kill of the season, keeping Durham from getting a single good chance on Huff.

But the Roadrunners capitalized on another turnover in front of Huff to score yet another early period goal in the third. Alex Andrews responded with a power play goal at 5:37, assisted by Nolan Wyers and defenceman Ethan Boyd, the former Roadrunner

playing in his first game since making the move to Niagara at the league's trade deadline.

"He's a quiet guy," Taylor said of Boyd, when asked if he imparted any inside information to the coaching staff about Friday's opponent. "He's still getting over the shock of getting traded. He played well tonight, he handled himself really well. I'm sure that gave (Durham) some second thoughts (about trading him)."

Interestingly, after the goal by Andrews, Durham coach Derrick Smith replaced Carvalho with Zack Smirniw, who played the rest of the game in the Roadrunners net. Urquhart picked up his second goal of the game for Durham on the empty net to cement the 6-3 victory.

Other newcomers in Friday's Predator lineup included Russian forward Timur Mirzaizants and goaltender Zane Clausen, both also acquired Monday.

"It was tough to lose our captain," Taylor said of trading St. Davids resident Max Bredin to the second place Bradford Bulls. "It was a difference in philosophy between what he wanted and what I expected. He requested a trade and he went to where he wanted to go. It's hard to replace a talent like that."

Having said that, Taylor added that Boyd is filling Bredin's spot on the blue line. He expects him to play a stay-at-home role, and looks forward to his size, 6'1" and 209 pounds, to play a big role in Niagara's physical side of the game.

Other than the few mistakes that resulted in goals, Taylor was pleased with his team's performance Friday.

"I think they (Durham) expected to walk over us," said Taylor. "They're still a team we want to compete with, and I think tonight we competed. We just didn't get the outcome we wanted."

They'll have one more chance to get that outcome when they visit the Roadrunners on Feb. 13.

Meanwhile, at press time, the Predators were still tied with St. George and Tottenham for fourth place, now 23 points behind third place Durham.

Taylor says Huff will most likely get the start in goal next Friday, Jan. 27, at home against Tottenham. And the 6'4" Clausen, who came over in a trade with the Northern Division's Bradford Rattlers, will most likely start against the Aces in Windsor next Saturday evening.



Preds' Alex Andrews keeps control of the puck. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Preds' Cole Ellis shoots on Roadrunner Cameron Carvalho.



Predator Leo Savin takes a shot.

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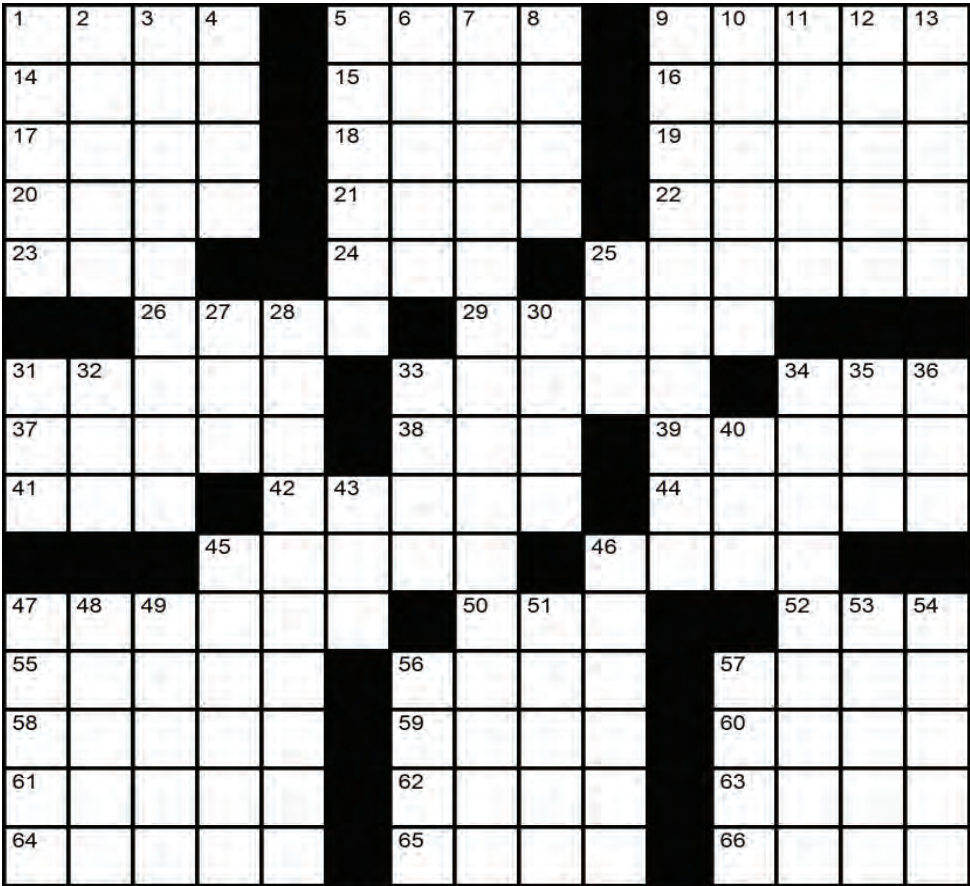
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- Across:**

1 Pitcher's error

5 Hall amphibian?

9 Enhancement

14 Country singer/songwriter Jake ---

15 S American flightless bird

16 Light gray-brown

17 How to start a pudding race?

18 Bring in

19 Garden tool

20 Slant

21 Marx or Warners, e.g.

22 Adjusted

23 Longing

24 Place for experiments

25 Series of church intercessions

26 Prom partner

29 Sarcastic praise

31 Reluctant

33 Ugly encounter

34 Oil well equipment

37 Arc

38 Apollo 11 lander

39 New in Tijuana

41 Arid

42 Stand-in

44 Wept
- 45 Thin pancake

46 The Volunteer State (Abbr.)

47 Wooden hammer

50 Batter's stat.

52 A long way

55 Castaway locations

56 Bathtub residue

57 Where to find Pikes Peak (Abbr.)

58 Trim

59 Rent

60 Saturnalia

61 "Peace on earth, good will ---"

62 A k a C C C P

63 College sporting org.

64 Commence

65 Court dividers

66 Unload for cash
- Down:**

1 Dictatorial

2 Up

3 Fabled

4 Recognize

5 Junior's voice

6 Vivien Leigh's G W T W role

7 Strenuous activity

8 Aykroyd and Quayle

9 Teetotalism

10 Second-in-command

11 Actress --- Rigg

12 Poet --- Nash

13 Wanting

25 Wolf Man --- Chaney

27 Off-roader

28 Now

30 --- Martin, cognac

31 Flat panel TV type

32 Belonging to us

33 Pigswill

34 Strengthen

35 "--- Got No Strings..." (Pinnocchio)

36 Deity

40 Gravetop vase

43 On a pension (Abbr.)

45 Brainy

46 Stopwatches, e.g.

47 Light fogs

48 --- in the arm

49 South American ruminant

51 Pop

53 Kind of pond bloom

54 Kingly

56 Ostracize

57 Drawbacks

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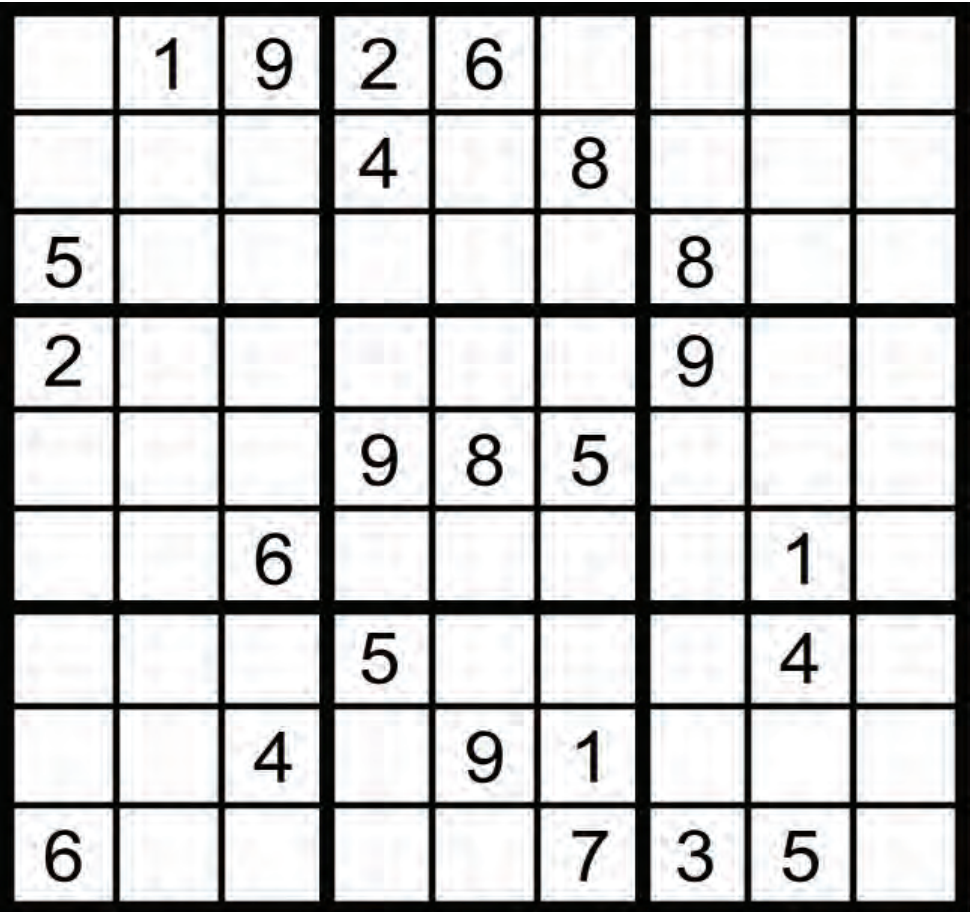
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PUZZLE ANSWERS



Sudoku solution from January 18, 2023

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

Down: 1 Bossy, 2 Awake, 3 Legendary, 4 Know, 5 Treble, 6 O'Hara, 7 Aerobic exercise, 8 Dans, 9 Abstinence, 10 Deputy, 11 Diana, 12 Ogden, 13 Needy, 25 Lon, 27 A-T V, 28 The present, 30 Remy, 31 L C D, 32 Our, 33 Stop, 34 Reinforce, 35 I've, 36 God, 40 Urn, 43 Ret, 45 Clever, 46 Timers, 47 Mists, 48 A shot, 49 Llama, 51 Burst, 53 Algal, 54 Royal, 56 Shun, 57 Cons.

Across: 1 Balk, 5 Toad, 9 Add-on, 14 Owen, 15 Rhea, 16 Beige, 17 Sago, 18 Earn, 19 Spade, 20 Skew, 21 Bros, 22 Tuned, 23 Yen, 24 Lab, 25 Litany, 26 Date, 29 Irony, 31 Loath, 33 Scene, 34 Rig, 37 Curve, 38 L E M, 39 Nuevo, 41 Dry, 42 Proxy, 44 Cried, 45 Crepe, 46 Tenn, 47 Mallet, 50 R B I, 52 Far, 55 Isles, 56 Scum, 57 Colo, 58 Shave, 59 Hire, 60 Orgy, 61 To men, 62 U S S R, 63 N C A A, 64 Start, 65 Nets, 66 Sell.

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