An important piece of Niagara-on-the-Lake history has found its way into the world of stamp collections just in time for Black History Month.

On Jan. 29, Canada Post issued a stamp honouring Chloe Cooley, an enslaved woman in the Niagara area. In March, 1793, her enslaver, Adam Vrooman, forced her into a boat at Queenston to sell her across the Niagara River. Her screams of protest were witnessed by Black Loyalist Peter Martin, who took his concern to the Executive Council of Upper Canada.

The incident is believed to have led to Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe’s passing of the Act to Prohibit Slavery later that year. The act banned the importation of slaves into Upper Canada, a major first step in the abolition of slavery in the province.

A plaque commemorating Cooley’s importance stands today on the Niagara Parkway at what has become known as Vrooman’s Point.

“It is very special,” says Brandy Ryan, director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (DEI) at Canada Post. Ryan’s family settled in the early 1900s in one of the largest and most northern Black pioneer communities in Canada, Alberta’s Amber Valley.

“For me, and others who have been in Canada for many generations,” says Ryan, “it’s special for us to see that representation and commemoration of diversity. It means so much to me and my family personally, to our legacy, for all to know that there have been Black Canadians for a long time.”

Cooley’s story of fortitude, resilience and strength resonates with Ryan, who tells The Local that it was a Canada Post

Continued on page 5

Mike Balsom
The Local

Village Medical Centre to open to patients Monday

With the furniture, equipment, computers and supplies scheduled to arrive Thursday morning, the Niagara North Family Health Team will be welcoming its first patients Monday to the new medical centre in The Village.

Physicians Iram Ahmed, Tim Bastedo, Karen Berti, Samreen Malik and Pratik Kalani gathered with administrators, nurse practitioners, town council members and others Tuesday afternoon inside the state-of-the-art facility to cut the ribbon for the official opening of the centre, which also includes a bright, modern new space to house LifeLabs.

Berti escorted The Local through a tour of the 8,000-square-foot building. The facility is divided into two wings, accessed through a central waiting room immediately upon entering.

While the five doctors, who are all moving from the old Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital, will operate out of the north side of the building, the south wing will host diabetes educators, a pharmacist, mental health professionals, social workers, nurse educators, a chiropractor, an occupational therapist and three nurse practitioners. Each wing has its own reception station.

Unlike the current hospital site, there are no stairs to navigate, and a walk along a hallway to an elevator is unnecessary as the new centre is all on one floor, level with the parking lot.

“That was very important from an accessibility perspective,” said Berti. “And for myself, it’s the first time in about 25 years that I will be above ground. I’ll actually see sunlight. And it’s a bigger space, a better set-up. It’s a perfect size.”

There are 10 examination rooms for the doctors to use plus two nurse’s rooms. That is a 33 per cent increase from the eight rooms in total that are currently being shared at the old hospital. Each exam room is spacious and bright, with windows looking out at the surrounding Village.

In the south wing, the nurse practitioners will for the first time have an office separate from their exam rooms. They will be mov...
Residents concerned about St. Davids development

Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake has approved the first step in a housing development project being planned for St. Davids — one of two potential residential projects local residents are voicing concern over this winter.

The owners of two properties at 134 and 140 Tanbark Road received approval from the town’s committee of adjustment to sever two lots of land, occupied by two single detached homes, from 1.55 hectares of property behind the homes’ backyards, situated between St. Davids Estates and Courtland Valley Estates.

According to the planners with Upper Canada Consultants, developers hope to build homes on this vacant land.

“It’s creating a strong opportunity for future residential infill,” said town planner Mark lamarino, noting St. Davids’ Secondary Plan includes intentions of dividing up and consolidating land in the community for future development.

“The nature of the future development of these lands is not known at this time, and will be subject to additional applications,” said junior planner Ethan Laman during an open house meeting held to share details of the zoning amendment being proposed.

The severance of these two lots was a separate process from the other main two steps of this project. An application to rezone the lots the two homes sit on is before the municipality, which will designate them as residential zones.

This will allow the developers to apply to rezone the vacant 1.55 hectares for site-specific residential development, at which point they will share the specifics of their development plans for this part of the neighbourhood.

Residents are voicing concern over this potential housing project in St. Davids is the subject of an open house meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 8. Developers have received approval for a municipal partnership to fund a town’s created plans for Dawny Ridge Estates, sets of single-detached homes, townhouses, and other residential units, at Tanbark and Warner roads.

Newark Park community garden ready to grow

Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local

A new project started last spring by a local, avid gardener is looking to grow from its recent success and bloom into a larger effort between neighbours and friends at a local park in Niagara-on-the-Lake this year.

Newark Park’s community garden is set to nearly double in size this spring, after receiving approval from the town to add 26 new gardening plots to the existing garden, which gardeners began working on last June.

Julian Trachsel of the Niagara Agara Community Garden Network was the brainchild behind the idea, and helped raise $20,255 last year to fund the installation of 32 10x10-foot plots, plus two raised garden beds to accommodate those with physical accessibility needs.

During the town’s committee of the whole meeting Jan. 24, he shared the accomplishments of the garden’s inaugural year: the end of the season saw a plentiful bounty of fruits, vegetables, plants and flowers produced by 19 different gardeners.

“Overall, we had a really successful year,” he told the committee. “We learned a lot, and, boy, we had fun!”

Each plot costs $60 to rent, or $90 to rent two, and each person is responsible for tending to their gardens. Every plot was occupied last season.

“I think everybody was really happy with their crops,” Trachsel said. “Even people in the neighbourhood who were walking by, or riding their bikes by, they’d stop in and say how pleased they were to see the parking used to be a much greater degree.”

More than that, however, he said the community garden brought people in the neighbourhood together to the great outdoors, bonding and helping to improve the areas environment.

They will also need approval to consolidate this vacant land with two other strips of property, one adjacent to southern Hickory Avenue, and the other Dyck Lane, a right-of-way easement which provides access to those 17 properties facing northern Hickory Avenue.

Locals had plenty of questions for planners during the open house and public meeting held on the land severances at 134 and 140 Tanbark Road. They shared worries about what the future residential development means for their neighbourhood.

“I get a feeling that St. Davids is becoming a bedroom community,” said Hickory Avenue resident Donna Hatton during the Jan. 19 public meeting. “I’m not against growth; it happens in life, there are major changes. But I think (we need) properly designed planning and development as we go.”

“Makers said he wants to see measures to secure 17 residential properties before the municipality, which will designate them as residential zones.

“I don’t understand; what will become of the easement?” he asked.

Others shared similar concerns about road access, the loss of housing frontage, increasing road traffic and impacts to the local environment.

“It’s a place for community engagement, meeting new people, and making new friends,” said Julian Trachsel.

“If the future involves closing Dyck Lane — and let’s not kid ourselves, the writing does appear to be on the wall in that regard — we need proper planning and community engagement can work well with the local environment, which attracts creatures like bees, butterflies and wasps. These gardens benefit both the flora and fauna of an area.

“There’s clearly a need for gardens like this,” he said. “If we don’t provide a suitable environment for our native pollinators of all varieties, we put the risk of losing them forever.”

“Trachsel said the NOTL Horticultural Society is agreeing to cover the cost of $1,200 to purchase suitable native plants.

“I’m thrilled that you’re putting in a pollinator garden,” said Coun. Sandra O’Connor.

“I think that is great for the environment and for sustainability.”

After spending the majority of the money fundraised in 2022 on the first phase of the project, he said this second and final phase needs $6,550 to be completed. With $9,095 leftover in donations from last year, Trachsel said the town won’t be required to cover any of the costs.

Instead, the committee approved a staff report detailing that the municipality’s staff will be in charge of assembling the garden plots, preparing the site, tilling the soil and other activities to complete the expansion. The labour costs will be billed to the project’s donations account.

“This is a really perfect example of how community engagement can work well with a municipal partnership,” said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, before he and council members completed their vote in favour of supporting the expansion.

The town is aiming to finish the expansion by Friday, May 19, depending on weather conditions.
Temporary outdoor patios back for another season

Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local

The road is once again clear for local restaurants, bars and wineries to open outdoor patios when spring returns to Niagara-on-the-Lake this year.

The municipality has approved renewal of its temporary, seasonal patio licensing program, implemented back in 2020 to allow places to operate while adhering to Ontario’s COVID-19 physical gathering restrictions, without jumping through the usual regulatory hoops.

Three years later, outdoor patios are still a hit among diners in town. Sunset Grill on Queen Street is one of 33 spots in NOTL to open an outdoor patio during the pandemic, and co-owner Kim Gauld said it’s still an important feature of the business, giving its guests who aren’t yet comfortable dining indoors another option.

“It’s added an extra energy to the street, too. We’ve been getting a lot of good feedback from residents and visitors alike,” she said. “The program overall, I think, is such a good addition for the town.”

That positivity was echoed at the Jan. 24 general committee of the whole meeting, during a discussion on the patio program. “I’ve heard nothing but positive things,” said Coun. Wendy Cheropita. “It’s been helpful for the business community to extend their space, but also, people love being outside. The committee unanimously voted to extend the temporary patio program for a third time. Until Feb. 28, 2024, businesses can either apply to open a patio or renew their permits for those that are already established.

Following direction from a town report on the patio program, councilors also voted for staff to investigate how Niagara-on-the-Lake should implement a permanent patio program, including design standards for patios, the process for accepting applications, and the costs associated with operating a permanent program.

“I think it would be a great opportunity for us and for the town,” Gauld said. “It makes the streets seem lively, I like the bright umbrellas that everybody has … it adds a European flair to the Old Town.”

Currently, there is no fee to apply for a permit. According to the report, town staff “will need to review the current program to assess whether fees will be implemented for future seasonal patio permits.”

The report mentions key financial implications of the program, namely lost revenue from patios occupying municipal paid parking spots and the cost of staff time and resources.

“Based on similar programs requiring zoning reviews, site inspections and coordination of permits across multiple departments, it may cost up to $50,000 in staff reports,” the report reads, based on an estimated cost of $1,200 to $1,500 per permit and 15 to 20 hours of processing time.

Gauld said it’s to be expected that keeping their patio for good will involve a lot of work with the municipality, and that a potential fee would be fair — provided it’s comparable to earnings the town would lose from its paid parking spots.

“We think it would be worth it,” she said. “There’s nothing to suggest anything’s not going to be fair. They’ve been open to discussion.”

The idea of potential changes to the program, such as charging fees, was enough to encourage a debate between councillors on the wording of staff’s recommendation, opting to create and pass a motion which, as Coun. Erwin Wiens said he fears, “would paint us into a corner.”

“I can’t say I support a permanent seasonal patio program when I don’t know what it is,” said Coun. Gary Burroughs. Almost every town department would need to be involved in the process, explained chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie: planning services, operations, fire and emergency services and the clerk’s office.

The discussion ended with staff tasked with presenting a report to council on the permanent patio program at a later date.

Outdoor patios on Queen Street, such as Sunset Grill’s, have been popular, and will be back this summer. (File photo)
Looking back: building bridges instead of barriers

Jane Andres
Special to The Local

It started out with a simple list of errands for Barbara Somervell one summer day in 1992. A vision check was not on her agenda, but by the end of the day Barbara viewed life through a different lens. That afternoon she had come across a fatal accident along a dangerous stretch of road in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The police were unable to identify the victim, a Caribbean seasonal farmworker. The impact of that scene affected Barbara deeply, and she called her pastor, Rev. Douglas Mitchell from Grace United Church, for counsel. It motivated her to make a trip to visit St. James United Church in Simitore to learn about the Caribbean Workers Outreach Project (CWOP), a program that church had started to provide social and spiritual needs of migrant farmworkers.

The visit inspired them to start a chapter of CWOP at Grace United Church in their hometown. The goal was simple: to build bridges between Jamaican farmworkers and residents of NOTL. It's Black History Month — a good time to reflect on how we have chosen to welcome our neighbours, from the early days to the present. The experience of farmworkers in Niagara is also a reflection of our local history for the past six decades. With the establishment of the local CWOP, Grace United Church partnered with United churches in the Vineyard and Lincoln area to bring up two pastors for Sunday night services in May and June, preaching on Sundays and visiting the farms on week nights.

They began annual domino tournaments, attended with great enthusiasm every May. Highly competitive cricket matches were organized every June, well-attended by both locals and their neighbours on the farms. In addition, St. Andrew's United Church in Niagara Falls hosted an annual dinner where several hundred farmworkers and parishioners enjoyed a mix of Canadian and Caribbean dishes followed by lively music and dance.

I was invited to help with the music in May 2005. At a meeting with Niagara area CWOP members, I was introduced to people who would prove to be a major influence in my life. That night I met Mary-Anne Schlabauch, who continues to inspire all who meet her. A recipient of the Rotary Club's Paul Harris award for her 50 plus years of serving, she still eagerly awaits the return of her friends every spring. There is likely someone in every town in Jamaica who knows "sister" Mary-Anne.

Another member, Anne- lise Panzaratz, had been friends with seasonal farmworkers for many years and was well-equipped to volunteer with CWOP. She knew the location of all the farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake, having delivered mail to the majority of the employers to school during her 35-plus years of driving a school bus. When her husband Henry was unable to drive Sunday nights for CWOP, she took over the task. She also turned their former apple barn into a "free shop" for farmworkers. Through her volunteer work at the MCC Christian Benefit Shop she was able to find jeans, hoodies and shirts which she then supplied to men working on farms in her neighbourhood.

A third member, Nancy Howse, began making friends with Caribbean workers in 1987 when she worked as a cashier at MB Foods in Virgil. Nancy would invite them to join her and her late husband, Bob Howse, to church on Sundays with lunch after. Excursions to Niagara Falls, Toronto and local events led to treasured friendships and enabled them to bring valuable insight to the CWOP team.

When I began assisting with the church services in 2005, CWOP was a dynamic group of dedicated people who provided social and spiritual support. On a more personal level, many of them assisted in practical ways, such as driving workers to doctor or dentist appointments, inviting them over for backyard barbecues, or Sunday afternoon outings to Niagara Falls.

The lively Sunday night services were the highlight of the week, not only for our Caribbean friends but for us locals as well! The great success of CWOP was determined in large part by the incredible participation and support of not only the United Church but by the whole community. Volunteers came from various backgrounds believe and non-believers, retired farmers, teachers, musicians and retirees from many professions that brought exceptional experience.

CWOP member Carol Miller and her friends could be found at garage sales on Saturdays, always on the hunt for warm clothing, suitcases, household items and toys for the men to bring back to their children. Retired farmers and local tradespeople assisted men searching for tools and equipment to ship home in crates and barrels at the end of the season.

Helmut Boldt first made friends with seasonal workers when he owned a small farm, and then joined up with CWOP shortly after it began in 1992. The cricket trophy was named the Helmut Boldt Award in honour of his dedication and devoted friendships that spanned 14 years. Some of the CWOP members made trips to Jamaica to visit their friends, staying in their homes, and visiting their churches and schools.

Enthusiastic reports and photos from Mary-Anne, Nancy, Trudy Enns, Carol, and Vic and Hertha Boese inspired more locals to travel the backroads of Jamaica to visit friends and their families. The first 25 years of CWOP were groundbreaking in many ways, bridging cross-cultural barriers that encouraged dignity and respect.

It was a tragedy that had opened Barbara’s eyes to the possibilities of a caring community 31 years ago. May we learn from those who have shared their vision, built bridges instead of barriers, and shown a light on the path to move forward together as neighbours.

Sunday night worship with the CWOP music team at Bethany Mennonite Church, 2007

Marlies Boldt awarding the winning team with the Helmut Boldt trophy at the 2006 CWOP Cricket match.

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Vivien Hutton with Herman Neufeld after a Sunday night gathering.
Continued from page 1

stamp launch in 2021 that led her to working for the crown corporation. “They released a number of stamps for Black History Month,” Ryan explains of that year. They featured Black Canadian communities, and one of those was Amber Valley. When I saw that stamp, it was a big deal to my family to see our community get recognized. A couple of months later I got a call from Canada Post for an opportunity, and I wanted to be a part of it.” Ryan’s role in promoting DEI within the organization did not include being part of the decision to actually go forward with the Cooley stamp. She explains that usually a new design is created when there are multiple requests to Canada Post to honour an important Canadian figure.

Once the decision was made, though, the crown corporation reached out to experts with knowledge of the Chloe Cooley story. One of those experts, of course, was at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Sarah Kaufman, the museum’s managing director and curator, was asked to provide input, as was educator and historian Natasha Henry, the president of the Ontario Black History Society.

“In Niagara-on-the-Lake, we know Chloe Cooley’s story, says Kaufman, “but the rest of Canada doesn’t.” I was very excited to see that they had selected her as the stamp for Black History Month this year.”

The stamp features a prominent image of Cooley in the foreground of the scenic Niagara River. The boat on which her kidnapper forcibly transported her across the river from Queenston is seen behind her right shoulder. Dark clouds loom on the horizon. “I found some mistakes in the first design they sent,” Kaufman remembers. “The boat was wrong, it didn’t look like the Niagara River, or Queenston. So we talked back and forth with them, and I got to review the text (on the stamp package) as well.”

Kaufman is happy with the final design, created by Lime Design and featuring an illustration by Rick Jacobsen. “It tells a story itself,” she says. “Chloe looks very defiant and strong. It demonstrates what we know from the witness accounts from the time, that she was constantly combatting her situation, and rightfully so. It’s from the perspective of Vrooman’s Point. And there’s a figure watching from the grounds, representative of Peter Martin.”

Unfortunately Cooley’s life following the 1793 incident remains a mystery. Kaufman concedes that there might be a good chance Cooley herself had no idea of the impact her kidnapping had on the lives of other enslaved individuals.

“It’s a shame she might not even have known about it,” Kaufman laments. There are other important moments in Niagara’s history that might lend themselves to future Black History Month commemorations.

“Solomon Moseby is a main character who has a significant story,” explains Kaufman. “The riot that happened around him is also something that affected Canada. He would be another great candidate.”

Moseby was an African-American freedom seeker who stole his enslaver’s horse and escaped to Niagara-on-the-Lake. More than 200 members of the local Black community camped outside the jail to protest and to obstruct Moseby’s removal. Two protesters were killed during the riot. Moseby escaped and fled to England.

“Although we are a small town, we have significant national history behind us,” says Kaufman. “We’ve been involved in so many significant events locally, there are so many characters from the past that could potentially be on a stamp.”

For Ryan, it’s important that Black History Month be recognized each year, and that Canada Post continues to do its part to recognize significant moments and people.

“I didn’t learn about any of the history of my people in school,” says Ryan. “Most of my colleagues didn’t, either. For those of us who want to tell that story, we’ve been left out of the history books. Far too often those stories don’t get told. I’m excited to work for an organization that tells those stories.”

“It was quite an honour to be a part of the project,” Kaufman adds. “I got to see the light shine nationally on Niagara-on-the-Lake, and on Chloe Cooley, who is a significant part of our history.
Editorial
It’s a good news, bad news kind of week

This is Black History Month, and to commemorate it, Chloe Cuddy has made it on to a correction. We said, first last last week — an error that was not just for the work they do, but to remind us how important they are. My staff and I hear consistently about the crisis in our healthcare system. Every single day, my front-line healthcare staff. Our government has made the financial impacts and disreputability of Bill 124. They deserve our respect and admiration.

In the news recently for the arborist report that has not been made public. Monday morning, based on a new arborist report that has not yet been released.

Additionally, this act by the Ontario Heritage Trust has changed the name of the Negro Burial Ground to the Niagara Baptist Church Cemetery. The town about the other tree on the lot began, after repeated investigations, and a week after the town went back and forth over the name? Maybe not, but nobody will ever see it. Healthcare — definitely a rant. Whatever form of privatization awaits our future, a much more immediate problem, and an even more significant resource is those healthcare workers who are so important to our system. We are fortunate in this moment to have universal public healthcare, as damaged as it is. Please, Doug Ford, take some action to hire and train more healthcare workers, and then tell us about private clinics.

Next up, Circle Street and the town’s answers following the investigation, again a week later. We said, that was no, the fence should not have been moved, no, the bylaw officer had not said it was okay, the moving of the fencing was moved, staff took appropriate action to educate the property owner on their obligations, and to ensure the fencing was reinstated in the proper location. A week later.

One tree gone for sure, and the other, well, construction is a long way from being finished. With a town by a tree that applies to residents seems unable to save trees from developers.

And one final topic of the day — an earthquake was felt in Niagara by many who were awake around 6:15 a.m. Monday morning. It was very brief, maybe a second or two — some said longer — but not enough to understand what it was, until we saw it on the news. Nobody has reported any damage. Also though, that same morning we learned of the deadly earthquake that has destroyed large areas of Turkey and Syria, killing thousands of people. There is a scientific explanation about shifting tectonic plates and a fault zone that caused the devastation, but that doesn’t make it any easier to make sense of the tragedy.

We felt a few seconds of a shudder or shake, and then reached for our coffee and went on with our day. Though there are no deaths, injured, homeless or missing.

Yes, we can always find reasons to feel grateful, but we must also remember how very fortunate we are to be here, in our corner of the world.

Ben Foster is discovering new locations in NOTL and has a few words to say about private clinics.
Ted’s thoughts: is the world going to hell in a hand basket?

Ted Mouradian

Special to The Local

I keep hearing people say the world is a dangerous place today and we have to be careful where we go and what we do. Well, I did some checking and the crime rate is at an all-time low in Canada. So why are we concerned and afraid?

I believe social media, the internet and cable news have created this false narrative. For example, there is roughly six minutes of new news every day, and yet we repeat those six minutes over and over again for the next 24 hours and beyond.

We used to watch the evening news on TV or listen to it on the radio at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Then it was expanded to the news at noon. And now it is a constant flow of doom and gloom.

It is a very expensive way to keep us scared. And we are not the only country today. It is happening everywhere. It is not unique to us.

What I am suggesting is that we should not have an all-day TV news cycle. We only need to have the evening news and maybe even less.

We are blessed to be living where we are and maybe it’s time to celebrate that and watch more local news instead of stuff that will never affect us. Does that mean we should not be aware of what is happening around the world? No, but simply put, my toilet flushed this morning so for me it’s going to be a good day.

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

No apology owed to nurses

Alexander Evans

Niagara-on-the-Lake

Let me first start off by saying I have nothing but respect and admiration for what nurses have gone through during this pandemic. I could not have done it myself.

But that’s not what I was addressing in my letter (Privacy in health care not a scary word, Jan. 25, The Local).

I was addressing the fact that nurses and their unions have been supporting public healthcare which has led to disastrous outcomes. I am not surprised that since the 1970s healthcare outcomes have been falling. That is about the time when we started making healthcare public — as such, yes, nurses and their unions are part of the problem.

Unless I am mistaken and nurses and their unions have been advocating for privatizing healthcare.

Unless I am mistaken and they aren’t advocating for the public system that is inherently designed to be “crumbling down around them.”

Unless I am mistaken and nurses and their unions have been advocating for abolishing the Canada Health Act.

No apology will be forthcoming.

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Continued from page 1

ing in from the Virgil medical centre, where there is no separate office space for them outside of their examination rooms.

"That came out of COVID," explained the health team’s executive director Mary Keith. "It allows for sanitation between patients. Our diabetic team (dieticians and nurses) are now able to provide holistic care together. And our multi-use space for mental health services has a moveable wall to facilitate groups."

There was some necessary logistical planning that has gone into moving from one medical centre to another.

Berti explained that there are very few paper records anymore, so that was not an issue. She was quite positive that everything will be ready to go Monday from an information technology perspective.

And she added that a team effort was necessary for other items.

"Exam tables and other things are coming over with a moving company," Berti pointed out. "Certain chemicals, though, we have to be careful with. With liquid nitrogen, we made sure we used that all up so we didn’t have to move it. The moving company won’t bring oxygen cylinders, so our colleagues will bring those over themselves."

Developer John Hawley seemed both happy and relieved that the medical centre is opening next week after the event had been pushed back twice in 2022.

"We had some troubles getting out of the gate with approvals," Hawley said Tuesday. "But the town helped us work through that. Everyone wanted to see this get done. A lot of the delays were caused by the pandemic. And of course, we are over budget because of the pandemic, too."

Hawley thanked the homeowners in The Village as well as the tenants in the commercial plaza next to the medical centre for their patience and cooperation.

He also expressed gratitude to NOTL councillors from the last 10 years for their support of the project.

In his address, deputy lord mayor Erwin Wiens made special mention of current councillor Sandra O’Connor for her influence in getting the project pushed forward.

"Healthcare as an infrastructure, a town needs that," added O’Connor. "Upgrading, as we’ve done here, is very important to the health and well-being of the town. It’s very important that we continue to push for the infrastructure here to service everyone."

"It’s going to be very nice to be within a community atmosphere," Berti told The Local. "Although I have very much enjoyed being at the hospital, it is a very high tourist area. Parking can be an issue there. We won’t notice that here. This is a move in the right direction for every body."

And the space in Virgil vacated by members of the health team leaves room for new doctors to set up practices in NOTL in the future.

As well, the added space offered in The Village may offer other future opportunities for expanded healthcare in town.

"We would be happy to bring in more people to collaborate," explained Berti. "Maybe some specialist care on certain days of the week."

But right now we just have to figure out how we fit in, how our workflow goes," she added. "We need more doctors in the area. It’s certainly a necessity. That will be our next five-year plan, how we go about recruiting more people into our two healthcare spaces. Right now, though, we’ll take some time to enjoy what we have."
Rotarians raise more than $500,000 to help Ukraine

The Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake, individual Rotarians, and Rotary District 7090 (including more than 70 Rotary Clubs in southern Ontario and western New York) have rallied to the aid of Ukraine. Our local club contributed $25,000 from community fundraising efforts to three front-line organizations that can provide direct support to Ukrainians: The Canada-Ukraine Foundation ($2,000), Shelter Box ($7,000), and Doctors Without Borders ($16,000).

Our support for the Ukraine doesn’t stop there. Rotarian Jody Porter raised a further $72,000 from the NOTL community in support of Doctors Without Borders. “We inspired our community to rally to the aid of Ukraine. Without Borders. “We in southern Ontario and western New York Rotary Clubs were extremely fortunate in hosting the NOTL club as a member of the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. “The Foundation is based out of Toronto and has done wonderful work. They take over medical teams (including equipment and materials) to do specialized surgeries and training. The trips were all paid by local donations and the medical teams consisted of volunteer professionals,” says Bill Jr.

This generous spirit runs deep in the Charnetksi family. When Bill Jr. was married last summer, in lieu of gifts, he and his wife requested donations to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. Family and friends generously donated over $11,000.

With the added impact of matching donations from Rotary International, Doctors Without Borders, and the Canadian Government, our contribution became $250,000. Not only did local Rotarians raise funds, but we went to work.

Rotarian Anne Dickson says, “We spent days collecting and packing care packages consisting of supplies identified as needed priorities, including medical and personal items.” Anne’s commitment to help extended to providing employment for several young people who arrived in our area from Ukraine. In the fall of 2022, Rotary District 7090 (of which the NOTL club is a member) received a grant of $35,000 from Rotary International to assist in sending medical equipment and humanitarian necessities to Ukraine.

Collaborating with the Rotary Club of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine — and Warehouse of Hope, Not Just Tourists in North America, as well as AMA Hope, all humanitarian organizations — a total of more than $230,000 of relief supplies, including 500 trauma kits, 50 hygiene kits, medical equipment, supplies, and bandages were sent and distributed in war-torn areas of Ukraine. Rotary District 7090s commitments, along with matching funds, brought a total of $250,000 to aid.

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Southern Ontario and western New York Rotary Clubs were extremely supportive and worked together to secure products and helped with packing and shipping of the needed equipment. Five pallets carrying medical and humanitarian supplies were delivered safely to the Rotary Club of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, to handle proper dispersion of all supplies.

Rotary’s global network extends to 1.4 million neighbours, friends, leaders and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.
St. Davids Social looking for members, meeting room

Penny Coles
The Local

In terms of population, the St. Davids of today is very different from the village it was 20 years ago.

What hasn’t changed is that the 5,000 or so residents who have become villagers in those years love their community every bit as much as the 250 people who called it home before the ex-plosion of development.

The two decades of growth can be traced to the expansion of the urban boundary of St. Davids, and the decision of the town and region that it was time for the installation of sewers in an area that had depended on septi-c tanks. "And they weren’t old and often failing. That led to Cannery Park and the many other subdivisions that have been created since then.

Greg Ryall is one resident who bridges that enormous growth, having lived on Pax-ton Lane in the 1980s.

After a time in Niagara Falls, he is back in the village, living on Sandalwood Cres-cent, and is at the helm of St. Davids Social, which is a less formal version of the Friends of St. Davids, founded in 2018 by Greg and Dorothy Walker.

What had began as a so-cial club, says Greg Walker, "grew to become a resource helping to make St. Davids an event that does place to live."

Examples of the group’s accomplishments include the establishment at Sparky’s Park of the Children’s Book Library, designed in the like-ness of the historic Wood-borough-owne of Fort-Mile Creek Road, and the creation of an active gardening group whose members maintain the pollinator gardens at the main intersection of the vil-

lager and at St. Davids Public School.

Both the library and the gardening group, says Walker, "remain active today as independent resources for the village of St. Davids."

The Friends group has now "returned to its roots as a social club," Walker says, providing "diverse social op-

portunities for the St. Davids community."

Ryall says this coming to-
gether of the group of villag-
ers is part of the village’s rich history, and we hope it will be around for decades to come," he says.

"What is missing from the community is a public space to meet — many of the re-
cent arrivals are retirees, and they would like a place where they can just sit and have coffee, and get to know their neighbours."

They are also looking for a location where they can meet as a group, and there are restaurants nearby, but he explains it has been diffi-cult to reserve space. Restau-

rants might want a guarantee of $20 a head, or a financial commitment upfront. Ryall stresses he’s not criticizing those establishments, given what has happened to them during the pandemic, but it doesn’t work for their mem-

bers.

They have had to go out-
side of St. Davids on occa-

sion for their gatherings, to restaurants in the north end of Niagara Falls, NOTL, the Eagle Valley Golf Club, for Christmas parties and other special occasions — wherev-
er they could get a reserva-

tion. And they’ve had some great events at Ravine Vine-
yard Estates.

"Ravine is terrific," Ryall says. "I love the family and everything Ravine has done for the community, but it’s not inexpensive. We’re struggling to find a regular meeting spot in the village without a significant cost."

"We have really good momentum," he adds. "We’re getting there."

"St. Davids Social" is a less formal version of the Friends of St. Davids, and is the first club to do so in two years. And he mentions the Harber family, owners of Ra-
vine, and what they did for that class of youngsters.

“Our members are al-most in awe of the family, and what they’ve done for the community."

Ryall was at the school taking pictures of the kids as they left their graduation, "faces all beaming and smil-
ing."

And they walked to Ravine, where there was a pizza party waiting for them. "They had a terrific party. They were having so much fun, all wanting to get in the pictures. It was a perfect set-
ing for them that night." And that, he says, is what the members of St. Davids Social want — to build and be part of that kind of com-

The focus of the club is to learn about the history of the village, and to foster a sense of community and pride in the village, says Ryall.

What they don’t want is to take on issues, or political debate.

While Ryall and oth-

er members have opinions about such issues as the roundabout, or the new commercial development at the corner — other than hoping it offers services they can use — that’s not the point of their group.

"We would be differ-
ent opinions among mem-
bers, and we’re not getting into the political fray." He speaks instead of the public school, and the stu-
dents of the graduating class of 2022 who were able to cel-
brate — the first class to do so in two years.

And he mentions the Harber family, owners of Ravi-

e," he says, "remain active today as inde-

"Social want — to build and be part of that kind of com-

Vice President of the Lions Club says, "I love the family and everything Ravine has done for the community, but it’s not inexpensive. We’re struggling to find a regular meeting spot in the village without a significant cost."

The club has moved away from a paid membership, he says. Since the early days of the Friends of St. Davids, there has been a total of more than 300 members, but today the social club has an active base of about 60 plus people, with a focus on expanding that in a post-pandemic 2023.

"The pandemic hurt us big-time," Ryall says. "People couldn’t get together, and they weren’t paying a membership because they couldn’t get together. At spots where we used to meet were shuttered."

The Lions Club hall on York Road is the obvious choice now as a meeting place, he says, but there are problems with that. "I’m all for the Lions, but I don’t want to use the space, join us."

And that, he tells The Local, "we’re working on it. That’s the future, and one of our aspirational goals."

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Examples of the group’s accomplishments include the establishment at Sparky’s Park of the Children’s Book Library, designed in the likeness of the historic Woodborough-owne of Fort Mile Creek Road, and the creation of an active gardening group whose members maintain the pollinator gardens at the main intersection of the village and at St. Davids Public School.

Both the library and the gardening group, says Walker, "remain active today as independent resources for the village of St. Davids."

The Friends group has now "returned to its roots as a social club," Walker says, providing "diverse social opportunities for the St. Davids community."

Ryall says this coming together of the group of villagers demonstrates "the spirit of fostering a sense of community here in St. Davids, and investing in its future."

The membership is very much driven by the people who have relocated to St. Davids. "They have come to St. Davids by choice, at this stage of their lives."

It’s an interesting dichot-
omy of individuals, he adds, those who have chosen to become part of the changing community, and those who have lived there a long time "and are hesitant to embrace the change."

To show their support for the village, its history and its future, "the final act" of the Wal-lers and the Friends of St. Davids, explains Ryall, was to donate about $2,000 to the town, accumulated over the last four years, to support the St. Davids swimming pool. It’s an important part of the community now, and one that will remain so in the coming years, and the group wanted to show their commit-

ment to the community.

"The Lions Park and pool are part of the village’s rich history, and we hope it will be around for decades to come," he says.

"What is missing from the community is a public space to meet — many of the re-
cent arrivals are retirees, and they would like a place where they can just sit and have coffee, and get to know their neighbours."

They are also looking for a location where they can meet as a group, and there are restaurants nearby, but he explains it has been diffi-cult to reserve space. Restau-

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sion for their gatherings, to restaurants in the north end of Niagara Falls, NOTL, the Eagle Valley Golf Club, for Christmas parties and other special occasions — wherev-

At the Friends of St. Davids’ last meeting the decision was made to donate about $2,000 to the St. Davids Pool Fund. (Photos supplied)
Rob Munger, owner of the Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe, has added an arcade to his Queen Street store.

For those reminiscing about the arcade that used to be in the plaza on the corner of Four Mile Creek Road and Niagara Stone Road, you can now get your Galaga fix in the new arcade room on Queen Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Rob Munger, owner of the Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe, has installed more than a dozen arcade games dating from the 1980s and 1990s, including Galaga, Tron and Golden Tee. Terminator 2 Judgment Day is, so far, the lone pinball machine.

Munger has been collecting arcade games for years and storing them in his garage with the intention of opening a barcade (bar plus arcade). However, he has not been able to secure a suitable location. A recent expansion in the candy store has created space for the vintage and rebuilt arcade games.

“We want to make it more of an experience, a destination,” said Munger, who is also installing a fully-automated candy floss machine.

The expanded Jelly Belly wall catches the eyes of young ones as they enter the store. “We carry literally 70 flavours,” said Munger. “We will also expand our toy line and focus on retro toys to keep with the ambience of the store.”

Munger, originally from Chippawa, started in the candy business while living and skiing in Canmore, Alberta. While working in a friend’s candy store, he went on a buying expedition to the Candy Expo in Chicago. Munger opened a candy store in Niagara Falls, and the one on Queen Street in 2015.

“We try to focus on everything you can’t get in grocery or variety stores,” said Munger. Crickets, sour balls, a five pound gummy bear and single pickles in a bag line the shelves of the store. They also offer a selection of candy originating from Japan, England and America.

“Look up to discover a ceiling embellished with ‘one of every Pez we had in the store for the past seven years,” said Munger. And with a larger wall full of new Pez, he is bound to add to his ceiling soon.

In the arcade most games are now operable, and will be coin-operated, costing nothing more than the nostalgic price of twenty-five cents to $1.

Sharon Burns
Special to The Local

Vintage arcade games await at the candy shop.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has partnered with local community groups, environmental agencies, and government organizations that share a common interest in helping Canada reach its goal of planting 2 Billion Trees for a better tomorrow.

Got Land? Let’s Plant

Private landowners invited to join collective efforts to bring millions of trees to the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Increase tree canopy
Restore natural habitats & biodiversity
Support green jobs

LEARN MORE & REGISTER YOUR PROPERTY:

getinvolved.npca.ca/trees-for-all
Newark Neighbours ready for more space

Penny Coles
The Local

Newark Neighbours has come a long way since the days when founder Peggy Anderson would be seen on her daily walk from her Butler Street home to the food bank and thrift shop that dates back to the early 1970s.

She’d be impressed and proud to see what the current volunteers have managed to do in recent years with the small barn on John Street, built with the help of volunteers in the early 1990s, and even more so with what they are about to do with their new Virgil location, which triples the space they have now.

But the reality is that although much of the new space will be dedicated to expanding the thrift shop, a much larger space is also needed for the food bank, which is being used by an increasing number of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.

The crowded thrift shop has always been a favourite for not only locals but shoppers from across the region who like a good deal, and about a half to two-thirds of the new space will allow it to be spread out, with lots of room to move around comfortably, says Cindy Grant, chair of Newark Neighbours.

“I’m really looking forward to the new space. Our clients will be able to shop a lot easier with more room and more aisles.”

With a growing need to help those facing food insecurity, the food bank in the new location will be about double the size it is now. It will be enclosed and have a side door to ensure privacy.

And what will feel like heaven for the volunteers is a proper washroom with running water. In early years at the barn there was no washroom, but they do have an incinerator toilet now — “a fun experience sometimes, I must say,” says Grant. “There are two washrooms in the new location, but I think we’ll be making one of those rooms into a storage space.”

The thrift shop at the front and food bank to the back will be divided by a separate area for sorting items as they arrive, something Newark Neighbours doesn’t have now and desperately needs, says Grant, and there will be a small office to talk to new clients and register them for food.

Several years ago the food bank adopted the use of the Canadian government’s low-income guidelines, and new clients are asked for proof of income.

“If they can’t provide it, but explain why they’re in need, we’ll never turn anyone away,” says Grant. “We would if we felt there was something off about their story, but that’s never happened.”

When Anderson and a friend realized there were families in need in town in 1971, they started the food bank in a small Chautauqua storefront, and that Christmas helped 100 families, including 175 children. Many of those who were provided with food had been drawn to Niagara-on-the-Lake’s agricultural community, and were willing to work hard to support their families, often with a large number of children. Donated clothing and household goods were also available for those in need, and the barn became a favourite place for migrant farmworkers to gather on their Sunday afternoons off. Anderson would give them a large black garbage bag to fill with clothing for their families back home, for the price...
Grant can say the same — when the food shelves are low or there are specific items that are needed, she has only to ask. “We see it time and time again,” she laughs about the call for poultry stuffing that went out before Christmas — although the shelves are getting bare even after the “incredible bounty” of food donated for the holiday, they have enough stuffing left over to get through Easter.

Although in pre-pandemic years there were typically 35 to 40 families or individuals who would be registered for help, the number has grown significantly since then. In recent months they’ve had more than 80 families registered, and at Christmas they delivered hampers and gifts to 87 families, and a total of 139 individuals.

“The last two and a half years, we’ve more than doubled the people we serve, and every month it increases. In January, we had nine new clients.”

The reasons are many, as they have over the years, including single mothers leaving difficult situations, students at Niagara College, and families who don’t have the income to cover the rising cost of food.

Newark Neighbours clients can pick up food every two weeks, while some of the other food banks in the region have had to cut down to once a month because of food supply and the growing need for assistance, says Grant.

“Our clients are generally very grateful for whatever we can give them,” says Grant. They are selective in what they take, “but in a good way. As they walk along the aisles, they’ll say ‘no, I won’t take that, I don’t need it.’ They only take what they need.”

They can’t pick up fresh produce or milk or eggs at the barn, so instead they are given PC Cards once a month to purchase what they need, the amount depending on the number of people in the family, says Grant.

The new space can’t come soon enough for the volunteers. Grant stresses that volunteers are also grateful for a food drive this weekend, and have a list of items most needed: jam, honey, applesauce, puddings, canned fruit, granola bars, cookies and crackers, soda crackers, cups of chili, rice or Chef Boyardee products, Ramen instant soups or Mr. Noodles, rice, Side Kicks, condiments, toilet paper, Kleenex, and paper towels.

The barn may be small, but they have outdoor containers for the overflow, and are grateful to be able to fill them.
Reflecting on the group exhibit Reflections

Maria Klassen
Special to The Local

Whenever I visit the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I always marvel at its beautiful location, sitting as it does on the banks of the Niagara River. Even in winter it is a picturesque place.

Wandering through the new art exhibit Reflections, featuring diverse styles and perspectives of the participating members of the NOTL Arts Collective, I am amazed at all the artwork that includes water.

Looking at Rosie Sherman’s two pieces entitled A Perfect Day and Come out and Play, capturing water, sand and sun, makes me realize we don’t have to fly south to enjoy these warm seasons, we just need to spend a few hours at this exhibit to transport us to warmer scenes; we just need to sit and savour the peaceful water on a sunny summer afternoon. Tim gets his inspiration from local scenery: lakes, rivers, parklands and farms.

Gord Rosewarne’s jáhjiting it Easy portrays an effortless flight of a blue heron leaving the manly shoreline. He uses acrylics in a variety of mediums. His favourite subjects come from his interest in wildlife. In On a Break Gord shows us a playful tiger in amazing detail.

Pat Haftar delights us with her Love of colour, movement, pattern, line and texture can be seen in her work. Sherron Moorehead’s Wil- love Bursting With Spring makes us realize that blossom season is not far away, spring is coming. She paints with oil, and dabbles in coloured pencil and oil pastel. Sherron gets her inspiration from photographs.

Lakeshore Pottery has stoneware in the exhibit featuring a summer sailing scene—perhaps Lake Ontario? Ron and Barb Zimmerman hand-craft their items individually in their studio, using their own designs and glazes.

The vibrant colours of autumn are reflected in Julia Kane’s Reflections of Fall. She embraces the different styles of watercolour, vibrancy of acrylics, mixed media and contemplation poured in. She is new to working with fused glass and painting with glass paint.

There are several pieces of artwork that take us to different places.

Lynn Weiner takes us to our own town in Queent St. Niagara-on-the-Lake. She enjoys drawing people and pets. She loves to work with pen and pencil, but acrylic paints are now her preferred medium. She finds endless inspiration in the beauty of Niagara.

Ron Clavier has a detailed water scene, done in oil, in Gondola Reflection. His style varies with his Reflection of Venice. His careers as psychologist, author, neuroscientist, educator and artist have influenced his work.

Nancy Wardle’s acrylic work is titled Iris — reflecting happiness. Her paintings come to life using vibrant colours in a loose impressionistic style. She gets her inspiration from photographs. Lynn Weiner wants us to use our imagination in interpreting her work. A Fragile Man, which comes from her human nature collection. She works in mixed media. Her work is mainly figurative; she invites the viewers to ask questions.

What a unique and thought-provoking display of amazing work! This exhibit is set up from Feb. 1 to March 25 in the Joyner Gallery, at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

Maria Klassen
Special to The Local

LXXVII with us. He expresses well the resolution of the romantic modernists’ dilemma, which is the balance of beauty and the sublime. He works with paint, collage, sculpture and photography.
Jenny Wright in Fall on Your Knees, ‘intense, beautiful story’

Sharon Burns Special to The Local

Jenny Wright, a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and Shaw Festival actor, appears as Mercedes Piper in the world premier of Fall On Your Knees. It’s such a gift to work on a new piece of theatre,” said Wright.

Based on the novel of the same name by Ann-Marie MacDonald, the play follows four generations of the Piper family, and is set on Cape Breton Island. Wright admits the story is “pretty intense, with some very dark material. But it is also a beautiful story. It is about a family, their dreams, secrets and memories,” said Wright. “It’s a Canadian story. It’s Cape Breton.”

“We are telling the audience this story and it’s a rough ride; it’s a beautiful ride and incredibly moving, but also we have to take care of the audience,” said Wright as she made a large hug gesture with her arms. The audience members “go on a journey with us. I try to stay true to the words, and say them truthfully and imagine the truth and try to protect those they love, even if they don’t deserve it.”

As for feedback from an audience, Wright said, “the experience with the first audience was amazing because you hear them respond and laugh because of Hannah Moscovitch’s amazing writing. But the silence in the theatre was striking to me. You could hear a pin drop. Profound. The silence feels almost kind of sacred. Because you’re sharing, and they’re sharing.”

The play is presented in two parts, and each part is a full-length play. Part One: Family Tree, and Part Two: The Diary are directed by Alissa Palmer, MacDonald’s wife, and written by Canadian playwright Hannah Moscovitch.

“I appreciated the nuanced way it did so without saying the words or showing the things that could be quite triggering to some, and yet the messages came across loud and clear,” said Bjorgan. “I appreciated the nuanced way it did so without saying the words or showing the things that could be quite triggering to some, and yet the messages came across loud and clear.”

“Davis recommends seeing both Part One and Part Two in the same day so you can discuss it between shows, and not lose momentum or connection.”

For Wright, “performing a play over two parts is incredibly demanding,” she admits to being “spooked at Shaw because we have long rehearsal periods where, for example, on the first Monday, we rehearse for an hour. Not the case with this,” she said. “Not only were we creating this piece of theatre because we were also creating the style of it. The material is difficult, the time frame is difficult and the volume is difficult.”

“Preparing for the role of Mercedes involved ‘finding the language of Cape Breton,’ said Wright, who spent hours listening to Frig off Fingon, a music featuring Newfoundland-born Ron James, Men of the Deepes, and The Barra MacNeils, among others. “This play has the Diaries of East Coast life, vitality and humour.”

Wright, who hails from Breton, “was working professionals, found an agent, then landed at the Shaw as an apprentice at 29 years old.”

“Deborah Hay, also a Shaw Festival actor, joins Wright in Fall On Your Knees as Frances Piper. Fall On Your Knees closed in Toronto on Feb. 5. Cast and crew fly to Neptune Theatre in Halifax until March 5, followed by a three-week run at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

The closest venue to see this epic play is in London, Ont., March 29 to April 2. Both Davis and Bjorgan emphatically agree to trip to the Grand Theatre would be well worth it. “It’s a wonderful drive and share the experience with friends who also love to read and experience theatre,” said Davis. Audience members can also expect to see Wright in the Shaw Festival productions of The Game of Love and Chance and Blithe Spirit. Rehearsal starts mid April, allowing the actor “a week to catch my breath.”

“What I love about this is working with other humans and telling stories about other humans,” said Wright. “Storytelling is primal — a human need, and I love it. It’s a way to understand the human condition: human problems and joys and failures, and everything about being a human.”
Mike Balsom
The Local

Ryan Gaio remembers growing up in a Niagara-on-the-Lake full of local young musicians with plenty of places to showcase their original music. With the upcoming release of his album *The Best Ain’t Happened Yet*, and an April 1 performance at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124, he’s hoping to get the ball rolling in town once again.

Gaio was in Grade 7 at St. Michael Catholic Elementary School when he first began taking guitar lessons from Bruce Jones, a Brazilian-Canadian guitarist and former frequent collaborator with the Niagara Rhythm Section. He was inspired by a friend, Dylan Turner, who at the time was in a band called *As Above So Below.*

"We referred soccer together back in the day," says Gaio, "and he was like the rock star in town. His band played the legion for one of my friend’s birthday parties. I knew right then that I wanted to do that, and Bruce was his guitar teacher."

So returning to the same venue to debut his own songs is a no-brainer for the enthusiastic 30-year-old who is now living in downtown Toronto and teaching English and history at the independent, progressive York School.

Gaio put out a CD of original songs about 10 years ago and played a show at the Sandtrap Pub & Grill. But for many years he put music on the back-burner as he finished an undergraduate degree at Western University, then hightailed it to the University of New Brunswick for a Masters in creative writing before attending teacher’s college in Toronto.

"I guess I thought I needed to grow up and get a job," he laughs. "But lately I was finding that I had no passion project. I needed to do something for my soul. When I was a kid, I always said that when I grew up I wanted to be Tom Petty. In the last couple of years I just decided that I wanted to put my music out in the world and express myself."

The influence of Petty, as well as the Beach Boys, Sam Roberts and even the Traveling Wilburys, features in the title song. “There’s a line in that song ‘Living’s only living if the best ain’t happened yet.’ It’s the idea that you have to keep on moving on, looking to the future. My return to music fits in with that attitude.”

"This has reinforced the joy in my journey; not in the destination," adds Gaio. "I’m almost sad in a way that the album is done because it’s been so nice to have something to work toward. It really felt good to do, and I don’t want to not do it anymore.

Another local musician, Matt Meagher, will open the April 1 show at the legion. "We grew up together, we went to Beavers together," laughs Gaio. "He went to St. Davids Public School and Niagara District. He was in a couple of bands in the back, honourAmong Thieves and Funi-des. His music is guitar-based rock like mine."

Gaio is hoping the show at the legion is just the start of something bigger. "I want to see shows back at Simcoe Park," he says. "I remember original rock bands playing their tunes there. I remember my guitar teacher playing at St. Mark’s. NOTL is not just a tourist destination. I want to inspire other local performers to do this. I hope we can create a hub for the performing arts.

Tickets for the April 1 album release party at the Legion are $10 in advance, $15 at the door, and are available by visiting ryangio.eventbrite.ca

**Help Boutique shelves are bare**

A volunteer at the Help Boutique, which collects food for Ukrainian families in Niagara, shows the shelves are bare and help is needed to fill them. Below is a list of food items that are needed.

- **Dry goods:**
  - rice (plain), barley – hulled or pearl, buckwheat, kasha, Quaker Oats, cornmeal, rye/wheat/millet, bread crumbs (plain), dried soup chicken/beef, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, tomato paste, dill pickles, sauerkraut, coffee (instant and regular), tea, walnuts, almonds, cookies, Nutella, jam
- **Spices:**
  - salt (plain and coarse), pepper (plain and paprika), garlic powder, onion powder, celery salt, cinnamon, bay leaves, poppy seeds, raisins
- **Bags of:**
  - potatoes, onions, lemons, cabbage, carrots, beets, apples, oranges
- **Canned:**
  - herring, sardines, tuna, salmon
- **Baby items:**
  - diaper wipes and cream, formula, baby food, cereal, diapers size 3-5
- **Toiletries:**
  - soap (no Irish Spring), shampoo, hand cream, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes for adults and kids, cold medicine for adults and kids, feminine hygiene pads, toilet paper, Kleenex, paper towels, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, dish soap, laundry soap

**Gift cards always welcome:**
- Giant Tiger, Walmart, PC, Shoppers, gas cards
- 905-468-2325 or email donatesunflowersforukraine@gmail.com

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Ryan Gaio decided to learn to play guitar in Grade 7 at St. Michael in NOTL. (Supplied)

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In music or life, The Best Ain’t Happened Yet

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**February 8, 2023 | THE NOTL Local | notllocal.com**
Highs and lows for U19 Rangers in Grimsby tournament

Mike Balsom
The Local

A challenging draw in their first tournament of the year was a bit of an eye-opener for the Niagara Rangers Under-19 girls basketball team at the Grimsby Grizzlies Invitational this weekend.

After winning an exciting opener 57-56 against the Burlington Force Saturday morning, the absence of some key players caught up to the Rangers and they dropped decisions to the Toronto Triple Threat and the Stratford Revolution.

In game one the Rangers fell behind 21-10 in the second quarter but clawed back with 13 unanswered points to go ahead 23-21 with 48 seconds remaining in the half. It might have stayed that way had the Force not dropped a three-pointer with under 10 seconds to play to go into the break with a one-point lead.

In the second half, point guard Mikayla Wallace seemed to take the entire team on her shoulders, exerting control at both ends of the court. Her constant driving to the Burlington basket resulted in a 38-38 tie at the end of the third.

The lead shifted back and forth between the teams in the fourth quarter. With 2:21 left in the game, the Rangers went up 52-49 on the strength of some clutch shooting from Kyla Pylypiw. But they saw that lead slip away 32 seconds later when the Force went ahead 53-52.

Julia Diemer then dropped a crucial, much-needed three for the Rangers that was answered by a similar shot by Burlington. But Wallace scored on a layup with 34 seconds left to regain the lead for Niagara.

The Rangers had a chance to put the icing on the cake after a missed shot by Burlington, but they turned the ball over under the Force basket.

With seven seconds remaining, coach Shawn Pylypiw called a timeout for his team to set a defensive strategy. Whatever he told them worked, as Ava Froese pulled down a rebound on a missed shot, passed the ball to Wallace, and the Rangers dribbled out the clock for the 57-56 victory.

Wallace finished with 23 points, including a number of them coming after she jammed her finger hard in the second half. Kyla Pylypiw added 13 and Froese chipped in 10, drawing a number of fouls under the Burlington board.

"It was a hard-fought game," said coach Pylypiw following the win. "We had never played the Burlington Force before, but they have always played at a higher level. I felt that we matched pretty well against this team and we did a lot of great things out there. To see our team stand toe to toe with them goes to show what kind of grit and grind the girls are made of."

Perhaps it was the hard-fought nature of that first game, or the absence of one of the team’s starters and leaders, Tiana Hicks, that caught up to them in their second tournament game Saturday, and their Sunday contest, both disappointing losses.

The Toronto Triple Threat, the eventual tournament winner, handed the Rangers their first loss of the season Saturday afternoon.

"It was frustrating as a coach," said Pylypiw, "and frustration by the team. It was one of those gut-check moments where we realized that there is a lot more work to put forward to build toward winning a championship by the end of the season."

Sunday’s loss to the Stratford Revolution was equally one-sided, knocking the Rangers out of a chance to play a fourth game for at least a bronze medal.

"It was a frustrating way to end the weekend," said a disappointed Pylypiw. "Both of those losses were really tough to take."

NOTL Skating Club girls take part in two competitions

NOTL Skating Club members headed to Stratford for the December Classic Skate competition, with (left) Hailey Mitchell coming in fifth in the U10 STAR 4 division, Jamie Doucet fifth in the O13 STAR 4, Soraya Felice 13th in the O12 STAR 5, Katharine Vanderkaay 17th in STAR 6, Samantha Frydryk 13th in O13 STAR 5, and Ophelia Xie fourth in STAR 6. (Photos supplied)
Niagara Predators clip St. George Ravens’ wings

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara Predators made a strong statement in their 7-0 grounding of the St. George Ra-

vens in Virgil Friday night. “I think we took it to them pretty good,” said head coach Kevin Taylor after the game. “I think it separates us from the rest of the clump; it establishes us as a team that is going to be ready to go.”

Where they are ready to go is to the playoffs, hopefully as the fourth seed in the Great-

er Metro Junior A Hockey League’s (GMHL) post-season. They continue to hold down that spot with just eight games left to play, three points ahead of Northumberland in the South Division, four points over St. George and six over Tottenham.

And the league is starting to notice. The league released their power rankings for Feb-

ruary and, though the Preda-
tors didn’t make it into the top 10, they dawed their way to an honourable mention for the first time this season after their third straight victory.

Both teams came onto the Meridian Credit Union ice ready to assert their physical domi-
nance Friday, with St. George’s Malcolm Campbell decked Niagra’s Declan Fogarty just seconds into the game. But the Predators soon began to take back with physical play of their own.

The Niagara power play faltered in the first 10 minutes of the game. Nearly successive two minute and five minute penalties to the Ravens gave the Preds some early opportuni-
ties but they failed to solve St. George goalie Owen Neomytka with the man advantage.

Later, in the 12th minute, Askar Amambetov took the puck in front of Neomytka and left a perfect no-look drop pass to the trailing Nick Savoie, who knocked a wrist shot behind the helpless goalie to give the Predators a 1-0 lead.

Niagra’s penalty kill was under the spotlight a number of times during the second period, successfully shutting down any opportunities the Ravens were able to muster time after time.

Then, with 3:47 left in the second, Leo Savin brought the puck up the right side and fed a forward pass into the St. George zone to Timir Mirzainters. Mir-

zainters backhanded the puck to Alexander Andrews who came charging in undefended in front of Neomytka for the Preds second goal.

Just over a minute later, Guy Mancis slapshot from the point was stopped by Neomytka, but Nolan Wyers was then waiting for the rebound. As the goalie tried to glove the loose puck, Wyers knocked it past him as he was taken to the ice by St. George’s Cameron Ison. Somehow the 3-0 lead felt a bit too much heading into the third period. Things started to get rough in the last 20 minutes, as St. George tempers faltered in the first 10 minutes but they had some good opportunities to bounce back with a new team,” Clausen told The Local. “The first cou-

ple days up here were a difficult adjustment, but an adjustment I wanted to be a starting goalie, so I wanted to take my skills somewhere else. I get to start fresh here.”

Clausen showed incredible confidence and calm in stopping all 30 shots by St. George, in-

cluding two great opportunities for the Ravens on breakaways.

“Try not to think too much out there,” Clausen said. “I’ve learned pretty recently to just keep a clear mind and have fun, not to stress so much about it.”

“He played a great game,” Taylor said about the 6’4” Clausen. “It’s the size of him. It’s in-

trigating for a lot of shooters who come down the ice on him. He’s a nice addition.”

Taylor admitted that Friday’s game was a big game, but added that the real state-

ment will be key as the Preda-

tors head toward their quest for meridian. “It’s the size of him. It’s im-

timidating for a lot of shooters who come down the ice on him. He’s a nice addition.”

Taylor admitted that Fri-

day’s game was a game re-

sumed to the point where the real

statement will be this Tuesday, when the Preds host the Ra-

vens at Port Colborne’s Vale Centre for a game rescheduled from the one cancelled during the Dec. 23 snowstorm.

“If we roll over and allow things to happen, or are we going to con-

ten to keep a clear mind and have fun.”

Jerry (Dohnal) got slashed, he went after him, and then another guy came over and slashed him, so he fought him.”

There’s no doubt that keep-

ing their cool in those situa-
tions will be key as the Preda-
tors head toward the GMHL’s Russel Cup.

“It’s just now trying to keep everyone on an even keel,” Taylor says, “to make sure they don’t have personal goals, to not put personal ambitions ahead of team ambitions.”

Tuesday’s rematch against the Ravens in Port Colborne be-

gins at 8:30 p.m., while Friday’s game against Streestville at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil begins at 7:30 p.m.

The U11 NOTL Wolves #2 team won the Al Boone Tournament championship in Niagara Falls recently, in an exciting win that included an overtime shoot-out.

It began with a 4-4 tie to West Lincoln, a loss to Jor-

dan 5-3, and then the Wolves handed Niagara Falls their first loss 6-3.

The excitement contin-

ued in the semi-finals against Niagara Falls #2, when the Wolves pulled the goalie with 34 seconds left and tied the game 1-1. The game was settled in overtime and the Wolves won in a four-player shoot-out.

The final was an intense game against the Wolves U11 #1, and a tournament win 3-2. Bench staff included Pe-

ter Flynn, Dan Plomish, Carl

Brum, Chris Hiebendaal and Mike Palmer.

Playing for the win were goalie Will Iwicki, with Tes-

sa Brum, Natha Fynn, Amedeo Santini, Avery

Warren, Cam Doyle, Vincen-

to Coppola, Max Plomish, Jon Velink, Max Lindqvist, Hudson Mclay, Nora Palm- er, Matteo Raponi, Tyson Birks, Charlie Hiebendaal, Rory Smythe and Jacob VanSpronsen.

Local Staff
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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

Across:
1 Raises
4 G
8 Strikebreaker
12 Siestas
14 Egg layers
15 Father of a lever
16 Superstar
18 Old Persian native
20 Aligned
21 Open
22 Enormous
23 Abominable snowman
24 Scrutinize
25 Study
27 Marid ---
29 E.g. A O L
30 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)
31 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)
32 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)
33 Four packs
34 Secret Chinese society
36 Bingol
38 Five pack
39 Time in Boston
41 Immediately
42 Dentists’ grp.
43 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)
44 To place your classified ad, contact Julia:
46 Homo sapiens
58 Time in Boston
62 Enormous
63 Abominable snowman
64 Scrutinize
65 Study
67 Marid ---
68 Four packs
69 "Death --- Expert Witness" (P D James)

Down:
1 Unity
2 Padre
3 Spout
4 The Oval Office
5 Heaves
6 Onset
7 User
8 Shiva
9 Canadians
10 Arcs
11 Beat
13 Sleigh
18 Strangleholds
26 Edge in
28 Retool
29 Boa
31 Shoo
32 Pawn
33 Beam
34 U S D A
35 Stand up to
36 T N N
40 Nat
45 Etched
48 Saline
50 Expos
51 Brain
53 Aegis
54 Pr...vo
55 Essex
56 F D I C
57 Leno
59 Ammo
60 Not his
61 Captain Jack Sparrow actor
62 Online missives
63 Secret Chinese society
64 W
65 Look after
66 Dive
67 Coos
68 Ones
69 Sox.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from February 1, 2023

Across:
1 Ups, 4 Thou, 8 Scab, 12 Naps, 14 Hens, 15 Hare, 16 Idol, 17 Eases, 19 Inca, 20 True, 21 Overt, 22 Vast, 23 Yeti, 24 V...et, 25 Read, 27 Gras, 29 Bad, 30 I S P , 33 Bushel, 36 Tong, 37 Aha, 38 E S T, 39 Tonnage, 41 Now, 42 A D A, 43 Of an, 44 Lies on, 46 Man, 47 Oft, 48 Sent, 49 Deli, 51 Bah, 52 Cape, 56 Flux, 58 Carlo, 60 Hers, 61 Depp, 62 E-mail, 63 Egos, 64 Into, 65 Mind, 66 Dive, 67 Coos, 68 Ones, 69 Sox.

Down:
1 Unity, 2 Padre, 3 Spout, 4 The Oval Office, 5 Heaves, 6 Onset, 7 User, 8 Shiva, 9 Canadians, 10 Arcs, 11 Beat, 13 Sleigh, 18 Strangleholds, 26 Edge in, 28 Retool, 29 Boa, 31 Shoo, 32 Pawn, 33 Beam, 34 U S D A, 35 Stand up to, 36 T N N, 40 Nat, 45 Etched, 48 Saline, 50 Expos, 51 Brain, 53 Aegis, 54 Pr...vo, 55 Essex, 56 F D I C, 57 Leno, 59 Ammo.

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