



Avery fills Newark Neighbours shelves
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Hotel proposed for Parliament Oak site

The planning and design company submitted this rendering of the Parliament Oak Hotel. If successful with its application, Two Sisters Resorts will have the school on King Street demolished and replaced with what it is calling a boutique hotel.



Penny Coles
The Local

How will Old Town residents feel about a four-storey Parliament Oak Ho-

tel on King Street?

That's the plan for the former school property — the proposal from Two Sisters Resorts is to demolish the former school building

and put up a boutique hotel.

There are 129 suites planned in the "luxury hotel" fronting on King Street, with a restaurant,

bar and event spaces, all in one building, allowing for some onsite greenspace. There will be underground parking and eight surface parking spaces.

In 2018, the District School Board of Niagara sold the 1.6 hectare King Street property to developer Liberty Sites Ltd., following community pro-

tests and failed negotiations with the town, which had made several offers to purchase it.

Liberty was proposing a dozen 1.5 storey semi-detached homes, plus a three-storey apartment building. Residents, believing it to be too big and too large a density, were advocating that any development of the site should respect the streetscape and low-density residential neighbourhood surrounding it.

Paul Lowes, of SGL Planning and Design, who also represents developer Benny Marotta, Two Sisters Resort and Solmar for the proposed subdivision on John Street East, says the applications for Official Plan and zoning by-law amendments for the hotel have been submitted to the town, along with all the studies required and an "early design." The town will review those applica-

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Farmworker Hub to include space to hang out

Penny Coles
The Local

The Farmworker Hub is expanding, offering a place for men and women working on local farms to hang out and have some social time together.

A large space that was "in limbo" upstairs at Cornerstone Community Church, where the hub offers clothing, household items, toiletries and food on the main floor, has been offered to the

hub to help fulfill its vision.

Cornerstone's Pastor Jeff Martens, who looks after operations and outreach, says there hadn't been a clear vision of what that space would be used for once the church moved to its Hunter Road location.

The church had been supporting the hub in small ways, basically treating it as a tenant, and operating a little bit at arm's length, says Martens.

But as they got to know

Julia Buxton-Cox, organizer of the hub, and understood her plans for its future, "we wanted to develop more of a partnership between the church and the hub. We wanted to help it expand, and dedicate that section to a longer-term vision."

Martens says they felt privileged having that building and their new, larger church on Hunter Road, and wanted to partner with community organizations to

use the Cornerstone space.

That developed into a relationship with the NOTL Youth Collective that uses the former sanctuary for a drop-in centre and programming for young people, The Farmworker Hub, and Quest Community Health Centre, which operates a clinic for agricultural workers.

"We wanted to use the space God has given us to bless the community, and work with good partners in

many ways," he says. "That made good sense to us."

That left the large area upstairs vacant, and the best use for it seemed to be extending their goal of "bringing together farmworker programs, and serving that community," says Martens.

As well, by expanding community programs at the church's town campus on Niagara Stone Road, "we're hoping to also engage our volunteers," he adds.

Their role initially was

to help the hub launch, "but that might change as we go along, with more volunteer opportunities in The Farmworker Hub. We already have some members of our congregation involved. This might be another way for our members to serve."

The rent will provide some revenue to the church to offset carrying costs of the building, says Martens, who explains they consid-

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Tawny Ridge could destroy neighbourhood, residents say

Zahraa Hmood
Special to The Local

Opposition to plans for growth in St. Davids persists this winter, as residents shared more than a few questions and concerns at an open house about a large-scale residential project being proposed in their neighbourhood.

Local construction company Riverview Homes Niagara wants to build a new subdivision called Tawny Ridge Estates in the west end of the village, adding 86 new homes to a block of land at Tanbark Road and Warner Road.

At an open house Wednesday, Feb. 8, planners from Upper Canada Consultants shared details of the proposal, which includes a collection of single-detached homes, townhouses and a four-storey apartment building facing Warner Road.

The details did not go over well with some of the subdivision's would-be neighbours.

"There's no precedent for an apartment building to be put in this area," said local resident Gienek Ksiazkiewicz. "It just doesn't fit within St. Davids' historical value, and the ambiance."

Senior planner Craig Rohe said the goal of the developer is to offer a variety

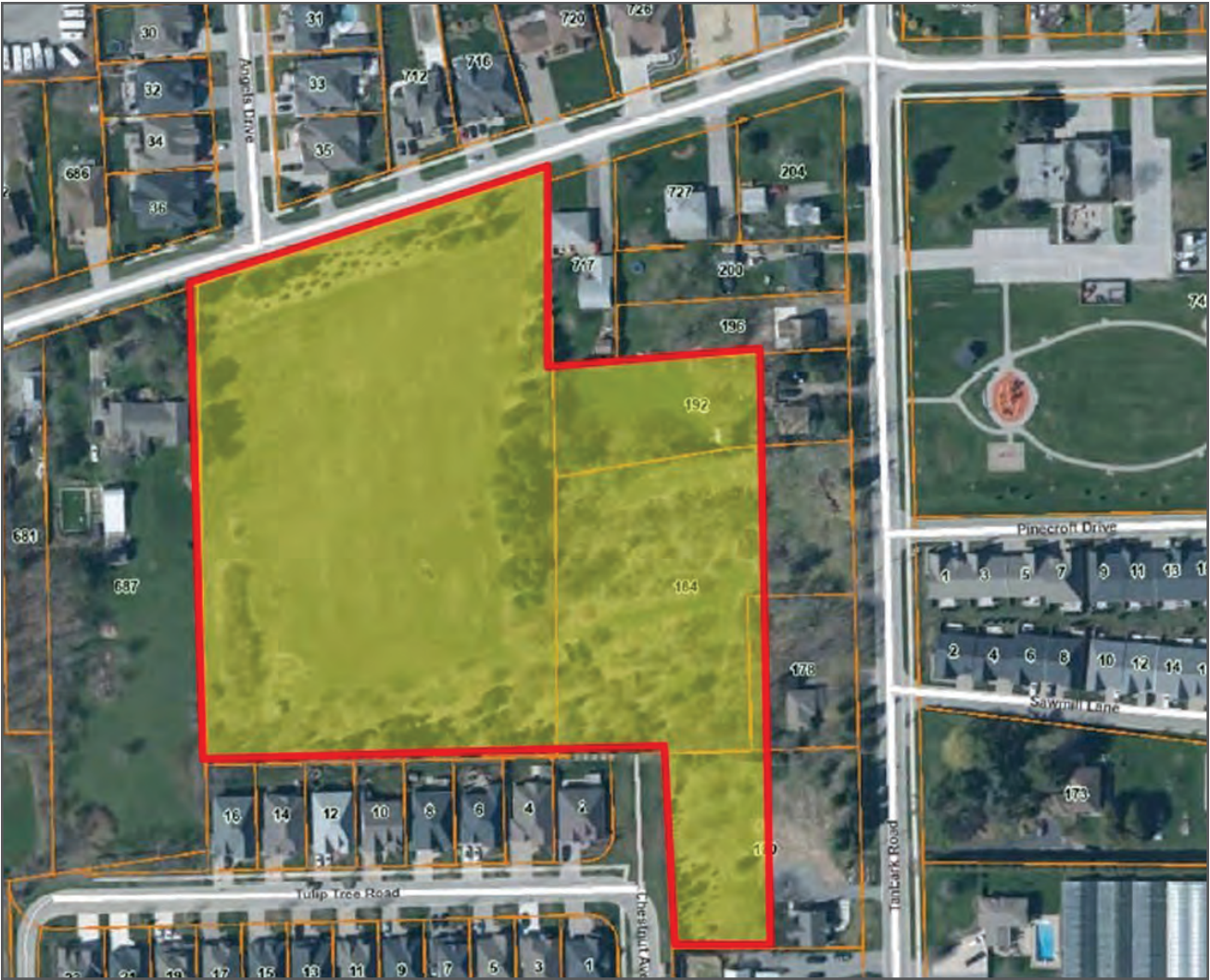
ety of housing types in the neighbourhood, increasing the density of the neighbourhood — as per the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's new Official Plan — and providing options for older residents looking to downsize their living spaces.

"There's been a lot of thought given to the most appropriate way to lay out this site," Rohe said.

The total development area covers 3.73 hectares, or 9.2 acres, of land. The project would be completed in two phases: phase one concerns a strip of land parallel to Tanbark Road, for the 12 single-detached dwellings, and phase two the rest of the property, with the apartment building, six blocks of townhouses in the centre, and eight single-detached dwellings near Tulip Tree Road.

The developer is requesting an Official Plan amendment to increase the allowed housing density on the site and to permit an apartment building, plus other exceptions for building heights, yard setbacks and more.

For phase one, the zoning bylaw amendment requested is to rezone the land from residential 1 to residential 2 with site-specific provisions. For phase two, the majority of the land for which is zoned



This aerial view of Tawny Ridge shows the large-scale residential development proposed for St. Davids on Warner Road and Tanbark Road, which is concerning to many neighbours. (Supplied)

for residential development, the request is to rezone to a residential multiple 1 Zone.

A Facebook group for the development was set up in June 2021, and registration

is currently open for hopeful future residents of the estates at tawnyridgeestates.ca.

The website lists the types of units that will be available as detached bungalows, two storeys, freehold bungalows and bungalow townhomes.

Ksiazkiewicz was one of about 10 residents who questioned the planners during the open house. Afterward, he said he would liken the conversation to a "beauty contest" in which the planners, on behalf of the developer, were attempting to convince residents of the project's advantages, "smoothing over any objections."

"There's a place for apartment buildings, but I don't think it's here," he said. "It would destroy the neighbourhood."

Courtland Valley Estates resident Bruno Laliberte said he and many other residents are concerned about the development, and called the rezoning requests "excessive." He also voiced concerns that increasing the neighbourhood's population will lead to

traffic issues on local roads.

"We've lived here 10 years, and I can assure you that the traffic flow even within our division, which is self-contained, is pretty heavy at times," he told Rohe.

This project and others in development this year in Niagara-on-the-Lake come after the Ontario government passed Bill 23 in late 2022 — the bill is reducing or eliminating roadblocks for developers: according to Premier Doug Ford's government, this is part of its goal of increasing housing options in the province.

"The province's directive right now is that we're in a housing crisis right now and we need to provide more housing," Rohe said.

A public meeting on the Tawny Ridge Estates development is being held Tuesday, March 7, scheduled for 6 p.m. or soon thereafter.

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Extra space helps to fulfill vision of church, hub

Continued from page 1

ered other ways to generate more income, “but we didn’t feel that was the right way to go forward.” Instead, the decision was made to look at ways to give back to the community. “That’s how we think about the space. Leveraging profits is not our goal, it’s about balancing two needs, making it affordable for us and looking after the needs of the community.”

And farmworkers, he added, “are a major part of our community. This is a great opportunity to address their challenges and give them community support. There is a role for the church to play in our agricultural community.”

Many of the congregation members are also part of the agricultural community, he says, and by supporting farmworkers “in practical ways,” they are also supporting farmers, says Martens.

From the earliest days of The Farmworker Hub, says Buxton-Cox, when the job of collecting and sorting donated clothes began, “Jeff has been walking this path with me, watching this unfold.”

In March 2021, as farmworkers arrived in the midst of the pandemic, there was little opportunity for them to get to retail stores for what they needed. Buxton-Cox used the Buy Nothing NOTL Facebook group, which she administered, to get clothing and household items for them. By July 2021, the hub had opened in a portable in the Cornerstone Community Church parking lot.

Martens kept an eye on the hub, saw how many farmworkers were coming and going, and made some space available inside the building that could be accessed from the parking lot.

“Jeff has been such an ally from the beginning, and has believed in our mission,” says Buxton-Cox.

The space the hub has been offered upstairs made this expansion possible. “We couldn’t have done this without the support of Cornerstone Church,” she says.

The space has comfortable couches and chairs, a pool table, a big projection screen, and some tables for games, all offering a place for workers to meet and have some space of their own off the farm.

There will also be a quiet room for “pastoral counselling,” says Buxton-Cox. “Many of the farmworkers are people of faith. We can have pastors of all faiths come in to provide prayer and counselling.”

Buxton-Cox has four pillars she would like to see addressed by the hub: poverty, by supplying free clothing

and other needed items; racism, by helping the workers “integrate into our community, and us into theirs”; food insecurity, which she hopes through grants to alleviate by having food to give away; and mental health, primarily looking at the issue of isolation of farmworkers, away from their family, and away from the community on farms.

The hub has 32 volunteers and more coming, says Buxton-Cox, and “this is the vision of where I want to take it.”

When Buxton-Cox and her husband Dave retired to NOTL, she hadn’t been in town long before she started a Facebook page, NOTL Today, as a forum she hoped would bring the community together in a positive, respectful way. The former Niagara Advance newspaper had been closed, “and there was nowhere to get any information about what was happening in town.” She stepped back from the Facebook page when posts veered from her intent and the good she hoped to accomplish with it.

Her next step was to administer a Buy Nothing NOTL page, which allows people to offer or request items they are looking for; share, lend or borrow; help each other; and give and receive — also a huge help to her when she started collecting much-needed items for farmworkers.

Her goal even then was to use her time and skills for the betterment of the community.

From her first introduction to working with farmworkers, delivering much-appreciated items to farms during the pandemic, she felt the need to do more, she says. Today, the hub consumes her. She is passionate about helping her friends from the agricultural community, not only by providing them with necessities so they can save money to send home, but also to continue to promote their acceptance as part of this community.

Once she learned of the need, she couldn’t walk away. Quoting Maya Angelou, she explains, “once you know better, you do better.”

And she encourages others to do better.

“It’s easy to see what’s needed. And it’s important to me to stand up and say ‘this is what’s needed. I see it. I’m going to do it, and I want you to follow.’ When you touch people’s hearts, there is no end to what you can do. When you share your heart and your vulnerability you make it happen. And this community has been behind me and helped me all the way.”

Years ago, when Cornerstone moved out of what



A large room upstairs at Cornerstone Community Church’s town campus on Niagara Stone Road will be used as a lounge space for farmworkers. There are also some smaller rooms off the main space. (Supplied)

they now call the Town Campus in Virgil to Hunter Road, “instead of selling it, they decided to keep it for the community,” says Buxton-Cox, and Martens and Cornerstone have been with her every step of the way since she first envisioned the hub. “Cornerstone has made this happen.”

And “what a blessing” for the hub to have a location in the centre of Virgil, close to banking, groceries and the bike repair shop for the farmworkers.

“It’s unheard of for a church to keep a building,” she adds. “It was all meant to happen. Whether it’s by God’s plan, or the stars aligned, everything has happened for a purpose. The whole concept of being a Christian is to love others, and this is a way to love our neighbours.”

There were 1,600 workers who visited the hub in 2021, and more than 3,000 visits last season, she says, representing 77 farms.

“My goal is to reach all workers, from all farms.”

Buxton-Cox says she has never been involved in something “this big, where we are able to impact somebody’s life, including my own. Knowing these seasonal agricultural workers has completely changed my life.”

And she quickly adds that the hub couldn’t be the success it is without the support of a very generous community. “We have a unique population of retirees and young people, affluent people, who make this work. I can’t imagine this taking off in any other community. I’m just a conduit for making it happen.”

For more information about the hub, to get involved or donate, visit thehubnotl.ca.

Free family skate Monday

Local Staff

Bring your family, and bring your skates.

The Fine Estates Team of Revel Realty has booked the Centennial Arena and is hosting the first annu-

al Community Free Skate Fest on Monday, Feb. 20 (Family Day).

Skate for free from 1 to 3 p.m. at the arena in the Centennial Sports Park on Four Mile Creek Road, and enjoy some snacks

and drinks provided by the Revel team.

“We’re hoping to have a great turn out filled with local families and friends and we can’t wait to see everyone there,” says Gracie Wilson, of the Fine Estates Team.

2023 MUNICIPAL TAX REMINDER NOTICE INTERIM FIRST INSTALLMENT DUE FEBRUARY 24, 2023 Tax Rates as per Interim By-Law No. 5468-22



Payment Options

- By mail or post-dated cheque to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- In-person to the Town Administration Building (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
- Via drop box at the Town Administration Building (front and side entrance)
- Electronically from your bank account using the 19-digit roll number
 - If payment is made at a bank or other pay station, your account will be credited only after the Town has received settlement from the bank. Please allow ten (10) business days for payment processing.

A penalty of 1.25% will be added on the first day of default and the first day of each month thereafter. To avoid penalty and interest charges, payment must be received by the Town by the due date. Penalties may not be waived.

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To save time and potential late fees, pay your taxes through our Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP) plan, online or telephone banking. Property owners can also request to receive their property tax bills and notices from the Town by email through an eSend service.

For information on payment options or to sign up for eSend, please visit notl.com or call 905-468-3266.

Residents already opposing commercial zoning

Continued from page 1

tions to determine if they are complete.

Once the town deems the application complete, it will be made public.

The building will have a “slightly bigger” lot coverage, at 22 per cent, than the school building, which covers 18 or 19 per cent of the property, says Lowes. But the landscaped area will be greater, with less paved surface.

And the historic oak tree, which has been reported to be 300 years old, will be saved.

The building design, he adds, “will fit quite nicely in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

Residents in the neighbourhood of the property have received a letter from LURA, a public relations firm, dated Feb. 6, explaining they “specialize in speaking with neighbours about a variety of policy and planning or construction projects. We are not engineers or planners ourselves nor are we responsible for the result of any project we are involved with. Rather, we work to foster positive dialogue between interested parties.”

Two Sisters Resorts, the letter says, “has identified that an early dialogue will be beneficial to ensuring the circulation of accurate information and the fostering of a respectful and open dialogue. We recognize there may be great interest in this site from residents. As the application process advances, this dialogue will also be helpful in circling concerns and inquires from the community back through to the project proponent/applicants.”

Neighbour Alan Gordon says POST, a group of NOTL residents and neighbours inspired to action by the first devel-



This rendering shows what the back of the hotel could look like, and greenspace behind it. (Submitted)

opment proposal for the historic Parliament Oak school site, is still very much in existence. Preserve Our Special Town was formed to protest what was considered inappropriate development in a low-density residential neighbourhood.

Gordon says since the first proposal was appealed for lack of a town decision on zoning and Official Plan amendments, POST members have been waiting for a hearing.

Liberty had also filed an application to the town for a permit to demolish the school, an application that was not completed, but that can be moved forward by Two Sisters, which bought the property in October for \$8 million.

“Things went very quiet during the hiatus, and nothing much was happening,” says Gordon.

He and others opposed to the residential Parliament Oak development have been following closely the proposal for a four-

storey, 60-foot apartment building on Mary Street, at the corner of Mississagua Street. It too is inappropriate for its location in a residential neighbourhood, because of its height and size, and that developer is also looking for Official Plan and zoning amendments, Gordon says.

That application “got our attention. We’ve been communicating with our list from POST. Most four- to five-storey buildings are 40 feet. This has very high ceilings, and mechanicals on the top. It’s the equivalent height of a six-storey building.”

Added to that is the issue of density, with 40 units proposed, “about 10 times or more what the OP allows,” says Gordon.

“Frankly to me it seems quite absurd.”

The Mary Street proposal is “way out of line” with the Official Plan, which is specific about residential zoning and redevelopment and what is appropriate for an existing

neighbourhood, he says.

Meanwhile, having heard that the Parliament Oak property had been sold, “we were on notice, just waiting for the other shoe to drop,” he says.

It has, and what he has learned about the proposal for what he calls “a quasi-resort” is also inappropriate for the low-density established residential area, he says.

“An enormous amount of effort went into the Official Plan,” which was recently updated, he says. “Our position is very clear. A commercial use for the property is completely inappropriate and inconsistent with the OP, as is the density, height and scale of the building.”

Gordon says he and his group are not opposed to development, and he points to the new hotel on Queen Street as something he feels maintains a sense of scale and density with the surrounding neighbourhood.

“But the Parliament

Oak and Mary Street developments, in residential areas, defy common sense.”

Connie Tintinalli, a founding member of POST and a neighbour to the property, is also opposed to commercial rezoning. Citing the history of the property, she says, “how much further from the intended use of this important site can this proposal for a commercial hotel be?”

Community facilities and institutional zoning designations permit uses that serve the residents and future residents of the town, she adds.

“If the town of NOTL wants to remain a real town with residents, families and maybe even a school, we need to prioritize the needs of the people that live here rather than the ones who merely visit, and those who only want to reap riches through development as they overwhelm the town’s unique character.”

Lyle Hall, a member

and often spokesperson of SORE (Save Our Rand Estate), which watches closely development and legal issues of the four properties owned by Benny Marotta, Solmar and Two Sisters on John Street East and Charlotte Street, has also been following development plans for the Parliament Oak site — he lives on one of the four streets surrounding the property.

He is concerned that the proposal is to rezone the property for commercial use.

Rather than a dialogue about how big the hotel should be or how many rooms it will have, it should be “what tone the new council is going set” with this proposal, and the one for Mary Street.

If the town wants to give up community facility space for commercial zoning right in the middle of a residential block, “we’ll never see another community facility space. Let’s not fall into the developmental trap of whether it should be 129 rooms. It shouldn’t be a hotel at all. Ideally, it should remain a community facility, or at worst, residential,” that fits in with the surrounding neighbourhood, says Hall.

Unfortunately, he continues, the owner of the property “has more money and more staying power than probably the town or the residents do.”

“I’m not at all surprised,” he adds, to see the property owner propose commercial zoning for a hotel — the discussion will be whether council will defend what residents want them to do.

This proposal, which if approved would begin to pull the commercial concentration away from Queen Street, Hall says, “will be a real challenge for council.”



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EDITORIAL

The issue that may define this term of council

We can't rewrite history (although there are certainly those who try) but we can learn from it.

Looking back now, it seems so simple — if the town had just purchased Parliament Oak School when the District School Board of Niagara declared it surplus, we

would not be where we are today.

And a group of residents hoping to establish a community hub would not have planned to talk to council Tuesday night to ask for the hospital building — they would likely have spent the intervening years with an es-

tablished hub in the former Parliament Oak building, and the town would not be gearing up for yet another battle over the future of that property.

Negotiations went on for years, first with the town trying to convince the board not to close the only school left in the Old Town, and then try-

ing to buy it from the board, making a total of three offers, all three turned down.

Most of the discussions between the town and the school board took place in closed sessions, but once negotiations came to a halt, both sides issued public statements. Pat Darte, the mayor at the time, said the town was doing everything it could to work with the board, and the board said it was open to working with the town. But it still didn't happen.

Gary Zalepa was a councillor during that term, and Gary Burroughs was the regional chair — they would understand the frustration of not being able to see those negotiations end successfully. They must think of that these days — how could they not?

It seemed there were two stumbling blocks. Although the site was zoned for institutional use, the board apparently wanted to test the open market to see what the property would be worth to a developer.

The other snag was the board's conditions — the town would not be allowed to flip it, nor could it become a private school.

The board was understandably concerned about losing Old Town students, and the dollars that went with them, to a school that might be established by a community group who wanted to provide families with an alternative to the long bus ride to Virgil. That, of course, is exactly what happened — Royal Oak Community School, set up first in the Market Room of the Court House, quickly outgrew that space, and continues to grow in the old hospital building — the only property zoned for community use left in the Old Town.

When the group heard the Parliament Oak property had been sold again, there were efforts made to again see it turned into a building the

community could use, but that, not surprisingly, didn't fly, we're told.

However, the good news is a community hub and not-for-profit school is still possible. The town has so far held on to the former hospital building, and has for some time tried to determine a future, hopefully permanent, use for it.

And a group of residents, many of them part of the group that first floated the idea of a community hub in Parliament Oak, has a solution for the hospital building that would allow it to continue as a community facility and serve residents, by offering a world-class centre for "creative, cultural, and community organizations to work and share resources, to the benefit of Niagara and beyond."

Their vision is described as a self-funded collaboration between Royal Oak Community School, and other non-profit organizations such as Music Niagara, the Shaw Festival and Yellow Door, and their ask of the town was to allow additional community organizations to become tenants.

The Local goes to press Tuesday night, and with the switch of town council meetings to Tuesday, we can't report the response to the request of the group to use that space as a "creative, cultural and community hub," but we hope it was positive — look for a story online today.

And that's the lesson we hope has been learned — what is being proposed would be a great addition to the community, a permanent solution to the future of the building, and a chance for a do-over after the failure to secure the school when the town had that opportunity.

The issue, however, is the future of the Parliament Oak site that is still to be determined. The owner of the property might turn out to

be the only resident of NOTL who thinks a hotel is a good idea. What remains to be seen is whether council has the will, or the staying power, to stop it.

Every candidate in every election campaign in NOTL, for at least the last three decades, has said they supported development, but opposed inappropriate development. Just as every candidate has said they support preserving heritage. You don't get elected in NOTL without making those promises.

But promises are easy to make and were likely well-intentioned at the time they were made, but are oh so much harder to keep. To further complicate matters, the recent election also brought out discussions about the high cost of legal bills, and taxpayers don't like to hear how much they are paying in legal fees to developers, so this council has some added pressure to deal with what appears to be a no-win situation. It will cost money to uphold the town's Official Plan and zoning bylaws against developers with deep pockets and patience. Development issues and the legal fees that come with them aren't necessarily resolved within a term of council.

The good men and women now sitting on council will want to do what's right for the town, and for the taxpayers. They will want to keep their promises to fight inappropriate development. They won't want to rack up huge legal bills to accomplish their goals.

They are in a tough position, just months into a new term, with an issue that could easily become the one that defines this council.

Engage in battle and stay the course, hoping for a win? Or save the cost of fighting. Which will it be?

Penny Coles
The Local



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Philomena Cunk, in the *Cunk on Earth* (Netflix, 2022) "mockumentary," is an investigative reporter, and aided by several erudite academics, she

examines the evolution of man. Rarely have I laughed so hard, or learned so much in such a short time.

This series is for lovers of Monty Python, Mr. Bean and QI. All others need not bother watching.

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

Where's Ben?



Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week's might have been a little more difficult than usual — we had one correct response, which was the Mackenzie Printery and Newspaper Museum in Queenston.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake
Local
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS Hotel proposal 'totally inappropriate'

Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake) was the first capital of Upper Canada. Sessions of parliament were held in the Free Mason's Lodge on King Street. In the extreme heat one summer, the members of parliament moved their desks and chairs outside to conduct their business under a stand of oak trees.

It was on this site (donated by the town to the school board) that Parliament Oak School was built and opened in 1948. In 1966 it was sold for one dollar

to the Niagara Public School Board (which became DSBN in 2013). The DSBN closed the school in 2015, declaring the school surplus one year later. Although the town submitted an unconditional offer over the asking price, the school board refused to sell to the town.

The new owners of this culturally important site are proposing Official Plan and zoning bylaw amendments to permit the construction of a four-storey, 129-suite hotel

with a restaurant, bar and event spaces in the middle of the established residential area of Old Town.

The height, noise, traffic and density of this proposed development is totally inappropriate. Introducing a commercial use into the middle of an established residential area betrays all the residents of this town and contravenes the Official Plan, which stipulates one of the goals and objectives for commercial areas is "to prevent

the intrusion of commercial uses into residential areas."

The Official Plan designates the property for open space and community facilities, with the main uses being "active and passive neighbourhood parks, elementary schools, health care facilities, churches, daycare centres, cemeteries, museums, historic sites, and similar community servicing uses."

How much further from the intended use of this important site can this proposal for a com-

mercial hotel be? Community facilities and institutional zoning designations permit uses that serve the residents and future residents of the town. If this site is lost to commercial development, there is only one other property remaining for potential community facilities and institutional uses.

If the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake wants to remain a real town with residents, families and maybe even a school, we need to prioritize the needs of

the people that live here rather than the ones who merely visit and those who only want to reap riches through development as they overwhelm the town's unique character. If an institutional use is no longer viable, the Official Plan provides that the only purpose for which the property may be redeveloped is 'Low Density Residential Use', one that is compatible with the surrounding Established Residential neighbourhood.

Connie Tintinalli

Local LETTERS Never have nurses or their unions advocated for privatization

In reply to the letter to the editor (The Local, Feb. 8) under the headline, No apology owed to nurses, consider the following, taken from the Ontario Nurses' Association website:

"Ford's plan to expand private clinics in Ontario will cost patients dearly, risk lives and significantly worsen staffing shortages, healthcare

unions say:

"Toronto, ON, January 16, 2023 – Five major Ontario healthcare unions are calling on the Ford government to not move forward with its plan to siphon provincial funding from public hospital care and hand it to private, for-profit surgical clinics, a risky venture that will cost Ontarians dearly and damage

access to public care.

"The unions – CUPE/OCHU, Ontario Nurses' Association, OPSEU/SEFPO, SEIU Healthcare, and Unifor – say that this move will further starve our public healthcare system of funding and divert front-line staff to enrich private shareholders and diminish access to publicly-delivered healthcare. Patients

will wait even longer for healthcare under this scheme and should not be misled into believing they will not pay out of pocket.

"They say that since coming to office, this government has implemented policies to demoralize healthcare workers, worsen the staffing shortage and cause burnout through heavy workloads

and low wages. Funding private clinics will further damage the ability of Ontario's public hospitals to provide high-quality care and make it even more challenging to retain front-line staff."

Mr. Evans is mistaken. Never have the nurses' union or nurses in general ever advocated for the privatization of healthcare.

Please do not bring nurses into this healthcare issue. They have worked tirelessly for months on end. The healthcare problems have been ongoing for decades and only now coming to light because the stress of the pandemic has placed it in a dire situation.

Maryellen Holmes

An easy way to get kids interested in nature



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

During a recent deep cleaning of my basement, I had to sift through some bins and boxes of belongings that haven't been touched in years. The inevitable situation took over immediately, as I found myself intrigued and distracted by a bunch of childhood keepsakes, photos and artwork.

Shocker — my artwork was related almost exclusively to nature. I had an obsession with drawing tornadoes. Their shape, and of course their monstrous power, was always something wildly captivating to me. To such an extent, I still stand by the notion that I would have professionally studied weather if I didn't fall too in love with biology.

Hence why the remainder of my youthful creative works feature giant tree sketches, toads racing one another, and snakes wrapped around moun-

tains. The writing was on the wall and the marker was on the paper from a young age.

Then there was a giant bundle of maps. These are maps I had made of The Swamp across my street, which I explored with great frequency and intent in my young years. I would be out there alone with my German shepherd, Shelby, and a walkie talkie to keep in touch with my parents.

That swamp is now one third of its size when I explored it as a kid.

Looking at these maps at 30 years old, I was instantaneously teleported back to the wonder I remember feeling when making them. With no actual maps of this area in NOTL available to my tiny hands, I mapped it myself, and with surprising accuracy.

This got me thinking about how you can get out with your youngsters, and map your own local park, conservation area, or even private property, depending where you live.

This is a superbly affordable and easy exercise of learning, creativity, skill development, and again — that classic feeling of childhood wonder.

All of my maps were themed. One was shaded from a light yellow all the way through to a darker red. I colour-shaded swaths of land based on my perceived density of snakes. Was I rarely finding snakes in one area, but scooping them up by the handful in others? The dark red area was hilariously titled in the map legend as Watch Where You Step. Your child can do this with any animal that you can safely observe, from beetles to birds to frogs.

Naturally, as a kid, you might begin wondering why the animal of focus shows up in some areas more than others. Now we're talking about habitats, and this was one of my other maps.

The legend shows swamp forest, dry forest, meadow, thicket, and creeks of varying size, which I gave my own names to. August Creek, Pipe Creek, and Pine Forest are a handful of spots, with a personal story and reason behind such names. This also reinforces the idea that not only in nature, but in life in general, all things are connected and influence one another.

Further on the note of wa-

terways, I also mapped their water quality. Of course I wasn't using scientific instruments assessing phosphorous or nitrogen levels, but I had big mason jars, and that was enough to get the fluids flowing in my little nugget of a brain.

Why was the creek brown, but this one clear? Why does this pond have lots of little debris pieces floating around? Some ponds were coated with algae

and others were generally open water. I then applied these findings, and where I took them, onto my map. Additionally, I observed and sketched what I saw in the jar for my shoebox records.

Like becoming a storm chaser or weatherman, I also seriously considered works in cartography as I got older, which is not a surprise whatsoever. Alas, the creatures actually swimming, crawling, slithering,

and flying around in these areas piqued my interest the most, so biology it was, and still is.

The takeaway here is that all your kid needs is a clipboard, blank paper, some markers and an inquisitive mind. This is not about ensuring they became future biologists one day, but it is a free and healthy method of fun, experiential learning that could serve to help kids think about all sorts of things in life!

Willow needs help

NOTL Cats has been caring for Willow for about a month. She's a sweet, affectionate kitten who captures the heart of everyone who meets her. Willow was recently diagnosed with clinical Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP), a viral disease which is almost always fatal. NOTL Cats enrolled her in an FIP drug trial and she started her treatments five days ago. Her prognosis is already looking good, but help is needed to cover the \$3,000 cost for Willow's medications, veterinary appointments and bloodwork. Contributions to her treatments can be made at gofundme.com/f/willow-the-sweetheart?qid=4ce72793d-00f304a0563e6ff20753553.



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NIAGARA'S BOUTIQUE BROKERAGE, BOUTIQUE EXPERIENCE

RiverBrink presents documentary on resilience of women

Sharon Burns
Special to The Local

Surrounded by evocative artwork such as haunting and sinister faces smeared with white, pink and blue makeup, and life-size skirt sculptures, director Roselyn Kelada-Sedra answered audience member questions after the screening of her award-winning documentary *Women of Resilience*.

At RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston, Kelada-Sedra was surrounded by the art of four other Niagara-based artists from the SWFT (Supporting Women, Femme and Trans) Artist Group. Themes such as gender identity and queerness, trauma and familial wounds, the universal cycles of transformation and human connection are apparent in the sculptures, video art and wall hangings throughout several rooms of the museum.

Kelada-Sedra's 45-minute film features three women in the Niagara region who have

experienced trauma. The science of resilience is reflected in the film.

"Trust," said Kelada-Sedra, "is based on the understanding that no matter what comes, this relationship is solid. And one's 'circle of security' are people that you call when you're angry or sad, people who have earned your trust. People who have proved over time that they are in it with you."

Kelada-Sedra chose to make this documentary because she admires women of resilience and "always wondered how they get like that." Her godmother and mother appear in the film.

"I care the most about women who have been through things and found a way to make their hearts bigger and their boots bigger and keep on walking," she said.

"We have a misunderstanding about forgiveness, that it's once. And you have to do it right away and it has to be 100 per cent done for real or it's not real. And that's not

real. Forgiveness is every day, and that's exhausting. It's really hard, but if you can't in one moment, you can try again in the next. If you cannot forgive now," said Kelada-Sedra, "you can focus on healing yourself and try again later."

Women of Resilience has won many accolades by esteemed film competitions around the world such as the Toronto International Women Film Festival and Cannes World Film Festival.

The artwork of Rajshree Jena, Mori McCrae, Luce Latour-Mooney and Rea Kelly represent a diverse range of perspectives and mediums, including drawing, painting, the traditional Indian folk-art form of Madhubani and sculpture.

A workshop on Indian Folk Art in a Mindful State with Rajshree Jena is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 25. The SWFT exhibit is still on display and is donate-what-you-can. For more information, please visit riverbrink.org.



Film director Roselyn Kelada-Sedra was at RiverBrink Art Museum to screen and discuss her 45-minute documentary on the resilience of women. (Supplied)

Cookies a heartfelt way to help Red Roof Retreat

Sharon Burns
Special to The Local

"All you need is love," said Shayla Vermolen, which is fitting for the 196 dozen heart-shaped cookies her mother Jody Finn-Vermolen has recently made to "give back" to Red Roof Retreat.

Kerry Finn, Jody's sister and Shayla's aunt, is a client of Red Roof Retreat, which has provided recreational programming for Kerry for six years.

In addition to programs for special needs children and young adults, Red Roof also provides day camps and respite care at two locations, The Ranch on Concession 6, an 11-acre hobby farm with an accessible walking trail and playground, and Kevan's House on Concession 2, which provides adult respite weekends and emergency residential care.

Kerry "loves going to The Ranch and going on outings and crafts and singing songs. Everything that Red Roof offers brings fulfillment to her life," said Jody.

Jody describes Kerry as "the light of our life. She is happy all the time. She is a social butterfly. She thrives from being around people and being able to do things and have friends."

According to Shayla, Kerry "has been super fortunate to spend time with the lovely people at Red Roof Retreat who provide her with so many fun activities and experiences. Our family is very lucky to have

been able to connect with them."

On Tuesday morning, Valentine's Day, Kerry met everyone at the door of the retreat's Hunter Road location, inside Cornerstone Community Church, with laughter, hugs and a big cheque to donate to the place that brings her so much happiness.

Wearing red and pink, clients and staff of Red Roof Retreat were planning on celebrating Valentine's day with a party. "We have a whole bunch of activities set up today," said special needs worker Kennedy Anderson. "We are going to decorate some cookies, and a whole bunch of colouring. And if the weather's nice we will get outside."

All you need is love, Red Roof Retreat's slogan, indeed.



At the Red Roof Retreat space in Cornerstone Community Church on Hunter Road were (back) program coordinator Christa Rawsthorne, cookie maker Jody Finn-Vermolen, Red Roof Retreat staff member Kennedy Anderson, student volunteer Lauren Manlow, and (front) Red Roof Retreat clients Kerry Finn and Kaitlin. (Sharon Burns)



The sale of heart-shaped cookies raised money to help Red Roof Retreat. (Supplied)



Red Roof Retreat programs bring client Kerry Finn much joy, say her family members. (Supplied)

Zalepa to speak about first 100 days at new Q Lounge

Mike Balsom
The Local

To celebrate the opening of their new Q Lounge, 124 on Queen Hotel and Spa is kicking off a new speaker series with an appearance by Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.

It was originally planned for Thursday, but has been rescheduled to March 15.

Director of marketing Alana Hurov feels the new lounge is the perfect spot in Niagara-on-the-Lake for the leaders of the community to come together on a regular basis to network and discuss important matters.

The lounge is a bright, open space with modern decor overlooking a spacious courtyard with a centrepiece fountain. It has the capacity to host between 50 and 70 people when all of the convertible walls are opened up. As well, Hurov says the floor-to-ceiling windows can also be opened to increase the capacity during warmer months.

“It’s a real loungy atmosphere,” says hotel general manager Eric Quesnel. “With this event, everything is going to be open. We have different types of tables throughout the room, and it’s a place where it is easy to move from table to table.”

“We want it to be a place for the locals to go, to feel welcome,” Hurov tells The Local, “to dress up, to have cocktails and great meals. We



General manager Eric Quesnel and marketing director Alana Hurov show off the lounge at 124 on Queen Hotel and Spa, where Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa will be talking about his first 100 days as mayor. (Mike Balsom)

want people to enjoy spending time here, to feel that they have a place to gather in the Old Town.”

Hurov, who moved to Virgil with her family during the pandemic, says Zalepa is a perfect headliner to kick off what she plans will be a monthly event.

“He’s a new Lord Mayor,” Hurov says. “Being a local myself, it’s important to hear what his plans are for the community. It makes sense to have him as our first speaker, to bring our community together.”

When asked about future guests for the speaker series, Hurov is holding her cards close to her chest for the time being. But her extensive background in television and multimedia production, including stints with Rogers Sports and Media, HuffPost Studios, Shaw Communications, and CBC, Global and City Television, gives a hint as to some of the possibilities.

“We’re in talks with some CEOs and leaders in our community and the region,” says Hurov, “and maybe

some other celebrities that I may be able to bring in from my previous life. I’ve reached out to my old friend George Stroumbouloupoulos (Hurov produced his CBC talkshow) to see if he can come.”

Hurov adds she’s open to suggestions for future guests, and holds out the possibility the series could become membership-based.

“My goal,” she says, “is to make Niagara-on-the-Lake have higher-profile people do events. We’ve brought different event producers to the

hotel to showcase the space, to see the luxury of our venue and its suitability for those types of events. We shouldn’t have to go to Toronto or Hamilton for them when they can be right here in our backyard.”

Hurov adds that proceeds from each date will go toward local charities. For the first session, the NOTL Youth Collective will be the beneficiary.

Guests will enjoy a four-course meal from Treadwell Cuisine and will be escorted on a tour of the hotel and spa

area, as well. The event will take place March 15 from 7 to 10 p.m., and costs \$175 plus tax and gratuities per person. To book, send an email to orders@treadwellcuisine.com.

“It’s really exciting to see what we can do with the space,” says Hurov. “It’s beautiful, modern and luxurious. Our owners are local people, and they’ve put so much love into this place that I feel so strongly about helping them make this successful, to make it a beautiful spot for people in our community to enjoy.”



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New director chosen for Niagara Regional Native Centre

Mike Balsom
The Local

At the Feb. 8 special membership meeting a new board was elected and appointed for the Niagara Regional Native Centre.

Newly appointed director Sean Vanderklis is hoping the change brings stability to a beloved organization.

The previous board was left with only four members in late 2022 after the centre's executive director at the time, Karl Dockstader, was escorted off the Airport Road property by board president Lacey Lewis and treasurer Wanda Griffin. Three fellow members resigned from the board following that incident, leaving the organization with an insufficient number of directors to operate and qualify for provincial funding.

Vanderklis, a journalist and co-host with Dockstader of the radio program *One Dish One Mic*, tells The Local that the remaining directors resigned on Feb. 8.

"Once they resigned, six new members were elected by our membership," he says. "And once they were in place, I was appointed to the board.

We currently have seven of nine vacancies filled, with two more remaining to be filled. They will probably be appointed at our next meeting."

Vanderklis feels that the native centre community was very clear and concise that they were under the leadership of the wrong leaders in the old regime.

"They needed to go, unfortunately," he says. "At the beginning of the meeting it appeared they weren't going to, though. They seemed to be fighting tooth and nail to hold onto power. But our community broke into song, our women's hand drum singers sang for a good 15 to 20 minutes, I imagine as a form of healing, of making sure that we were all collectively together."

The new board is to be led by president Roxanne Buck, who has served in that position a number of times over the centre's existence. Her mother was one of the founding members of the native centre.

Brian Mac Aulay will serve as vice president.

"He's part of our Silver Fox group, our older clientele," says Vanderklis. "He's been coming to our programs forever, and he brings a lot of his-



New Niagara Regional Native Centre director Sean Vanderklis. (Supplied)

torical knowledge, community knowledge that a younger member like me doesn't have."

Doug Paget is the new treasurer, and Elaina Jones is the new secretary. Activist Fallon Farinacci and Audrey Clark will join Vanderklis as directors.

"Out of our executives, three or four have past board experience specific to the Niagara Regional Native Centre," Vanderklis adds.

The dispute that arose following Dockstader's re-

moval from his position left some rifts in the community that Vanderklis hopes can be healed with the new board.

"Our community is very small, very tight-knit," he points out. "The people that we were taking issue with are people that I grew up with. (Newly-resigned board member) Bobbi Jones Japp is a childhood friend. I've hung out with Wanda Griffin outside of meetings. These are relationships we've been developing and fostering for years."

The fourth member who resigned at last Wednesday's meeting is Wendy Wilson.

As a community member, Vanderklis is hoping that another open meeting can be held in the near future for all members to voice their concerns.

"Ultimately the goal of this organization is to improve the quality of life for our people," he insists, "not just right now but for fu-

ture generations. The legacy needs to continue. Despite any differences some of us may have had, it's incumbent upon us to have these tough discussions."

And, he says, he hopes to see those board members who resigned last Wednesday back at the centre.

"Wanda and I might have differences, but she has been one of the most community-focused board members we've ever had," he says. "Some staff members here consider Wanda to be their family. There are members of our community that feel bad about what happened to Wanda and Bobbi."

The issue, says Vanderklis, is that the old board wasn't following the proper process when it came to governance.

"I imagine that once some time passes, and some healing has happened, they will want to become more involved than they want to be right

now," he adds.

The native centre typically holds its board meetings the last Tuesday of every month, which would mark Feb. 27 for their next one.

Before that, though, the new board hopes to meet with the provincial funders, with whom they are now in good standing with seven of the nine board positions filled. Bylaws require at least five members in place, and until last week's special meeting the board was one member short.

"Our community is passionate," Vanderklis says. "Sometimes we have these disagreements that affect governance. Indigenous people historically use a consensus-building model as a method to navigate some of the bigger decisions, not the first-past-the-post model. I hope that we can look at having bylaws in place in the future that better represent our traditional governance structures."

Town drops appeal of tree-cutting allegations

Local Staff

The town has decided to withdraw the appeal concerning the provincial offences violations under the *Ontario Heritage Act* at Randwood Estate, on the three John Street E. properties and one in Charlotte Street.

The original charges arose from allegations that heritage features were damaged because of trees that were cut on the properties.

In October 2022, the courts decided that the case would not be heard on its merits and that the trial would no longer continue, the town's press release,

sent out Tuesday, said.

Every individual has a right to be tried within a reasonable time frame, and the courts have provided guidelines concerning those timelines. Those accused need to be tried within 18 months for provincial court trials, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the news release says.




"In this circumstance, the accused was not able to have the trial within these prescribed timelines. Several factors contributed to the time delay, including the lack of judicial resources. On this basis, the town believes financial resources are better used in the interests of the pub-

lic, and the appeal will not proceed."

When making its decision, the news release continues, "the town was also mindful of the high legal costs associated with an appeal on this matter," without any assurance of success.


"The public may be assured that the town continues to value the conservation of heritage resources and will make the most of opportunities through *Heritage Act* and *Planning Act* applications.

After a closed session Friday, council voted on the matter of a provincial offence involving Solmar, but did not identify the issue.

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Music Niagara celebrating its 25th season

Mike Balsom
The Local

When the first season of what was then called the Niagara International Chamber Music Festival was wrapping up 25 years ago, founder Atis Bankas was urged by his audiences to do it again the next year.

He heard the same thing the next year, and again the next year.

"I thought by then they would have known I wasn't going anywhere," he laughs.

Getting set to launch what is now Music Niagara Festival's 25th year this summer, Bankas says it's the perfect combination of the scenery, the history, the wineries and the Shaw Festival that have made it possible to reach this significant milestone.

"It was evident right from the start that this was a great place for classical music," Music Niagara's artistic director tells The Local. "It's been a true labour of love."

"Our audiences have grown with us over the years," he adds, "and I feel we've expanded the boundaries of what is considered good music. We've presented jazz, Celtic, world music, choral music, a diverse lineup right from the start."

With the season announcement just around the corner, Bankas is using the week of Valentines Day to announce a

fundraising goal of \$25,000 to appropriately mark Music Niagara's milestone this year. He's personally donating \$12,500 of his own and looking to raise a matching amount and more by July 1, to ensure that this summer's schedule of events is the best ever.

"It will be a terrific shot in the arm," Bankas says, "to raise \$25,000 this year. It will go a long way toward keeping the festival going."

He holds out hope that Music Niagara can continue another 25 years, and looks forward to presenting an orchestral series some time in the future.

Bankas is promising a lineup of 15-plus concerts this summer, as well as a new Wine and Music series that will celebrate emerging musicians, something that has always been a part of the festival.

"Our academy has always been the backbone," the violinist tells The Local from the Ottawa airport, on his way to play New York City's Carnegie Hall with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. "I actually started the school before I started the festival. I'm happy to have developed so many musicians over the years."

The Wine and Music Series aims to support young, diverse and emerging musicians that Music Niagara has worked with in the past. As well, it will



Photos from Atis Bankas taken over the last 25 years: (clockwise, top left) Atis Bankas at St. Mark's Church with Ukrainian musicians, including world-renowned violinist Oleh Krysa, his late wife, pianist Tatiana Tchekina, and young pianist Marianna Humetska; practicing at Henry of Pelham, in preparation for a gala performance; young students at Music Niagara's Performance Academy at Niagara College — the violinist was Bankas' student Marya Krechkovsky who is playing with Pittsburgh Symphony now; and Bankas with his previous administrative assistant Kaylee Davidson. (Supplied)

highlight a new generation of performers, including some from Ensemble Obiora, the Odin Quartet, the Toronto All-Star Big Band and students from The Royal Conservatory, where Bankas teaches. Concerts will take place at Ravine

Vineyard Estate Winery, Chateau des Charmes and Ironwood Cider House.

Bankas missed presenting young musicians in masterclass settings during the pandemic, and is hoping to return to that now that concerts are back in

full swing for 2023.

"Our young musicians have always been well-received by our audience," he says. "Our masterclasses would be full with audiences watching teachers working with students. We hope to get back to those kinds

of shows."

Final arrangements are being made on booking the musicians and the venues for 2023, and should be complete in the next few weeks. A full lineup for the festival will be announced then.

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Avery collects 50 boxes of food for Newark Neighbours

Mike Balsom
The Local

Last Wednesday, a day after his 10th birthday, Virgil's Avery London filled the shelves of the Newark Neighbours food bank with donations from around the

world. Avery and his parents Mike and Krista loaded up the family van with an estimated \$3,000 in food and household items, \$750 in cash, \$250 in Amazon gift cards and another \$25 in M&M Food Market gift

cards to drop off at Newark's John Street location. The collection was the result of Avery's desire to donate to the food bank this year rather than receive gifts for his milestone birthday. Krista put out the call for donations last month via her TikTok account, thekristalondon, which has almost 600,000 followers.

Immediately, boxes from Amazon filled with items from Avery's wishlist under the banner Frank's Birthday Fundraiser (Frank is Krista's nickname for her son), began to arrive at their door.

"It filled up our whole kitchen table," Krista tells The Local, "and covered all of our counters. People were sending diapers, and we had an insane amount of baby wipes. We were able to get it all in the van, but there was nowhere for me to sit, so I had to follow in my car."

Many of the donations of products and cash came from Krista's TikTok followers from around the world. In lieu of making an Amazon order, some opted to send e-transfers or simply make a payment to her PayPal account, which converted foreign currency into Canadian dollars.

"When we brought it all

in, the bags and the boxes filled one entire row, and part of the food bank shelf area itself," she adds. "There was no floor space left."

"I don't think we've ever had a donation of this size from one family," says Newark Neighbours board chair Cindy Grant. "And I was shocked by how much. Krista told me it was 50 boxes, but I had no concept about how much that would be."

"All we had to do was say it on the internet," said an enthusiastic Avery, a Crossroads Public School student, "and snap, there was food at the door."

Grant agrees that the nature of the donation sheds a light on the potential of social media to be used to do some good in the world, and in the Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

"The concept of putting something on TikTok and having that kind of response," says Grant, "makes me realize Newark Neighbours has to get better with our own social media. I had a brief chat with Krista about it, and I hope to sit down with her to see if she can help us promote our upcoming move."

The Newark board is currently in the process of final-



Avery London has enough food to stock empty shelves at Newark Neighbours — the most the food bank has ever received from one family. (Mark Bennett)

izing the design for the interior of their new space in the old Lincoln Interiors building on Niagara Stone Road. Once that is done, they move on to the construction stage. Grant expects the move from John Street will take place either in late spring or early summer.

Although the shelves at John Street are now full following Avery's donation, by the time of the move those goods and much more will most likely have been distributed to families in need.

And despite the fact that Avery didn't ask for any birthday gifts, Grant presented Avery with two Lego sets and an item that one of the food bank volunteers

brought back for him following a trip to Ireland.

"We specifically wanted to thank him," Grant says. "We knew it was his birthday, and we wanted to give him a gift as a show of appreciation for what he did. That was very important to us. He was so excited to be here Wednesday."

"This is a real shot in the arm to see this amount of food come in at one time," Grant continues. "It gives us hope, and it keeps us going. He is learning at a young age what it means to give, and hopefully Avery continues to have that spirit of generosity as he grows older and becomes an adult."



Krista London takes a photo of Avery and some of the food he collected before heading to Newark Neighbours to drop it off.

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Queens and Cider at Ironwood Friday

**Sharon Burns
Special to The Local**

Pride Niagara and Ironwood Cider House are partnering to present Queens and Ciders at Ironwood's Lakeshore Road site this Friday, Feb. 17.

Pride Niagara Ambassador Macy Manolo, Queen Mother of the Niagara Region Rhonda Richards and Empress Claudia Silva will be entertaining audience members. Hospitality manager Devon Ryback made sure to note that they have se-

cured a DJ for after the performance.

Surrounded by art from local artists in Ironwood's large second-storey loft, Robyn Brown, marketing and events manager for Ironwood said that "Ironwood's connection with the District Tapas Bar in St. Catharines has shown us that we can offer the same level of entertainment." The District has a pop-up restaurant at Ironwood.

"The performers are with Pride Niagara, a pride advocacy centre in Niagara," said Brown. "We

incorporate diversity into our events and we want everyone to know we are an inclusive, welcoming space."

As for potential negativity, Brown said, "we have seen a couple comments on Facebook but this isn't a deterrent for us."

For more information please visit ironwoodcider.ca.

Macy Manolo, Rhonda Richards and Empress Claudia Silva will be performing at Ironwood Friday. (Supplied)



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Seedy Sunday has something for gardeners at every level

Penny Coles
The Local

Whether you're an experienced gardener, or more of a greenhorn wanting to learn, you'll find what you're looking for at the Master Gardeners of Niagara Seedy Sunday event.

And whether you know it or not, others may be looking for just the seeds you have to swap.

Bev Campeau, chair of Seedy Sunday, says there will be Master Gardener volunteers available to help both those looking for seeds for their gardens, and others bringing in seeds they may need some help labeling.

It's typically more experienced gardeners who harvest seeds, since beginners don't necessarily know how to collect them, says Campeau. However, "it's about 50/50" of those bringing in seeds to swap who will know whether their seeds are hybrids or not, which is important information in understanding what

will be produced from the seed. By asking the right questions, volunteers should be able to glean enough information to label the seed packet.

If you bring your seeds in a glass jar or other container where you've stored them since the fall, volunteers are ready to package the seeds with information that includes the best place to plant them, and the kind of care the plant will need.

"All a beginning gardener would need to know is on the package, and we will fill in the information on seeds that are brought in," says Campeau.

"We don't want to discourage people from bringing in seeds. This event started with the idea of sharing seeds, and having a variety to swap. A seed sale has become an addition to the swap, for those who are new gardeners."

There will be more than 2,000 seed packages for sale, at just 25 cents a package, adds Campeau.

Seeds will be sorted to ensure gardeners buy the right

kind, including 200 different varieties of vegetables; 800 different kinds of native plant seeds good for pollinator gardens, such as milkweed and coneflower; and even seeds for trees.

As Campeau explains, "your garden doesn't have to be 100 per cent native plants, but the more the better, and if you add a couple this year, and a couple more next year, you're doing your part for the environment."

There will also be workshops and talks from experts, and opportunities to meet garden-related vendors selling items such as bee houses and organic soil amendments, and to buy seeds from seed companies.

Talks by speakers throughout the day include Designing for Biodiversity; Benefits of Native Plants; Urban Homesteading; and 'Tina', A Painted Corn 16 Years In the Making.

Plus, master gardeners will have an advice clinic to answer gardening questions.

"If your tomatoes had a black spot on them, we can help you. If they've been damaged by an insect, we can help you identify what kind of insect," says Campeau.

Refreshments and light snacks will be available for purchase throughout the day.

And, says Campeau, bring the kids — there will be fun learning activities for them,

such as planting a seed "to take it home, learn how to nurture it and see what happens. It will help kids learn what gardening is all about, and where their food comes from. Maybe it will encourage them to grow some potted tomatoes or lettuce themselves."

The family-friendly event is on Sunday, Feb. 26, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at St. Giles Church,

205 Linwell Rd., St. Catharines. Admission is free and parking is available. Food donations for the local food bank will be collected.

For more information on seed classification, seed collection, native seeds and seed germination or on the event itself, visit the Master Gardeners of Niagara website: mgniagara.com/seedy-sunday.



Seeds will be displayed in colourfully-marked pots so gardeners will know what they're purchasing. (Supplied)

Buzz on Pollinators: Identifying, removing invasive plants

Sandra Ozkur
Special to The Local

Invasive plants are non-native species that have been introduced to North America either deliberately or by accident, and once established grow out of control, causing environmental, societal and agricultural damage.

Not all non-native plants are invasive, so familiarize yourself with the most threatening ones in Ontario to avoid purchasing or sharing these plants with friends.

Betty Knight, a Master Gardener in Niagara-on-the-Lake, says, "The best way to eliminate invasive species is to never plant them in the first place. Invasive species can be transformers, reproducing rapidly, growing quickly, changing the biome of the soil and crowding out other nearby plants. They are hard to remove once established."

You may be surprised to learn that some of your favourite plants are indeed invasive. I have a lot of English ivy growing in my yard; at first, I liked it because it was great ground cover and didn't require much care. However, it soon became a problem when it grew up the side of my house, onto my cedars, and then into my flower garden, eventually choking out all the original flowers. It has been impossible to remove from my trees, and has damaged the brickwork on my home. I wish I had stopped it years ago.

When invasive species are confined to your yard, they may not seem like a problem, but once they escape into nature they can quickly

take over and choke out the native plants, trees and flowers, destroying native habitat and biodiversity. Invasive plants can spread by several methods. One is by seeds released from the plant or eaten by birds who then distribute them over hundreds of miles through their droppings. The second way is by stems (rhizomes) that grow horizontally underground and choke out other plant roots as they expand. The third method is through the watershed system, where the seeds move with the water flow and establish themselves on the banks along the way.

The first step to removing invasive plants is to properly identify them. Take a picture of the plant and use Google or an App called Seek by iNaturalist to correctly identify the plant, and use several sources to confirm.

Once you are certain, remove them by cutting, pulling, digging, or solarizing the plants. Getting rid of invasives is easiest when they are first spotted, before they get established. If you have larger areas, begin working from the outside inward to contain them and reduce their spread.

Solarizing involves covering the area with clear plastic to kill the plants before removing.

The use of herbicides is never recommended unless large areas have gotten out of control, or are entangled with poison ivy.

Begin your attack by digging out the entire plant roots and rhizomes. Use a garden fork to loosen up the underground root system and rhizomes, and rake any re-

maining parts from the soil. If you do this work after a rain, the soil will be moist and the plants will give way much easier. Try to get them out before they go to seed and never put invasive plants or seeds into your compost pile or bin — they will sprout and re-contaminate your garden.

Once you have removed all the plant materials, put them into a black garbage bag and set it in the sun for a couple of weeks to kill the plants inside before disposing of it into the garbage.

If the job seems too overwhelming, invite a friend to help. Put on some lively tunes, pour your favourite beverage and grove as you go, but don't forget to return the favour.

Here are some of the most common invasive plants found in local gardens, wooded areas and roadsides:

- Goutweed — Originally from Europe, this groundcover is an absolute menace. It spreads underground by rhizomes, and entangles itself around the roots of other plants, which kills them. There are two varieties — one has solid light green leaves and the second is bluish-green with a variegated white edge. It blooms from June to August with flat-topped, umbrella-shaped clusters of white flowers. If it invades a forest, it chokes out the understory of delicate wild flowers such as trilliums, and prevents new trees from germinating.

- Garlic mustard — An invasive herb brought from Europe and now out of control in Canadian forests, roadsides and riverbanks. It produces thousands of seeds which can remain dormant in the



English ivy is an invasive plant that can take over a garden and is hard to get rid of. (Sandra Ozkur)

soil for up to 30 years. It has a thin stock with small serrated green leaves, and small white flowers with tiny petals. The plant can grow up to one metre tall and the leaves smell like garlic when crushed. It thrives in sun and shade, and is allelopathic, which means it produces chemicals in the soil that prevent other plants from growing nearby.

- Periwinkle — This groundcover has dark, shiny leaves and bluish-purple flowers. It is very hardy and thrives in shady areas, therefore when it escapes into wooded areas it quickly creates a monocrop by killing all other existing plants in the area. Wolf spiders love hiding out in it.

- English ivy — This plant has leathery leaves that resemble stars and is used as a ground cover or to decorate unsightly commercial buildings. It climbs easily but once

established it is almost impossible to remove from porous surfaces or brickwork. To remove from trees, you must sever the vine stalk and the leaves will eventually die and fall off. Removing the roots is the only way to prevent it from sending out more shoots.

- Yellow flag iris — This aquatic flower was introduced from Asia as an ornamental pond plant and is easy to identify as it is the only iris with entirely yellow flowers. It has found its way into local waterways, especially here in NOTL. It spreads by seeds and by underground rhizomes, which develop into thick mats that can block water flow and dry out wetlands, reducing habitat for wildlife, fish and nesting birds.

- Lily of the valley — A popular groundcover with white bell-shaped flowers and a perfumy fragrance.

This poisonous plant spreads easily through rhizomes and berries and has escaped into parks, ravines and woodlands, creating large patches that destroy native plants.

Niagara's mild climate, fertile soil, humidity and ample waterways provide the perfect environment for these plants to grow out of control. Provincial, regional and local governments spend large amounts of taxpayer dollars dealing with this problem. You can assist by eliminating these plants on your property. It takes a unified force to tackle this massive problem so your individual effort will make a difference.

Tip of the week: Form work parties to eliminate these invaders from your neighbourhoods.

For a list of invasive species and 'grow me instead' replacement plants visit ontarioinvasiveplants.ca.

Actual Kid-Friendly News

Kids GAZETTE



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NOTL CENTRIC POSITIVITY

February 2023

Volume 3 • Issue 2

FIND THE SMILEY FACE HIDDEN ON THIS PAGE!



RIDDLE



What does a
cloud wear under
its raincoat?

Answer:
Thunderwear.

Local News

A note from the Niagara Pumphouse : On top of the monthly online art project, families can also create this project in the studio during drop-in days on Feb. 18 & 19, Sat & Sun (Family Day Weekend). All supplies are ready for them to use and there is no charge to participate.

Artist's Corner

"A Hair-raising Experience"

By : Hannah Allison, Hannah Gossen
and Christian Dodd



WORD SEARCH: ANIMALS

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MONKEY
HORSE
GIRAFFE
TIGER
BEAR
GORILLA
ZEBRA
LAMB
LION
DOG
CAT

Interview with Hannah Allison

Q. What do you like about your "Hair-raising Experience" artwork?

A. I like all of the crazy lines in it and the detail on the shirt.

Q. What would be your perfect day in Niagara-on-the-Lake?

A. I think I would wake up and go to Sunset Grill. I would get chocolate chip pancakes. Then, I'd play with my dog for a bit. Then, I'd play on my iPad. I'd get Wendy's for lunch and have a play-date with a friend. Then, I'd play on my iPad a bit more. Maybe I'd go to Silks for dinner? I included "waking up" in my answer because otherwise this wouldn't work. Lol.

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

A. I think I would like to be a zoologist or an interior decorator. I love animals and I love designing

things. Personally, I think I have great taste in style.

Q. What is your favourite food?

A. Panookies. Basically, it's a big cookie cooked in a pan with ice cream and toppings. I had it at Boston Pizza.

Q. What is your favourite restaurant in Niagara-on-the-Lake?

A. Wendy's by the highway. I just love Wendy's!

Q. What is a big problem in the world that you'd like to change?

A. Probably war because so many innocent people die or get hurt. We have someone in my class that had to leave everything behind because of war. It's very sad.

Q. What are 3 awesome things about yourself?

A. My creativity, my imagination, and I think I have pretty good read-

ing abilities.

Q. What can we add to Niagara-on-the-Lake to make it better for kids?

A. An indoor pool that's close to Virgil would be amazing! It would be good if it was close and open all year long.

Q. What is a unique talent you have?

A. I'm pretty good with animals. I know how to train dogs on how to give a paw.

Q. What do you like about Grade 4?

A. It's not too hard and it's not too easy. Also, I like that I get to be upstairs now and learn French and stuff.

Q. How do you feel about having another Hannah in your class?

A. I find it fun because if someone says "Hannah", I can always say "yeah"... even if it's not for me!



Hannah Allison interviewed by Hannah Gossen

Family-Friendly monthly project courtesy of The Niagara Pumphouse
Use your cellphone camera to scan the code to get started!

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ONLINE ART STUDIO

DIY Scratchboard

View the video starting Feb. 1st
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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 and in the subject line please put the category for which you are submitting. Thank you.

FOR LAUGHS

What do you call two
birds in love?

Answer:
Tweetharts



What did one volcano
say to the other?

Answer:
I lava 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.

LocalSPORTS

Women score with access to outdoor hockey rink

**Sharon Burns
Special to The Local**

One good thing to come out of COVID for a group of Niagara-on-the-Lake friends has been the formation of a weekly outdoor women's hockey game.

Several women now playing in this regular Wednesday night game, including rink-owner Erin Rowaan, had played for a co-ed team in the Virgil arena with the GHL, a co-ed, non-contact hockey league for adults with little or no hockey experience.

But in December of 2020, hockey, due to the pandemic, was cancelled.

"We always had a little rink on our front lawn," said Rowaan. "Then we decided to put the boards up and it was amazing timing because we had to renovate the barn and decided to put the refrigeration in." The rink, complete with lights, viewing platform with a fireplace, scoreboard and of course, Zamboni, "is an amazing outdoor space to play hockey on," she said.

"It's nice that anyone from a

beginner to someone with experience can play," said Stephanie Willms, who may be the most experienced player on the ice. "I grew up playing hockey since hockey school, and I was playing in a women's league in St. Catharines. After COVID I decided to try this and I enjoy it more."

Karen Wiens said she had never played hockey as a kid, and two years ago joined the GHL to give it a try, "then COVID happened."

Audrey Epp Neuhof is also new to the game. "Last year I was at my son's hockey school and another mom friend asked if I wanted to join an outdoor ladies' hockey league. It seemed like a lot of fun. Baseball season was over. And if they can tolerate someone with no skills who doesn't know how to play, then I was down."

The Rowaan family — mom and dad Erin and Brian, and sons Hayden, 12, Charlie, 10, and Wesley, seven — have all been enjoying this front lawn rink since 2020. "All three boys are involved in hockey, and Brian has a weekly hockey night with his friends."

Erin always wanted to play hockey growing up, "but there wasn't a lot of opportunity like there is now for girls to play. I grew up learning how to skate on our ponds," she said. Like many of her friends, the year she signed up for organized hockey, the season was cut short and she thought, "you know what? We have a rink. All my kids get to play, so why shouldn't I play too?" The Honey Fields Ladies Outdoor Rink Hockey was formed, named for the family business of bee-keeping and pollination across Niagara and Ontario.

Other players include Wendy Eitzen, who, with Erin, played hockey for Eden High School. Laura Dick started playing as an adult. "This is a relatively new sport for me and I love it," said Dick. "It's an authentic hockey experience. This is what we do in Canada. It's unique. We have a long enough winter to get a long enough season to play."

However, Wiens noted, "it's totally unmotivating when it's dark and cold. But you know you're going to love it once

you're out there, and it's a break from home life and kids, and you can put all your stress away."

For Epp Neuhof, the team's music playlist curator, the outdoor rink "is the only reason I come out — I wouldn't play inside an arena. The lights, the stars, the music, are the best of winter."

Willms admits it is fairly rare to find outdoor women's hock-

ey and this is "more of a social night out." Epp Neuhof appreciates that "everyone is so supportive. I just started last year and people are cheering me on. Everyone is so pumped up."

One day Erin may expand the friends-only pick up league into something more, but for now, the ice is getting plenty of use. Before the Honey Fields took to the ice on Wednesday,

dad Brian was spending some one-on-one time with Wesley, developing his hockey skills. Wesley implies that he plays a lot of hockey here, "not every day, but ..." His favourite part of outdoor hockey is that he "can just walk out the front door and I'm on my rink." He also enjoys the time on the ice with his dad, and now, his hockey mom Erin.



Playing outdoor women's hockey are (back left) Chelsea Muste, Karen Wiens, Stephanie Willms, Erin Rowaan, Sharon Burns, Deanna Hiebert; (bottom left) Audrey Epp Neuhof, Jen Lagerwerf, Laura Dick, Alison Waller and Wendy Eitzen. (Photos supplied)



Playing outdoors is a bonus for a group of women who love to play hockey together.

Skating news includes bake sale, gold medal winner

Three NOTL Skating Club members competed at the recent Hamilton Winter Chill competition. Darah Adeyiwola placed 6th in her STAR 4 U13 event; Jamie Doucet placed 4th in her STAR 4 O13 event; and Hailey Mitchell won the gold medal in her STAR 4 U10 event.



The NOTL Skating Club held a very successful bake sale fundraiser at the Meridian Credit Union Arena Saturday, organized by club volunteer Lolita Hale. More than 30 families donated baked goods and the table was overflowing with a great variety of tasty goods that drew a lineup an hour before the scheduled start. Proceeds of the sale are going directly toward keeping the cost of skating programs down, says Darlene Dortono, who thanks all the volunteers who assisted with the sale. Behind the table are Yvonne Haines (club co-chair), Maria Orsini, Katharine VanderKaay, Ophelia Xie, Ashleen Hale and Lolita Hale.

Tennis for kids



Karen Wright has moved her tennis lessons for kids from the community centre to St. Davids, and has expanded the Thursday lessons to Sunday as well. This Sunday, with the help of Shirley Madsen, she invited some of the children who are recent arrivals from Ukraine to a class, at no charge, providing them with tennis racquets and balls. The kids all had a great time, Wright says. Her mission in life is to give back to others through tennis, and this helps her fulfill her goal. (Shirley Madsen)

LocalSPORTS

Predators finally beat Roadrunners

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara Predators finally got their top-three-teams monkey off their backs Monday when they defeated the third place Durham Roadrunners 4-3 at the Delpark Homes Centre in Oshawa.

Goaltender Zane Clausen did everything other than stand on his head, stopping 40 shots to lead Niagara to its first victory this season over a top-three team in the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's South Division.

Prior to Monday the Preds were a combined 0-10 against Durham, the Bradford Bulls and the North York Renegades. Head coach Kevin Taylor was elated with the victory.

"It is so nice," he told The Local. "The boys played well. It was a really good game. We had Rob (Turnbull, team president) on the bench with us, which was nice. It was an all-around great game."

Durham was first on the scoreboard at 14 minutes into the game, when Jaden Smith scored on a power play. Just 40 seconds later, Niagara had a power play opportunity of their own. Defenceman Ethan Boyd fed a perfect pass to forward Cameron Savoie, who tied the game with a blistering shot that Durham goalie Hunter Hutchinson couldn't handle.

Jaroslav Dohnal put the Predators in the lead just over two minutes into the second period, with assists by Boyd and Nolan Wyers. A minute later, with Niagara on another power play, defenceman Guy Manco grabbed the puck during a scrum in front of the Roadrunners' net and somehow tucked it in behind Hutchinson for the Preds' third goal.

Later in the period, Durham's Kyle Smith closed the gap with a shorthanded goal on Clausen. But the Preds regained the two-goal lead when their top scorer, Anthony Tropea, was able to knock his own rebound into the Durham net.

The Roadrunners had another power play with about five minutes remaining in the period, and Clausen came up with some big saves to preserve the lead.

The third period started with players from both teams in the penalty box, following some pushing, shoving and fighting to end the second. But the

Predators played probably their best defensive period of the season Monday, intercepting Durham's passes and shutting down their offensive attack.

Kyle Smith notched his second goal of the game with 36 seconds remaining and Hutchinson sitting on the bench, but they ran out of time to force an extra five minute period.

The big win Monday followed a disappointing Sunday night game, in which the Preds dropped a 4-2 decision at home to the eighth place Streetsville Flyers. In that game they gave up a 2-1 lead to the Flyers in the second period and relinquished two more goals in the third for their second loss in two days to Streetsville.

It was penalty trouble in the second and third periods that did in the Predators Sunday.

"Bad penalties at the wrong time," Taylor said after that game. "Reese (Bisci) got that five minute boarding call. It was a bad call. You don't call that on that play. But overall we took penalties when we shouldn't have taken them."

Niagara outshot Streetsville 51-30 Sunday, but three of the four Streetsville goals were on power plays, leaving Clausen almost unprotected on some of the Flyers' attempts.

The Predators dominated in the first period Sunday, but seemed to tire out as the game progressed. Perhaps it was the fact that they were in the middle of their busiest seven game stretch of the season, with five games on their schedule, including four in a row from Friday to Monday, and practices last Wednesday and Thursday.

"It's a lot of hockey," said a frustrated Taylor, "We're on the ice 12 times in 12 days."

In Friday's loss to the same Streetsville team, the Preds blew leads three times and allowed the Flyers to tie the game with 15 seconds remaining. As well, they had a man advantage for two minutes of the overtime period but failed to capitalize on the opportunity.

"We got outworked," said head coach Kevin Taylor after the game Friday. "Guys who were supposed to step up their game tonight didn't step up. They weren't playing like they wanted it."

The Preds were without key scoring threats Cameron Savoie and Tyler Gearing for that game, both serving suspensions



Preds' Anthony Tropea takes a shot in Sunday's game against Streetsville. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Nolan Wyers on left, Cole Ellis on right attacking the Streetsville net Sunday.



Screenshot of Monday's win for the Preds.

resulting from incidents in Tuesday's game against St. George.

Perhaps it was the frustration and anger that the team felt after Sunday's loss that turned things around when they faced a much tougher Roadrunners team in their road game Monday.

Over the five games last week, the Preds came away with five of a possible 10 points. They also lost to the rival St. George Ravens 2-1 Tuesday but picked up a

win on the road in Tottenham Saturday night, where Timur Mirzaiants had a hat trick, Anthony Tropea and Wyers had two goals, and Cameron Savoie, Bisci and Cole Ellis had singles in a 10-1 victory.

Taylor says the win over Durham "makes a wasteful weekend not so wasteful. We pulled something out of our hats. It sucks that we only got five points, but this is something to build off of, to look forward to, to put together a bit of a run."

The Predators are still holding onto fourth place in the division, two points in the standings up on Northumberland, who have won their last three games. The Stars will play host to the Predators Saturday, but first Niagara has to take on Streetsville one more time at home this Friday night.

"That's a must-win game for us," Taylor says of Friday's contest.

Goaltender Ryan Santini, who has been out for three weeks with a shoul-

der injury, is slated to start Friday against the Flyers.

All the Predators have to do is win one of their remaining games to lock up fourth place and home ice advantage for the first round of the league's Russell Cup playoffs. After two losses to the Flyers last weekend, it would certainly be gratifying for that win to come at home against Streetsville Friday night.

Game time is 7:30 p.m. at Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena.

LocalSPORTS

NOTL wrestlers bring home provincial hardware

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake teens Charlotte Bowslaugh, Ezekiel Ivri, and Jorja Lepp all came home from the Ontario Winter Games last weekend with provincial medals around their necks.

Bowslaugh, a Grade 10 student at Eden High School, won gold in the girls 69 kg division, while her classmate and best friend Lepp took home bronze in the same category. Ivri, in Grade 10 at A.N. Myer Secondary School, also captured bronze in the boys 51 kg category.

Larry Grieve, one of their coaches with the Brock Junior Wrestling Club, wasn't surprised to see Bowslaugh come out on top at Pembroke's Fellowes High School.

"She's so strong," Grieve told The Local at the club's Monday night workout at Thorold Secondary School, "one of the strongest kids here physically. She's new to the sport, but she's done jiu jitsu and kickboxing before. And she comes from a wrestling background. Her father wrestled, and her aunt was a wrestler and national judo champion."

"Pembroke was so much fun," Bowslaugh said. "It was a great experience. We got to experience the team duals, and the individual matches. I wrestled five times during the weekend. I really wanted to win. I felt more confident in this tournament than I ever have."

On her way to her gold medal, Bowslaugh was undefeated in both the team and individual matches on the weekend. She usually wrestles

at 65 kg, so she was one of the lighter competitors at the Winter Games. She is also quite tall, which is often a hindrance rather than an advantage on the mat.

"My stance is usually a lot higher than other people, so I have to really work on getting lower," agreed Bowslaugh. "I usually end up standing a lot because I'm uncomfortable down low. My height is good for lifting shorter people off the ground, though, because I can lift them a lot higher."

Though the best friends and next door neighbours in rural NOTL competed in the same weight class last week, thankfully they didn't have to wrestle each other.

It was Bowslaugh who convinced Lepp to try out for the wrestling team at Eden this year, and the pair stuck with it. Grieve's daughter also wrestles at Eden, and that connection led to the pair practising with the Junior Badgers club program.

"We've been best friends for six or seven years," explained Lepp, a former dancer and gymnast. "Her dad really wanted us to wrestle, and he pushed us at first to go to practices. This isn't something I would normally do, it takes me out of my comfort zone, but it's fun."

Lepp says the two will often get together to work out in the Bowslaugh family home gym, and often those sessions will include some grappling.

In practice, Bowslaugh and Lepp often work with more experienced wrestlers, and those are sometimes boys.

"I lose a lot in practice," Bowslaugh laughed. "But that's okay, because it's all for the experience. The guys are a lot more muscular, a lot stronger. It helps me a lot to wrestle bigger opponents because when I get into matches the girls feel a lot smaller."

All three NOTL wrestlers went undefeated in their team dual match competition on the first day. Lepp and Ivri both lost one match on their way to earning their bronze individual medals.

St. Davids resident Ivri took up wrestling at five years old, when his jiu jitsu studio closed.

"He took right to it," explained Rochelle Ivri, his mother. "He likes the ability to remain focused, the mental aspect to it as well as the physical. He sets goals and works hard toward achieving them. And he loves that it keeps him in shape for soccer (he plays for the Oakville Rush elite soccer program)."

"It was a tough tournament," Ezekiel said of the past weekend. "I was dominating my first (individual) match. I was up 6-2. But I was going for a pin, and my arm slipped out near the end of the match, and I got re-rolled near the end and it cost me the match."

He made up for that mistake in his bronze medal match later that day.

"I wanted to finish it quickly," explained Ivri. "I got a quick takedown and I finished the match with a pin in the first round."

Like Bowslaugh and Lepp, this is Ivri's first year competing on the mat for his high school. In his school season so far, he has won his weight class in all but one of the five tournaments he's participated in.

"We really encourage kids to do both," Grieve explained. "The kids who are wrestling only in high school are at one level, and the kids who wrestle at club are at another level. They get to see a good range of opponents. The better the opponent, the better you wrestle, eventually."

The teens, from various schools around Niagara, were all working together on the mats Monday, helping each other with moves and strategies, even though they may become adversaries as early as next week.

Grieve and other coaches were working the three NOTL wrestlers, as well as some of the other 30 high-school aged Junior Badgers, through preparations to compete at the Southern Ontario Secondary Schools Association (SOSSA) championships taking place Thursday, Feb. 23 at Grimsby's Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School. The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) follows that two weeks later.

"I'm training hard for

that," Ivri says about next Thursday. "I'm going to remember the mistakes I made at the Winter Games, and try to learn from them and not repeat them at SOSSA. I also have a winning mindset coming into the matches."

Grieve says Ivri's 10 years of experience are an asset for a wrestler of his age, especially when he comes up against less seasoned competitors.

"He's very quick, very flexible," Grieve said Monday. "Most kids in his age group don't have as much experi-

ence. He's very coachable, he's like a sponge."

Following March Break, Ivri will be flying out to British Columbia with seven other Junior Badgers to compete at the Canadian Nationals.

And, on a smaller set of mats, by the way, another set of Brock coaches were working some of the six- to 12-year olds through some exercises as well. One of them was Zachariah, Ezekiel's nine-year-old brother, surely on his way toward following in his older brother's footsteps.



Jorja Lepp (left) wrestles an opponent at her Monday practice. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Ezekiel Ivri (right) at his practice at Thorold Secondary School.



Charlotte Bowslaugh wrestles her friend Jorja Lepp.



Friends Jorja Lepp, Charlotte Bowslaugh and Ezekiel Ivri all brought home medals from a recent provincial competition.

LocalHAPPENINGS

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(Nursery - Grade 8)

10:00 a.m.
Worship Gathering
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Message:
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The Blessed Life, Part 2
(Matthew 5:1-12)

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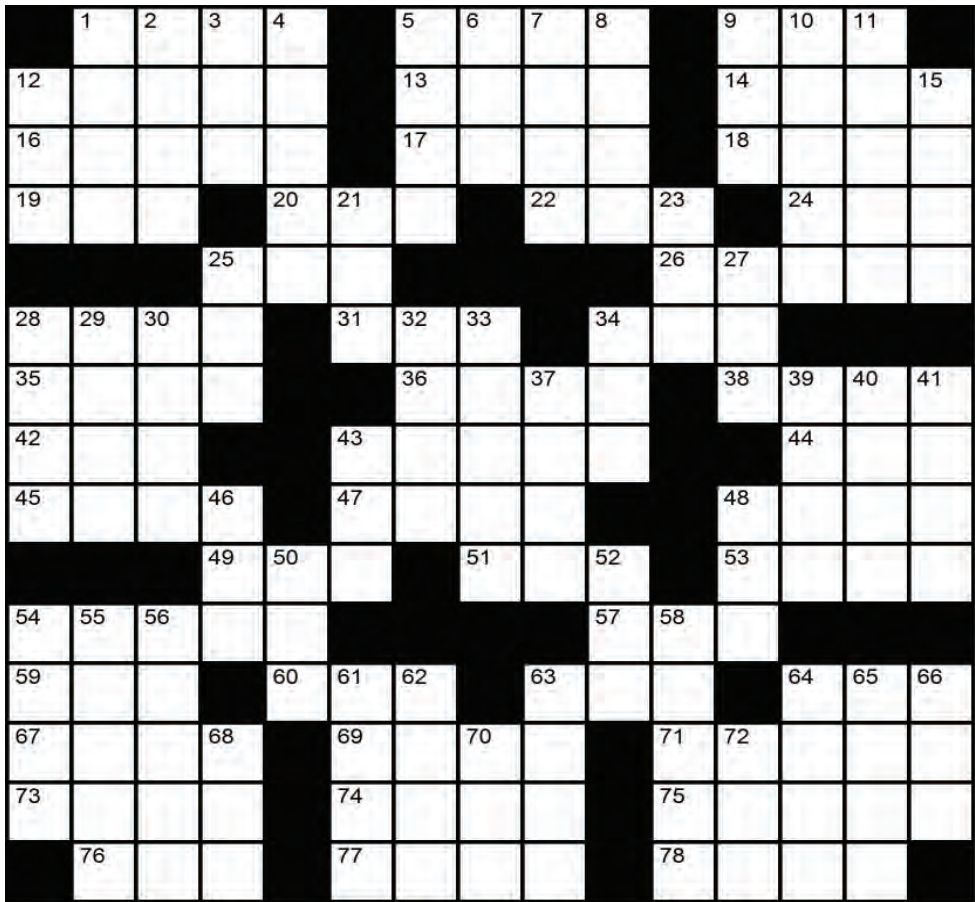
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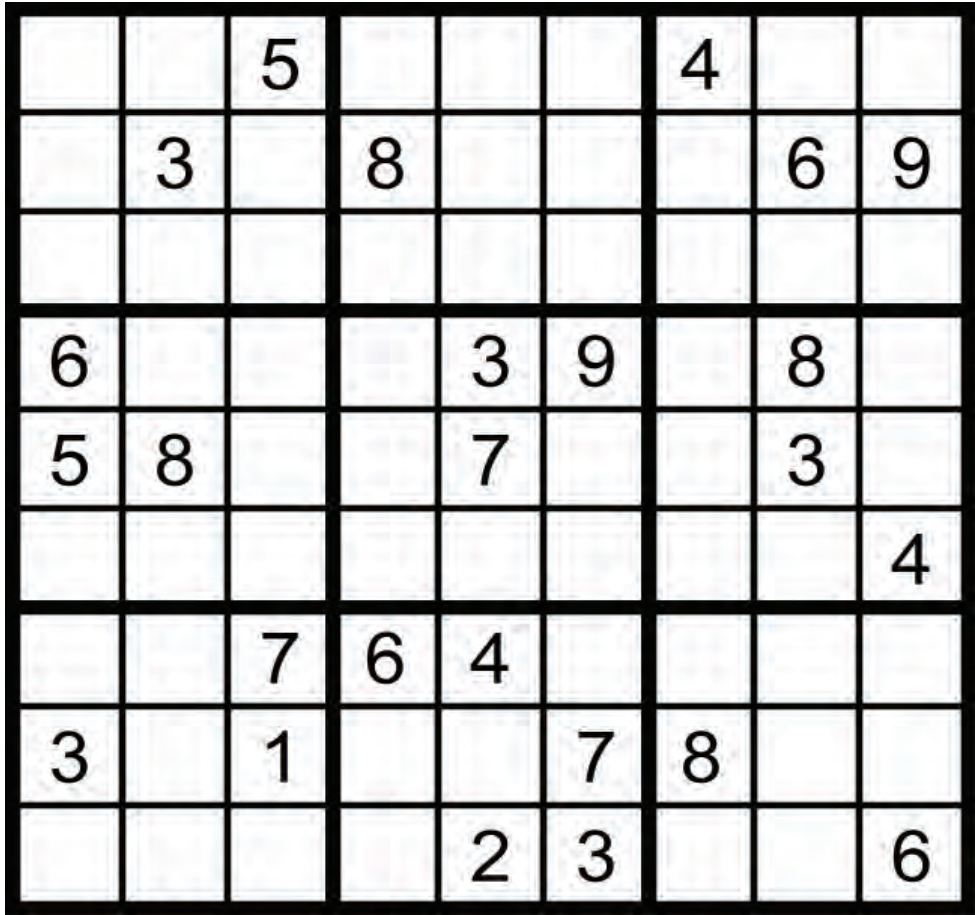


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- Across:**
1 #
5 Conversation
9 P C to web link company
12 Persian Gulf port
13 Gypsy people
14 Immediately, in hospital
16 Edgar --- Poe
17 Upon
18 Insect destructive of clothes
19 Negative
20 One coming out
22 Big beer can
24 --- Grande
25 Solar system center
26 Casing
28 Electrical connector
31 Passed away (Abbr.)
34 Old card game
35 "Would it be ---?" (Presley: "Can't help falling in love")
36 Father's sibling
38 Physicians
42 So far
43 Sour-smelling
44 Sticky stuff
45 Junction
47 Not us
48 Killer whale
49 Rotational speed measure
51 Bashful
53 Top
- 54 Harsh treatment
57 Applicable
59 Entertainment
60 Bench with a back
63 Letters on Royal Navy ships
64 E.g. a street kiss
67 Horse controller
69 Spanish fashion designer ---
71 Long
73 Aware of
74 Overnight stops
75 Law
76 Fight against underwater threats
77 Penny
78 U R L starter
- Down:**
1 Kind of hoop
2 Competently
3 Cape Town carrier
4 One of the Indian majority
5 Quarrelsome grouch
6 Very fashionable
7 Hog-wild
8 Recording medium
9 Belief system
10 Bad weather
11 Paved outdoor area
12 Karate degree
15 Hammer god
21 Aim
- 23 Federal fiscal watchdog
25 One of a hundred in D C
27 Eye cell
28 Methods
29 Statement of understanding
30 The Beatles' lovely meter maid
32 Apiece
33 Antidotes
34 Classic Ford model
37 Type of rechargeable cell
39 Man-eating giant
40 Stimulating South American shrub
41 Sit in a tub
43 Bank machine
46 E.g. Robinson, Doubtfire
48 Plump
50 Vigor
52 Thanksgiving dish
54 Spherical hairdo
55 --- Vista, Disney brand
56 Military groups
58 Outguess
61 Heroic
62 Diminish slowly
63 Vast multitude
64 Gasp
65 Bead
66 Newswoman --- Curry
68 The present time
70 Cable/satellite network
72 Dine



OBITUARY

HOPPER, SHIRLEY MARGARET—Passed away on Saturday, February 4, 2023, at Heritage Place, Niagara-on-the-Lake, in her 88th year. Beloved wife of Fred for 57 years. Loving mother of Douglas Deline, Debbie Hansen, Wendy McKay, Robert Deline and Timothy Hopper. Grandmother of many grandchildren. Predeceased by her sister Thelma and brothers John and Robert.

Shirley was a dedicated member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 where she spent many hours volunteering specifically baking, with the Ladies' Auxiliary.

Cremation has taken place, interment at a future date at Butler Funeral Home Niagara Chapel by Arbor Memorial.



PETER JANZEN
1954-2023

Surrounded by the love of his family, Peter passed away on February 10, 2023 at NHS Niagara Falls, in his 69th year. He will be deeply missed by his loving wife, Wendy (nee Wiens), beloved daughter Jennifer (Rainer) Jabs, and cherished granddaughter Ainsley.

He will be sadly missed by his sister Anna (Rick Andres) and their children; brothers and sisters-in-law Eleanor (Rick) Block, Albert (Sigrid) Wiens, Helmut (Heidi) Wiens,

Henry (Shirley) Wiens and many nieces and nephews. Also mourning his passing is his half-sister Senda (Willi) Kuskova and their family in Germany. Predeceased by his parents, Dietrich and Katharina (Paetkau) Janzen. Half-sister Siena, in-laws Jake and Katie Wiens, and dearest friend John Goertz.

Visitation will be held at Niagara United Mennonite Church on Thursday, February 16th, from 2:00-4:00pm and 6:00-8:00pm. Funeral service will be held at Niagara United Mennonite Church on Friday, February 17th, at 10:30am, with reception to follow.

Tallman Funeral Homes has been entrusted with the arrangements.
Memorial donations may be made to the Mennonite Central Committee.
Online condolences at tallmanfuneralhomes.ca

NOTICES

**To place an Obituary or
In Memoriam in our Classifieds,
please contact Julia at:
julia@notllocal.com or
905.934.1040
Deadline is Tuesdays at 1 p.m.**

PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Sudoku solution from
February 8, 2023**

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

Across: 1 Hash, 5 Chat, 9 I S P, 12 Dubai, 13 Roma, 14 Stat, 16 Allan, 17 Atop, 18 Moth, 19 Nay, 20 Deb, 22 Keg, 24 Rio, 25 Sun, 26 Armon, 28 Wire, 31 Dec, 34 Loo, 35 A sin, 36 Aunt, 38 Docs, 42 Yet, 43 Arch, 44 Goo, 45 Seasm, 47 Thern, 48 Orca, 49 R p m, 51 Shy, 53 Peak, 54 Abuse, 57 Apt, 59 Fun, 60 Docs, 61 Psych, 62 Wand, 63 Host, 64 Buena, 65 Units, 68 Ann, 68 Now, 70 C N N, 72 Eat, 73 Yearn, 74 Inns, 75 Canon, 76 A-S-W, 77 Cent, 78 H t t p.

Down: 1 Hula, 2 Ably, 3 S A A, 4 Hindu, 5 Crab, 6 Hot, 7 Amok, 8 Tape, 9 Ism, 10 Storm, 11 Patio, 12 Dan, 15 Thor, 21 End, 23 G A O, 25 Sen, 27 Rod, 28 Ways, 29 I see, 30 Rita, 32 Each, 33 Cures, 34 LTD, 37 N-M-H, 39 Ogre, 40 Coca, 41 Soak, 43 A T M, 46 Mrs, 48 Opt, 50 Pep, 52 Yam, 54 Afro, 55 Buena, 56 Units, 58 Psych, 61 Wand, 63 Host, 64 Buena, 65 Units, 68 Ann, 68 Now, 70 C N N, 72 Eat.

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