



Anne Street investigation finds no criminal offence
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Lezlie Harper, a fifth generation descendant of a freedom seeker, tells stories passed on to her by her Uncle Kit. Harper spoke at the Queenston Chapel Sunday at the first of a series of three Niagara Parks Commission lectures on Black history. (Penny Coles)

Family history passed down by descendant of freedom seeker

Penny Coles
 The Local

Lezlie Harper, the first speaker in the Niagara Parks Commission's three-part series exploring perspectives on Black history and culture in Canada, left her audience at the Queenston Chapel wanting more.

A group of about 60 people in the pews of the former Methodist meeting house — moved by Niagara Parks to the Laura Secord Homestead site — left Harper's presentation saying the two-hour session ended too soon.

She began her presentation with a brief prayer. "My spirituality is a part of who I am," she says, and her need to share her stories is "a calling from God."

And as Harper prefaced each story she told, she said she

has so many more to tell, and not nearly enough time to tell them. She doesn't lecture. She chats, developing a rapport with her audience that feels more like having a conversation, with questions welcomed.

A fifth generation Black Canadian, and descendant of a fugitive slave from Kentucky, Harper begins by showing a photo of her family from around 1920. Her ancestors arrived in Canada in 1851, settling in Fort Erie.

Her great-grandfather, William Chandler, was born in Canada, but left the country to fight in the American Civil War. "Born free in Canada, yet felt compelled to fight in the Civil War in the United States," she says.

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Lessons learned from pandemic in Niagara

Penny Coles
 The Local

Three years ago, we were just beginning to learn of a new virus that would lead to a time of upheaval from which we are still recovering.

The first case had been confirmed in Canada on Jan. 25, 2020, and by March 11 the World Health Organization had declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Just two days later, in Niagara and across the province, recreational programs and community facilities were closed as we headed

into March Break, and didn't reopen. Schools too remained shuttered to students, with school boards scrambling to offer virtual learning.

By March 20, 2020, Niagara-on-the-Lake had joined the province in declaring a state of emergency. By April 3, Niagara Region and Niagara's 12 local area municipalities had jointly declared a state of emergency.

What followed has been a swell of COVID waves as the number of cases, deaths and pressure on hospitals rose, peaked and declined — temporarily, as variants emerged, each wave

leading to restrictions of different levels on society and businesses, enacted by federal, provincial and municipal governments.

Niagara's acting medical officer of health, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, has been at the helm of the region's public health department throughout, and not always in step with provincial regulations, or even Niagara municipalities.

He spoke with The Local recently about his handling of the pandemic, what lessons have been learned and what we might do better in the future.

"I think there's a whole

laundry list of these things, and the list will probably continue to grow," he says. He's hoping there will be some kind of commission struck that will have a look at our response and learn from it.

"The last two-and-a-half to three years' experience certainly have had a huge impact on our society."

He spoke of the 2003 outbreak of SARS, a severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus, which was often mentioned early on in this pandemic in reference to lessons we should have learned, but didn't.

It was March 13, 2003, that Health Canada was notified of a cluster of cases in the Toronto area, and following that outbreak, much research was done on how to prevent the spread of the next infectious disease to come along. Reports and recommendations that came after SARS read like a blueprint for preparations to prevent a pandemic such as COVID, but were not all implemented.

One example Hirji pointed out was that masks and personal protective equipment were stockpiled to be ready when needed, but then we stopped paying at-

tention, and the PPE was thrown out when past its due date, never to be replenished.

"We learned a lesson, but didn't continue to follow it," says Hirji. "We need to learn this is a cost," one we won't have to pay any more if we learn those lessons about how to prepare for infectious diseases of the future.

It's important we don't become complacent, and that we remain concerned in the long term, keeping issues 'top of mind,' he says, "but I'm not sure how we deal with that."

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No criminal offence at Anne Street home, police say

Mike Balsom
The Local

While investigating a call of a disturbance Sunday afternoon at a Niagara-on-the-Lake home that indicated a weapon might be involved, Niagara Regional Police arrested one person who was later released from custody unconditionally.

Detectives searched

the home and found nothing that would lead to a charge for a criminal offence, they said Monday morning. After being told a firearm might have been involved in an incident on Anne Street near Mississauga Street, officers from Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, with help from St. Catharines, the traffic enforcement unit, and “out of an abundance

of caution” the emergency task unit as well as crisis negotiators, were all called to Anne Street.

Officers with what appeared to be automatic weapons were seen walking along the street. A pickup truck was spotted on Anne Street between the cordons, with officers speaking to someone near the truck.

Pedestrians were being

redirected around the area, one of whom informed The Local they were told the police were detaining someone.

An NRP tactical truck was parked at the Anderson Lane community centre, where by about 5:20 p.m. some of the police congregated. They continued to have a block of Anne Street between Mississauga and Simcoe Streets cor-

doned off, with the investigation continuing.

The house was cleared for safety, the police report said, and no one was injured. Police said no further information about the person who had been arrested and released would be made public, adding that there was “no ongoing public safety threat stemming from this incident.”

Anyone with informa-

tion is asked to contact 905-688-4111, option 3, extension 1009219.

Members of the public who wish to provide information anonymously can contact Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards to persons who contact the program with information which leads to an arrest.



Armed police were seen walking along the sidewalk on Anne Street, with several police cars parked in the neighbourhood and at the community centre while an investigation was underway Sunday afternoon. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

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NOTL man charged with possession of crystal meth

Local Staff

A Niagara-on-the-Lake man stopped for driving with his licence suspended has been charged with possession of nearly 17 grams of suspected crystal methamphetamine.

A traffic enforcement officer of the Niagara Regional Police was driving a police car equipped to recognize licence plates of suspended drivers, a police report said, and pulled over the driver of a Mazda3 sedan Monday evening on Hartzel Road near Walnut Street in

St. Catharines.

During the traffic stop, the officer confirmed the driver had a suspended licence, and found 16.9 grams of suspected crystal methamphetamine.

Kevin Lee Bentum, 50, of Niagara-on-the-Lake was arrested and charged with possession of crystal meth and driving while under suspension.

Bentum was released and is scheduled to appear in court on Feb. 23 in St. Catharines.

Anyone with information related to this investigation is asked to call 905-688-4111, option 3,

extension 1009558.

Members of the public who wish to provide information anonymously can contact Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477.

Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards to persons who contact the program with information that leads to an arrest.

The polic program that identifies suspended drivers by their licence plates has been designed to comply with the guidance of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, the police report says.

Apartment plans for Mary Street ‘betrayal’ to Old Town

**Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local**

Another proposal to build an apartment complex in Old Town is being met with criticism from neighbours — this time, on Mary Street in the heritage district.

An open house took place on Thursday, Jan. 26 sharing details of the 3.5-storey, 41-unit apartment being proposed by Veronica and Mihai Balaj, owners of the two properties at 223-227 Mary Street.

This is the second time the Balajs are proposing an apartment at this location since fall 2016, when Niagara-on-the-Lake’s council shot down their proposal to develop a four-storey, 76-unit building there.

Despite changes to the plans seven years later, the Balajs’ recent proposal still garnered questions and concerns during the open house from Old Town residents concerned about disturbing the traditional look and feel of the community.

During the virtual meeting, local resident Andrew Taylor, who’s lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake for 25 years and co-owns three heritage properties in the Old Town, said he wants to see the building’s

height and size scaled back substantially.

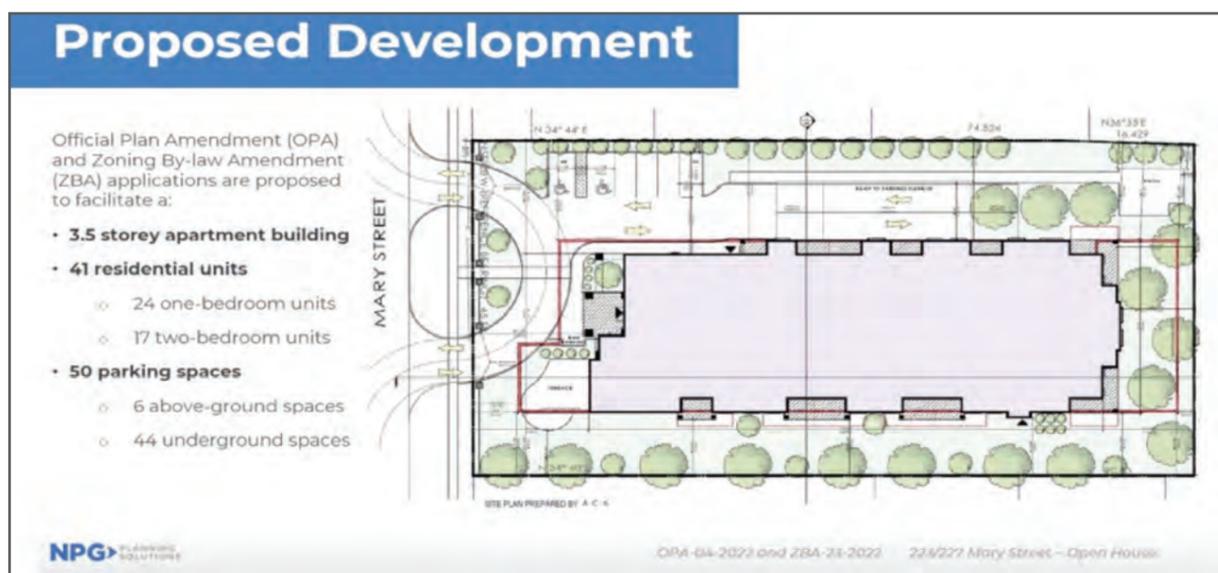
“To put this building into what would be considered, by most people in Niagara-on-the-Lake, to be the Old Town is just frankly a betrayal of the trust (of) generations of people who have built Niagara-on-the-Lake,” he said.

The Balajs are requesting the properties be rezoned to permit a building with a height of 18 metres, a density of 40 units per acre, front and rear yard setbacks for an underground parking lot, a patio encroachment in the back, and removing the requirement to have a children’s play area.

“We did try to go out and talk to various neighbours,” said the Balaj’s daughter, Ada, who attended the virtual meeting. “We are very interested in hearing everybody’s comments.”

The new plans mean that while there will be three full building stories, the top floor will be built into, not below, the building’s roof, making it a half-storey.

According to a letter Veronica sent to several neighbours, the Balajs hope to provide an alternative type of housing for retirees who want to continue living in



town — tying into the practice of “downsizing” from a large home to an apartment or condo.

The building would cover an area of 1,553 square metres, while 1,884.9 square metres will be covered by landscaped open space. It would have 24 one-bedroom and 17 two-bedroom units, ranging from 800 to 1,200 square feet.

Plans include “significant” and “increased” setbacks, said NPG Planning Solutions planner Jesse Auspitz, formerly a staff planner with the town, on three different sides of the property: 8.5 metres on the east side yard (next

to Mississagua Street), 13.5 metres on the west side yard (next to Simcoe Street), and 9.2 metres in the rear yard (facing William Street).

Auspitz said the developers and planners hope this will improve potential privacy concerns for residents who live next to where the building would go, who have voiced concerns about their visibility from the top storeys of the apartment.

“We are proposing a taller building, but we’re also having larger setbacks,” he said.

The Mary Street apartment also includes plans for a roof-top pool and an outdoor terrace: to in-

crease privacy and mitigate outdoor noise, the project’s architect Michael Allen said they plan to put up landscaping and screens around these settings.

Still, the size of the proposal, in a neighbourhood surrounded by smaller residential homes and one-storey commercial buildings is an issue for the residents who spoke during the meeting.

“It’s smaller than the first proposal from several years ago, but it’s still extraordinarily dense,” said Gracia Janes, president of the NOTL Conservancy. “It will set a precedent.”

Auspitz, Allen and others on the planning and development team took down comments from residents and said they hope to accommodate what they want to see with respect to urban design.

As for the building density, however, it seems they’re planning to stick to their guns.

“We are proposing a 41-unit apartment building and that’s not something that we’re really open to changing,” said Auspitz.

The development proposal will come before the town’s committee of the whole planning meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Youth collective teams up with museum

Local Staff

The Niagara Youth Collective is into its third week of an eight-week winter session, and the planning continues, says organizer Caroline Polgrabia, as they build partnerships to connect the collective and the community in interesting and engaging ways to benefit youth.

One of the new programs being unveiled this week is the Niagara-on-the-Lake Heritage Moments — Youth Curators Contest. The idea is for NOTL Museum staff to present an authentic NOTL artifact to the youth, and give them two weeks to ‘research and curate’ (digital, still or live) content on the history of the artifact.

The full program and con-

test details will be unveiled this Wednesday evening during the regular drop-in program between 6 to 9 p.m. at the youth collective home at the Cornerstone Town Campus at 1570 Niagara Stone Road in Virgil.

Shawna Butts, museum assistant curator, will present a few intriguing details about the artifact to the youth, who will have an opportunity to ask questions. A picture of the artifact will remain at the campus, and the original will be available at the museum.

The museum is open daily from 1 to 5 p.m. during the winter (it’s free during February), so kids can visit any day or multiple times to research, collect information, and ask museum staff questions to build their content for the

contest. During the curation development period, the kids (individually or in teams) would curate digital, creative display or live youth-focused content on the artifact and its history, value and significance in NOTL history.

The contest is open to all NOTL youth, Grade 7 to 12. You must be registered with the NOTL Youth Collective (go to NOTLYouth.com for more information) in order to participate in the collective programs.

At the end of the month, on Wednesday, Feb. 22, kids who participate will present

their Curators Content in a speech of under three minutes, a video, images, movie production stop motion, claymation, a short play, poster, sculpture, poems — whatever they choose to create — to the other kids, who will then vote for their favourites.

Dr. Marianne Hopkins of Dr. Hopkins and Associates Optometry heard about the idea and immediately wanted to get involved. “The NOTL Youth Collective is just getting started, and when I heard about the NOTL Heritage Moments — Youth Curators Contest, I thought it was a

wonderful way to connect youth to the town’s past.” So much so that Dr. Hopkins wants to reward youth for self-seeking knowledge and creative endeavours, and has offered up a \$250 cash prize for the winning Curated Content selected by the kids.

“From the beginning, it has been a goal for the collective to connect youth to the community. Now that the NOTL Youth Collective is up and running, the volunteer team is turning our attention to building unique and engaging opportunities for the youth,” said Polgrabia, one of

the founding members of the collective. “We think it is so critical for everyone to understand how important NOTL is to Canadian history, from Confederation, to Indigenous contributions and teachings, to Black heritage, agriculture, power generation . . . I get excited thinking about it,” she continued.

The winning submission(s) will earn prize money, plus the glory of being posted on the NOTL Youth Collective digital assets as part of the ‘The NOTL Heritage Moments’ Youth Curators Collection.



Caroline Polgrabia, founder of the NOTL Youth Collective, is excited to be partnering with the NOTL Museum on a program for kids. (File photo)

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Lots done right across Canada, Hirji says

Continued from page 1

One of the problems has been having funding redirected over time, and funding that should have been spent on preparedness was reduced.

"We need to find a way to fund it. It's like insurance. It's expensive, but you have to be prepared for the future."

Another lesson learned, he says is about the more vulnerable people in our society.

We learned that those most at risk, in addition to those with certain health conditions, were Indigenous people, minority races, and those living on low incomes who, among other problems, might have less access to primary caregivers for early intervention.

Some of those vulnerabilities are systemic, and some that can be changed, he says, but there is no doubt some were more vulnerable than others in terms of suffering the impact of the pandemic.

The vulnerable might be frontline workers, such as those working in grocery stores, people living in crowded housing with poor ventilation, or those who were slower on the uptake of vaccinations. "There is more to it than that, but we do see those vulnerabilities now," he says.

"We don't really understand all the dimensions of that, but we saw it clearly in the data around the world."

He says looking back at the early days of the pandemic, another lesson learned is the need to react quickly, at all levels.

"We weren't always very quick at absorbing new knowledge," he says. He recalls the need for scientific data to back up actions, but wonders if there could have been a better balance between waiting for science and the need to move quickly.

The importance of masking is a good example, he says. By the summer of 2020, municipalities were talking about mask mandates, and on July 16, Niagara-on-the-Lake passed its mask bylaw, as other municipalities in Niagara were either considering or approving theirs. Some were waiting for a region-wide policy.

At that time Hirji was promoting the other practices that became routine: physical distancing, frequent hand-washing, keeping our hands away from our faces, and wearing a mask when physical distancing wasn't possible.

After a discussion about masking during a mid-July regional council meeting, councillors voted to defer a mandate, on Hirji's advice. He said then that when issuing an order to deprive someone of an element of their freedom, he needed to have science behind it, and he didn't think it had reached that

threshold. It wasn't until July 31 that a regional mask bylaw was approved.

"I thought that summer early evidence was showing masking worked and was something we should recommend," he says now, without what he thought was strong enough evidence to mandate them.

"But maybe that wasn't the right position. Maybe I should have been quicker to endorse mandatory masking."

He adds the science was slow in recognizing the virus was airborne. "We largely believed it was spread by droplets."

That's where that balance between science and acting quickly is important, "and I don't know if we always got the balance right."

It also took some time to realize a two-metre distance was not enough, he added — the scientific community was slow to accept that.

But there was lots that was done right, in Niagara and across the country, he says.

"Canada as a whole took the pandemic seriously. We avoided it being politicized the way it was in the U.S. I think we really prioritized to protect people."

The restrictions in place in Niagara, compared to the U.S., he says, "saved 1,400 lives in Niagara. We occasionally had to accept lockdowns, and we got people vaccinated. If we'd followed the pattern of the U.S. we would have lost many more lives. That's one thing we should be proud of. We made some hard decisions, but we did the best we could."

Hirji points to Canada's roll-out of vaccinations as one of the best in the western world in terms of the percentage of people who were vaccinated. Although there was some criticism of the time it took to get enough supply of vaccine, "we had the fastest roll-out and one of the highest percentage of people vaccinated in the world."

The biggest error in Ontario was the initial provincial plan in the roll-out of shots, he says, where the decision was made to prioritize healthcare workers in some communities, rather than the most vulnerable population in all communities. "The group most at risk of dying was in long-term care. We needed to get vaccinations out to those in long-term care first in every community. I think that was the single biggest error. Niagara was not one of the areas selected to get vaccines early on, and sadly we saw a lot of people dying in long-term care homes."

It was distributed to the areas that saw the highest number of cases, through December 2020 into January and February 2021, "while the virus

was spreading quickly in long-term care and we weren't prioritizing them for vaccinations."

And although Toronto was considered a hot-spot, with a greater need for vaccinations, "it was just a few days away" from reaching Niagara, he says.

In January 2021, there were 177 deaths from COVID, and 136 of those who died were in long-term care.

"We didn't get the vaccinations until the fourth week of January. If in mid-December the province had made the decision to send it to every region and prioritize long-term care residents, in Niagara we would have saved lives, and I think that's true across the province."

The provincial priority to vaccinate healthcare workers, and only in parts of the province, "was the wrong decision. The death numbers in Niagara speak to that."

When the region received vaccine in January 2021, the local roll-out "was a real success. We vaccinated all long-term care residents in nine days. We moved quickly to get them vaccinated as soon as possible and to stop the horrible number of deaths we were seeing."

By March, Niagara was able to offer vaccinations to the public, and was using up vaccines as soon as they were received, says Hirji, prioritizing those with certain health conditions, and some of those considered vulnerable.

Yet another lesson could be doing a better job of educating people about the importance of vaccinations, Hirji added.

As for the future, he hasn't changed his mind about how to move forward. He continues to promote the importance of booster shots, which have a much lower uptake than the first set of vaccinations. If we don't think we need to do it for ourselves, we should consider the need to protect the vulnerable in society, especially those in long-term care. And he will encourage people to have annual or six-month shots once we get to that stage. "There is a need to vaccinate for all of us, to protect our fellow citizens who are at higher risk," he says.

"We could be as high as 95 per cent vaccinated. How do we get from where we are to where we could be?"

With COVID causing only mild symptoms now, especially for those fully vaccinated, there is a sense of complacency, that it's not such a big danger as it was before, "but people need to understand it still can be serious. It's still the third leading cause of death," behind cancer and heart disease.

"Even if you don't get sick, someone else in your life might." Or you could be part of a chain of people who will pass it on to someone who will

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Local BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Dr Hopkins & Associates Optometry

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Eye care essential to good health, from an early age on

Dr. Marianne Hopkins, our local optometrist on Mary Street, is more than your average eye doctor.

With a keen interest in providing not only the best in ocular health care, she is also interested in how to optimize vision in all aspects of life at every stage and every age. "Eyecare is not just for people who

wear glasses or contact lenses, it is an essential part of the health and well-being of my patients, and is vital to optimize learning and development in children," says Hopkins.

Many parents who bring their children to the optometrist office often do so as a reaction to their own visual concerns, or if

the child is not flourishing in school. All children, however, should have their vision and ocular health assessed from infancy through to adulthood to ensure they have the visual resources they need to grow and develop to be their best.

"Studies show that many children with learning disabilities also have visual issues that can make it even more difficult to learn," says Hopkins, "and sometimes, visual problems are misdiagnosed as ADHD or a learning disability, because they share some of the same symptoms."

Having great vision goes beyond 20/20, as there are more than 17 important visual skills required to function efficiently to perform well in school or sports. With more than 300 continuing education hours in vision therapy, vision development and rehabilitation, Dr. Hopkins is an expert in the field of vision, and how to optimize this very essential sense.

"Over 80 per cent of the brain is involved in visual processing – vision is our primary sense. Our eyes are literally the moving parts

of the brain, and we should value their health. I have made it my life's work to build awareness for the significance of great eye care for all ages, starting with the developing visual systems of children."

This eye-brain connection is well demonstrated in cases of brain injury, including concussions and strokes. At Dr. Hopkins' Niagara Vision Therapy Centre on Secord Drive in St. Catharines, she and her team of highly-trained therapists rehabilitate patients who have suffered traumatic brain injuries. "I

suffered a serious concussion 10 years ago and I have firsthand experience how life-changing vision rehabilitation is," she says.

Patients attending her clinic include children who are struggling with learning and reading, as well as patients with inefficient visual systems that appear as eye turns or lazy eyes. Dr. Hopkins' office receives daily referrals from local doctors, other optometrists, ophthalmologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

"Of course, I cannot do this work alone and I am

grateful for my team of staff and doctors who every day show up for our patients. The last three years have been challenging to say the least, from COVID-related closures to (unresolved) disputes with the government, we have had several ups and downs. We are very thankful for our patient family for providing us with ongoing support."

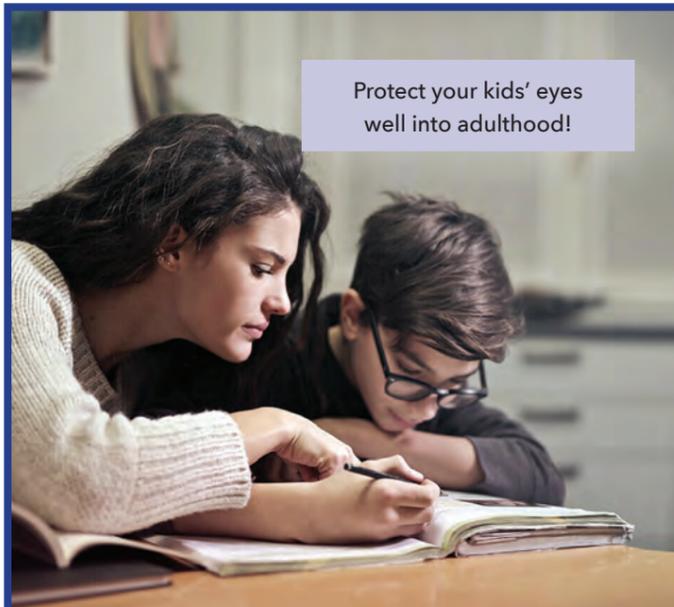
Dr. Hopkins is looking forward to 2023, with plans of attending several conferences with her team to learn ways to better serve our community through great vision care.



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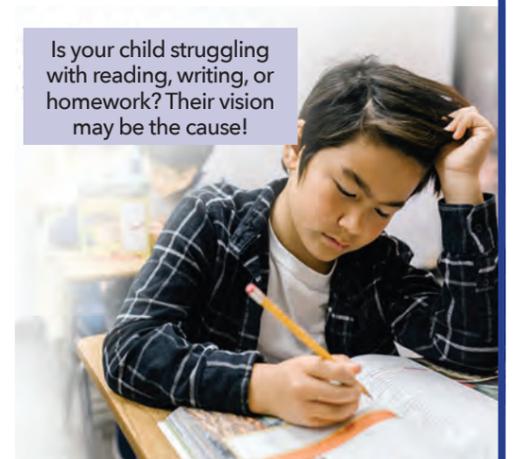
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EDITORIAL

Black History Month: let's open our minds and learn

Every February we celebrate Black history. We talk about it, learn about it, but do we really take it into our minds and our hearts? Do we open our eyes to the truths we're being told?

Maybe some of us do, but likely the majority of people get on with their lives and don't give much thought to those who have a very different history, and a very different life experience, until February rolls around again.

It's a part of our history, especially in Niagara, that past generations didn't learn about

in school. And how much have our kids and grandkids learned? It's likely they will spend some time colouring, doing crafts, and talking about Black history, but will that be all until next year?

That we even need to set aside a month to remind us to talk about it is a sign it's probably ignored the rest of the year.

As a society we think we're getting better at talking about the difficult issues that tell us we haven't eliminated racism and bigotry. If we think we have, we're likely harbouring some

degree of unconscious bias that we're certain doesn't apply to us.

A very peaceful and educational rally took part in our town in June 2020. It forced us to listen and to acknowledge that yes, racism exists right here, in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake. Yvonne Bredow, a local woman who spoke at the rally, helped open the door to a conversation that was not only overdue but that many insisted wasn't necessary. And sadly, she told *The Local Sunday*, nothing has changed since then.

It seems when we are re-

minded gently of Black history through a special month, or confronted directly by it with horrible stories on the news of those who have suffered and died because of their race or culture, we have an opportunity to look at it as a wake-up call for those willing to accept the truth of what has been put in front of us, and to use that truth to work to change it.

But if nothing has changed for us since that rally, if we as a society are just as complicit by not forcing it to be better, what have we learned?

We must take our need for education seriously.

We were asked by Yvonne at the 2020 rally to raise our hands if we would like to live as a Black person in this society. She asked a second time. She didn't expect to see any hands raised and there weren't. She would likely get the same response today.

Lezlie Harper, a woman who is proud of her Black heritage and her ancestors, would raise her hand. We need to take to heart that we can change our society so that one day when asked, we will all raise our

hands with her. It's a long way away, but thanks to the Lezlie Harpers and Yvonne Bredows of this world, ready to speak up and hope we can learn from their history and their experiences, that day may come.

It's our duty to listen, and to pass their message on to future generations, so that one day, if faced again with Yvonne's question, we'll wonder why it would even be asked.

Penny Coles
The Local

Take a nature walk on the drive to work



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Finally, there is a dose of properly cold weather this week in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Before anyone complains, we need to consider that our town and the rest of eastern North America are getting set to break records as the mildest winter since record-keeping began.

With a chilling reminder of typical winter coming up over the next few days, I have decided to give you a unique virtual nature tour from the seat and comfort of your car.

Many of us exhibit repeated driving routes and behaviours, so

I have pinpointed some high traffic and familiar areas in Niagara-on-the-Lake that will hopefully never make you look at the dip in the road the same way again.

This tour, hopefully completed with heated seats and good music, figuratively begins on East and West Line as if you're driving toward the Niagara River Parkway. Looking out the right side of your vehicle, you are graced with an uninterrupted view going all the way back to the Niagara Escarpment. A few things are striking about this view. For one, the stark flatness and open sightline about eight kilometres long. The lack of trees is testimony to southern Ontario's historical loggings dating back more than 200 years. Rewind just shy of 12,000 years ago, and you'd be driving underwater along a giant lake bottom, while Niagara

Falls plummeted over the edge where the Queenston Lewiston Bridge arches into America. No wonder the soil is so fertile here.

Turning left onto the parkway, you then travel downstream the slow but monstrously voluminous Niagara River. Through the large trees, the familiar turquoise water, created by limestone erosion, is often the main attraction. However, odds are you are peeking through one of Canada's rarest ecosystems, known as the black oak savanna.

The word savanna immediately conjures up images of endless grasslands polka-dotted with spangly trees somewhere in Africa. Prior to European settlement, such savannas (minus the rhinos and cheetahs) existed right here in NOTL. By means of a natural floor plan, 35 to 65 per cent of the canopy remains open to sunlight, inviting native grasses and heat-loving flowers to dance victoriously in the sun.

The largest trees seen here are pushing 250 years old. Black oaks grow almost nowhere else in the country other than right here in extreme southern Ontario, making the black oak savanna a national rarity for ecosystems.

After cruising through the prettiest town in the world, you can take Niagara Stone Road, also known as Hwy 55 (although it's been a regional road, not a

highway, for decades) back out of downtown. It is one of the longest and straightest roads in Niagara, and sadly, the same can be said about the shape of the many creeks that pass underneath it.

The first big dip in the road occurs before Garrison Village. This is Two Mile Creek, the second-largest waterway in terms of volume in NOTL. Like the road it flows under, the vast majority of this stream has been reshaped into a glorified ditch over the past century. At this overpass, you get a brief look at its natural meandering state as it snakes its way to Lake Ontario.

Continuing on a nearly perfect southwest tangent, the next

overpass of mention shares a similar story. Four Mile Creek is NOTL's largest in terms of length and volume. As it unassumingly slips under the overpass by the main intersection in Virgil, we often take for granted what that creek has been through.

Similar to Two Mile Creek, what you happen to see at that overpass is an inaccurate representation of its upstream life. It has been straightened, narrowed, and deforested in damaging quantities over the past century. This allows farmers to maximize acreage and irrigation access, but has come with a trade-off of lower water quality and decreases in biodiversity.

Upstream, the two Virgil Reservoirs boast a secret in their shallow, mud-laden waters — an ancient winding stream that once trickled its way through a forest replete with black bears and rattlesnakes.

However, both of these overpasses have some surprises that should never just be considered water under the bridge. Snapping turtles, rainbow trout, great blue herons, green herons, beavers, coyotes and deer still use these creeks as their own version of Niagara Stone Road, to get from point A to point B on a daily basis, just as our species needs to as well. Let's all enjoy the commute.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Shotgun Wedding (Prime, 2022) is the ultimate destination wedding gone terribly wrong, as the entire wedding

party is taken hostage by a gang of pirates. This is not my kind of film, but somehow I got hooked and had a really good time. If you like Jennifer Lopez, and silly, this film is for you.

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?



Eden student Ben Foster has wrapped up his co-op with *The Local* and is continuing to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. *The Local* had many responses last week, the first from Dennis Rizzuto, who recognized the entrance to the NOTL Chamber of Commerce.

Ted's thoughts: on Black history and white male privilege

Ted Mouradian
Special to The Local

February is Black History Month, where we stop and reflect as we learn about Black history here in Niagara. We should be proud of the part Niagara played as the final stop on the Underground Railroad, its anti-slavery legislation and the contribution of Black settlers and soldiers to the Niagara Region.

I would like to give you a perspective on this important annual event today, and what we need still to learn from it.

I lived with a Black man for 12 years and quite often when we were at events people would ask him where he came from and he would answer, "I'm Canadian." They would ask again, "No, where did you come from?" Again, the answer, "I'm Canadian." Again, "No, where did your people come from?" His answer again was Canada.

Here's the thing — he was more Canadian than I am. He is from Halifax, and his ancestors came to Canada in the 1600s, while my ancestors fled the holocaust in Armenia in 1906. But no one ever asked me where I or my family came from. I'm white, and everyone assumes I and my ancestors have been here since the beginning of Canada.

So, the lived experience I have is that if you are white, why would anyone even think to ask where you came, from but if you are Black it is assumed you must have come from someplace else. Of course, let's also not forget who the true inhabitants of this country were before the white man came here. The Indigenous peoples were here long before any of us were.

Yes it is Black History Month and we need to educate ourselves on the important contributions Black people have made to Cana-

da over the years so that we do not forget the struggle that they have experienced in the past.

But I also want to talk about white male privilege, which does exist in Canada, and it is something that many of us are blind to. White male privilege is not about money or accomplishments. It is not about beauty, religion, social status or even how you present yourself.

If you are a white male, I want you to think about...

When was the last time you were asked that simple question as to where you or your people came from?

When was the last time you spoke and the person you were speaking to looked surprised, and commented that you spoke very good English for a white man?

When was the last time you were followed around a store by security people thinking you might steal something?

When was the last time you and two or three of your white buddies were walking down the street and the woman approaching you held more tightly to her purse? Or more importantly, walked across the street to avoid you?

When was the last time

you looked around the room and realized you were the only white person there?

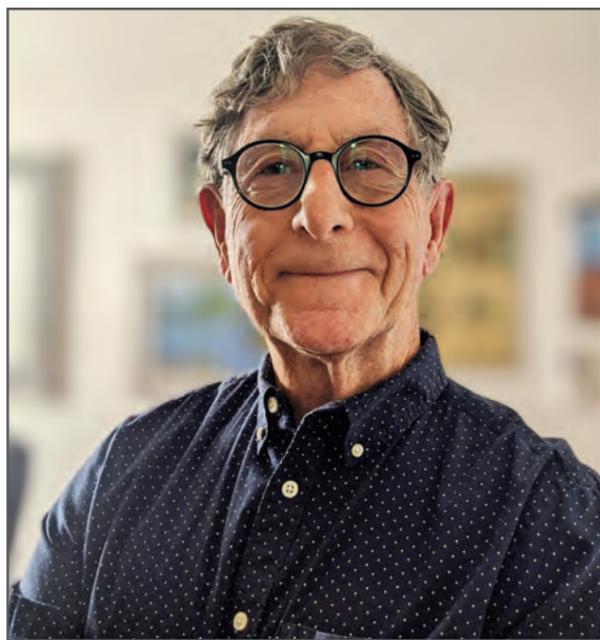
When was the last time you were stopped by a police officer and asked for identification simply because of the neighbourhood where you were walking?

When was the last time you were driving that nice new car and you saw someone give you that look that said, "to drive a car that expensive, he must be a drug dealer?"

I have white male privilege, and that is the lesson I learned and the reality I want others to think about, not only during Black History Month but all of the time.

When you see any person of colour or any person who looks a little different than you, simply smile and nod. You will be surprised how many times you receive a big smile back with a knowing nod that says, "Thanks, you noticed me and acknowledged me."

Ted Mouradian is an author and professional speaker. He is president of the 2% Factor Inc. and his videos can be seen on TikTok and Instagram. Ted can be reached at ted@the2percentfactor.com



Ted Mouradian

Local LETTERS

Why are regulations not enforced?

On that wholly compromised and ridiculous lot which was created when the town agreed to the severance of 6 Circle Street, the builder and his sub-contractors have now for the fourth time flouted the regulations that exist to protect trees; in particular those two significant town trees that adjoin the property.

As is now pathetically the style of this current administration, the town managers are having yet

another meeting to discuss what it would seem they are apparently powerless to prevent.

Is the town completely incompetent when it comes to controlling what happens on the building lot which is 6a Circle Street? Or is it that the town just lacks the will or even the decency to prevent others, who have no interest or attachment to the neighbourhood, from causing lasting damage through their cynical care-

lessness?

It is now long overdue.

The town must start to exert some sort of proper control over 6a Circle Street.

The town cannot ask residents such as myself to comply with the local rules and regulations when it fails to hold others to account and in addition fails to protect the interests of its stakeholders.

Michael Burns
Circle Street

Joy Ormsby 'an expert time-traveller'

It was a pleasure to read your well-researched tribute to Joy Ormsby (The Local, Jan. 25).

I met Joy by chance in several town archives while I searched in vain for historic records of a reputed windmill. This caught Joy's interest and over the years she sent me photocopies

of 1820s clippings about local windmill sightings in the Colonial Advocate, the Gleaner, deeds, settlers' guides by John Galt, and 1830s surveys by the Royal Engineers.

Joy effectively located three windmills in old Niagara for which no other evidence of any kind has

been found to date.

She was an expert time-traveller among the paper annals of a lost world called Newark.

Robert J. Miller, UE
Canadian affiliate Chapter
of the Society for the
Preservation of
Old Mills - SPOOM

Apology owed to front-line nurses

I am writing in response to the letter regarding private healthcare debate (The Local, Jan. 25).

I was gobsmacked to read the statement "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."

There are reams of articles and studies that foretold the disintegration of our health care system going as far back as the

late 1980s. Cuts to hospital funding, to beds and to staffing at the time were the beginning of this end. A simple example is to note in 1970, Ontario had three times as many hospital beds per capita than we presently have. Considering the aging population of we boomers, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand how this one factor would impact the most robust system, let alone one that has been

chronically underfunded for 20-some odd years.

The statement that nurses are part of the blame is based on ignorance, not fact, and an apology is owed to every nurse who remains on the front line, providing care to the people in our community despite the system crumbling down around them.

Sandra Commerford
Retired RPN (32yrs)
NHS

Loved the column on trees

I wanted to let you know how much I love Owen Bjorgan's columns, especially the most recent one about his tree friends. I also love trees and post them pretty much daily on Facebook.

There is a beautiful love song to a tree at the be-

ginning of George Frideric Handel's opera *Xerxes*, where the hero sings to his beloved plane tree while sheltering in its shade.

"There was never a tree more lovely and beautiful, may fate protect your branches from storms and

hail and lightning."

There's a good version of Handel's *Ombra mai fu* by countertenor Franco Fagioli on YouTube.

Alexa Petrenko
NOTL, where we are much
blessed by trees

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'Proud to be Black Canadian,' says Harper

Continued from page 1

Lavinia Street in Fort Erie is named after her great-grandmother, Lavinia Taylor Chandler.

Harper talks of the impression many people have of freedom seekers coming to Canada along the Underground Railroad, picturing them travelling through a series of tunnels, lanterns in hand, crossing in sturdy boats and maybe carriages to transport them across land.

That was not the case, she said — her great, great-grandfather fled slavery with his brother and nine-year-old sister, hiking alone at night in the dark, no lanterns to guide them, eventually crossing the Niagara River near Buffalo to the northern shore at Fort Erie.

With only the stars for direction, and many cloudy nights, freedom seekers would often walk around in circles, adding miles to their trip, before finding their way across the river, she says.

They were not just escaping slavery, they were fighting social injustice, and that social injustice "isn't about what white men did to Black men. It's about what one human can do to another, including Africans, some of whom were involved in slavery," says Harper.

They would arrive in the U.S., sometimes separated from their families, were put on an auction block, had their teeth checked, treated like cattle sent to market. "They dealt with all of it. It's an amazing story, that although there was no hope, they fought to survive.

That's the kind of pride I want to infill in our kids."

She speaks with great fondness of her Uncle Kit, whose real name was Charles Bright. He was a storyteller who loved to pass on her family's history, and she loved to listen, although, she explains, not all Black families could talk about the fact that their ancestors were enslaved, including some of her own relatives.

She is passionate about sharing those stories, and the experiences of Black families, hers and others, in a way that is much more intimate than anything we could read in a book — although she jokes about the book she might write.

Harper is the founder of Niagara Bound Tours, conducting historical tours throughout the Niagara region, for schools, groups and individuals. "When I'm talking to people," she says, "they sometimes wonder why we're not putting these stories in text books, or history books. When people came to Canada as freedom seekers, they needed to put a roof over their heads, feed their stomachs and build their churches. And if white people had enslaved us, why would we say we need to be in history books? We wouldn't have trusted them. It's being rectified now though."

One of these days, she says, she will write a book. "I'm so proud to be a descendant of these people, people who had to suck it up, maintain their faith, accept their station in life. I'll say to kids, 'look at this skin, and let me tell you where it's been.'"

That's how she feels now. Harper says she grew up feeling invisible, and insignificant,

and that only white people were smart and could go to university.

"I came out of that stronger because of it. I'm confident in my skin," she says. "I conditioned myself so that when someone used a racial slur or implied bigotry to me I wouldn't even hear it. I wouldn't recognize it."

Today, "when white people are not comfortable with us, I make them comfortable. It's not a great thing to have to do, but I do it. I'm happy and proud to be a Canadian, and to be a Black Canadian."

Harper addresses revisionist history, including the name change of the Uncle Tom Cabin Museum in Dresden, Ont.

"My response to changing names in a revisionist world is that the names of the times are the history. To change the names is the removal of the history. Often times this is done without critical thinking, such as what happened with the Uncle Tom Cabin Museum change, to the Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History," the man on whom the book Uncle Tom's Cabin was based.

Some didn't like the name, but it was "totally a subjective action," she says, "when there is so much evidence that explains there is nothing wrong with the term Uncle Tom."

The name change makes her furious, she says. "He was a wonderful man, a noble man, loved by so many."

At the age of five he witnessed his father being punished for trying to protect his mother. He was whipped, and eventually nailed to a tree by his ear as an example to other



David Adames, CEO of the Niagara Parks Commission, with speaker Lezlie Harper, Tim Johnson, senior advisor for the Parks Commission, and Jim Hill, superintendent of heritage at the Queenston Chapel Sunday.

slaves. He survived, but was a beaten man.

"If someone called me Uncle Tom, I would wear it as a badge of honour," says Harper.

She also speaks of the cemetery in NOTL that has had its name changed.

"There is nothing wrong with the term Negro," she says of the Negro Burial Ground. "Negro after all is from the Spanish word 'black.'"

She and others have objected to the Ontario Heritage Trust decision to change the name of the Negro Burial Ground in NOTL to the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground — there are some who are not convinced it was a Baptist Church on the site, and there is no reason to change its name, she says. The new plaque was supposed to be erected during a ceremony expected to take place last June, but that hasn't happened yet, possibly because of the protests.

"I suspect though they will quietly erect the new plaque, even though there were objections."

There is a cemetery in Fort Erie, she says, called The Co-

loured Cemetery, but no talk of changing that — it isn't likely to happen. "I don't think they will, as many know that I am from Fort Erie, and they won't mess with me there," she laughs.

If Harper ever gets to writing that book, it would be good reading for anyone who wants the unvarnished truth about the lives of the enslaved and freedom seekers, as told by their descendants, and for anyone who wants to understand the importance of having those truths continue to be passed on today and in the future.

There are two more speakers in the Niagara Parks series. Saladin Allah will speak on present-day Freedom Seekers and The Power of our Stories, Feb. 26, and on March 26 Kevin Cottrell will talk about interpreting The Underground Railroad in the age of heritage tourism in the Niagara Region.

For more details and tickets visit niagaraparks.com/blackhistory. Tickets are \$15. All sessions will begin at 2 p.m. at the Queenston Chapel at the Laura Secord Homestead, 29 Queenston Street, Queenston, Ont.



Yvonne Bredow attended the presentation, and says she loves to chat with Lezlie Harper and hear her many stories — her presentation could have been twice as long, with a break in the middle, and still not be long enough. "There are so many stories that have to be told," Bredow says, about Black history, but also about the challenges Black people face today.

'Incredible team' helped Niagara through pandemic

Continued from page 4

get sick and potentially die, or someone either visiting or working in a long-term care home that will be the cause of another outbreak, he adds.

But despite his desire to see higher vaccination percentages, he says, "we have one of the best uptakes in the world, and it has changed the dynamics of COVID for us. Vaccinations are one of the great success stories for us."

If vaccinations are our first defence, masking remains the second, says Hirji. "It's a little bit of a nuisance, but it really does make a difference in the spread of the virus."

And given that we know it's airborne, investing in improved ventilation will also stop the spread, not only of COVID, but other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, and any future viruses that might come along. "There is a huge upside to making that investment" in places where people are going to gather, such as schools, stores and restaurants.

Improved ventilation in new buildings should be a priority, and he hopes to see changes to building codes to make sure that happens. While upgrades to existing buildings can be expensive, "it's not a lot more to build to a higher standard in new buildings."

Niagara regional council

endorsed a motion earlier this year to recommend the province and federal governments update building codes and make funding available for small businesses to invest in ventilation, he adds.

As Hirji and the public health department continue to work to keep people safe, after almost three very difficult years, The Local asked how he personally has dealt with those challenges.

"It's a hard question to answer," he responds, not surprising from someone who is known for protecting his privacy, and for good reason — during the height of the pandemic, his home was targeted by protestors against vaccina-

tions, especially for children, and who blamed him for the loss of jobs for those who refused to be vaccinated.

Despite some of the challenges, including regional councillors who questioned some of his recommendations — although never as a council voted against him — he says, "it felt a little bit normal."

He spoke highly of "a really incredible team at Niagara Health. Having that great team means you don't feel like you're dealing with it alone. Also there were conversations with colleagues across the province. Feeling like you're part of a team is one element that helped."

As someone "oriented in

science, like any physician," he says, "you're used to dealing with bad news. You focus on the science and know you're not always going to get it right, but you do your best and make your decisions. That gives me a lot of peace of mind, knowing that I did what I thought was best."

Criticism is nothing new in the role he plays, he says.

"Some people are upset with rules, some people are against vaccinations, but they're just voices that are a little louder."

As for regional councillors who didn't always agree with him, he says that was another lesson he has taken away from the pandemic. He realized he wasn't doing a great job of

communicating, and that there was a better way to engage with councillors, so they would have a better understanding of what he was proposing and why.

One last question for the region's acting medical officer of health was not his to answer, he says.

What does he have to do to get rid of the "acting" in his title?

He's been the acting medical officer of health since Dr. Valerie Jaeger left the position about five years ago, when he moved from assistant medical officer into her job.

The next step "is a decision of regional council," he says. "I don't play a role in that. It's their process, and it's up to them."

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Lots of laughs for Pillitteri's Icebreakers performance

**Sharon Burns
Special to The Local**

Local comic Joe Pillitteri kicked off the ninth annual Icebreakers Comedy Festival with hilarious anecdotes about his wife, parents and family.

But before he spoke, event organizers Jeff Paul and Tim Balasiuk, clad in

matching velour tracksuits, welcomed emcee Pillitteri to the stage. Born and raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pillitteri is also an inspirational speaker, motivational leader and past Citizen of the Year.

"The local hero is always Joe Pillitteri and I always appreciate what he brings to the table," said

Virgil's Mark Cherney. "He's a shining example of who we are here in Niagara."

During his bit, Pillitteri left no family member untouched in the packed house at Oast House Brewers on Jan. 26, which starts off three nights of comedy in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Over a dozen comedians appeared at Oast, Corks Winebar and Ravine Vineyard.

Derek Seguin, a Montreal native who has performed at the prestigious invitation-only Just for Laughs Festival an astounding 11 times, made the full house at Oast roar with laughter at his take on the pandemic. "Everyone has been tired of COVID for so long, it was good to laugh about it instead of stress about it," said Virgil resident Alice Sirard.

Cherney is grateful this festival "happens in our own backyard. We need more of this in our small community, not only for the tourism sector but for the locals to get out and appreciate and enjoy what really goes on here."

Matt Wayland thought this was "a very good kick start to the winter season for our festivals." He also noted that it was "a really great crowd here tonight — a packed house and these comedians really lit it up."



Joe Pillitteri was one of six comics to perform at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery Saturday night at the gala CBC performance, recorded to be part of a CBC radio show. All were well-received by the crowd, but not surprisingly, Pillitteri got the loudest laughs. (Penny Coles)



Matt Wayland and Mark Cherney at Oast to see Joe Pillitteri (centre) perform, both spoke highly of the venue and Pillitteri's comedy. (Sharon Burns)



Local funny guy Joe Pillitteri wows the crowd at Oast. (Sharon Burns)



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Culinary community mourning local chef Daniel Tong

Mike Balsom
The Local

Staff and customers from Ruffino's, as well as the entire Niagara culinary community, are mourning the sudden loss last week of 32-year-old chef Daniel Tong in a tragic car crash. Executive chef and owner Ryan Crawford is mobilizing this Thursday with a special event to raise funds to support Tong's family.

Early Saturday morning, Jan. 21, while on his way to work, the father of two was involved in a collision on the Fort Erie bound QEW near the Ontario Street, Beamsville exit. According to the OPP, the first collision was followed by two more, when a tractor-trailer hit one of the vehicles and then another subsequently ran into the back of the tractor-trailer.

Tong was transported to an out-of-town hospital where he was pronounced deceased. One other male was transported to a local hospital in stable condition.

Crawford immediately closed the restaurant last Saturday, posting on Facebook that there had been an unforeseen emergency. Two days later he announced



Chef Daniel Tong was part of the Backhouse staff, transitioned to Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill and was also a big part of the opening of BarBea Wine Shop and Snack Bar. (Photos supplied)

the loss of his close friend and colleague via the social media site.

Tong leaves behind his wife Melanie and two young

children: Olivia, seven; and Atlas, four. His parents, Joanne and Wally Tong, are mourning his loss, as are

his twin brother Simon and their older sisters Jennifer, Lisa, Teresa and Jessica.

"Dan was part of our restaurant family for five years," Crawford wrote in

a message to The Local. "He always greeted you with a funny nickname. He was a king of the one liner. He would leave you mystified by its timing and of course, you'd be in stitches laughing."

Crawford credits Tong as an integral member of the Backhouse staff, and instrumental in the transition to Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill and the opening of BarBea Wine Shop and Snack Bar.

During the pandemic, Tong and Donald Shi would often prepare Chinese-inspired meals for the staff at Ruffino's. Crawford offered them the kitchen one night for a pop-up that ended up becoming extremely popular. It returned again this year as a regular night under the new name Wang Tong Foods, a.k.a. WTF Chinese.

"Dan cooked with the heart of a lion," added Crawford. "He was the coolest human under pressure. He inspired and led so many young culinary minds during his career. His work ethic and passion for food were unmatched. His shoes are big ones to fill, and he is dearly missed."

Melanie's long-time friend Lauren Roberts began a GoFundMe page last week to support Tong's young family with a goal of raising \$18,000. By press time more than \$53,000 had been donated via her efforts.

"I am extremely surprised," says Roberts about nearly tripling her goal for donations. "We had a couple of people from the culinary community reaching

out, that's why we started the campaign. We didn't want to ask for much. This has been amazing, and it's going to go such a long way to helping Melanie."

"Dan was a family man first and foremost," Roberts adds. "He would do anything he could to be there for them, and his extended family, too. He was sweet, thoughtful and happy to help anyone out in times of need."

Roberts says Daniel and Melanie, who now works part-time as an early childhood educator, met when they were both in the culinary program at Niagara College. Before getting hired at Backhouse, Daniel worked at Spencer's on the Water in Burlington and then Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake's The Epicurean.

"He had a huge influence on the chef community in the region," Roberts says, echoing Crawford. "He was super proud to be able to bring his authentic Chinese food into the community, and so happy that Ryan was so on board with that."

Following the celebration of Tong's life this past Friday, many from the larger Niagara culinary community came together at Ruffino's and BarBea to honour Dan's memory and to support his family.

Crawford reeled off a list of representatives from Garrison House, Ravine Vineyards, Oast Brushfire Smoke BBQ and Patina Pizzeria, OddBird, Tide and Vine, Stratus, Meldville, Forty Creek, Bark 'n' Bitter, and current and former Ruffino's and BarBea staff who donated their time to the gathering.

"We are astounded and forever grateful," Crawford said. "It was an honour to introduce Dan's family to our community. Dan was so humble, and this event made it especially evident that he was revered and respected as a brilliant culinary mind by his peers."

This Thursday, Feb. 2, Ruffino's and BarBea are hosting a fundraiser in support of the Tongs. Already sold out, both restaurants will be offering a special set Chinese menu from Wang Tong Foods from 6 to 9 p.m. with proceeds going to the family. Crawford adds that their takeout and delivery menu will be offered from 4 to 6 p.m. only that day, with pre-orders required. Again, proceeds from takeout and delivery will be for Tong's family.

As well, Roberts promises that the GoFundMe page will stay up through the end of this week and perhaps longer. Donations to the family can be made at [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com).



Daniel Tong with his wife Melanie, daughter Olivia and son Atlas.

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Celebrate Seniors Golden Years Guide

How to choose an air purifier



(NC) As we navigate this winter's combination of colds and flu many of us could use cleaner, fresher air to breathe indoors. In fact, according to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, it's recommended that room air be changed almost 5 times per hour to enhance ventilation.

One way to improve the air in your home is with good-quality air purifiers. An air purifier works by pulling stale, dirty air

into the unit and forcing that air through a filter that captures microscopic pollutants. It then returns cleaner, fresher air back into the room.

When purchasing an air purifier, look for the Clean Air Delivery Rate (CADR) symbol on the purifier's packaging to know the recommended room size and the clean air delivery rate. The higher the CADR number, the faster it will clean the air in that room.

High efficiency particulate air filters, known as HEPA filters, are considered the gold standard in air purification, using technology recommended by doctors. An air purifier with a HEPA filter, like Honeywell options, can filter as much as 99.97 per cent of microscopic particles from the air that passes through the filter, as small as 0.3 microns or larger.

Some air purifiers also come with carbon activat-

ed pre-filters that help trap larger particles and reduce odours and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These also help to extend the life of the HEPA filter.

There are many different types and sizes of air purifiers. To get the best results, it's important to get an air purifier that is the right size for your room. You can find a guide for room sizes at honeywell-pluggedin.ca.

www.newscanada.com

Helpful tips for people living with a chronic condition

Being diagnosed with a chronic condition can significantly impact your psychological, physical, social and even financial well-being. Life-changing decisions are often needed, but the good news is that many can overcome challenges by adopting healthier lifestyles. The following tips provide easy-to-implement actions to achieve optimal health in the face of a chronic illness.

1. Educate yourself with appropriate sources

Following your initial diagnosis, you may not know which steps to take, so the best way to combat any uncertainties is to seek advice from your healthcare provider. They will guide you through appropriate treatment plans, present you the Dos and Don'ts, and point out other reliable sources to consult if further help is required.

2. Connect with others for support

Living with a chronic illness can feel isolating, but you are rarely alone. In Canada, a large number of adults live with common chronic conditions. Many rely on support groups and communities with people sharing similar health conditions to help them tackle mental, physical and social challenges. Your support people can also benefit

from additional community as they encounter new responsibilities.

3. Stay active and nourished

Healthy habits such as regular exercise can strengthen your body, help you sleep better, support your immune system and protect your cognitive health — all of which can help fight the symptoms of chronic illness. Similarly, eating foods

as recommended by your doctor or dietitian and using a meal planner like the one online at the Kidney Community Kitchen will help you keep proper nutrition and help you effectively care for yourself.

4. Participate in knowledge-sharing events

Participate in knowledge-sharing events. Educational sessions about your condition are a great

way to discover new treatments, research and advice. They also allow you to meet new people with whom you can exchange insights, stories and more. The Kidney Foundation of Canada offers multiple patient-facing webinars for this purpose and encourages anyone facing a chronic illness to engage in information sessions designed for them.

www.newscanada.com

How to spot reliable health information

(NC) Sometimes it seems like everyone thinks they're an expert on health, and many people are quick to offer opinions on health information. How can you be certain you're finding the best information from reputable sources?

1. Be skeptical

Take everything you read with a grain of salt. Information circulates quickly online, so it can be easy to think that what you're reading has been fact-checked. However, that isn't always the case.

Misinformation abounds because people can post opinions and make comments on health matters without credentials or sources cited. To ensure that you're accessing the most reliable information, the key first step is to recognize that not everything you hear is true, especially if the information is associated with the sale of a product or service.

2. Access official sources

While you might be in-

undated every day with information from friends, family, social media, websites and more, you can very easily establish a few key reliable sources for news. You can't go wrong with trusting official government websites. Health Canada is the leading source for reliable healthcare information that all Canadian citizens can access for free.

Healthcare non-profits can also offer a wealth of information supported by doctors, experts in the field and individuals with lived experience. The Kidney Foundation of Canada, for example, has many resources about kidney disease, such as their website, webinars and social media feeds.

3. Consult your healthcare provider

If you feel like there's a lot of conflicting information online or you have specific health concerns that aren't being taken into account, bring those questions to your primary care physician. Especially if you feel like you may need to make any changes related to your health, seeing your doctor should be a critical step in any decision-making process.

Following these three key steps will help you find accurate, fact-based healthcare information. Before trying any new diet fads, making changes to your drug and health products, or anything else, remember to be skeptical, check your trusted sources and, if needed, consult your family doctor.

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Celebrate Seniors Golden Years Guide

Seasonal home safety checklist

(NC) Having your own home comes with many perks from privacy, to added space, to your own unique décor. But one thing's for sure – it takes some work to keep the place organized and safe.

To help keep your home running smoothly, here's when to tackle some important home safety tasks.

Winter wonderland

Look for bare patches on your roof after a snowfall to see if your roof or attic insulation may need repair.

Check for water leaks indoors during minor thaws to get ahead of water damage and mould.

Test for high levels of radon gas in your home with a simple DIY test, or call in a pro.

Make sure important documents are stored off the floor and not in the basement ahead of spring thaws and floods.

Spring showers

Refresh your emergen-

cy kit if needed, and add any season-specific items, such as a battery-operated fan if you lose air conditioning in a summer power outage.

Angle your downspouts away from your home to prevent flood damage.

Consider adding a sump pump with backup power or reverse-flow valves in basement drains.

Clear gutters and debris left over from winter storms and do time-sensitive repairs.

Inspect your roof and repair any damage.

Consider applying sealant around basement windows and at the base of exterior doors.

Check your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms each spring and fall.

Sunny summer

Do more extensive safety updates in summer when weather is clear, such as fixing a leaky foundation.

Ensure that your landscaping is graded to slope



away from your home.

Trim any trees or bushes that are getting close to power lines.

Check your ventilation by holding a tissue up to your bathroom fan – the suction should cause it to noticeably flutter.

Run a dehumidifier to prevent mould if you live in a humid place or detect a musty smell.

Fall fixes

Winterize or drain outdoor faucets and pipes ahead of cold weather to avoid frozen, burst pipes.

Check and replace weatherstripping to ensure your home is protected from the elements.

Clear your eaves troughs and downspouts of leaves and debris.

Refresh your emergen-

cy kit with supplies to last you for several days.

Confirm that your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are in good working order and replace the backup batteries.

Whatever the season, make sure you know the risks in your area so you can properly prepare your home for them. Do you live near a river that floods

in your area every spring? Or, are you at risk for wildfires in summer? Are you likely to face severe winter storms or power outages in winter? A little preparation, can help you be ready for just about anything.

Find out about your regional risks and learn more safety tips at getprepared.ca.

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New home proposed for lot next to Steward House

Mike Balsom
The Local

A proposal to build a home on a severed lot at 507 Butler Street is leaving at least one local resident with questions.

The house is to be built on land that is part of the William and Susannah Steward historical site at the corner of Butler and John Streets in the Old Town.

William Steward was an African American teamster and carpenter. He and his wife Susannah bought the lot in 1834. By the middle of that decade, Niagara's Black community was about 400 strong and owned about 10 per cent of the lots in the town.

The 1.5-storey home was part of what became known as Niagara's coloured village, a community of former Canadian slaves, Black Loyalists and African American refugees. The majority of the Black families lived south of William Street between Regent and Simcoe Streets.

The Niagara Foundation purchased the Steward House, which had experienced many changes through the years, to rescue it from development. The group completed the exterior in 2006, restoring it to its earlier form.

In 2003, the house was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, covering the exterior facade, the structure of the house, and the chimney. Three years later the property was zoned institutional with the intention of creating a museum or research facility on the property.

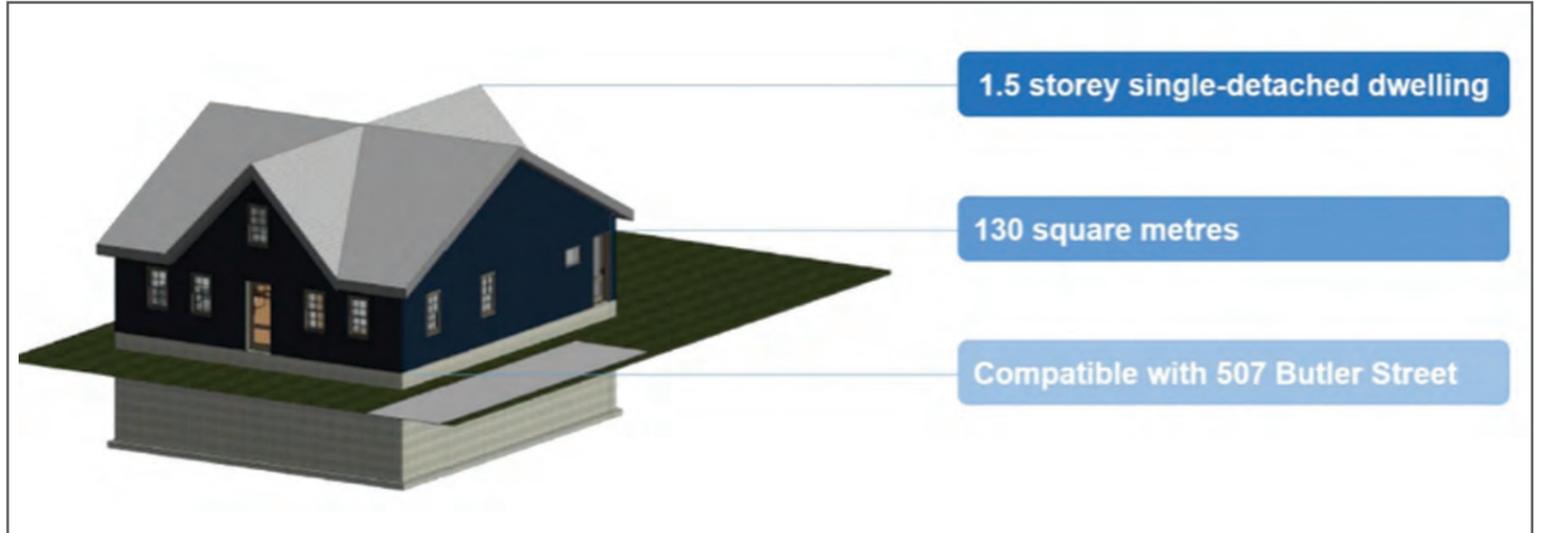
In 2008 an application was put forth by the foundation to sever the lot behind the house. That application was turned down by the town's committee of adjustment because it was too small.

Bruce Harvey, a former member of the Niagara Foundation, bought the property in 2009. He currently rents the historical home to a tenant.

Harvey was given approval under the Ontario Heritage Act in 2013 to sever the lot as long as the town's municipal heritage committee approved the design of any house built there and the committee of adjustments accepted the severance.

The town held an online open house Monday to present information about Harvey's applications. Representatives from NPG Planning Solutions of Niagara Falls, under contract with Harvey, outlined his plans.

NPG's representative stated that the required heritage impact assessment,



This is the proposed design for the house to be constructed on the lot next to the William Steward House on John Street West, from the NPG presentation during the Monday's open house. (Supplied)

planning justification report and streetscape survey were already on file with the town.

In order to build on the lot, Harvey has three applications on file with the town. One is to rezone the property from institutional back to residential. The second one is to attain consent to sever the open lot behind the historic house. The third is to receive a heritage permit to accept the design of the proposed dwelling.

The third condition would also require a temporary protection plan to ensure that any excavation for the new construction would not adversely impact the significant built heritage of the existing house.

Reached at his home Tuesday, Harvey indicated

that the 1.5-storey house he is proposing for the severed lot is only 20 feet high, which is actually lower than the peak of the existing Steward House on the property. And the lot he is severing is larger than the one that he proposed to sever back in 2008, which was turned down.

"The footprint of the house," Harvey said, "is 35 feet wide by 40 feet deep. It's 1,700 square feet. And its design fits in with the design of the surrounding houses on John Street."

The lone participant in the open house Monday was Old Town resident Paul Shepherd, a former president and current director of the Niagara Foundation.

Shepherd questioned NPG about whether or not

the entire property was actually protected under a heritage designation.

NPG's Mary Lou Tanner explained, "There are actually two designations on the property, the first deals with the structure, the second deals with the land area as it relates to archaeological resources. As part of the preparation for this application we've had three stages of archaeological assessment completed in order to meet the requirements of the province, the region and the town."

Turner explained that the designation related to the land in question is not on the land but instead on any archaeological finds that may have been historically significant. She went on to explain that the stage

three dig conducted by North Bay-based Horizon Archaeology, attended and observed by the NOTL Local in October 2020, turned up nothing of significance.

"The region and the province confirm whether or not a stage four dig is required," she said, "and stage four was not required."

Harvey read to The Local the letter he received in May from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries following the work completed by Horizon.

"The William Steward site does not meet the criteria as having cultural heritage value and interest. As such, it is recommended that the William Steward site should be considered cleared of further archaeo-

logical concerns."

Harvey added, "All they found in the dig was basically the dump site of William Steward. It was bits of nails, bits of porcelain, just garbage. They didn't find anything of interest."

Shepherd was the only resident to speak up about Harvey's proposal during the open house. At the end of the meeting he said he was hoping to see the results of the stage three archaeological survey, and Tanner offered to send him that report at a later date.

The next step in Harvey's application will be a public meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Pre-registration is required through the clerk's office to attend in person.



The historic William Steward House as it looks today. (Mike Balsom)



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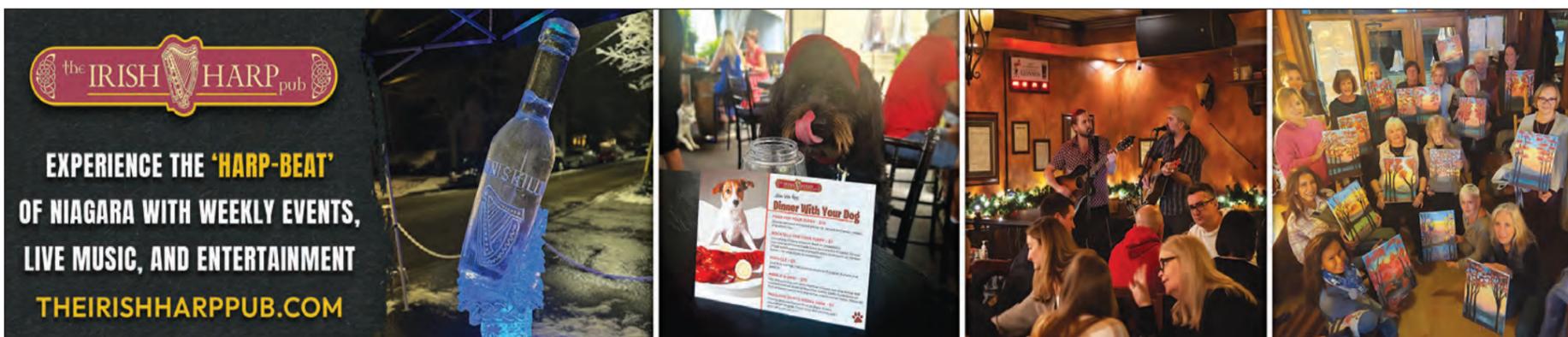
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NOTL couple exploring Thailand on motorcycles — again

**Sharon Burns
Special to The Local**

“They call Thailand ‘The Land of Smiles’ for good reason,” said Roberta Harper, who, with husband Bruce Harper, is on their third self-guided motorcycle tour of Thailand in a year.

The Harpers spoke to The Local from Chiang Rai, a city in the northernmost province in Thailand.

The Garrison Village couple extol the friendly and kind people, magnificent food and stunning panoramas.

“The shrimp is amazing,” said Roberta. “It’s never been frozen. They really know how to cook.” Bruce adds that the street food and breakfast buffets are “phenomenal.”

About two weeks ago Bruce and Roberta travelled from Chiang Rai to the Golden Triangle, where the borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet. “We’re not going the route of all the backpackers. We are avoiding all that and going on a different path. There’s not a lot of tourists going where we’re going. There are 77 provinces in Thailand, and each province is different and unique,” said Roberta.

Their first motorcycle trip, in February 2022, “evolved through COVID,” said Bruce. “YouTube had a huge influ-



It’s not unusual for locals to ask for their pictures taken with Roberta and Bruce Harper (centre). (Photos supplied)

ence. I started watching travel blogs and got interested in a couple who were riding in these places, and that’s when we decided to get our licence.”

Or licences, “because I said I’m not riding on the back of your bike,” laughed Roberta. “I lived in Japan for almost a year after university and I spent a month in Thailand in the ‘80s.

I wanted to take Bruce to Japan because I speak Japanese,” but the pandemic cancelled their plans.

After many hurdles, including Thailand’s Test and Go COVID-testing program, the Harpers embarked on their adventure, and followed up quickly with a second trip last year, in October. Roberta says

they fell in love with the place. “There is so much to discover and learn. We don’t like to just hop into a place, do the tours and leave, we like to hop into a place and learn it, get comfortable for a bit.”

A former high school teacher, Roberta taught Japanese at A.N. Myer in Niagara Falls before retiring as the head of the

guidance department. However, she notes, the Thai language is extremely complex. “Unless you have an understanding of their writing system it’s really hard to figure out, because our letters do not transcribe to Thai. They have sounds that we don’t have and it depends on which translation system you’re looking at. ‘Sawasdee’ (hello) can

be spelled five different ways. There are 44 consonants and 21 vowels, and vowels can come in front of the consonant, or after the consonant, or above or below or wrap around,” she said.

While Roberta learns the language — “I can count to 10 and order a beer,” she jokes, — “Bruce is the logistics guy.” He plans the journey using technology such as Google Maps, which, she notes, isn’t always trustworthy. “We were going up and up and up a mountain, looking for a lookout. We never even got to the lookout because the Google Maps road ended and all of a sudden we weren’t even on the freaking map anymore. We took a wrong turn.”

Bruce and Roberta wear motorcycle helmets with a speaker system, and are riding dual sports bikes, Honda CRF250L, which are “like dirt bikes with lights. Very torquey,” said Bruce. “We are getting better each time,” added Roberta. “I like these ones a lot more — you’re a lot higher up off the road.”

“Some of the inclines here are incredibly steep. You come around the corner and you see this wall and the bike is capable of just going up,” said Bruce. “When they warn you of a steep incline of eight per cent, you know they’re way worse

Continued on page 17

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Three-month tour includes exploring Vietnam

Continued from page 16

than that," he jokes. "That's the only sign they have."

For new riders in a foreign land, Bruce and Roberta have experienced very few mishaps on the road. "Watch out for coconuts," said Roberta. "They do warn you that there are wild elephants," added Bruce. "One time we came around the corner and there's a whole family of monkeys hanging out in the road. They look at you like 'we're not moving.' We tiptoed through those guys."

At 5'9" and 6'3", Roberta and Bruce literally stand out

in Thailand. "I pull off my helmet and they're impressed," said Roberta. "Sometimes the grandparents will run and get the kids to come out and take a look at me."

Roberta and Bruce are equally as impressed with Thai scooter skills. "Women can ride scooters, talking on the phone with a baby on one hand and a kid riding in the back," said Roberta. Bruce described a man they had just seen the day before. "He was in flip flops, had a tray of beer and ice, and was driving down this bumpy dirt track, on this semi-automatic bike, also with our food!"

Bruce and Roberta plan

to tour Thailand for two more weeks before exploring Vietnam. Their three-month tour will end with more self-guided rides through southeast Thailand, averaging around 100 kilometres per day and taking as much time as needed.

Roberta said they have learned to slow down and take it day-by-day. Bruce adds they have learned how to ride a motorcycle, how to ride on the left-hand side of the road and to negotiate Thai highways.

"Driving on the highway is something," said Roberta. "Just picture the QEW and instead of off-ramps, there are just U-turns in the middle of the

highway."

The Local hopes to catch up with the Harpers as they

journey through Vietnam and southeast Thailand, and maybe their next trip as well — they

are already planning another motorcycle ride through Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia.



The Harpers are seeing beautiful, off the beaten track sights of Thailand.

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Niagara Jazz Festival celebrates Black History Month

Mike Balsom
The Local

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival celebrates Black History Month with upcoming performances at the Hare Wine Company on Niagara Stone Road and Mahtay Cafe in downtown St. Catharines.

Juno-nominated trumpet and flugelhorn player Alexis Baro kicks it off Monday, Feb. 6 at The Hare Wine Company. Sax-man Neil Brathwaite and his band follow at the same location Feb. 20, and the Faith Amour Trio performs at Mahtay on Sunday, Feb. 26.

A highlight of all three events is an opening presentation by social anthropologist and musicologist Wade Pfaff, originally from St. Catharines.

"We really wanted to focus on Black artists for the month of February," festival co-creator, executive director and artistic director Juliet Dunn tells *The Local*. "And we're super excited to have Wade talking about Canadian Black jazz history."

Pfaff is a research assistant for *A Black People's History of Canada*, a three-year project to bring more Black history into Canada's schools, run out of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He also conducts research for the Centre for Sound Communities, an arts-led social innovation lab at Cape Breton University.

"My research focuses on Canadian Black jazz history before World War II," Pfaff says on the phone from St. Catharines, where he is visiting with an old school friend. "My PhD that I am working on now covers all across Canada, throughout the United States, the Caribbean and Europe, all the areas where black music came out."

The guitarist, drummer and bass player goes into a lengthy description of the various sub-genres of jazz music and some of his personal favourite musicians before landing on one of his potential subjects for the February festival events.

"One topic would be Mynie Sutton and the Canadian Ambassadors," says Pfaff. "He is our greatest hero from the Niagara Region. To me, he is the one who broke all the colour barriers in Canada. He lived and played in Montreal in the 1920s and 1930s. His Canadian Ambassadors were the best of the best. They played from about 1928 until 1941 in every top venue in Canada and the U.S."

Sutton is enshrined in the city of Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Wall of Fame, soon to find its new home

at the under-construction Cultural Hub. The pianist, saxophonist and trumpeter moved back to his hometown after his father passed away, and worked as a welder.

"He slowly got back into music, and then the musician's union approached him, and asked him to be the co-president of the new integrated union, the first one in southern Ontario," says Pfaff. "He started a new band called The Casuals. He wrote several songs that are still played today."

Sutton spent more than 30 years on the executive board of the Region Musicians' Association, and also founded the Canadian Brotherhood Club of Niagara Falls in 1945, where he acted as president until his death in 1982.

Pfaff is also considering a presentation on women in Canadian jazz and blues, a topic he feels is extremely relevant in relation to Dunn's role with the TD Niagara Jazz Festival.

"When I left Niagara there certainly wasn't a jazz festival here," Pfaff says. "When I found out that the organizer was Black, I thought that was very interesting. It was right before Emancipation Day last year, and she had booked a number of Black artists. I agreed to interview them for a production they were working on."

The role of music, and in particular jazz in social justice, is another topic near to Pfaff's heart.

"Musicians often lead the way when it comes to issues of identity, place and individuality," Pfaff insists. "Music is so infectious that people just can't stay away. When you start playing music the colour of your skin doesn't matter anymore. Music is the great harmonizer."

Pfaff will make his first appearance in Niagara in support of Cuban-born Baro. History is also important to the bandleader, whose 2022 album *Mi Raiz*, pays tribute to the Cuban musicians and composers who have contributed to bringing the trumpet's distinctive sound to prominence around the world.

The former member of hard-bop jazz ensemble Kollage moved to Toronto from Havana in 2001 after touring with Buena Vista Social Club superstar singer Omara Portuondo's band and, at only 19 years old, playing lead trumpet for that country's National Radio and Television Orchestra.

Mi Raiz is his seventh album and the follow-up to his 2018 release, *Sandstorm*, which was nominated for a 2019 Juno for Jazz Album of the Year: Solo. The new



Alexis Baro kicks off the jazz festival's celebration Monday, Feb. 6 at The Hare Wine Company. (Photos supplied)



The Faith Amour Trio performs at Mahtay in St. Catharines Sunday, Feb. 26.

release begins with the martial, military-style cadence of *Campo de Batalla* and winds through the conga sounds of *Tan Lejos*, the festive feel of *En Son de Descarga*, and the funky, jazzy *Timba Jam*.

For the Feb. 6 show in Niagara-on-the-Lake he'll be accompanied by fellow Cuban-Canadians Yoser Rodriguez on bass and Amhed Mitchel on drums, with pianist Jeremy Ledbetter rounding out the quartet. All three played on *Mi Raiz*, which means that some of that album is likely

to take centre stage at the Hare Wine Company.

"We'll play a mixture of everything," says Baro. "Each album has something interesting that I like to share. I will play music from at least three or four of my albums. On all my records, each song has a different ensemble. We'll play the numbers that work best with the four-piece band."

Two weeks later, the Neil Brathwaite Group, led by the saxophonist whose nickname is Bee, plays selections from their 2022 debut album *Bee Thankful*. The group in-

cludes Clark Johnson on bass, pianist Eric Boucher and Wilson Laurencin on drums. Alexis Baro, by the way, guests on one track from *Bee Thankful*.

As a sideman, Brathwaite has straddled a number of genres, including R&B, jazz, blues, reggae, country, rock and world music, working with artists such as George Clinton, Danilo Perez, Winton Marsalis, Salome Bey, Molly Johnson, the Headstones and Jacksoul.

The scene for Black History Month shifts to St. Catharines on Sunday,

Feb. 26 for a performance by the Faith Amour Trio. The in-demand composer, conductor and vocalist won Best Jazz CD and Best Jazz Vocal at the New Mexico Music Awards for her multilingual (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian) 2013 debut album *Bright Eyes*.

Amour's trio will be rounded out by local resident Ross McIntyre on bass and pianist Stu Harrison.

Tickets for all three Black History Month performances are available at niagarajazzfestival.com.

Central Community Centre wants to be busy every day

Mike Balsom
The Local

Sarah Pritula, director of client relations at the Central Community Centre, is excited to see the new York Road facility taking shape as one of Niagara's busiest community hubs.

"It's busy here every day, between the groups using the building and church events," says Pritula. "And we have a number of big events coming up in our main auditorium in the next few months. There's a lot of activity."

The Niagara Rapids Volleyball Club is one of the tenants using the auditorium space. About 1,500 seats for Sunday services in the 13,800 square foot room are all removed each week and tucked neatly under the stage. This

allows the floor to be divided into a number of volleyball courts for the Rapids to hold their training sessions.

"We have a couple of groups that are looking to host some volleyball tournaments," adds Pritula. "And we are actively pitching to host the OVAs (Ontario Volleyball Championships). We also have a dance studio using our smaller auditorium."

That's Auditorium B, a 3,685 square foot room outfitted with a complete high-end audio-visual installation. Charee Romo moved her Peak Dance Company, originally from British Columbia, into Central this year, where she offers classes in ballet, lyrical/contemporary, jazz, tap, hip-hop, acro, song and dance, and musical theatre. Peak also offers programs

called Wee Move and Baby Steps for younger children.

"We have a number of church groups using the meeting rooms, too," adds Pritula. "But we would like to book a lot more community groups. The Centre is perfect for meetings, charity events, product launches and the like."

There are a few larger events coming up in the next few months.

The auditorium will be hosting popular Evangelical Christian author and speaker Andrew Farley on Feb. 25. Farley has written nine best-selling books, including *The Naked Gospel* and *God Without Religion*, and is the lead pastor of The Grace Church in Dallas, Texas.

Farley is an in-demand speaker at churches, con-

ferences, and universities around the United States and in Canada, and has a nationwide call-in program on Sirius XM called The Grace Message.

"He has about a million followers on social media," says Pritula. "This is the second time he'll be joining us. And we've just booked Dr. Caroline Leaf for May 6."

Leaf, an author, researcher, psychologist and professor, will be the keynote speaker for a conference focusing on mental health.

"She wrote a really great book called *Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess*," Pritula tells The Local. "She's going to give some really great tips and strategies on how to keep your mental health on track. It's a whole-day conference, with some local mental health experts running some sessions as well."

Pritula is pleased with the first few concerts that have taken place at Central. Filipino rock band Sponge Cola sold out Auditorium B for an energetic night of music. As well, Allie Colleen, the daughter of country music legend Garth Brooks, headlined a fundraising country music show there last October.

"We have a big dance competition coming up in March, called On the Floor," adds Pritula. "And we're hosting the first-ever Niagara Black Business Awards in November, and a Light of Day event for Parkinson's disease in September. We've just signed the contract for that one."

Light of Day Canada president Dave Rotella saw a social media post of a past concert

at Central and was floored by how great it looked.

"I went down to see it," Rotella says, "and I was amazed by the facility, even just the fact that we have this here in the Niagara region. The stage and the audio-visual they provide make it the nicest space available. And the huge lobby, and the breakout rooms are a bonus, too."

Central has also signed a contract with Canadian Blood Services to host an O-positive clinic. And Pritula adds that she's in talks right now to potentially host the NOTL Pickleball Club.

Pritula is clearly proud of the centre and what it offers

to various types of community organizations.

"The space is stunning, and the sound system is state-of-the-art," she raves. "Everyone who comes in here says how gorgeous it is. We're getting a lot of concert requests, a lot of sporting requests."

She adds, laughing, "We've almost outgrown the building."

"We would love to have more bookings," she continues. "The goal is to really ensure we have the space filled all the time. We have a full event team ready to offer a great experience. We really want this to be a true community centre."



The Central Community Centre has hosted concerts in its auditoriums.



The Peak Dancers enjoy using one of the auditoriums as the Central Community Centre on York Road.

Brock study: perfectionism can add to depression and anxiety

Sharon Burns
Special to The Local

"Let's Create Positive Change" was the slogan for last week's Bell Let's Talk Day, and while the day has passed, it's not too late to create positive change. That's exactly what a Brock University researcher is trying to do in an under-researched area of mental health: perfectionism in young people.

Danielle Sirianni Molnar, associate professor of child and youth studies, is exploring how perfectionism is related to mental and physical health and well-being in adolescents, parents and educators.

In a study with 46 youth, Sirianni Molnar was able to hear young people describe their experiences with perfectionism. "It's not that they want to be perfect, but it is a compulsion, an absolute need. Often people think young perfectionists just want excellent grades, but these students were really clear that they absolutely have to be perfect at all times. Some described it as an angry voice in their head."

Perfectionism is not a di-

agnosis, but, according to Sirianni Molnar, clinicians and researchers have come to recognize perfectionistic tendencies as a part of other disorders, such as depression and anxiety. Also, "there are links and overlap between obsessive compulsive disorder and perfectionism," said Sirianni Molnar.

What can parents look for? "Watch for the perfect mask where the youth wants everyone to think that they have it all together when underneath there is a struggle." She continues, "Some young people will exhibit worry about making mistakes, especially in front of other people and act like it's the end of the world and 'everyone is going to think I am stupid.'"

Other markers may be fear, for example, when a young person won't take risks for fear of failure, they often think "unless I know I can do it perfectly, I don't want to risk it," said Sirianni Molnar. She found that in her study with educators, teachers identified perfectionists as high achievers, but also procrastinators. "They're afraid of handing in anything less than perfect." Other signs may

include rigidity in an approach to an assignment or task, an unreasonable emphasis on organization, and the feeling of social disconnection.

"A lot of research has shown that perfectionism is associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety, but the physical health aspect has fascinated me for some time," said Sirianni Molnar. "A lot of young people experience physical health problems which can range from getting ill more often to immune system functions getting eroded by chronic high levels of stress."

Sirianni Molnar is quick to indicate parents or educators are not to blame. They have good intentions, however, "parental expectations and criticism can be one factor that attributes to a young person feeling as if they need to become perfect."

Acceptance to post-secondary institutions and scholarships are tied to marks, said Sirianni Molnar, and sometimes what happens is young people interpret this as "parents expect perfection. I can't mess up or my future is

not going to be what I want it to be." Also, some youth in Sirianni Molnar's study indicated that they realize life has been hard and if they perform well, it will take the worry and stress off of parents.

Educators may also have a role. "Kids get praised quite a bit for a successful moment but that praise may be lacking when things don't go as planned and kids can interpret that as 'oh, the acceptance and the love and the belonging is contingent on me performing at this level.'"

Sirianni Molnar recommends that adults help young people to understand that they have many options and that there are several different pathways towards their goals. "The pathway isn't linear. Expect barriers and setbacks."

Youth can have "self-compassion, self-kindness and should take into account the broader picture, because society has changed rapidly. Give yourself room to breathe and accept that. Appreciate the world that you're in, and all that you've dealt with. Take time to grieve some of your

losses too," said Sirianni Molnar. In the past few years youth have missed graduation, have had to learn online or in hybrid models, and been subjected to lockdowns. "Give yourself a pat on the back."

Mental health support is available in the region. The Pathstone walk-in clinic has re-

opened at the Pen Centre, and the Pathstone Crisis Support Line, an intervention service providing immediate telephone counselling, operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for children and youth up to the age of 18 and their families. The Crisis Support Line phone number is 1-800-263-4944.



Danielle Sirianni Molnar

Local SPORTS

Softball club offers everything from Learn to Play to slo-pitch

Mike Balsom
The Local

Registration for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Softball Club is opening on Feb. 10. The club is hoping to run programs for children aged three through 18 this summer.

Continuing with changes to the age groups the club made in 2021, the Learn to

Play division is for kids aged three to six, while the Coaches Pitch division covers the ages seven through 10.

The Learn to Play division is set up into two separate groups, one for ages three and four, and the other for five and six.

The overall emphasis for NOTL Minor Softball has always been on developing skills and a love

for the game. Club president Peter Flynn says the organization has become comfortable in its role as a “starter point” for youth interested in baseball and softball. Over the past few years he has seen some of the Pee Wee players (ages 12 to 14) moving on to play hardball in St. Catharines or Niagara Falls, or fast-pitch at the Grantham

Optimist Club in St. Catharines.

Having struggled in the past few years to encourage enough older kids to sign up to play, last year the club began offering a Kids Slo-Pitch league for ages 11 to 14. Flynn points out that the game is easier to learn, easier to play, and is more likely to encourage kids to continue playing ball into

their adult years.

“It went so well last year,” Flynn says, “that we are offering slo-pitch for ages 15 to 18 if enough registrations come in. It’s perfect for these older kids who are working, they can get out to play one night a week.”

The specific nights for the age groups have not yet been finalized. Flynn and

Niagara-on-the-Lake Soccer Club president Carrie Plaskett are working together on scheduling to ensure that kids who want to play both soccer and softball won’t have conflicts.

For information about the NOTL Softball club and to register beginning on Feb. 10, call Flynn at 905-327-1620, or send an email to info@notlsoftball.org.

Under-9 NOTL Wolves win 3, tie 1 and come home champs

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U-9 team travelled to Bradford last Friday through Sunday for the Bradford Blue and Gold Classic Hockey Tournament. They won their first two games in convincing fashion against the Humber Valley Sharks and North York Knights.

Game 3 was a hard fought battle against the host Bradford Bulldogs that ended in a tie, 3-3.

The Wolves ended up facing the same host Bulldogs once again in the championship game Sunday. It turned out to be another close battle, ending up tied 2-2 at the end of the third period.

The Wolves came out on top in overtime, when Dean Pagnotta set up Ryan Riddle, who knocked in the game-winning goal in exciting style. Stellar goaltending from Peter Kotsanis was key to the Wolves’ success throughout the weekend.



Celebrating being #1 are: (back left) Hunter Berry, Will Lidstone, Bentley Berry, Colton Meleskie, Dean Pagnotta, Leo Pillitteri; (middle) Nash Funk, Ryan Riddle, Nicholas Riddle, Russell Palmer, Owen Thorimbert, Jacob Rogers; and (front) goalie Peter Kotsanis. Coaching the team are Chris Riddle, Dave Funk, Mario Kotsanis, Jay Thorimbert, Mike Palmer, Brandon Berry, Joe Pagnotta and Steve Lidstone. (Photo submitted)

NOTL Soccer expecting good turn-out for variety of programs

Mike Balsom
The Local

Heading into the second post-pandemic summer, and with the recent World Cup having created a bit of buzz for the sport, Niagara-on-the-Lake Soccer Club president Carrie Plaskett is expecting registration to be even stronger this year.

Just under 350 kids played soccer in NOTL last summer, including exactly 100 in the age four and five Timbits division. And since registration opened at notlsoccer.ca only two weeks ago, already 132 children have signed up to play.

“We had a waitlist last year for the U9/10 division,” Plaskett says. “With the Timbits, we were able to get some last minute uniforms and ensure that all 100 kids had a chance to play. We only had 10 registered for the U15-17 age group and had to cancel that one.”

Plaskett is hoping that

getting the word out early enough will encourage enough of that older age group to register so the club can run a program for them this summer.

The focus for the club seems to once again be mostly on house league, with only two Niagara Soccer League travel teams running out of NOTL. There will be a U-9 girls team, moving up from the U-8 division last year, and a U-8 boys team.

“The travel program usually depends on having the coaches who want to commit to it,” says Plaskett. “We did have some interest last year for another age group, and we lined up a coach, but it was too late, and some of the players had already moved on to play at other centres.”

The summer season will kick off on Saturday, May 27 with the opening festival, involving all of the house league teams and interlock teams in NOTL.

It will conclude Saturday, August 26 with the celebratory year-end festival.

“It was so great to have that back last year,” Plaskett says of the final soccer Saturday in 2022. “So fun. It wraps it all up. The kids get so excited, they are all together that day. They love getting their medals. And the opening festival is great too, because you can see how successful our program really is with all the kids in one spot.”

Plaskett adds that coaches are still needed for this summer. She encourages parents of registered children to consider helping out with a team. And the club is still looking for sponsorship for the program.

“We really value our partnerships with local businesses,” she says. “That’s how our club runs successfully, through the generosity of all these local businesses who sponsor us. We have a few lined up, but we’re hoping for a few more.”

SUDOKU PUZZLE (MORE PUZZLES ON PAGE 23)

8				4			5	2
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Local SPORTS

Preds hold onto fourth place after two weekend wins

Mike Balsom
The Local

After beating Tottenham Friday and Windsor Saturday, the Niagara Predators continue to hold onto fourth place in the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's South Division. And though only four points separates them from the next three teams, the Preds have the advantage of having played fewer games than Northumberland, St. George and Tottenham.

And with the addition of some new players in recent weeks, Niagara seems to be peaking at the right time.

"All the players that we have brought in have added to the team," head coach Kevin Taylor says. "They all bring something different. I think we've made improvements, and we're a good team now. Good teams find a way to win."

Forward Declan Fogarty led the way in Friday night's 7-1 win over the Thunder in Virgil. Fogarty netted four goals, linemate Cameron Savoie added a goal and four assists, and Nick Savoie notched three helpers in a game dominated by the Preds at both ends of the ice.

Leo Savin, Tumur Mirzaiants and Fogarty all scored in the first period, during which Niagara outshot Tottenham 20-5, en route to a 59-23 shots on goal advantage for the game.

Fogarty stayed hot to start the second, scoring just 33 seconds in off a set-up by Cameron Savoie. Tottenham scored their only goal of the game at 9:41 on the power play, spoiling the shutout attempt by Niagara goalie Zane Clausen, making his first start for the Preds.

Cameron Savoie restored the four goal lead for the Preds with just over five minutes remaining in the period, unleashing a wrist shot between two Thunder defenders that Thunder goalie Marco Squeo missed completely.

Some pushing and shoving resulted in penalties for both teams five minutes into the third. In the four-on-four situation, Nick Savoie passed the puck from behind Clausen's net and found Fogarty just past centre ice. He made a move on Squeo and potted the puck for the hat trick.

With 6:45 remaining in the game, Thomas McGrath won a faceoff in the Thunder zone and Cameron Savoie ended up with the puck. He skated behind the Tottenham net and centred it to Fogarty, who knocked it in for his fourth of the night and the seventh and final Predators marker.

An effusive and ebullient Declan Fogarty spoke to The Local as he came off the ice.

"My linemate Cam Savoie just seemed to find my tape all

night," Fogarty enthused. "And the same thing with his brother Nick, with that stretch pass. I've been playing hockey with those two brothers my whole life. It's good to be back with them here in Niagara."

The St. Catharines native and former Welland Canadian and Thorold Blackhawk was a mid-season addition to the Preds, along with Cameron Savoie. His four goals almost doubled his season total to nine.

"Four goals from a guy who doesn't like to shoot the puck," said head coach Kevin Taylor Friday about Fogarty, who has 17 assists and 26 points on the season. "It's always a bonus like that. Hopefully he can continue with other games."

Heading into Saturday night's game in Windsor, Taylor says he didn't know what to expect from the Aces, a team that had surprised the Preds back in November, beating them 4-1 in Windsor, one of only three wins thus far for the last-place team in the South.

On Saturday, it took a late surge of three goals in the final seven minutes of the game for the Predators to break a 2-2 tie and seal the victory, their 15th of the season.

"We got that one out of the way," says a relieved Taylor. "It's so difficult to play against them. They have some good players, but they always have a short bench. The guys see that and think it's going to be point night, but it never is."

Niagara defender Guy Manco had the game's first goal in the opening period, assisted by Askar Aimanbetov and Timur Mirzaiants. But Windsor's Samuel Senft tied it up late in the second with his

41st goal of the season.

Anthony Tropea put the Predators back in the lead 1:52 into the third, but Ryan Patterson tied it up again for the Aces with just under eight minutes remaining. The Preds finally took the lead once again 51 seconds later when Leo Savin beat Windsor goalie Justin Sheets.

The Preds shut down the Aces the rest of the way, with insurance goals added by Mirzaiants and Cameron Savoie for good measure.

Mirzaiants finished the game with a goal and two assists, while linemate Aimanbetov added three helpers. Goalie Zane Clausen picked up his second straight win. Clausen, Mirzaiants and Aimanbetov are all newcomers to Niagara, playing in their second, third and second games respectively.

"We put the two Russians (Mirzaiants and Leo Savin) and Aimanbetov from Kazakhstan, together," Taylor says. "The way they see each other, the way they move the puck is phenomenal. Leo in particular really stepped up his defensive game."

On the Niagara roster since the start of the season, Aimanbetov only arrived in Canada last Tuesday. It took months for his travel arrangements to be finalized.

Though Aimanbetov didn't get a chance to practice with the team last week, Taylor dressed him for Friday night's 7-1 win over the Thunder. He demonstrated excellent puck sense and a keen ability to find his teammates with passes, even though he collected zero points Friday.

"His leadership is something we have missed all year,"

raves a very impressed Taylor. "The way he carries himself is great. He doesn't put up with much from the other guys on the bench. He was a real leader on Saturday. He said some things in that game and the guys tended to listen to him."

With Niagara's number one goalie Ryan Santini potentially out for two more weeks after re-aggravating a shoulder injury, Taylor will be relying more heavily on the newly acquired Clausen. At 6'4" and 201 pounds, the 20-year-old from North Dakota strikes an imposing figure.

"He's a huge presence in net," Taylor agrees. "It's nice having that intimidation factor when they come down the ice. They think they have a spot but they don't because he's so big that he covers a lot of the net."

With the two wins, the Predators have 33 points on the season. Northumberland is in fifth in the South Division with 32, followed by St. George with 31 and Tottenham with 29. Niagara hosts the St. George Ravens Friday night.

"They've gotten better, they've added some players," Taylor says about the Ravens. "This is a game we have to win. With all the games (nine) we have coming up, to be realistic, I'm giving us one more loss."

The potential loss he is referring to is on Feb. 13, when the Predators visit Durham, a team they have yet to beat this season. The other games include four against last-place Streetsville, another against the Ravens, one in Tottenham and one against Northumberland.

Puck drop is 7:30 p.m. Friday at Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena.



Predator Zane Clausen won his debut start in goal against Tottenham, and repeated the win in his second game.



Nick Savoie takes a shot as Alex Andrews screens Thunder goalie Marco Squeo in Friday's home game.



Cameron Savoie winds up for a slapshot at his home game Friday night.

Wolves U16 A team brings home gold



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U16 A played four games over a three-day tournament last weekend and finished undefeated with an impressive 0-loss, 1-tie and 3-win record to overtake West Niagara in the finals 2-1. The annual Doug Robinson All Star Challenge is hosted by West Niagara Minor Hockey Association. Playing for the Wolves were Calo Zambito (C), Lucas Williams (A), Noah Whyte (A), Easton Andres (A), Quinten Davis (G), Braden Sawyer (G), Brandon Falk, Billy Pillitteri-Smith, Ben DiPietro, Braeden Dyck, Jarvis Neufeld, Jacob Dulas, Joshua Dulas, James Quinn, Jacob Cook, Mitch Olsen, and Andrew Bayne. (Photo supplied)

Local SPORTS

Rangers U-19 girls basketball team beat the Grizzlies

Mike Balsom
The Local

A total team effort led to the second straight win, 55-40 over the visiting Grimsby Grizzlies, to start the season for the Under-19 Niagara Rangers girls basketball team.

The Rangers starting five made quick work of the Grizzlies, dominating play at both ends of the court. Ava Froese led the way during the first quarter, drawing fouls under the Grimsby basket and

draining the corresponding free throws. The Grizzlies only managed one successful free throw and a three-point shot, with the Rangers enjoying a 10-4 lead at the end of the first.

The Rangers defence continuously forced turnovers and translated many of those opportunities into quick baskets. As the third quarter progressed, Niagara climbed to a 32-point lead over Grimsby, and was on the positive side of a 49-19 score heading into the fourth.

Coach Shawn Pylypiw saw that margin as the perfect time to turn to his bench to spell off his starters.

“We wanted to allow our bench players to get some game time experience,” Pylypiw told The Local. “This being our second game of the season, it was good to see the girls come together and work well as a unit.”

Grimsby began chipping away at the Rangers lead but couldn't catch up, despite outscoring Niagara 21-6 in the final frame.

“It's important for me to provide some valuable court experience and to help build their confidence and knowledge,” Pylypiw said, “so that they can be put into the thick of things and believe in themselves and play the game they know how to play and not over think. They communicated well on the court and helped one another when needed.”

Pylypiw credits Jailah Gabbidon and Julia Diemer who took over the primary ball-handling duties off the bench, as well as Morgan Lambert and Sydney Chaves for playing vital minutes with tough, tenacious defense to continue frustrating the Grizzlies.

On the scoreboard, Froese led the way for the Rangers with 20 points in the winning effort. Mikayla Wallace and Kyla Pylypiw each contributed seven.

The Rangers travel to Beamsville District Secondary School Feb. 4 for four games in the Grizzlies Invitational Tournament. Saturday will see them playing at 10:30 a.m. against the Burlington Force, and 4:30 p.m., when they face the Toronto Triple Threat.

Their Sunday, 9 a.m. tipoff is against the Parry Sound Stingray. The start time for their fourth game Sunday is to be determined by where they place after the three games.



The Rangers' Ava Froese shoots from the free throw line. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Jailah Gabbidon passes the ball to a Rangers teammate.



Kyla Pylypiw drives to the Grimsby basket.



Julia Diemer gets ready to shoot.



Sydney Chavez wrestles the ball from a Grizzlies defender.

Local HAPPENINGS

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February 3rd

4:30 to 7:00 pm

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Timothy 1:1-14; 2:1-2

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OBITUARY



RAVESI, ANTHONY "TONY"—It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved Tony on January 26, 2023 at the age of 76. Tony suffered from Parkinson's and sadly succumbed to complications of Covid.

He is predeceased by his parents Domenico and Maria Ravesi.

He leaves behind his loving Soulmate, Judy; his daughter Angela (John) and his son Tony (Kelly), and his adored grandchildren Alex, Giada and Lucas.

Also left behind are his stepdaughter, Kelly and stepson,

Michael, as well as step grandchildren Chelsea, Jordan, Chloe, Mackenzie and Andrew.

Left to share in our loving memories of Tony are his sisters Stella (late Gerry), Elvira (Ron), Columba (late Domenic) and brother Joe (Lynn). He will be lovingly remembered by many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Tony was employed for 42 years at W.S. Tyler Co. in St. Catharines, as a Fine Wire Weaver. He was a proud union president for 30 years, working tirelessly to improve working conditions for the members.

Tony was also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 124 in NOTL for 40 years, and a member of the Lions Club (NOTL branch) before his illness.

Sincere thanks to the staff at Upper Canada Lodge, especially Queenston House, for their support and kindness throughout Tony's stay, and for their guidance through our long goodbye.

Cremation has taken place. Visitation will be held at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Friday, February 3rd from 2-4 & 6-8 pm. A memorial service will be held at the funeral home on Saturday morning, February 4th at 11 o'clock. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

"Dad, may you be at peace and soar with the birds."

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



CROSSWORD (SUDOKU IS ON PAGE 20)

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12
13							14				15		
16							17				18		
19						20					21		
			22		23			24		25			
26	27	28			29			30					
31					32		33	34		35	36	37	
38					39			40		41			
42				43		44				45			
			46		47		48			49			
50	51	52					53		54				
55				56		57			58		59	60	61
62				63					64				
65				66					67				
68				69					70				

- Across:**
- 1 Statue of Liberty material
 - 7 Got together
 - 10 Buddy
 - 13 Dry gulch
 - 14 Cab
 - 15 Lawyers' grp.
 - 16 Flower of Rhode Island
 - 17 Rends
 - 18 Affirmative signal
 - 19 Call the whole thing off
 - 20 Very strong winds
 - 21 First lady
 - 22 Stand-up guy
 - 24 "Thanatopsis" poet William --- Bryant
 - 26 Large handbag
 - 29 Noah's boat
 - 30 Dumped in Boston harbor
 - 31 Homeless child
 - 32 Thick slice
 - 34 First light
 - 38 Bart Simpson's driver
 - 39 Cheryl --- of "Suburgatory"
 - 41 Wine valley
 - 42 Terse
 - 44 Aflutter
 - 45 Operation Overlord
 - 46 Half a Latin dance
 - 48 Wetland
 - 49 Snitches
 - 50 "Mamma Mia" mamma
 - 53 Fidgety
 - 55 Pursue ardently
 - 56 Ascends
 - 58 Worn out
 - 62 Limb
 - 63 Repast
 - 64 Medical prioritization
 - 65 National boys' gp.
 - 66 Corrosive
 - 67 Confer
 - 68 Male offspring
 - 69 Directed
 - 70 Fall flowers
 - 10 Control board
 - 11 Aloft
 - 12 Burdened
 - 14 Heptathlete's specialty
 - 20 Little lady
 - 23 Pulverize
 - 25 Lots of things to do
 - 26 Pairs
 - 27 Cuss
 - 28 Former Yugoslav dictator
 - 33 Sires
 - 35 Zilch
 - 36 --- the crack of dawn
 - 37 Is profitable
 - 40 Coordinate
 - 43 Rising current of warm air
 - 47 Each
 - 50 Gun-barrel cleaners
 - 51 Trunk
 - 52 One of the old empire builders
 - 54 Fast rabbit relatives
 - 57 Stated
 - 59 Deceased
 - 60 "Prince ---", Borodin opera
 - 61 Tidings
 - 64 Uninformative schedule info.
- Down:**
- 1 Grotto
 - 2 Are you out ---? (Poker)
 - 3 Nudge
 - 4 Cops in general
 - 5 Intention of
 - 6 Baloney
 - 7 Postal delivery
 - 8 Anticipate
 - 9 Cold comforts?

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from January 25, 2023

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

Across: 1 Copper; 7 Met; 10 Pal; 13 Arroyo; 14 Taxi; 15 A B Late; 60 Igor; 61 News; 64 T B A. **Down:** 1 Apiece; 50 Swabs; 51 Torso; 52 Roman; 54 Hares; 57 Said; 59 Begets; 35 Nader; 36 Up at; 37 Pays; 40 Sync; 43 Thernal; 47 Gille; 23 Mash; 25 Laundry list; 26 Twos; 27 Oath; 28 Tito; 30 Tissues; 10 Panel; 11 Above; 12 Ladder; 14 Track and field; 20 Or in; 3 Prod; 4 Police force; 5 Eye to; 6 Rot; 7 Mail; 8 Expect; 9 Acid; 67 Bestow; 68 Son; 69 Led; 70 Asters. **Down:** 1 Cave; 2 56 Fits; 58 All in; 62 Arm; 63 Meal; 64 Thage; 65 B S A; 66 D-Day; 46 Cha; 48 Fen; 49 Rats; 50 Strep; 53 Itchy; 55 Woo; 34 Sunup; 38 Otto; 39 Hines; 41 Napa; 42 Short; 44 Edgy; 45 Comic; 24 Cullen; 26 Tote; 29 Ark; 30 Tea; 31 Wait; 32 Slab; A; 16 Violet; 17 Rips; 18 Nod; 19 End it; 20 Gales; 21 Eve; 22



MALINS, MIRDZA—Mirdza Malins passed away the morning of January 30, 2023 at Upper Canada Lodge at 98 years old. We would like to thank the incredible staff for their attentive and incomparable supportive care during her four years there, and, in particular, during the palliative stage over the last 2 weeks.

Mirdza lived a long life, with a unique perspective on the world's changing landscape over the century of her life span. She was a true survivor and was fiercely independent, making her way from her hometown of Riga, Latvia, living through the second world war and finally immigrating to Toronto at the tender age of 22.

We are grateful for having moved her to Niagara-on-the-Lake at the age of 92 (first to Pleasant Manor and then to Upper Canada Lodge) to assure her physical and emotional proximity to her family during the last 6 years of her life.

Full of energy and resilience, she was a source of wonder to all who met her, as she 'related' her way around the building and grounds in order to feel the wind on her back and the sunshine on her face.

With devotion, Imant Malins and Suzin Schiff



VEENENDAAL (MACDONALD), ANNE—With heavy hearts we announce the passing of Anne Veenendaal (nee MacDonald), age 63, of Burlington, Ontario with her loving family by her side. January 22, 2023, marks the end of a 12 year, hard-fought battle with Huntington's disease.

Anne was born and raised in Sioux Lookout, Ontario where she met and married the love of her life, Tony Veenendaal. Following the birth of their first daughter, Jennifer, in 1981 they moved to Strathroy, ON. Their second daughter, Lindsay, arrived in 1984. In 1994, they moved one last time to Burlington, Ontario. A devoted wife and mother, Anne

was predeceased by her parents, Marie (1987) and Bernie (2011), her daughter Lindsay (2016), and her brother Jack (2022). Anne leaves behind her husband of 43 years, Tony, along with her daughter, Jennifer (Jeff), grandchildren Kate and David Zimmerman, siblings Sharon (Chuck) Gera, Janet (Mel) Landry, Raymond (Linda) MacDonald, and Joyce (Gary) Marton. Anne will be forever missed by her in-laws, Karen MacDonald (Jack), Bert Veenendaal (Lise), Herman Veenendaal (Rosemary), Helena Copeland (Rob), numerous nieces and nephews, and the many people she befriended in the town she loved.

Visitation and funeral took place January 27, 2023 and Anne will be laid to rest alongside her daughter, Lindsay. Those wishing to do so are asked to make a donation to the Huntington Society of Canada or a charity of your choice.

Online condolences can be left at www.dbburlington.com



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