

Ralph Mellanby dies at 87

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notllocal.com FEBRUARY 2, 2022 Volume 4 • Issue 5



## Skating for his mom

Steve McNeil skates with Bones, the Ice Dogs mascot, at one of his annual events to raise money for Alzheimer's at the Gretzky Estate Winery last Wednesday. For story see page 17. (Mike Balsom)

## Council approves budget with 2.99% increase

Penny Coles  
The Local

At a special council meeting Monday, the town's 2022 operating budget was approved, with an increase over last year of 2.99 per cent.

The capital budget was approved by council in December.

Coun. Allan Bisback, chair of the budget committee, called it the "maintenance budget 2.0," because for the second year, COVID and other issues required staff to make tough decisions to keep to a small increase, including limiting the transfer to capital reserves and holding off on capital projects.

It's not a sustainable budget, but it's a prudent one, said Bisback, adding the only way

to have a sustainable budget in the future is to look for new revenue sources.

"It's reasonable cautious, and it reflects the current reality of our environment."

Treasurer Kyle Freeborn said in his presentation to council that some of this year's pressures include staff salaries, volunteer firefighter compensation increases, insurance increases, inflation at about a 4.5 per cent increase, legislative requirements, and COVID-19 measures.

In October, staff was asked to keep the budget increase in the range of two to five per cent.

They've reduced it twice since then, the first time from a 13.20 per cent increase,

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## Outspoken councillor criticizes budget decisions

Penny Coles  
The Local

During a heated disagreement over the 2022 budget at a council meeting Monday, Coun. Erwin Wiens reaffirmed he has no plan to run for another term of council.

He has said in the past he wanted to serve one term, with the plan of leaving the town in a better position than at the start of the term. He hasn't changed his mind about leaving, but he's frustrated that

he hasn't been able to follow through on the second part of his goal.

The benefit of not seeking reelection means he can speak his mind without worrying about votes, as he's been speaking his mind from the time the term began.

What may have come as a surprise Monday was his blatant criticism of council decisions and budgets over the last term.

"We've done a poor job," he said. "We've tried to do

too much. We have too many things on the go, too many balls in the air."

As other councillors took their turn congratulating town staff for their hard work and speaking of how pleased they were to come up with a budget that has an increase over last year of less than three per cent, Wiens lambasted them for approving a budget that is unsustainable and irresponsible, and which he alone opposed.

Wiens also voted against

the inclusion of the municipal accommodation tax in the 2022 budget, which council approved to fund the town's commitment to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum expansion. While he said he supports the tax, he was not in favour of the timing or the way council went about it, using support for the museum expansion to force the issue. He also disagreed with moving ahead before having public consultation for a tourism strategy that was originally ex-

pected to be developed alongside the new tax.

"Our strategy when we were elected was to be sustainable, be responsible," he said. "When this council was elected in 2018, our strategic plan was to have a sustainable budget, and we spoke of how we were going to be responsible with public funds. But within the first year we had a massive tax increase. I supported it at the time because we needed it to clean everything up. Year two we reduced transfers

from operating to capital reserves, saying we'd come back in year three, and we reduced a lot of operations we said we'd do, because we couldn't afford them," said Wiens.

"Year three we ended up with what we called a maintenance budget, and we didn't replace anything we'd taken out. Now we're into 'maintenance 2.0' and we've removed a number of things from operations. We've raised taxes,

Continued on page 3

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# Chamber president leaving NOTL for new opportunities

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Eduardo Lafforgue, president and CEO of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, is leaving his position to take the job of director of tourism for the Yukon Territory.

His resignation as chamber head, which includes the Convention Bureau (Tourism NOTL), is effective Feb. 28.

His announcement takes many by surprise, as he enters his third year working on behalf of local businesses and the tourism industry.

A hiring committee has been appointed and a search for a new president and CEO will be conducted. The chamber will continue with ongoing programs, Friday's announcement said. Paul MacIntyre, chair of the board, assisted by the board members and Nicole Cripps, director of events, will handle day-to-day operations until a new president and CEO joins the organization.

Those who know Lafforgue's background might not find it too unexpected that he is moving on — he has lived, worked and travelled around the world, beginning at a young age. He has a master's degree in architecture, but with travel such a big part of his life, he has always

had a deep interest in tourism that has influenced his career choices.

At this stage, he says, when the call came from the Yukon government offering him the job of tourism director, he felt he had to seize the opportunity.

He explains that a little more than a year ago, he was on a conference call that talked about tourism recovery across Canada, and he presented some of his ideas. Then a short time later, he learned the Yukon government was looking for a tourism director, when the human resources department reached out to him and suggested he apply. He had a phone conversation with them, and was told to apply online.

"At the time, I didn't. It was too complicated," he says of the process for applying.

It was also at the time that a fire destroyed the house where he and his wife were living in the Old Town, and they were preoccupied with all that was going on at that point in their lives.

Then, another phone call, after he'd put it out of his mind.

"In the end," he added, "they said they were looking locally, and nothing happened. I completely forgot about it."

On Jan. 11, he got a call

again, from human resources asking if he was still interested — he was surprised by the call, assuming they had hired someone else. "It was completely unexpected," he says.

When they offered him the job, he said he needed time to think about it, and they gave him two days to decide.

"They made me an offer," he says. "That made me feel so young," he laughs. "It seemed like it was a job for younger people, but it was offering all the things I want to do."

"If Biden can run for president at the age of 78, I can try something new at my age," he jokes.

Biden has more than a decade on Lafforgue, but he explains a large part of his motivation for taking the Yukon job is the knowledge that "there might not be too many more opportunities like this for me. That is really the reason. It's an opportunity to do something different, something I'm really looking forward to. And it's now or never."

He will be located in Whitehorse, and although he's never been there, he says, "it looks beautiful in photographs. It also looks very cold, and very impressive surrounded by nature, the mountains, the lakes."

He is also looking forward



Eduardo Lafforgue said his HO HO HOs in December as he carried sacks of canvas to drape around tree bases, also climbing a ladder to put up lights on a Christmas tree at the cenotaph. He's worked with a reduced staff due to COVID through a difficult time, and received many words of praise for his almost three years leading tourism initiatives in NOTL. He takes his new job in the Yukon Territory March 1. (File photo)

to the challenge of promoting a very different kind of tourism — Europeans visit in the summer, tourists come from Japan in the winter.

And his wife Anika, an artist, is also excited to go.

"She's even more crazy than I am," he jokes.

He takes on the position in Yukon on March 1, but the move isn't a challenge for the couple who have moved often, to locations all over the world.

"This is not the first time in our lives where we've made this kind of move. We have a certain experience for it. And the support of my wife is key. It wouldn't happen without her."

And it's not just to go with him on this next adventure, but to help move the house, although this time, he says, they will keep a home in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

After the fire last year, they rented a house, and just recently put an offer on purchasing a home. That closed Jan. 10, and it was Jan. 11 the call came from the Yukon.

Their plan is to keep their new house and leave furniture behind, so they can come back for visits.

Lafforgue says he feels very confident he is leaving the local tourism industry in

good hands, with MacIntyre, the chair of the board, vice-chair Andrew Niven and treasurer Tim Jennings, CEO of the Shaw Festival, taking over and looking for a new Chamber president.

Since his early days in NOTL, he says, "We've come a long way, and we have a fantastic board, with extraordinary, very talented people. They will make the right choice of a replacement for me. I'm not worried at all. Niagara-on-the-Lake, as a short-haul destination, is poised to be one of the first to recover."

Lafforgue says he is very grateful for all those who reached out to him once the news of his resignation was announced.

"So many kind words, absolutely fantastic emails. It's been very touching to hear all these testimonies, very, very touching."

In the announcement of Lafforgue's resignation, MacIntyre said "Eduardo and I share a love and respect for Niagara-on-the-Lake's exceptional success in tourism development, and the unique brand equity of its individual partners. We both recognize the need to move forward in collaboration with all our partners and stakeholders. I am grateful for what Eduar-

do has brought to the table during his time with us, setting us in the right direction and managing us through the tourism crisis of the last two years. I wish him luck in his exciting new role."

Town CAO Marnie Cluckie also had words of praise and thanks for Lafforgue's time at the chamber.

"I extend my heartfelt thanks to Eduardo for his leadership, passion and commitment to the success of tourism in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Town staff appreciates the connections that Eduardo has made at all levels of the organization and his collaborative style. He will be sincerely missed for his energy, passion, vision, and strategic thinking. I have no doubt he will be a tremendous asset to his new organization as he has been for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber and Tourism NOTL," said Cluckie.

"We have been through some incredibly difficult years," says Lafforgue. "I am proud of the work the team has done, and I am grateful to have been a part of it. I thank Paul MacIntyre, treasurer Tim Jennings, the board and our town CAO, Marnie Cluckie and her staff, for their continued support."

## Accommodation sector wants input on new tax

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

growth — not to replace old funding.

Speaking to council Monday night about a municipal accommodation tax, Paul MacIntyre said he was not there to debate the tax, but to ask that it be "within the spirit and framework of the intent of MAT legislation."

The chair of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce board, and vice-president of operations for Vintage Hotels, MacIntyre said he hopes it will create a new funding source to invest and drive sustainable

As the province lifts some restrictions this week, tourism operators "are prepared to meet the challenges ahead - whether it is through creativity or innovation, or simple unrelenting focus on value and customer service. But over the past two years we have become exhausted — not only do we feel exhausted but many have exhausted their capital, their lines of credit and their cash flow."

Imposing a new tax levy on the hardest sector of this

pandemic is asking the sector to also invest in time, resources, and possibly technology, he said.

"There is no new tax switch to flip on our point of sales technology or accounting software in June or July. And everyone's systems are different. It may involve tech investment, contractual updates, training. The administration of collecting and administering any funds from a new tax will take time and

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# Second maintenance budget minimizes increase

Continued from page 1

then after budget committee deliberations to a 10.40 per cent rise, and finally to 2.99 per cent, with a general levy of \$13,670,566, up \$543,793 from last year. With \$151,187 in assessment growth, this year's budget will cost taxpayers \$1,216, or \$44.08 more than last year, for an average residential property pegged at \$536,960.

With a storm water management levy requirement of \$879,443, up from \$456,998, the average residential property tax for an urban taxpayer increases to \$1,338.64, with an increase of \$53.17 over last year on the average tax bill, for a total increase for those urban properties of \$97.25.

This year for the first time, made easy with new budget software, staff looked at a four-year historical trend, and was able to reduce the budget by \$365,000 through reduced reserve funding, including the legal fee reserve.

The "solid investment" in the storm water management program, Freeborn explained, is to fund regular cleaning of storm ponds, which hasn't occurred for several years in NOTL, allowing them to fill with debris. The increased cost will continue through future years to allow the ponds to function properly, as intended, meeting all the legislative requirements, he said.

Reducing the increase to 2.99 per cent, Freeborn said, was chiefly a result of staff brainstorming sessions, which he referred to as the "dragon's den," with each department revising their costs to find savings.

The largest reductions were from the operations department, for items such as road maintenance and parks and recreation facilities.

Legal fees were budgeted at \$500,000, and in response to a question from Coun. Erwin Wiens, about a possible decrease, Freeborn said "I hope so."

A 15 per cent increase to transit covers the cost of four vehicles instead of two, he said, in answer to a question from Coun. Wendy Cheropita.

Coun. Gary Burroughs made a motion to defer the

\$15,000 rainbow crosswalk until 2023, to allow for more public discussion.

Although there was public consultation on social media, "it didn't have a huge response," he said, and there has been no discussion with the public about where the crosswalk would be located. Burroughs intended his motion to defer the decision until budget discussions of 2023, "once we have more detail on location."

He said NOTL "has a history of being supportive of all groups. Now we're coming up with something that is making a statement about what? That's what I'm unclear about."

In the end, his motion was changed to include consultation about the location of the crosswalk, as well as five rainbow benches, to be scattered around the municipality, but not to put it off until 2023.

One of the main discussions Monday was over the municipal accommodation tax.

The budget committee, which includes Couns. Norm Arsenault, Allan Bisback, Gary Burroughs, Sandra O'Connor and John Wiens, had considered and approved a two per cent tax on accommodations of five rooms or more, with increases to three and then four per cent in the coming years, to fund a \$100,000 commitment for the NOTL Museum expansion. Council had already approved the tax in August, but tied it to an overall tourism strategy, which is expected to take 12 to 18 months to complete, with only preliminary steps taken so far.

In December, when council discussed the capital budget, some councillors voted against funding certain items with the municipal accommodation tax, including the museum expansion, and that part of the budget was not approved.

They were concerned that the timing is wrong for such a tax, as the tourism industry hasn't had time to recover from the pandemic, and also that tourism stakeholders have not been consulted or part of the discussion.

Three items in the 2022 capital budget which were expected to be covered by the accommodation tax were

funding for NOTL Tourism's Icewine Festival; a \$100,000 Victoria Street beautification project; and \$100,000 toward the NOTL Museum expansion, one of five payments over five years to honour a \$500,000 commitment.

The Icewine Festival has been cancelled due to COVID restrictions, and a contribution to the spring event organized by the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, 13 for 13, will be funded through parking reserves, council agreed.

The Victoria Street project is on hold, and council moved forward with the accommodation tax to fund \$100,000 for the museum in 2022.

There were two presentations before the budget discussion, one from Paul MacIntyre, the chair of the NOTL Chamber board, and also vice-president of operations for Vintage Hotels, the other from Janet Jones, representing a chamber committee, the NOTL Tourism Advisory Working Group.

They both asked that, given the acceptance of the municipal accommodation tax as a done deal, a governance committee be created to involve tourism stakeholders, in discussions of how the tax will be administered and what it will fund.

They both requested time for operators to work out a process to collect the tax. Jones said she hoped it could be put off until the 2023 budget, and objected to council approving funding for a project before any money has been collected.

A motion by Arsenault to approve the accommodation tax was approved, at two per cent this year, three next and four per cent the year after on five rooms or more, to be instituted July 1, that reserve accounts be established, and that there be consultation with the accommodation providers over the next several months.

Arsenault called the goal of the motion to approve the tax was to create "a placeholder." There is no money for a MAT reserve, and when there is, it will be available as a funding source for the museum expansion, an initiative council has approved, he said.

Bisback, who has supported an accommodation tax from the beginning, said if the

\$100,000 for the museum is deferred for a year, "we have to find \$200,000 in 2023." As a museum board member, he added, he believes the commitment toward the capital budget to be "extremely important," allowing the museum to access funding from upper levels of government.

And since the majority of visitors to the museum are tourists, "it's a typical cost for a MAT to cover."

Coun. Clare Cameron spoke passionately against the motion to fund the museum expansion with a municipal accommodation tax. "It's the wrong time, given the state of the tourism industry and how very precarious it is going into the third year of a pandemic," she said.

Cameron said she couldn't support putting the tax in place until a tourism strategy is in place, and also because of the disruption it would cause to the accommodation sector when guests are already being booked for this season.

"My preference would always be cooperation instead of coercion," she said, "and I'm very uncomfortable with how this has come to the table, as if we have cotton bolls in our ears. I feel there is something very coercive about this."

To add to the problem, "we've recently lost our head of Tourism NOTL and president of the Chamber of Commerce (Eduardo Lafforgue has resigned, effective the end of the month) who normally

would have been a key stakeholder with this, which makes the time seem even more off for me."

Cameron said she is also uncomfortable with the way "it conflates this need for a MAT with the funding for the museum. I feel we're being forced to choose between the municipal accommodation tax and museum."

If it was levy-supported, it would increase the budget hike to 3.75 per cent "completely within the original guideline. If we want to show our true support for the museum, and not use the museum as a lever to pass this tax, we should build more support for our beloved museum on the levy, where it belongs."

A further motion, this one by Coun. Wendy Cheropita, was approved to more specifically address the tax, calling for the creation of a governance advisory group made of seven or nine tourism stakeholders, selected by staff to assist in the design, governance and process for the program, without holding up its implementation in July.

Key initiatives supported in the budget to advance council's priorities, Freeborn said Monday, include the tourism strategy, planning workshop action items, the heritage conservation district expansion study, the transportation master plan and the former hospital site initiative, which has called for proposals for use of the building.

Drivers for the 2022 budget, Freeborn told councillors, include advancing service delivery initiatives, including improvements to the town website; developing a framework towards a sustainable budget; and ensuring environmental stewardship in decision-making.

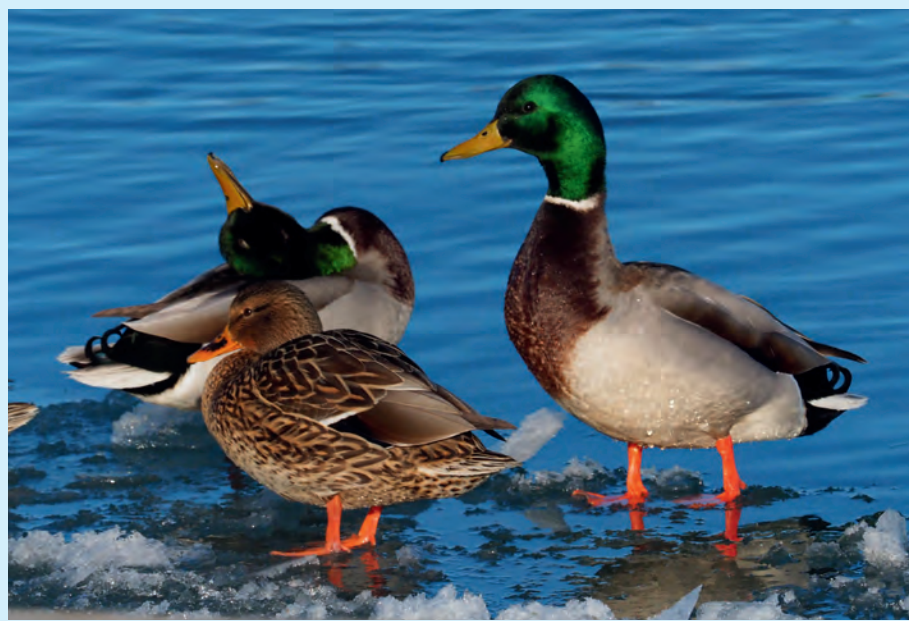
The goal with this year's budget principles haven't changed from 2021, councillors heard — to maintain core services, while minimizing the impact to taxpayers; delivering on current commitments and obligations; protecting town assets; continuing to successfully address COVID-19 impacts; and a new one this year, advancing the priority initiatives of the town.

New studies for 2022 include an asset management plan, planning items including rezoning of Old Town, additional funds for the Heritage Conservation District Plan, planning process mapping, a secondary plan design guide update, review of Official Plan winery policies, review of the pros and cons of a community planning permit system, and some enhancements to the application policy to the Official Plan.

New studies also include a character study of the Randwood Estate and a recreation master plan.

Voting in favour of the budget, Lord Mayor Betty Disero said, "it's not sustainable, but we'll get there."

## Sunshine on a cold day



There was ice in the water at Navy Hall, but the sunshine made for some great photos of the mallards who didn't seem to mind the cold in the Niagara River. (Dave Gilchrist)



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# Restaurants back in business with limited capacity

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Beginning Monday, the province is allowing restaurants and some other businesses to reopen at 50 per cent capacity.

Opening their doors couldn't come soon enough for most local restaurants. Justine Lakeit, front of house manager for Caroline Cellars Winery, says they are thrilled to be opening again. "We have such an amazing local clientele, and we are excited to see everyone again – whether it's for dining in or picking up takeout."

The restaurant isn't as busy in the winter months, so reduced capacity is not an issue during the week, Lakeit says, "but of course we wish we could be at full capacity on the weekends. At least there's a timeframe in place with plans to open at 100 per cent capacity in the next re-opening step."

She expects they will continue to do a lot of takeout, which helps with their revenue stream.

"We are disappointed that although the rest of the province's restaurants don't have to do contact tracing anymore, the Section 22 orders in place in Niagara mean we still have to do contact tracing for all guests, in addition to checking proof of vaccination QR codes. We are also disappointed that the stream of free rapid tests for small businesses has completely dried up – we cannot access these at this time."

Having access to rapid tests would mean employees could use a test if they come into contact with someone with COVID, or if a customer reports back that they were at the restaurant in the couple of days prior to testing positive, she says. "Of course any employees who have come into close contact or have a household member test positive need to isolate for the recommended amount of time – we aren't using rapid

tests in lieu of isolation. Currently we have to purchase rapid tests for our business instead of accessing the free tests from the government."

Jovie Joki, owner of The Irish Harp, has had the ability to stay open through this latest shutdown with her outdoor patio, which has been popular with locals. She's continued to have bands outdoors on the weekends, and some takeout specials – she's always looking for something extra to draw people, especially in the winter. She's looking forward to seeing the 50 per cent capacity limit lifted, but even with just eight tables on the patio, it's been worthwhile staying open and keeping her staff employed, says Joki.

She plans to keep the patio open throughout the winter – there are always some who prefer it to indoors, either because they don't have proof-of-vaccination to eat inside, they just feel more comfortable outdoors, or because they love to bring their dogs with them – the Harp provides dog mats and bowls of water for their four-legged guests.

And Joki will continue to hold events, such as a comedy night and a trivia contest, to help lift the spirits of those anxious to get out and have some fun.

"It's definitely time," she says. "We're happy to be open for the community."

Jeff Letvenuk, marketing manager at Pillitteri Estates Winery, says they have been offering curbside wine ordering, and their restaurant, BarrelHead, has successfully been offering takeout, "but we are looking forward to being able to serve guests and taste wines again."

The winery tour and tasting program, he adds, "is an essential part of how we present our wines to guests, and it is the best way we can build relationships with our customers."



Regular Bob Doherty, Chef Natasha Dietsch and server Kim Hopcraft and were all happy to have indoor dining as an option Monday at the Sandtrap. (Photos supplied)



Bricks & Barley's Marco Spione is grateful to be able to open their doors safely and start serving their great food again.

Andrew Niven, director of marketing for Konzelmann Estate Winery, says there is a feeling of excitement within the industry "as many wineries across Niagara-on-the-Lake once again open their doors and welcome back guests to new experiences and revitalized tasting programs."

At Konzelmann, he says, "there is a sense of optimism. We're thrilled to not only greet visitors and engage with guests, but welcome back our team members, many of whom have been on very limited hours throughout much of the recent lockdown."

During the last month, says Niven, "we've taken the opportunity to enhance our onsite programming, including a brand new Lakefront Lounge (wine by the glass), and an out-

door S'mores and wine experience called Fireside Flights. Our approach at the winery will continue to be a major focus on guest experiences."

Eric Quesnel, general manager of Treadwell Cuisine, The Gate House Bistro and Starbucks on Queen (a part of 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa), says "we are excited and more than ready to open our doors again to indoor diners. We are taking all precautions possible for a safe reopening."

All 124Q locations "have passionate and committed teams that have been eagerly awaiting this. They can't wait to welcome back their regulars and visitors from out of town," he says. "We are simply grateful to be open. A 50 per cent capacity is a higher opening capacity than we had anticipated, so it was welcome news. Fortunately we have a beautiful covered and heated patio at our Treadwell that allowed us to continue to



Andrew Niven at Konzelmann Estate Winery says they're delighted to be welcoming visitors, and offering great guest experiences.



Queen Street Starbucks manager Aman Pandher is glad customers have the choice now for takeout or sitting indoors.



Skyler Richard of BarrelHead has been looking after takeout meals, but indoor dining is now being offered as well.

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H A P P Y

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# EDITORIAL

## Good news: infections have peaked, restaurants open

This is turning into one of those good news/bad news weeks.

It seems omicron cases might have peaked, and are beginning to decline in Niagara and across the province. At the same time, we're celebrating the opening of restaurants and other businesses.

That's the good news.

Not so reassuring is that we have no way of knowing whether that decline will continue, or lead to another wave of infections. Our local acting medical officer of health says it might be too soon to be reopening — he fears we could be in for another repeat of this time last year, when the province relaxed restrictions and we saw a resurgence of cases.

And if not, if we manage to avoid another surge, if we don't see a large number of cases from new variants, we could truly be

headed to the endemic stage. However, as Dr. Mustafa Hirji warns us, it's not as if COVID will be behind us.

He thinks many of the measures we have learned to protect ourselves from COVID could be ongoing, even permanent. He suggested building codes might be changed in the future to improve ventilation. We might continue to wear masks, especially indoors in the winter. We might even want to rethink our holiday schedule, having a longer break in December so if we are infected during holiday celebrations we don't take it back to work or school. Hirji spoke of societal changes over decades — most related to improved sanitation, such as no longer spitting in public, and a better understanding of hand-washing — that have reduced or eliminated some

diseases, such as tuberculosis and diarrheal diseases.

As always, he stressed the need for vaccinations, and suggested being fully vaccinated should mean having booster shots — the two doses we may have got months ago are not very effective against omicron. And with the global unvaccinated population, it's pretty much a foregone conclusion there will be new variants, which may or may not require more, different vaccines, he warns.

Also not so good is the ongoing news about the truck convoy, and the trouble it is causing Ottawa residents and businesses as protests continue. It's also disrupting traffic on major highways in some areas of the country, and police are beginning to look at it as unlawful.

It has become a reminder to

withhold judgement, and to be understanding of those who have different beliefs. Unfortunately it's all the other issues, aside from vaccinations, associated with the protest that make understanding so very difficult.

And speaking of understanding (or lack thereof), there has been a bit of indignation locally for an alternative school in Virgil that is not playing by the COVID rules. As frustrating as that might be to some, and with no knowledge at press time of what might be done about it, if anything, it's a good reminder that many parents are frightened for their kids, not so much due to COVID, but for their mental health. This group in Virgil is trying to do what they think is best for their children. Who among us doesn't worry about the long-term effects

of this pandemic on youngsters, teens, even university students — and wish it could be different for them. Yes, most parents choose to follow the rules, whether they agree with them or not. That's also an important lesson for our kids. But for those who choose differently, we can wish the best for them and their families.

On a completely different note — sad news that Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo Lafforgue will be leaving town for colder climes. He has been a passionate and knowledgeable supporter of local businesses, and he will be missed. All the best Eduardo!

Also, after a tense and pretty acrimonious budget debate at council Monday, Coun. Erwin Wiens said he won't be running for a second term. He is someone

who is strong in his beliefs and not afraid to say what he thinks, and it is always good to hear a different opinion. Hopefully he can be persuaded to change his mind.

While he was not happy about the budget, to put it mildly, there was a lot of work that went into it by staff and the budget committee, and residents will be happy to hear there will be only a slight increase to their taxes.

For those who want to concentrate on the good news, there are all those restaurants we love to visit, and can now (Niagara's section 22 restrictions apply). Or if we're not yet quite comfortable with that, there are so many opportunities for great takeout. Restaurants opening at 50 per cent capacity could use that extra revenue.

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

## Local VOICES: Town needs to review its hunting boundaries

**Shirley Madsen**  
Special to The Local

Did you know the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake issues hunting licences? Did you know the Province of Ontario allows hunting for deer within the limits of the town? Did you know you can set up a hunting blind on private property and shoot deer with a crossbow within the limits of NOTL?

Go to the Town of NOTL website, Ontario.ca, Niagara Region (NPCA) or the Ministry of Natural Resources websites and wind your way through their hunting bylaws and regulations and you will find out what you can hunt, when, with what weapons, the specific locations and the cor-

responding fees and hunting limits. Apparently, it is entirely up to the Town of NOTL as to where the hunting boundaries are designated for the respective wildlife and fowl, etc.

Now, you may believe this can all be trusted to the respective levels of government to manage on a yearly basis and keep abreast of all the new developments within their jurisdictions and the proximity to people, homes, recreation facilities within the community.

However, I would seriously challenge this premise and submit to you (resident and taxpayer of NOTL) that this is not the case.

Do federal, provincial or municipal elected officials have any idea as to exactly what the ground rules are for hunting in



Hunters are enticing deer from Niagara Shores Park, close to where people are walking, says a local who believes NOTL should rethink its hunting boundaries. (Photos supplied)



the Niagara Region and specifically NOTL?

More importantly, does the general public and specifically the residents of NOTL (a tourist destination for millions of visi-

tors each year) understand how close they are to these specific areas designated for hunting?

Today, as you drive along Lakeshore Rd. toward NOTL (just East of Four Mile Creek Road) you will notice a peach orchard on the north side with two deer hunting blinds (structures) on the property, approximately 30 metres from the west side of the Parks Canada/DND lands where much of the NOTL wildlife live. These blinds are also approximately 100 metres from a winery and several residential homes.

It is not unusual to see people walk along the Parks Canada/DND fence line down to the lake/marsh.

To entice the wildlife, especially deer, a large quantity of apples has been dumped to attract them from the Parks Canada property. I can tell you from a personal perspective I do not consider this form

of luring deer with bait to be hunting. These blinds are erected yearly and taken down after the season.

Environmental philosopher Gary Varner identifies three types of hunting: therapeutic, subsistence and sport. Each type is distinguished by the purpose it is meant to serve.

Now I understand hunting, hunters and as some would say we need to control the population so thinning is a process that has evolved as a result of population growth amongst species and growth of our towns and villages. What is difficult for me to wrap my head around is how the municipality, region and province allow this practice to take place in a populated area beside a Parks Canada property (Niagara Shores Park) where many residents and tourists walk year-round!

Five years ago, the town's

director of corporate services was contacted and stated "the map of hunting boundaries, first made in 1970, is updated as communities grow." In the last five years the town has grown considerably, and over the past 20 years doubled in population.

More and more people are out using walking trails, parks (where available) and generally outside enjoying the outdoors, especially now COVID-19 has become a part of our daily lives.

When was the last time the town updated the hunting bylaws? More importantly, when is the last time the province updated its hunting regulations? Grimsby's original bylaw said "no hunting in Grimsby on land or water," which kept the hunters under control for almost a century.

Let the hunters hunt, but not within our town limits. Let the people we elect at the municipal, regional and provincial level introduce the necessary changes to ensure NOTL has kept abreast of the changing times.

We moved to the Niagara region because we love the tranquility, peace and enjoy seeing the wildlife. It is time to review our current bylaws and input from our taxpayers and visitors. NOTL residents and visitors, make your voices heard.



## View from the couch

**Donald Combe**  
Special to The Local

*The Song of Lunch*, Prime (2010), is a lunch-time meeting of two former lovers. The film is a poem, a special, private language, which

the viewer may or may not understand. This story-telling style captivated me, as did the intensely fine performances of Alan Rickman and Emma Thompson.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves

to go to 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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# COMMENT

## Library ready for safe, gradual reopening

**Cathy Simpson**  
Library CEO  
Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library reopened for in-person visits on Feb. 1, and we're very pleased to welcome everyone inside again.

Library staff began planning for the safe reopening following the provincial announcement public health restrictions would ease Jan.

31. We're now open Tuesday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Fridays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday openings are planned for March when in-person programs resume. Programs remain virtual throughout February and curbside pickup appointments are still being offered.

We plan to gradually increase opening hours this year, including Sunday and Monday. The increase de-

pends on several factors, including budget approval, which will allow hiring and training of more frontline staff because, as in other sectors, the pandemic has reduced our staffing levels. So far, we've limited the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace by following provincial and regional health directives and by creating "work bubbles" to minimize contact among employees.

The library board has been meeting virtually to mitigate the spread and continues to provide excellent governance. The board recently approved a vaccination policy for library employees and volunteers. This policy ensures the library meets its obligation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect employees and the public, and to maintain a healthy and safe workplace.

As well as planning this week's reopening, staff are also organizing March break activities. Like all of us, kids are craving social interaction, so we're planning for in-person programs. They'll be a mix of drop-in and sign-up activities, including a family movie night, art projects, makerspace sessions, gaming and coding classes. Ms. Addie looks forward to welcoming

children and parents back to the Rotary Room, and we're excited to introduce our new makerspace facilitator, Aedan Johnston, who will run the coding classes and makery sessions.

All our re-opening plans

ultimately depend on the course of the pandemic and public health directives, but we're seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and look forward to seeing you in the library. Thank you for your patience and understanding.



Library intern Emma MacDonald is ready for reopening. (Photo supplied)

## Responsibility for fire safety must be shared



**Jay Plato**  
Deputy Chief, NOTL  
Fire and Emergency Services

At the time of writing this article, fire has claimed the lives of 17 people in the month of January, within Ontario. Most recently, six children have passed away as a result of fires in Brampton and Sandy Lake First Nation. These tragic events serve as a somber reminder that fire safety is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone knows they need a smoke alarm in their house, but so many are still unsure exactly where to put it, that the batteries need to be changed, or that they expire. Fire prevention departments across the province work tirelessly to push these critical messages. Yet, time and time again, we meet individuals through public education events or emergency responses that are unaware of these items. Between fire departments, the provincial government, and businesses developing and making fire safety products, strategies are in place to ensure citizens, not just in Ontario but across Canada and the world, become fire safe. These parties working together can still not do it all. The last step is personal accountability for ensuring you and your family are fire safe.

Every municipality in Ontario must establish a program that includes public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention. This is mandated by the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. For most municipalities, this is completed by the local Fire Department. This is the first strategy and tool used to create the behavioural change required surrounding smoke alarms and other fire safety messages. You don't have to look very hard to find these messages all over the place. There may be posters in your workplace, ads on social media, firefighters talking with community members at events, or interviews with Fire Prevention Officers or Fire Chiefs on the news. Fire Safety messages are spread everywhere frequently. Not all people across Ontario can be reached by these methods, however. This is where the provincial government comes in to assist.

The provincial government has enacted legislation requiring all homes have working smoke alarms. This law provided municipalities and fire departments with additional tools to assist in trying to ensure citizens are remaining fire safe. New homes must have smoke alarms installed on all floor levels, outside and inside bedrooms, and older homes must have them installed on every floor level and outside bedrooms. Not having smoke alarms in these locations can lead to charges, fines, or even jail time. If education does not

seem to be working or sinking in, fire departments have the ability to enforce these laws with the intent of leaving a more lasting impression about the requirements of having a working smoke alarm.

Lastly, while fire departments are doing what they can, businesses developing and creating fire safety products are also working hard to assist in making homes safer, making it easier to keep you and your family safe in a fire emergency. The introduction of hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms helped ensure you were alerted of an emergency on another level in your home faster. These devices can now also be connected wirelessly in some cases. Built-in 10-year lithium batteries now don't require a battery change for the life of the device. Residential sprinklers are also a fantastic tool to assist in keeping your family safe. There are many misconceptions about the operation of sprinklers and their capabilities; however, that's an article for another day.

With these organizations working together using education, legislation and technology to keep the citizens of Ontario safe, there is one last step that these parties cannot control. These organizations cannot control personal responsibility. Fire safety is everyone's responsibility. Please take the necessary steps to ensure you are keeping your family safe. Test your smoke alarms monthly. Change your batteries at least once a year. Ensure your smoke alarm is not expired.

## Local LETTERS

### Local should devote page to convoy

I have great concern that our Public Health is mandating for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren a vaccine in name only, this is still in the experimental stage until 2023.

I would have hoped The Local would have done a full page on the truckers convoy to Ottawa 2022, who are standing tall against all these mandates. If you listen to the Zello Walkie Talkie App you will hear young children thanking the truckers for giving them a future, and parents thanking the truckers

because their seven, 12, and 15 year-olds contemplating suicide now have a hope that they will have a future.

Yesterday in our Niagara Region people at the Husky Travel Centre on York Road were handing out food to those travelling to Ottawa, scores of people standing on overpasses waving our Niagara convoy with support.

As a Local paper please be a voice also for those standing tall for our freedom... Lest We Forget.

Thank you for hearing my

heart and have an awesome day.

**Janet Hemphill**  
St. Davids

P.S. A Niagara local convoy plans to support the truckers, alternating Saturday and Sunday weekly. This week will be Saturday, Feb. 5, meeting at the Husky Travel Centre in NOTL between 12:30 and 1 p.m., leaving to do a 'slow roll' to Grimsby via Hwy. 8 and ending at the Niagara Gateway Information Centre on the service road at Casablanca Blvd.



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# Restaurant owners relieved indoor dining returns

Continued from page 4

accommodate seated dining, but not everyone is inclined to dine outside.”

The opening of indoor dining, even at a reduced capacity, “is helpful for us to welcome a greater number of seated diners, and a sign that we are again headed in a positive direction. Our doors are open and we look forward to safely welcoming even more guests as soon as it is allowed.”

At Sandtrap Pub & Grill, Bob Doherty, a great daily regular couldn’t wait to come in for lunch, right at 11a.m., says restaurant co-owner Paul Dietsch. Staff, including server Kim Hopcraft and Chef Natasha Dietsch, “are all happy we are open,” daily from 11a.m. to 1 a.m., he adds.

“Fifty per cent capacity is better than nothing. We are licensed for 155 because of the large space, so 70 to 75 people spaced out allows for comfortable indoor dining. Our great customers kept us going during takeout, but nothing beats having them inside, having a meal and a drink, and interacting with them.”

Maria Mavridis of Cork’s Bar and Grill says she will only open for weekends in February. “We don’t know what to expect as far as business goes.” At the Queen Street restaurant Monday to prepare for reopening, doing some cleaning and prep with her team, Mavridis says, “the street was dead. There weren’t any tourists or visitors, so our decision

not to open weekdays is a good one so far.”

She says she stopped at Ruffino’s Pasta Bar & Grill on Mary Street to talk about a future fundraiser, and owner Ryan Crawford said they had only a few tables all day.

“Reopening during February, which is traditionally a very slow month for business in NOTL even pre-COVID,” says Mavridis, “will be challenging for staff to keep busy.”

Marco Spione of Bricks & Barley in Virgil says “we’re extremely relieved, and have anticipated the reopening of restaurants at half capacity.”

They’ve done their best to comply with government mandates, and have been successful, he says.

“We were glad to be able to offer takeout and delivery for the community, regardless of reduced revenue. I think it’s important to stay consistent as a business to offer product and services even in these uncertain times. Any type of business is good business.”

They look forward to offering great quality food and impeccable service, regardless of capacity and look forward to the upcoming weeks “where we can move into full capacity and hopefully back to normalcy. I’m sure that everyone is beyond frustrated. Bricks & Barley is the place to help relieve that frustration.”

Rob and Danielle Begin of The Grist in St. Davids, which just opened last spring, say they had made the difficult decision to close their restaurant a week before the government shut-



Rob and Danielle Begin of The Grist say it’s been a rollercoaster since opening last spring. (Photos supplied)

down, out of an abundance of caution.

“It’s terrifying to have had the momentum we had built taken away so quickly, and have to try to claw back to some sort of normality. Every day owners of small businesses like ours go through so many highs, followed by so many lows, and the cycle seems to repeat itself. It’s a roller coaster of emotions,” says Rob.

To say they are nervous about reopening would be an understatement, he adds. “All our hopes, dreams, hard work and savings are hinged on a singular thing, our business.”

They’ve been worried most about their team, he says, many of whom they have had to temporarily lay off, “worried about their livelihood, their families and the financial strain this may have caused to each of them individually.”

He’s also concerned about whether they will return to a hospitality industry “that has been so inhospitable.”

“We worry if we’ve missed a step with so much time off,” he says, “we worry about the increased labour costs recently imposed by the government, and how that will impact the staff, our business and the guests, and we worry about the dramatic rise of basic goods and services, and the limited availability of normally readily available products.”

Rob says they think “long and hard about other business owners who have suffered much longer than ourselves, and respect their efforts even more for enduring the hardship they have had to undertake for such a prolonged period of time.”

They wonder, he says, “if life as we knew it will ever be



Justine Lakeit of Caroline Cellars Winery will be happy to have capacity limits lifted.



The patio has been popular at The Irish Harp, but owner Jovie Joki is happy to offer indoor dining again.

the same as it once was, or if this becomes the base camp for a new kind of normal. We don’t know what the todays will hold, but know we will have to do more tomorrow than we did

yesterday.” It’s an exhausting task for many, he says, who “already gave everything into each of the everyday we’ve already been through.”

# Governance an issue with accommodation tax

Continued from page 2

effort by us all.”

MacIntyre also stressed the need for “proper governance” to create accountability for all stakeholders, for the municipality, and for the DMO (destination marketing organization) that will administer a portion of the tax.

“It is no secret experience in Ontario and other jurisdictions has shown that without proper governance, there is a strong tendency for municipalities to allocate MAT revenues inappropriately or ineffectively,” he said.

MacIntyre referenced accommodation tax legislation in Huntsville, Ont., which al-

lows the municipality to spend its 30 per cent of the revenue on tourism infrastructure such as signage, biking or hiking trails, capital investment of new tourism attractions or facilities, support of community events and organizations, enhanced funding to small community grants, and its Chamber of Commerce visitor information services.

What is not eligible includes ongoing road maintenance and repair, capital projects and capital repairs to municipal facilities, and operating costs of municipal facilities.

The tax funds should be aligned with an effective tourism strategy, he added, started in part and driven by the town,

with the DMO for support and expertise, tourism stakeholders and residents, the day it goes into effect.

“Let’s bring the industry, elected officials, and as equally important the community together so we have a strong plan. Let’s include economic impact studies, let’s include forecasts for the future, let’s include any empirical data so we are not quoting numbers based on opinion, but rather fact.”

Janet Jones, chair of the chamber’s tourism advisory working group of business members, was at council to represent the accommodation sector, where the municipal accommodation tax has been “a hot topic,” she said.

She asked councillors for a governance document “to see things go forward in a transparent manner, transparency being the number one issue for many of us.”

She said some members of the sector “are confused about how we’re going to spend or consider spending money designed for tourism infrastructure, when we don’t have a tourism strategic plan.”

The tourism strategy should be in place prior to discussions about the money being spent, she said.

She also called for representation from the accommodation sector and other interested parties in the development of some form of governance document.

“If we want buy-in, if we want the best way to do this, I don’t know how we cannot consider the various members of the accommodation sector.”

She’s hoping that council “is looking for as much cooperation and communication as possible,” she said.

“Transparency looks to me like a separate bank account, looks like documentation of discussions available to public, and annual reporting.”

“My most concerning item is I don’t understand how we could possibly consider spending money we don’t have. We haven’t received one penny from this tax.”

There is no information about how much tax there will be to spend, and no imple-

mentation system in place, she added.

“I’m very concerned that this item is part of the 2022 budget. It needs to not be spent until 2023.”

Most accommodation bookings for this year are already in place, and the accommodation owners “will likely eat the increase,” she said.

While councillors approved moving ahead with the municipal accommodation tax by July 1, 2022, they also approved a governance committee that would include stakeholders and residents, to be put together as quickly as possible and work concurrently with the development of a tourism strategy in the coming months.

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# 'I apologize to next council in advance'

Continued from page 1

investigated selling off assets, and we're looking for other funding."

"We had four years to make it sustainable," Wiens continued. Instead, "we've increased taxes incredibly."

He disagreed that the budget was a tough one because of COVID — more revenue was earned from parking than expected, and more from utilities.

"We haven't lost money on COVID," he said. "We can't use COVID as an excuse."

"We have reports coming back all the time saying we have to spend money, but we have no money. We're hiring people for customer excellence when right now operations for 2023 are lower than in 2018. We don't have a revenue problem, we have an expense problem, and we've never addressed it."

Instead, he said, "we went back to operations and reduced it. I'm leaving after four years, leaving the next council to have a huge increase or huge cutbacks, because we're not sustainable."

Every time somebody asked for something, he added, "we said yes."

Now the town is in a situation where it can't afford necessary operations, "and we think it's a victory that we went back to operations and cut more. We never cut any-

where else. The average person expects the day-to-day stuff," he said, counting on their roads and culverts to be fixed, and their sewers to be flushed, while in reality taxes are being increased three per cent for fewer services.

One of his biggest disappointments is the tree bylaw. "We spent less on trees than the previous council, but we spent way more on the administration of a tree bylaw. This isn't the way it was supposed to be. We were supposed to make the hard, heavy decisions to run the day-to-day operations."

He also points to some of the expensive legislative requirements, such as the need to properly dispose of soil in ditches, and the cleaning of storm water ponds, which have been ignored for too long.

The next council will face either a huge increase in budget, or huge cutbacks in spending, he warned.

Talking to The Local Tuesday morning, he was just as outspoken about his disappointment with council decisions, especially over the budget.

"I've been consistent in everything I've said over the last four years," he said. "We said we were going to be professional, make sweeping changes, and yet year after year, the budgets have not been sustainable. These are my taxes, and my neighbours' taxes."

He spoke of more than 150 "action items" to be dealt with by town staff, while issues that should have priority, such as roads and facilities maintenance, are put off, as taxes continue to rise.

"We're going to hand this off to the next council. I feel bad I won't be there to deal with it. I apologize to them in advance."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero had the last word before the vote for the budget proceeded, and said she couldn't let Wiens' comments go without a response.

"I'm sure we're all living on the same planet. We've all had to deal with COVID and those issues."

"When we arrived here three years ago no one ever anticipated that developers would be taking us to court, and that we'd have to react and defend the town from lawsuits," she said, explaining the high cost of legal fees, for which council has been criticized — this year there is another \$500,000 in the budget for legal fees.

"People look to us and say we're spending too much on lawsuits. We have to respond to them or our town would be much worse off in terms of development, and people taking advantage of us, than we are today. I'm quite proud that all of us, or most of us, have decided throughout this term to defend our positions."

They have not been law-

suits the town has instigated, she said. "Benny Marotta made it clear he would take us down by making us spend a lot of money. I think the successes we've had show us we've done the right thing to defend our town. I'm very proud of what we did. It needed to be done."

Addressing the municipal accommodation tax, she said, "We've talked about it since 2016. There have been so many discussions, and each time we're asked to hold off, hold off. It's a tactic not to do it. You are never going to get people to come to the table to start talking seriously about it until you tell them there's a deadline. Now there's a deadline."

She said she supports bringing stakeholders to the table. "If I was a member of the chamber, I'd think about focussing on Tourism NOTL (a branch of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce) because that's where we're going in the future. They will be getting money to spend on tourism. I would beef up and try to get the strongest NOTL Tourism going that I can, and work with the town to do that. The only authority we have to get revenue is either through fees, taxes, and the only other tool the government has given us, a municipal accommodation tax. That's why every other municipality across Ontario is implementing a municipal accommodation tax."



Coun. Erwin Wiens says he has other plans for the next four years, helping his community in ways other than by serving on council. (File photo)

Disero also spoke to the issue of operations, with every department having a reduction from their ask. "We were at 13 per cent in asks, and that came down to under three (per cent increase). Everyone took a bit of a hit, and operations had to take a bit of a hit too."

To play one department against the other is not productive at all, she added.

Disero said she could support this budget because "we've set a roadmap to be sustainable. It's not going to happen in one year, and I trust that the incoming council will be better off if they have other revenue streams, like MAT, to pay for things."

The money should be used to pay for things like washrooms on Queen Street, patios, or bicycle paths, as well as going to NOTL Tourism "to market our town in a better way."

Government is messy, she said, and democracy is messy.

"I'm proud of the direction we're taking, not only with the budget but with the town. And if we had to spend money to go to court, I was happy to defend the town."

Wiens responds there are core issues that continue to frustrate him, and taxpayers should be frustrated as well.

"I have said from the start that I would run for one term, and try to make my town a better place. I thought we could get it ready for the next people to take over. And I'm disappointed that we didn't do that. The most important thing we do is the budget. I wanted to give everyone a clear direction of where we're going. But there is no direction, no view or plan of being sustainable. What are we going to say to the next council, 'we've made a mess of this, now fix it?'"



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# Celebrate Seniors Golden Years Guide

## Tips on managing a virtual health appointment

Many physicians and other healthcare practitioners are providing care through phone or video calls. While this took off because of the pandemic, virtual appointments seem here to stay. They're a great way to help keep everyone safe while still addressing many of your healthcare needs.

To make sure you get the most out of your time with your doctor, follow these tips:

- Before your appointment**
- Choose a private and quiet location with minimal background noise.
  - If it's a video appointment, make sure there is ample light so your doctor can see you clearly. If you need to show them a part of your body, wear loose-fitting clothing.
  - Have on hand any devices your doctor may have recommended, such as a thermometer, bathroom scale or blood pressure monitor.
  - Gather any information

you may need, including your current medication list and pharmacy name, location and phone number. Also take note of any healthcare data such as recent blood pressure readings or glucose levels.

- Write down a list of questions and concerns. Have a paper and pen to take notes.

### During your appointment

- Keep in mind the call from your healthcare provider may come in as a blocked number.
- Give yourself extra time, as the call may come in a bit before or after your scheduled time
- Let your doctor know if someone else is with you and introduce them.
- Keep an open mind. Although the appointment might feel different, try to treat it like a regular visit. Ask questions. Schedule follow up appointments if needed.

### Technology tips

- Choose whether you'll use a smartphone, tab-

let or computer. Ensure that your device is charged and that you have access to a reliable connection.

- Video calls work best with high-speed internet. If possible, consider using a wired connection.

- When booking or confirming your video appointment, ask which app or program your provider will use

and download it before your session. Find more health tips and information at [kidney.ca](http://kidney.ca). [www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)



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# Broadcaster, author Ralph Mellanby dies at 87

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

Canadian broadcasting pioneer and Niagara resident Ralph Mellanby passed away Saturday at age 87.

From 1966 to 1985 he guided CBC Television's Hockey Night in Canada (HNIC) through its golden years, ushering in game-changing innovations that changed the way hockey and all sports was aired around the world.

As executive producer, he was at the helm of HNIC while Canadians followed the plays being called by the likes of Howie Meeker, Dick Irvin Jr., Bob Cole and Harry Neale. As well, he was largely responsible for giving HNIC hosts Dave Hodge, Ron McLean and Don Cherry their platforms on national television.

The broadcaster was born in Hamilton and attended Wayne State College in Detroit after high school, attaining a degree in communications and playing semi-pro baseball. He also worked part time at CKLW-TV in Windsor.

From there, he made stops at WXYZ in Detroit, Chicago's WGN and in 1961 at CFCF TV in Montreal, where he directed sports, entertainment and news broadcasts.

Soon he was recruited by McLaren Advertising Agency to bring new ideas to Hockey Night in Canada. At the time, the agency was working in conjunction with CBC to present games on both television and radio on behalf of their clients Imperial Oil and Molson Breweries.

His two decades in the business were marked by an amazing series of innovations and technological advancements that still influence today's hockey broadcasts.

Upon learning of Mellanby's death, Cherry tweeted, "Sad to hear (of) the passing of my good friend Ralph Mellanby. He was a good friend and one of the most important men in Canadian television history. God Speed Ralph."

Hodge also took to Twitter, posting "I, and the large HNIC family, past and present, are saddened by the death of Ralph Mellanby. As long-time exec. producer, Ralph took a chance on this untested 26-year-old in 1971 and showed confidence in my ability to fill the host's role properly for 16 yrs. Forever grateful to Ralph. Sincere condolences to the Mellanby family."

Saturday night's broadcast of the game between the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Detroit Red Wings was dedicated to Mellanby's memory.

"He had a greater influence on this show than anyone else," broadcaster Chris Cuthbert said while images of Mellanby working behind the scenes appeared on screen. "Ralph was an innovator, (who) enhanced the viewing experience with his use of instant replay, robotic cameras, net cams, ref cams, wireless mics and computer animation. And he changed the way hockey was presented."

Cuthbert went on to advocate for Mellanby's future enshrinement in the Hockey Hall of Fame based on his importance in bringing the game to the nation. He also worked behind the scenes for other important sporting events, including the 'Miracle on Ice' at the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid in 1980, the Calgary Olympics in 1988, tennis, golf, Major League Baseball and Canadian Football League broadcasts. He won five Emmy Awards for his work on Olympics coverage.

Mellanby and his wife Gillian lived in Niagara since the early 2000s. The avid tennis player was a fixture for many years at White Oaks, and often strolled to nearby Eagle Valley Golf Club where owner Délia Iafate and countless golfers through the years got to know him well.

"He was the resident celebrity here," Iafate told The Local. "He had time for everyone. He would walk over, usually with only one club, and hit balls on the driving range or hang around the putting green. It was more like a social hour for Ralph. A great excuse to schmooze, have a glass of wine and tell a story. Or listen to yours. He was truly interested in everybody"

Iafate described Ralph as a beautiful man who adored his wife, often enthusiastically inviting her over to the golf course to meet his new friends. He was persistent in urging Iafate to install a tennis court at Eagle Valley so he could combine his favourite athletic pursuit with his social network at the golf club.

"Ralph's eyes would light up when he had some good news to tell you," she continued. "He was always excited about his friends. He made sure I met (retired NHL player and coach) Steve Ludzik when he moved back to Niagara. He came to Eagle Valley excited like a kid showing off his friend. And he made sure I got to meet Don Cherry."

Mellanby sat on the board of directors of the Steve Ludzik Foundation, an organization that raises funds for a Parkinson's Disease clinic at Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Hospital. Ludzik, who himself is fighting Parkinson's, said Mellanby was a driving force behind many of



Ralph Mellanby, Delia Iafate and Don Cherry at a Steve Ludzik Foundation event. (Photo supplied)

the foundation's fundraisers, helping him to line up guests such as Cherry for his events.

Ludzik is adamant that Mellanby was as much a friend as he was a colleague and supporter.

"He was very humble," Ludzik told The Local. "He was a great partner to go to lunch with. Always kind to everybody. He was old-school, a smile in the morning, a glass of wine for lunch, and story-telling after dinner. He loved his life."

A consummate storyteller, Mellanby put his experiences to paper with the writing of two books, *Walking With Legends* and *Let the Games Begin: My Life with Olympians, Hockey Heroes and Other Good Sports*. Iafate hosted Mellanby for book signings at Eagle Valley that were highlights in her relationship with him.

Rich Merlino of Niagara Falls, former general manager of White Oaks, had the pleasure of being the emcee for some of Mellanby's book

signings at the hotel and tennis club.

"He was really down to earth, a great guy," Merlino said. "He had some amazing stories. Some of the people he had rubbed shoulders with over the years were amazing. It brought me back to my childhood, all these people that I looked up to when I was a kid watching hockey. Red Kelly, Marcel Dionne, Brian McFarlane, every one of them talks very highly about Ralph."

Besides his wife Gillian, Mellanby leaves behind his daughter Laura and son Scott from his marriage to his first wife, Janet, who died of cancer in 2001.

Laura followed her father into broadcasting before moving into the executive ranks at Bell Canada. Currently she is senior director, new market development at Rogers Communications. Scott is a former NHL player who also served as assistant general manager of the Montreal Canadiens after retirement.

Both Iafate and Merlino mentioned how obviously proud Mellanby was of his children.

"What struck me was that it always came back to his kids," Merlino said. "Someone who was so famous in his own right always spoke about Scott, and how proud he was of his and Laura's accomplishments. I always admired that about Ralph."

"It was an honour to call him my friend," Iafate said, "and to meet his son Scott, who is just as wonderful a father as Ralph, and could amuse me and my daughter just like his dad did."

"He's a legend, but for Ralph, it was about the people who lived here in Niagara," Iafate added, summing up Mellanby's life in the region. "These people, this community made him feel good. We knew who he was and we respected him for what he did. He loved the Niagara community and the Niagara community loved him."

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The Royal Henley**

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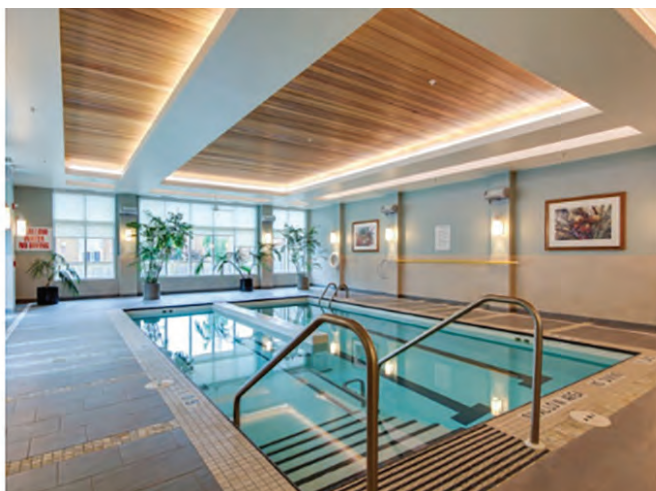
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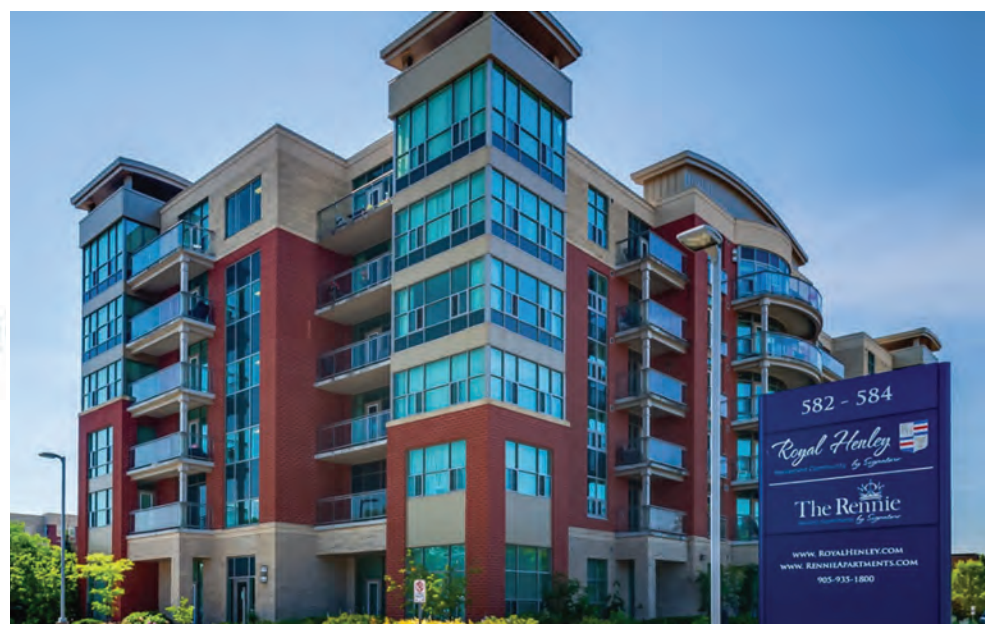
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Actual Kid-Friendly News

# Kids

GAZETTE



**SILLY PET PHOTO**

**Shadow and Pepper,**  
eating sunflower  
seed butter  
off a spoon.

JANUARY 2022 Volume 2 • Issue 2 FIND THE SMILEY FACE HIDDEN ON THIS PAGE!

## Local News

Kids of all ages have been enjoying the snowy hills at Simcoe Park and Fort George. If you haven't been out, grab some friends and a toboggan, snowboard, or whatever you've got and go! Only 46 days until spring! Send us your photos of your winter activity fun!



Ben van Veghel-Wood, Ilias Dritsacos, Saxon Reese, and Skielor Reese enjoying the snowy hills at Simcoe Park.

## Interview with Taleah

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

**A.** A dad. I want seven kids, both boys and girls. I also want to be a chef. My favourite thing to make is pizza.

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

**A.** I think I'd make it rain candy. My favourite candy is Kit-Kat. I'd want it to rain all kinds of candy.

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

**A.** I would go to the park and go on the swings.

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

**A.** Abominable. It's my favourite because it's adventurous. They go all the way from New York City to Mount Everest.

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

**A.** I help my parents with the

laundry and dishes. At school I help by cleaning around the sink. I keep it dry. I don't like when I get my shirt wet when I'm leaning over to wash my hands, so I keep it dry so no one else gets their shirt wet.

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

**A.** On Fridays we watch movies. That's the night I make my pizza. Nanny and Grandpa come sometimes.

**Q. If you were a superhero what would your name be and what would your super power be?**

**A.** I'd want laser eyes like Superman. I'd use them to defeat bad guys. My name would be Super Nathan.

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

**A.** I played electronics. Mine-craft is my favourite.

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

**A.** I like that we live close to the lake. I like to throw rocks in the water in the summer time.

**Q. What's that certain something that makes you special?**

**A.** I am special because I am kind and loving. I try to be nice to everyone. I like to sing and dance, I performed in front of my church at Christmas. I also like to make pictures. And, I lost a tooth by a sock.



Nathan Epp, 6

## FINISH THE STORY

With a friend, finish the story by filling in the blanks with words from the appropriate part of speech.

### SNOW DAY!

Today is a \_\_\_\_\_ January day and I wanted to go  
(ADJECTIVE)  
\_\_\_\_\_ with my \_\_\_\_\_ friends. \_\_\_\_\_  
ACTIVITY ENDING IN -ING (ADJECTIVE) (NAME)  
went down the hill on his \_\_\_\_\_ first. He went  
(NOUN)  
down really \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ went down on a  
(ADVERB) (NAME)  
\_\_\_\_\_ next, she ended up \_\_\_\_\_ the entire  
(NOUN) (VERB)  
way down! Finally it was my turn to go. I went \_\_\_\_\_  
(DIRECTION)  
on my inflatable \_\_\_\_\_. It was so \_\_\_\_\_!  
(NOUN) (VERB)  
After sledding we had some \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(BEVERAGE) (FOOD)  
We had a \_\_\_\_\_ day.  
(ADJECTIVE)

#### WINTER FUN FACT!

Although nobody is sure of when the first snowman was made, Bob Eckstein, the author of *The History of the Snowman*, claims the earliest known drawing of a snowman is in a book from 1380!



#### JOKE By : Emilio Kauzlaric, 7

**Q. Where do snowmen keep their money?**

**A. The snowbank.**

## Short Story

Taleah Bucci, 11  
Kids Gazette

"Where am I?" Val the Lovebug called, emerging from his home under a log. He couldn't see, a whiteness had covered everything. Just then, Val looked up. A great white beast with feathered wings swooped in from behind, landing beside him. "Who are you?" Val asked. "Oh, hello, I didn't see you there. I'm a snowy owl. I see you've woken up early like many others," the owl answered. "There are more Lovebugs like me?" "Not exactly like you," said the owl. "But from the sky I have seen many other insects awake. Global Warming has caused much of the forest creatures



to rise early." "What am I to do, now that I'm awake?" Val asked. "You should find a friend for Valentine's Day." With that the owl flapped his mighty wings and was gone. "Well," Val said to himself, "I'd better get a move on if I want to find a friend." He hadn't gone far before a voice called, "Hello." Val looked over to see a Woolly Bear caterpillar. "Hello. I'm Val." "I'm Clementine, but my friends call me Tine," the caterpillar replied. "Odd being awake this time of year. I've never been up for Valentine's Day." "What's Valentine's Day?" Val asked. "Well," said Tine, "It's a holiday when friends and family show love for each other." "Why don't we become friends?" Val said. Tine smiled. "I'd like that."

#### SUBMISSION INFO

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

#### CHARITY

We are looking for charities in which kids can participate. If you would like your organization to be highlighted here, please send your information to [joyousnotlkids@gmail.com](mailto:joyousnotlkids@gmail.com).

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# Skating for 19:26 to raise money for Alzheimer's

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

Steve McNeil's personal dedication to raising funds for and awareness about Alzheimer's Disease stems from his late mother's prolonged fight against the malady.

"She was the ultimate hockey mom, she raised five of us," the Etobicoke-ar-

ea mail carrier and hockey referee told The Local last Wednesday afternoon during his marathon skate at Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery. "She battled Alzheimer's for the better part of 20 years, and she was in a nursing home for her last 11 years. I saw so much that hardened me in a sense, and that's what made me do these skates."

McNeil has been doing these skates for over 10 years now. Each one lasts 19 hours and 26 minutes, representing the year, 1926, that his mother was born. What began as a way to blow off steam after an especially challenging visit at the nursing home has now brought him across the country raising funds for local chapters of the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

"I would get in my truck and I would have an empty, hollow feeling," he explained. "I always had my skates in my truck, and if I saw an outdoor rink, I'd stop, put my skates on, put my music in my ears and skate. Three hours later my wife would call me saying 'where are you?'"

The idea hit him to turn his outlet into a marathon fundraiser while he was officiating a hockey game one night. He approached Rob Ford, the mayor of Toronto at that time, asking for permission to remain on the Nathan Phillips Square ice for 19:26. Armed with Ford's approval, he hit the ice and completed the marathon. Today he says that city council contacts him every year to help him with his arrangements.

He's been across Canada twice, making a point to stop in each of the seven cities that play host to NHL hockey teams. The last two years have put a bit of a damper on his usual itinerary, with COVID-19 restricting his ability to take his mission far and wide.

Niagara-on-the-Lake was one of eight stops this winter on what he is calling his Ontario Skate-cation. His plans were to visit 10 cities in the province to mark his 10th anniversary, but two locations were cancelled just before he started.

It's his second time visiting the Gretzky Estates and coincidentally, this year's



Valerie Lord and Rod Mawhood of CKTB skate with Steve McNeil to raise money for Alzheimer's. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

skate took place on the Great One's birthday. Because of provincial restrictions that were still in place last week, a limited number of participants were allowed to accompany McNeil for a few laps around the rink, and each had to register prior to the event.

Samantha Marson, the Niagara Predators trainer and assistant general manager, was there to skate with McNeil for the second straight year.

"He's such a different character, the atmosphere he brings, he gets lost in his music skating around and dancing," Marson said. "It's a great cause, too. You never know in life what can happen. The hockey community comes out and supports him wherever he goes."

Teena Kindt of the Alzheimer Society of Niagara said that McNeil's efforts had brought in donations totalling \$1651.70 to the local chapter as of press time. She was hoping that by the end

of the week that total would reach the magic number of \$1926, which would still be significantly lower than the approximately \$3,000 raised at last year's event.

"January is Alzheimer Awareness Month, and with our annual walk moving to May this year, this is a great opportunity to showcase our local chapter," said Kindt. "He's a fabulous man, and we're very fortunate to have him here again this year. It brings great exposure."

Kindt explained that the funds raised during the 1926 Skate stay in Niagara, supporting the organization's wellness programs which are not funded by any government agencies. The local chapter needs to raise about \$600,000 a year to maintain the level of service offered through their programs.

McNeil took to the ice just after 12 a.m. Wednesday morning. By the time The Local caught up with him he had been skating for

more than 13 hours and was showing no signs of fatigue. On the contrary, he assured anyone who asked that his stamina has never been a problem for him during his marathons.

Without fault, each visitor who spoke to McNeil was handed a sharpie and asked to sign his yellow hoodie, which was adorned with the logos of his local sponsors. Lord Mayor Betty Disero's signature found a spot just above that of Ice-Dogs mascot Bones.

At the end of each marathon he removes the hoodie and presents it to the local Alzheimer Society chapter. It usually finds its way onto the auction block eventually, raising more funds for the cause.

The eight-city Skate-cation continues this Friday with a stop in Windsor. McNeil will be in Peterborough on Feb. 12, and wraps it all up with a stop at the famous Weber's Burgers on Highway 11 near Orillia on Family Day.

"I'm just trying to get out and make people aware," McNeil said. "I've dealt with Alzheimer Societies from coast to coast. Some have the resources, some don't. I'm just trying to make an even playing field for everybody."

He continued, "COVID has shown us that even though our seniors mean so much to us, we've dropped the ball in a lot of ways. This is a good opportunity for communities across Canada to get involved with their Alzheimer Society."

Kindt says there is still time to donate, and suggests that a contribution of \$19.26 would be appropriate if possible. Donations can be made at [www.alzheimerniagara.ca/donate](http://www.alzheimerniagara.ca/donate) or at <https://www.1926skate.com/donate>.



Lord Mayor Betty Disero and her mother Lena Disero stop in at the Wayne Gretzky Estates Winery to visit with Steve McNeil, and Niagara Predators' Samantha Marson.

## Painting by Steve

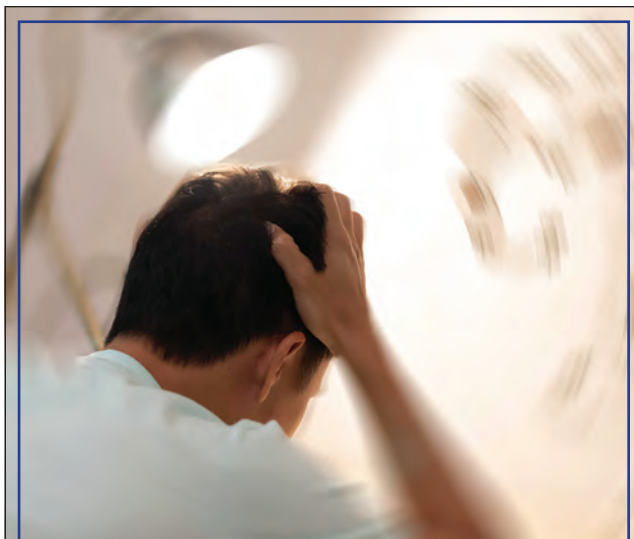


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LocalSPORTS

Local teen going to world ball hockey championships

Mike Balsom  
Special to The Local

For 13-year-old Crossroads Public School student Cohen Alexander, the chance to represent his country at the World Ball Hockey Federation (WBHF) U14 championships in Bratislava is both a thrill and a huge responsibility.

His father Rob says that when word came of his son's selection to the very first U14 National Ball Hockey Association of Canada (NBHAC) team to compete at the worlds, the family was surprised, but not totally shocked.

"Cohen's always tried out and played for older divisions, two or three years up," explains Rob. "When he went to the try-out for U14, his own age group, he was really a standout player there."

Word came of Cohen's selection in early January, about a month after the single-day tryout camp he attended in Oshawa in early December. The long, gruelling session on the ball hockey surface was enough to impress national team general manager Scott Jacobi.

"From my perspective, he's got good size, a good shot, good speed," Jacobi tells The Local. "He ranked very, very highly on our list for communication on the bench with his teammates, too. These are the things we're looking for in evaluating the fullness of the player we want to represent the country on the floor."

Besides Jacobi, a handful of Junior Team Canada (JTC) personnel from various age levels were also there to provide insight into the players, but one of the most important elements in Cohen's selection was feedback from his coaches in his St. Catharines-based league.

"We reach out to the coaches they play for to get a more rounded evaluation of them," explains Jacobi. "I can figure out if they can pass and shoot. It's a bit harder to understand the quality of the person. When we're there (Bratislava) we spend as much time off the floor as we do on. It works best when we have good people."

"Good coaching has benefits," adds Jacobi. "And Cohen's exposure to playing with the older kids, challenging himself against bigger and better players, has its benefits too. He's a product of that, and he's a heck of a player."

Wade Stafford, Cohen's coach with the St. Catharines Storm, suggested to Rob that he take his son to Oshawa to vie for a spot on the national squad.

"He's a good kid, I enjoy coaching him," Stafford says. "He keeps advancing as an all-around good player. With his size (5' 9", 155 pounds), he's so much bigger than all the other kids at that age. He has a natural talent. He made the team with flying colours, from what I understand."

Cohen's hockey journey began on the ice in Niagara-on-the-Lake with the Learn to Skate program. He played in the tyke division here, and tried out for one of the local travel teams but didn't make the cut. Six months later, after putting in some extra work on his skating, he earned a spot on a St. Catharines AAA team. He came back to NOTL for one more year, before successfully trying out for the Southern Tier AAA Admirals, where he currently plays on their U14 squad.

He started ball hockey at age seven as something to do in the summer. He quickly found he loved the game about as much on the floor as he did on the ice. And though it may look like the same game, Rob, who referees both ice and ball hockey, explains it is very different.

"The floating blue line in ball hockey is different, and the game is a lot more intense, a lot more skilled, a lot more mental," he asserts. "In ice hockey, on skates, when you shoot you can slow down, glide before you shoot. In ball hockey, you can't, because you're running. And you can't push the ball either, you have to stick-handle all the time."

Cohen says he was quick to adapt to the different skills needed on the floor.

"I saw that as I began to play a bit more ball hockey, my

shot started to get a little harder," Cohen says. "My second year I started to play up a year, and we won our championship. One game I played with my brother (Tristan, 18 years old) and his friends, and I scored three goals."

Currently, Cohen plays in the ballhockey.com house league as well as on the Storm's competitive U16 team. At age 11, he was part of the Storm U13 team that won the Bauer Ontario Youth Open Championships in July, 2019. That win qualified them for a championship in Philadelphia, that was cancelled due to the pandemic. He was also on the Storm U16 team that won a 2021 Labour Day weekend 3 on 3 tournament in St Catharines, going the distance undefeated.

The U14 JTC team will compete in Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia, June 27 to July 3. Jacobi says the European countries are more established at U14, especially Sweden, Finland and the Czech Republic. But he expects his tight roster of 15 excellent players and two goalies will have a chance to take home the gold even though it's the first time for Canada at that age.

"It's important to me that we take guys that are going to play, that are going to make a difference," Jacobi says. "We can roster up to 25, but we chose players who will be able to complement one another. Fast, first and fearless, those are the ingredients. With that, good things will happen."

Jacobi has spent 20 years playing and coaching in ball hockey, and 11 years with the national team at the U16 and U18 age groups. The world championships are held every two years, with Jacobi's past U16 and U18 Canadian teams winning gold in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The 2020 championship was cancelled due to COVID.

"I enter every tournament expecting to win," Jacobi adds. "I expect us to be playing in the finals on Sunday (July 3)."

Cohen will most likely be joining his new JTC teammates in May for some practices prior to their training camp in June.

They'll break camp for a tournament consisting of exhibition games, before flying out to Slovakia in late June.

Between now and then, the Alexander family, including Cohen's mom Michelle and his eight-year-old sister Lulu, will be trying to line up some sponsors and putting together some fundraising efforts to cover the cost of Cohen and one of his parents to take the trip.

And when they do fly to Europe, Cohen will have to remember the responsibility he takes on wearing the red and white on the international stage.

"There's a whole code of conduct that he has to adhere



Ball hockey champ Cohen Alexander (Photo supplied)

to," Rob says, referring to the correspondence received recently from the NBHAC. "That includes a very strict dress code. He has to remember he is representing Team Canada."

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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- Across:

  - 1 School org.
  - 4 Emit
  - 8 Tenet
  - 13 In case
  - 15 Tennis ace --- Sampras
  - 16 Fault
  - 17 A law --- himself
  - 18 Behavioral and learning problem
  - 19 Refractor
  - 20 Resident of Rabat, perhaps
  - 22 Fragile
  - 23 Sis sib.
  - 24 Faith
  - 26 E.g. United Way
  - 28 Frightening
  - 29 1/1000 inches
  - 32 News exclusives
  - 35 Alliance of some former Soviet countries
  - 36 Buffalo Bill
  - 37 Where we all started
  - 38 Consequence of driving over a nail
  - 40 Baking chamber
  - 41 Copies
  - 42 Female deer
  - 43 Resident of Damascus, e.g.
  - 45 For each
- Down:

  - 1 Exactly vertical
  - 2 E.g. Pavarotti
  - 3 Stargazer
  - 4 Room
  - 5 Foot controls
  - 6 Type of war crime
  - 7 Espouse
  - 8 Arrange in battle formation
  - 9 Utah senator --- Hatch
  - 10 Dismal
  - 11 Rolling stones lack it, but the Rolling Stones don't
- 12 Ground forces
  - 14 Also
  - 21 Trim
  - 22 Groundbreakers
  - 25 Earth goddess
  - 27 Sailors
  - 29 Cinema buffs
  - 30 Notion
  - 31 Coal Miner's Daughter, Loretta ---
  - 32 Exchange
  - 33 Manage
  - 34 More morose
  - 36 Volume of wood
  - 39 Goller's shout
  - 44 Up-and-down toy
  - 46 Inviting smells
  - 47 Lou ---, baseballer who gave his name to a disease
  - 49 Angry stare
  - 50 Highways
  - 52 Renaissance cherub
  - 53 Remains
  - 54 Annoying person
  - 55 Periodic Table abbr.
  - 56 Departed
  - 58 Details not yet set (Abbr.)
  - 60 Sheltered side

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across: 1 P-T-A, 4 Spew, 8 Dogma, 13 Left, 15 Pete, 16 Error, 17 Unto, 18 A D H D, 19 Prism, 20 Moroccan, 22 Films, 23 Bro, 24 Religion, 26 N-G-O, 28 Scary, 29 Mill, 32 Scoops, 35 C I S, 36 Cody, 37 Work, 38 A flat, 40 Oven, 41 Apes, 42 Doe, 43 Syrah, 45 Per, 46 A drag, 48 Ode, 49 Greenery, 51 G P S, 54 Pallor, 57 Shoot-out, 59 A-team, 60 Lira, 61 Beta, 62 Infra, 63 Enid, 64 Arty, 65 Notes, 66 Eggs, 67 S O S.

Down: 1 Plumb, 2 Tenor, 3 Astronomer, 4 Space, 5 Pedals, 6 Ethnic cleansing, 7 Wed, 8 Deploy, 9 Omni, 10 Grim, 11 Moss, 12 Army, 14 Too, 21 Crop, 22 Firsts, 25 Gala, 27 Gobs, 29 Moviegoers, 30 Idea, 31 Lynn, 32 Swap, 33 Cope, 34 Sadder, 36 Cord, 39 Fore, 44 Yo-yo, 46 Avromas, 47 Gehny, 49 Glare, 50 Roads, 52 Putto, 53 Stays, 54 Pain, 55 At No, 56 Left, 58 T B A, 60 Lee.

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OBITUARY



**RULLER, WILLIAM CHARLES**—The world has lost a man of God, the definition of a humanitarian, loving husband, caring, wise and supportive father and grandfather (Pa), brother, brother-in-law, uncle and great uncle, friend, and mentor to so many around the world.

William Charles Ruller was born March 18, 1947, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, to Kenneth and Marjorie Ruller, the third oldest of six children. Will passed away suddenly while on a father and son road trip on Saturday, January 29.

Up to the age of 20, Will lived in Canada, graduating from Niagara District Secondary School, before moving on to Forestry School. Following his graduation, he moved to New Zealand and within five years met and married the love of his life, Annie. They were happily married for 42 years, raising their four children, Kimberley, Keren, Philippa, and Nicholas, before Annie passed away in 2014. Will and Annie shared in the joy of their growing family through loving relationships with their children’s spouses and grandchildren.

Will lived a principled life that was full of adventure, including world travel, his reach through his ministries with Youth for Christ, International Child Care, his Christian music business and Pastoral roles in the church spanned across Canada from coast to coast, the U.S., Haiti, Egypt, Central and South America, New Zealand and the South Pacific. So many lives were touched and positively impacted by Will’s commitment to his convictions.

Will instilled his love of the outdoors in all his children and grandchildren. In his youth in NZ, he enjoyed white water kayaking, mountain hiking and spending time in the Kauri forests of the NZ North Island. Upon his return to Canada in 1980 with his family, many great memories were made at Algonquin Park, Bowron Lakes, and Rainbow Falls, to name a few special places. All who knew Will knew his “One Way Willy” motto to get the most out of any outing. He took this to a new level once he had his motorhome under him over the last ten years, enabling him and Annie to further strengthen adult relationships with siblings, children, and grandchildren on his cross Canada trips, never missing a chance to put in a 1000km day. He was happiest behind the wheel, out on an adventure. The recent addition to Will’s life, Lily, his Labrador puppy, put a new spring into his step and was his co-pilot for this past year’s road trips known as the “Willy and Lily show.” He will be missed!

Those that knew Will (and there are MANY) knew him to be the definition of integrity, empathy and compassion. He was unique in his ability to see a need and match it with the required resource, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. Will’s genuine gift and ability to listen and give council will make his passing all the more real as he is the one you would go to with matters of the heart in times like these.

Will leaves a legacy through all those he encountered and those fortunate enough to call him father, brother, uncle, Pa, and friend to be your best self, live life to the fullest, follow your convictions, and never miss an opportunity to help someone in any kind of need.

A ceremony will be held at a later date.



**SHRUBB, JACK WILLIAM**—Passed away at home on Thursday, January 27, 2022 in his 79th year. Jack will always be remembered by all who knew and loved him as a gentle, kind and special “guy.” Husband of 55 years to his soulmate Jane. Dear Dad to Sarah Shrubb (Matt) and Mary D’Alessandro (Dan). Proud Grandpa to Daniel, Luca and Natalie. Beloved brother to Wayne Shrubb (Astrid). A celebration of Jack’s life will be planned this spring for family, friends and the community to honour and remember Jack. It will be just in time for the opening of golf season, as he would have wanted it. A private visitation has taken place. Arrangements entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



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**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

Penwell joins Iain Riordan, Jacob Collaco and David White as the fourth member of Predators' goal-tending corps. Recently acquired Jacob Saunders, who had yet to appear in a game

"I'm sure the guys are

"Am I still looking to add a couple more forwards?" he asks. "Yes I am. I'm still in negotiations with a couple of players. The teams that have a chance to do well are looking for the final pieces. We have a great group of players that all get

With the return of live events this week, there is a 50 per cent capacity limit in place for the Meridian Credit Union Arena, as at all such facilities. With the local arena approved for a normal capacity of 1,000 fans, including standing room, that means there is more than enough room to hold a usual Friday night

The visiting Tottenham Thunder hold down the bottom spot in the GMHL's South Division, with a record of 3-21-0-1. On Sunday, the Predators head

Game time Friday night is 7:30 p.m. Adult tickets are \$8 while seniors and students are admitted for \$5. Kids under 10 are admitted free.

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