

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



The trusted voice of our community.

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Native Centre addition finished

Ready to offer programs

Penny Coles
The Local

The expansion at the Niagara Regional Native Centre is complete, with new programming beginning soon.

Although there has been no date for an official opening celebration, programming for children and families will begin in the new space March 23, and there will be a drumming and dancing event to recognize it.

A five-day-a-week EarlyOn Centre will open at that time, and some existing programming will move to the new premises, which include three new rooms. They are bright and colourful, with comfy seating, lots of toys and books for children of all ages, big

windows to let in natural light, and decorating, such as artwork on the walls, that reflects Indigenous culture.

The EarlyOn program is open to the community, says registered early child educator Dianne Tomlinson, who is in the process of setting up the schedule for the new premises, which is officially called the Clear Skies EarlyOn Child and Family Centre.

As with other EarlyOn centres, funded by the Province but administered by the Region, experts will be invited for specific programming, such as yoga and infant massage — Tomlinson already has two

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Dianne Tomlinson prepares for the EarlyOn Centre opening at the Niagara Regional Native Centre March 23. (Penny Coles)

Black History experts told 'riveting' stories

Personal stories brought history to life

Penny Coles
The Local

At the tiny, historic chapel in Queenston, the Niagara Parks Commission hosted its first Black history symposium Saturday, with three community historians telling riveting, stories of themselves and their families.

Parks commission heritage manager Jim

Hill says the event sold out very quickly, and it was the personal stories as told by the speakers that made the afternoon such a success.

"These were dramatic experiences, brought to life for us by people who were personally connected to them, and also connected to important historic sites where they are accustomed to talking

about generations of history to visitors every day," says Hill.

The speakers at the Queenston Chapel, which has been renovated to make year-round events more comfortable, included historian Rochelle Bush, who spoke of Harriet Tubman, and

**Continued on
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Ayo Adewumi, Rochelle Bush and Saladin Allah spoke at the Queenston Chapel Saturday, relating stories of their ancestors about Black history in Niagara. (Fred Mercnik)

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Museum session highlights what's best about it

Also brings out what needs improvement

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum needs more space, more visitors — especially young ones — and stable funding to ensure both operations and the historic building are sustainable.

Those were some of the many passionate responses to questions raised during an envisioning session held at the museum Friday, as part of a process to create a strategic plan for its future.

The session was led by Rebecca Jones of Dysart & Jones Associates, aided by Daryl Novak, also of D&J and the chair of the NOTL Public Library board.

About 40 people attended, many with connections to the museum or other local cultural organizations.

"The board has to make difficult decisions that will impact on the organization for the next five to 10 years," said Jones, asking the audience what is important to them about the town.

Answers included the feeling of peace and quiet, its proximity to major centres, the cultural activities offered, the cultural networks, the natural beauty, its uniqueness as the "little gem we have

here," and the history and heritage it represents.

When asked about concerns, audience members spoke of inappropriate development, overwhelming tourism, the threat to museum funding, and that it might be closed.

There was also a fear expressed of reluctance to be open to change, about losing the tender fruit industry to wineries or even cannabis growth, and about how the town would react to climate change and the environment.

The lack of affordable housing was also discussed. "People who work in town can't afford to live in town," said one audience member. "That's an issue."

"The town is career-ending," said another, citing a lack of professional job opportunities.

Public transportation and shuttle hours are also issues, especially for those who need to get to work in Old Town or Glendale.

"I'm concerned about the town becoming an amusement park," said another audience member. "I'd like it to remain a liveable, working town."

Turning to talk specifically of the museum, Jones asked about what prompted

audience members to attend the session.

One response was out of concern for the museum, which is "an under-appreciated gem in the community."

A common theme among supporters was a lack of understanding or awareness of how much the museum has to offer, and the need for expanded space for more displays and events that would attract a larger group of people.

"Story-telling" came up often as the role and strength of the museum, its ability to protect memories of the past, educate locals and visitors about the town's history, and "preserve the authenticity of the town."

If the stories of the community aren't told, nobody will know them — they need to be shared in a way that's accessible and understandable, Jones heard.

"The role of the museum is essential in our community, to preserve who we are," was another comment.

Its role is preserving not only artifacts, but also documents, which represent a continuous history of the town.

It also has a role as a partner to other cultural organizations, which would benefit



Facilitator Rebecca Jones (centre) led the discussion about the NOTL Museum and where it could be in the future. Photo by Penny Coles

from working together and helping each other, Jones was told.

Others talked about the museum as a community hub, and a place to hold events that would draw people to it, including children and school groups.

"Entertainment will bring people in, tricking people into learning something. They come to be entertained and can be surreptitiously taught while they're here," was one comment.

"Fashion shows instead of clothes behind glass," was another.

"There are so many compelling physical elements about this site, a heritage property in this world having an eye to the future," said Coun. Clare Cameron, who was one of three council representatives, along with Couns. Allan Bisback and Erwin Wiens.

There was also discussion about the museum having a larger role in telling the stories of Indigenous history, and fostering dialogue around Indigenous history, which has been cited as one of the reasons for the expansion.

Jones then turned the talk to the barriers that prevent the museum from being all people want it to be. Accessibility was one that was mentioned, as was "the word museum," which to many conjures visions of old and dusty exhibits, a turn-off especially for the young.

"It's considered a place to visit when it's raining," said

one audience member, drawing chuckles from the crowd.

But others, said one lover of museums, "might find it a place of awe and joy. Museums mean different things to different people."

Lack of space to display current exhibits alongside the "chronological history" of the town so important to visitors was mentioned.

"Locals want new and different, visitors want to get their bearings of where they are in the community."

A teacher who has taken school groups on museum visits suggested more opportunity for interaction with exhibits would allow them to "come away with a positive experience."

"There is a missing voice here, of people under 20," said another. "We have to get them involved."

The location is a barrier, off the beaten track, said Bisback. "We've got to get people off Queen Street to the museum," he said, adding, "I'm not suggesting we move it."

Jones asked about "accelerators" that would move the museum forward, which turned the talk to the excellence of the staff and volunteers, the society that supports the museum, the fundraisers, such as polo on the commons, camps for children, walking tours, the tiny museum on wheels now in the works, potential partnerships, preservation of the building, performances that bring people into the building that wouldn't otherwise be

there, the Black History walking tour, and youth outreach.

"Maybe more promotion, more tooting your own horn," echoed several comments about raising the profile of the museum.

Coun. Erwin Wiens brought a touch of practicality to the discussion, bringing up the need for a "consistent funding model," so the museum can budget in a manner that's sustainable, without being a burden on taxpayers. "I would like to be pragmatic, and know that we have funding so that we don't have the roof falling down on us. You need a consistent model that the museum can rely on. Fundraising should go toward artifacts, not the roof or furnace."

Ron Dale, former Parks Canada supervisor of historic sites, suggested an increased use of technology, including virtual reality alongside exhibits so visitors, instead of just seeing a spinning wheel in a glass case, "will be able to see someone in period costume using the spinning wheel."

Having a website that "draws people in from outside Niagara," that shows more of the collections online, was another suggestion for the future.

The conversation wrapped up with a discussion of the "perplexity" of locals either not knowing about the museum, or not visiting it, and the opportunity, and necessity, with the coming expansion, to change that.

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Town moving forward to determine hospital future

Penny Coles
The Local

Three years after purchasing the former hospital for \$3.6 million, the Town is moving toward a decision about its future.

A steering committee, to include three members of council, is being appointed to engage the public during the consultation process, and ensure the community feels a strong sense of ownership and support for the site's appropriate development.

Lord Mayor Betty Dis-

ero, and Couns. Gary Burroughs and Allan Bisback have asked to be on the committee.

In November, 2017, about six months after buying the property, council approved a subcommittee to review how to move forward with a public process regarding the site's future. The committee, which included then-councillor Disero, was disbanded at the end of the previous council term.

Public participation in 2018 brought forward suggestions on how to use

the property, "and the next move is to take all the information from the public and go out to the world, asking for expressions of interest," says Disero.

"We'll talk about what the town would like to see there, and we'll consider a public-private partnership or a long-term lease."

The results of any expressions of interest they receive will be presented to council, and council will decide how to move forward, says Disero.

"We need to get started. We need to see if there is

anyone out there to help us move forward with this."

The building could be renovated, or it could come down, depending on the expressions of interest that come forward, she said. "Someone might want to use it, or might say it's not salvageable."

The property includes the hospital building and nurses' residence at the back, as well as the front parking lot. Most of the property behind the hospital is owned by Parks Canada, says Disero.

A lease with the current

tenants, negotiated in 2018 to allow the doctors who had offices in the building to remain until Dec. 31, 2019, was extended to continue the lease until Dec. 31, 2020.

The future of the lease depends on the completion of the new medical centre beside Crossroads Public School, says Disero. "I suspect that will probably be renewed for a period of time. There are a whole bunch of variables."

The hospital committee will discuss a timeline at their next meeting, she says. "We have to move cautiously and get our timing right."

The Town is currently paying about \$61,200 a year in interest on the property, intended to be funded through lease payments, a report to council says, and from fees for the parking lot.

The public consultation held for three months from March 20 to June 20, 2018 resulted in some comments being gathered, but no action was taken. Join the Conversation, the Town's website for gathering public comments, elicited 45 suggestions for the future of the hospital property, which included living condos or apartments for seniors; a pub art gallery or museum; a multi-purpose complex with seniors housing, retail shops and educational programs; a parking lot; a tourism office, a cultural hub for artists and farmers; tennis and pickleball courts; a new town hall; an indoor mall with a pool and playground; a hostel for low-income travellers; a fine arts centre that could be an art gallery with space for the Shaw Festival; or that the property be returned to Parks Canada.

Symposium teaches important history

Continued from page 1

her last stop in St. Catharines. Bush, a descendant of a freedom-seeker, is the trustee of the Salem Chapel in St. Catharines, and operates Tubman Tours Canada. Her great-great-grandfather was the minister at the church on Geneva Street when Tubman was a member.

Author Saladin Allah gives talks at the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and spoke of the history of the Underground Railroad in Niagara. He is a descendant of freedom-seeker Josiah Henson.

Ayo Adewumi came from Nigeria in 2004, and spoke of living in Canada and the Afro-Canadian experience.

"The depth of their knowledge is incredible, and very detailed," says Hill. "Yet Saladin can condense 500 years of history into two minutes."

The parks commission has recognized

Black history and incorporated it into events and plaques, but is beginning to do more, and trying to ensure they are telling the correct stories,

says Hill.

"We've been getting lots of questions about Black history," he says. "More and more people are asking questions, and

have more of an interest as time goes by. The older generation is realizing there was a lot they weren't taught in school, and the young people have far more resources and are learning more, but also want to know more. We were just providing the venue to let these stories be told, these incredible stories of bravery and sacrifice."

And not just during Black History Month, he added — watch for more such events hosted all year long on parks properties, says Hill.



Saladin Allah of the Niagara Falls, NY Museum and Under Ground Railroad Centre spoke to a full house at the Queenston Chapel Saturday. (Fred Mercnik)



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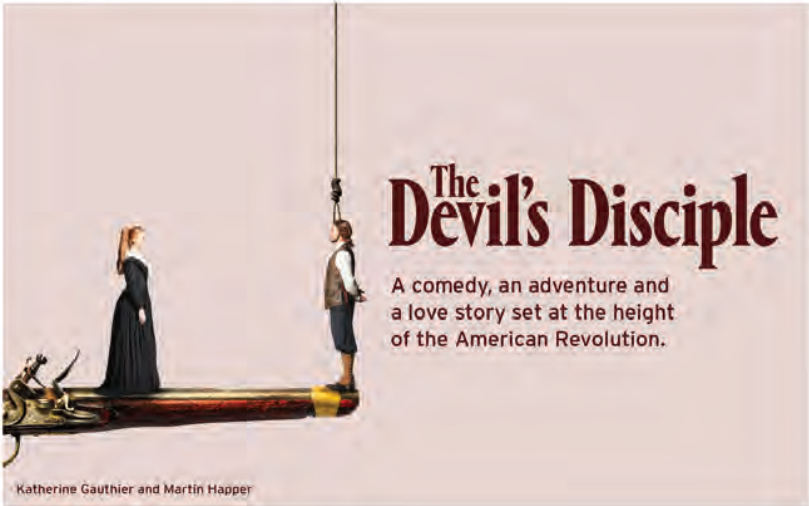
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EarlyOn program to be offered five days a week

Continued from page 1

of those on her calendar for the first week. Those sessions will be scheduled, but the program is run on a drop-in basis. EarlyOn Child and Family Centres provide free, high-quality drop-in programs for children from birth to six years of age, their parents and caregivers. The centres, family-focused and designed to offer a welcoming and fun space for children to learn, play, and connect with others, are offered across the region in YMCA buildings, schools and churches, with varying days and times, depending on the location.

Some of the programs at the Native Centre are funded with the purpose of serving the Indigenous community, and others, such as the EarlyOn program, are aimed at the broader community, but even those, Tomlinson explains, may have an Indigenous component, such as traditional nutrition, cooking, or dreamcatchers, incorporated into the sessions.

There is also lots of room for outdoor play, and there is a discussion about a fenced-in area, she says, “but we have eight acres. It would also be nice for parents to be able to wander around outside with their children.”

The smallest of the three new family rooms is set up with a gigantic rocking chair, small tables and chairs and lots of toys for babies. It’s being called the infant room, while a larger space is decorated for toddlers, and is considered the

preschool room.

“The furniture was all ordered in February, 2019, and we’ve had it waiting for more than a year now. The smaller items we’ve been buying recently to fill in the space, and to be here when the kids arrive. It’s been so exciting to see it all come together. We can’t wait to see it used,” says Tomlinson.

The space has been designed to meet the standards of a daycare centre, and that might be possible at some point down the road, but not in the immediate future, she says.

The largest area of the expansion is called a great room, and is set up for parents to use for workshops while their kids are playing elsewhere, although all are free to move around and use whatever space they want, she says.

There is a large window in the wall between the great room and the preschool space, originally planned for a water feature that could be seen from both rooms, says Tomlinson.

“That was a dream of mine, but it would be expensive, and we didn’t have the funding. It may be filled in. We’re not sure at this point. Water is so sacred — we were in water before we were brought into this world. If I could have two wishes for funding, it would be for a water feature and a mini van to get people here.”

The Airport Road centre also has an expanded gymnasium, and a new board room which was moved from its former space and completely redone.

The gym, about a third larger than the original

space, will be used for a variety of sports and activities, Tomlinson says, including basketball, which the centre has been very successful with in competition, volleyball, and healthy living programs.

Tomlinson has been the co-ordinator for the Canada Nutrition Prenatal Program at the Native Centre for years, a program that is moving to the new family space. It is funded by the federal government to allow community groups to help improve the health of pregnant women, new mothers and their babies. One of its goals is to ensure culturally-sensitive prenatal support for Indigenous women.

Tomlinson came to the Native Centre after a long career in early childhood education, and didn’t realize until she arrived she has Indigenous roots herself. “I learned my great-grandmother was Indigenous,” she says.

It has been 49 years since she graduated with the second early childhood education graduating class of Niagara College, she added, and has continued to take courses since then.

When she is ready to retire after a 50-year career, probably in spring of 2021, she will be happy to do so with the knowledge that she was able to help set up the new space at the centre, and arrange more programming for families and children in the community. “It will be a nice way to end a great career, but my goal right now is to get these doors open and run a fantastic program in this space.”

For more information, visit nrnc.ca.



This structure can be used indoors or out, and is designed to look like a Longhouse. It’s meant to be a place for kids to play, chat or enjoy quiet time, says early childhood educator Dianne Tomlinson. (Penny Coles)

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: NATURE'S AID + SIMPSON'S

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Going green in the personal care market, how one company is leading the way

Nature's Aid is a true natural health and beauty care company that was a one-product business only six years ago and has since grown into a multi-faceted brand, right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A family-owned business, run by Al Huberts and his daughter Courtney, Nature's Aid products are now available in over 4,000 retail stores across North America, and are making their way into global markets.

"We're best known for our multi-purpose, true natural skin gel. It's a one-product, dozens of uses formula that has become a staple in homes across Canada due to its effectiveness. It's a first aid, skin care and beauty aid all rolled into one," says Al.

However, their other

products including lip balms, shampoos, body wash and bar soaps are quickly catching up.

"Having our skin gel receive an award for Best Body Care product in Canada by the natural health community was a real honour for us, and we strive to ensure every product we create meets the same level of quality our customers have come to expect," says Courtney.

Along with their desire to create clean, natural health and beauty products for consumers, Nature's Aid wants to create clean, natural products for the planet.

"Personal care products have some of the worst recycling rates, with upwards of 80 billion plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles being thrown away globally

each year," adds Courtney. "As a company that creates natural beauty and body care products, including shampoo and conditioner, this is an issue we want to address."

For liquid products, Nature's Aid sources bottles made from non-virgin plastic so that they're not adding more to the world. They're also in the process of designing refill stations for their retail partners, which will allow customers to bring their Nature's Aid bottles back to the store to be filled up, extending the life of these already recycled bottles.

Another way they're addressing the issue of plastic waste is with the launch of their new solid shampoo and conditioner bars.

Working hard over the last year, Courtney says

her company has created four varieties of salon quality, solid shampoo and conditioner bars that not only work like their liquid counterparts, but are colour-safe, vegan friendly and cruelty free, while containing no parabens, SLS, silicones, palm oils or artificial colours or fragrances.

Going green doesn't end here for Nature's Aid. They continue to support the Nature Conservancy of Canada by donating proceeds from the sale of their bath and shower products as well as developing other innovative products that will eliminate the need for plastic packaging.

You can learn more about Nature's Aid and their true natural products at www.naturesaid.ca.



Father/daughter team Courtney and Al Huberts, Nature's Aid (Photo Supplied)



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EDITORIAL

Black history should be recognized year round

Jim Hill, of the Niagara Parks Commission, in discussing Black History Month, got it right in two very important ways.

First, he says, we should be recognizing Black history with every event that celebrates our local history, every chance we get, all year long. Especially here in Niagara, where it played such an important role in our past, and our county's past.

His other point is that we have to get it right. And to help us learn, he gathered three experts with personal connections to the history of our country for a symposium, to make sure we get it right.

He mentioned the same problems with our knowledge of Indigenous history — it is our history, plain and simple, and should be recognized as such. But we have to get the stories right.

A month-long celebration is a fine idea in trying to right wrongs of the past, in bringing awareness to the forefront, and focusing on education.

But it shouldn't be confined to just one month.

Celebrations of Black history began in Canada in the late 1920s, following a similar move in the U.S. During the early 1970s, it became known as Black History Week, and grew into Black History Month in 1976.

It has officially been recognized in Canada since 1995, with a goal of celebrating the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the "culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation it is today," as our federal website says.

For a long time, there was no recognition or acknowledgment of the many sacrifices by soldiers of African descent during the War of 1812, says Hill. The parks commission is trying to correct that, not only with plaques and mentions in many events, but in a much broader, more comprehensive and focused attempt, as are many cultural organizations in Niagara.

We all know we're not there yet, not as knowledgeable as we should be, about Black history or our Indigenous people. But we are very fortunate to live and work in an area where there are many occasions to remind us.

Canadian history, Indigenous history and Black history are so intertwined, it seems we shouldn't have to distinguish between them. But until we do a better job of that, of making it all just our history, with the stories properly told, factually correct and passed down to future generations, we should be grateful there are those who are willing to tell their stories, over and over if necessary, until we all have them firmly implanted in our minds and hearts, and no longer need the reminders.

Penny Coles
The Local

LETTERS

Solution to garbage a complicated problem

Re: Same volume, different collection schedule for garbage (The Local, Feb. 20).

Why do we allow manufacturers to make items that are not recyclable? These items include packaging, but also electronics, cars and appliances.

The manufacturers profit by allowing their leftovers to be taken care of by someone else ... and then of course there is the mercury from paper plants, and the oil contamination left at the oil fields ... all clean-up to be financed by someone else.

Maybe we should follow the money. Could we tax the oil barons, the paper profiteers?

I thought I could ask a simple question, but it has become more complicated.

Cynthia Rand

Reader supports cost of caring community

Re: Ted Mouradian's column, Municipal taxes improve our lifestyle (The Local, Feb. 20).

Right on, those who propose zero increase are only pushing the cost onto future generations.

I wish to live in a community that cares for everyone.

Although I don't use all facilities I support them.

Paul Pattison

The NOTL Local acknowledges the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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1851-1906
son of
John C. and Eliza A. Kirkpatrick

Remains remain a mystery

by Donald Combe

Special to The Local

This is a splendid granite monument for the Kirkpatrick family, yet their remains are somewhat of a mystery. The family was prominent in the village of Chippawa. Eliza's husband, John Cockcroft Kirkpatrick, died in Welland in 1880, but his burial site is unknown. Eliza died at 45 Wellington Street in Toronto, on June 24, 1906 and her son, Dr. John Kirkpatrick, died at the same location on July 9, 1906.

LETTERS

Look to BIAs for revenue instead of MAT

A recent article on the Lord Mayor's efforts to improve the appearance of the community through the introduction of a municipal accommodation tax (MAT) is misguided.

The explanation provided by the Lord Mayor is to offset capital improvements and upgrades to areas such as Queen Street, and the town of Virgil – to the tune of \$1 million.

Has the business community been asked their opinion? There are other tools that the municipality might use without establishing a MAT – like a BIA. A Business Improvement

Area accesses funding from other levels of government to improve a business area. In particular, the provincial/municipal legislation states that BIAs are local boards and municipalities have considerable flexibility in the creation and operation of BIAs.

A 2010 BIA handbook is available online through a simple google search. The handbook includes information on selected provincial economic development tools that local governments can use in partnership with local business and commercial property

owners, including business incubator programs and Community Improvement Plans (CIPs). Municipalities are encouraged to work with BIAs and local communities to devise solutions that work best in each area.

It may be time for the Lord Mayor to consider establishing BIAs in the Heritage district of Queen Street, as well as Virgil and St. Davids, to access readily available alternative funds.

Derek Insley
NOTL

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The environment lost out in the recent pipeline protest



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

When the Indigenous groups blockaded railways, highways, and border crossings across the nation, and the federal government was under immense pressure to react most appropriately, we wondered who the real winners and losers would be.

I'm not taking sides. Instead, I'm going to ponder, with you, how we got here in the first place. This is also an act to protect the earth's natural heritage on a large scale, and I will offer a perhaps unpopular opinion to digest.

Oil is necessary to power our society, for the time being. As a civilization, giving up oil overnight, or entirely, is going to be an impossible course. Giving the green light for new mega oil projects while simultaneously pushing onto traditional territories is not a pleasant combination.

It's a step in the wrong direction for our global biosphere. The plan has doubled up as a showcase of indifference toward native groups at the corporate scale, name-

ly the Wet'suwet'en people of British Columbia in this case. The oil companies may look bad to some, but they are heavily backed by other forces seen through the lens of jobs and the economy.

It must be challenging to be a massive business with sufficient funds and ideas for a project, only to have treaties and minority groups stop it.

When the Wet'suwet'en protestors and others closer to home had their protests cleared out, the RCMP and the OPP were doing their job and following orders respectfully. It must be an appreciably awkward spot for some of those men and women on the force, as they embody Canada, while doing their most loyal duty possible in tense times.

But it's complicated. Not every Indigenous official was against the pipeline. In fact, some have been openly supportive, because of the potential for job opportunities.

When Indigenous groups across Canada stood up in solidarity to show anger towards the Wet'suwet'en arrests, their protests worked.

If the Indigenous people were successful in protecting their traditional lands

and natural heritage by stopping the pipeline, the world's biosphere and Canada's culture would have won. Imagine if we poured that kind of money and ambition into larger, greener projects that could employ just as many people. Oh, but we do also need oil to tide us over.

It's complicated, all right. From a global perspective, I have no issue with railway blockages, highway

shut-downs, and protests on the steps of Parliament. Providing they are temporary, they have a place in the global gears and cogs in wheels that stimulate real change. Every protest is a step toward a bigger issue boiling over our heads — climate change.

The protest ripple effects have economically inconvenienced millions of Canadians and countless business-

es, with folks trying to go about their daily work lives, caught in the whirlwind of tricky times — or literally in a traffic jam.

Some view the protests as extreme, but they worked, to a point. People are still talking about them.

This was an act of not only solidarity, but desperation. This desperation had been brewing for a long time, and sometimes it takes

extraordinary acts to start a fire in a cold winter.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the blockades must come down. He was careful not to specify how or in what timeline. It has been interesting to watch the moves that followed. The protests have stopped, and the pipeline will proceed. The environment was clearly not the winner.



Blocking railways is economically disruptive, environmentally supportive, and culturally divisive all at once. These rails cut through the Thundering Waters Forest in Niagara Falls, Ont. They are not subject to any protests, but the photo speaks to the symbology behind the national scenario. (Owen Bjorgan)



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

This week in Auchterlonie on Astrology I'll look at the full Moon on Monday, March 9, the same day Mercury turns from retrograde to direct motion. And the period from Thursday, March 5 to Wednesday, March 11.

On my podcast I've got a look at The Astrology of 2020 – A New Order!

Also the week of Sunday, March 1, through Saturday, March 8 is on the podcast at www.lookingupwithbill.com/podcasts.html.

Now, the week ahead:

Thursday, March 5: The Moon is in her home sign of Cancer, opposite an NFL de-

fensive line of planets in Capricorn. Today there are four connections: three good, one difficult. Stubborn attitudes (yours or another's) go nowhere. Imagine the best and take a chance. It was March 5, 1496 that King Henry VII of England granted Italian explorer Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot) a commission to explore new lands. He discovered Newfoundland!

Friday, March 6: Here comes a day where everything seems like a struggle. Even though the Moon is in the outgoing sign of Leo, this cat may be more interested in lying under a tree than in getting anything accomplished. On this day in 1960 Cassius Clay won the Olympics. He

later changed his name to Muhammad Ali, calling his former name a 'slave name.'

Saturday, March 7: That retrograde Mercury is at it again today, and this time may result in real physical injury. Maybe even to the head. It happens just after midnight. So mind your pints! A number of inconjunct aspects suggest this is a Saturday to go back and fix things you need to fix. Remember when Sunday was a day of rest? That goes all the way back to March, 7, 321 AD, when Roman Emperor Constantine declared 'dies Solis (Sunday) the Roman day of rest.'

Sunday, March 8: So here comes the day before the full

Moon. Also, the day before Mercury turns from retrograde to direct. And yet this is a busy day. The Moon connects to Mercury, Uranus, Venus, Chiron, and Saturn. The Sun hooks up with Neptune and Uranus. Venus connects to Uranus too. All this with the Moon in discriminating Virgo. My advice? Keep breathing! On March 8, 1867, the British North America Act is passed in the House of Commons, serving as Canada's constitution for more than 100 years.

Monday, March 9: Two! Two! Two things in one. First it's the full Moon in Virgo at 1:47 p.m. This pumps up emotions through the roof and makes for lots of tears.

Then Mercury turns from retrograde to direct at 11:43 p.m., bringing clear thinking and communication back into our lives for the first time in a month. Did you know Barbie is a Pisces? She was born at the American Toy Fair on March 9, 1959. There have been more than one million of her made since.

Tuesday, March 10: The energy of the full Moon softens quickly today, as the Moon moves into Libra at 6:02 a.m. It's nice to have a day where things are not so speedy, no? Would you believe? On the world's first telephone call, Alexander Graham Bell says, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see

you," to his assistant, Thomas Watson, on March 10, 1876.

Wednesday, March 11: Lucky me! Lucky you! Lucky everybody today! All thanks to the Sun and Jupiter making nice in the morning, with enough energy to last all day long! It was on this day in 1943 that the Nazis liquidated the Jewish ghetto in Krakow, and Schindler saved all his workers by having them hide in his factory.

Next week is the third quarter Moon in Sagittarius on Monday, March 16. That and more, next week on Auchterlonie on Astrology, here in The Local.

Joni Mitchell said: "We are stardust. We are golden." So shine on!

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Keeping brain active is important as we age



Larry W. Chambers
Hanna Ley
Eva Liu
Special to The Local

According to Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Community Wellness Committee January 2020 Report recommendations, community vitality involves both connectedness and education through life-long learning, for either personal or professional reasons.

Life-long learning is a guiding education principle of the McMaster University Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. At present, 82 of the 609 students in the three-year program are based at the Niagara Regional Campus. Life-long learning for these students is highlighted by understanding that new scientific discoveries will repeatedly change how they should approach caring for their patients. The only way to provide the best care is to be engaged and open to learning about new information and developments

throughout our careers. Students are encouraged to take initiative on their own learning and the curriculum is designed to build capacity for self-directed learning as opposed to memorization.

For example, until two decades ago, the brain was thought to be both complex and simple to understand. It was believed that the brain we were born with does not grow or develop, and that the only change over time is nerve cell damage and death as we age.

That teaching was wrong, and we now know that the opposite is true. The brain is an organ that can grow and develop, and the term that has entered research and education about the brain is plasticity – specifically neuroplasticity. Plastic — what does that word convey to you? One implication is of a material that is hard and strong and shiny, like metal but lighter. However, the great advantage of plastic is that you can change its form easily, transforming it into anything from a toy car to a disposable spoon.

Neuroplasticity means that the brain can transform throughout life. The nervous system is not simply like a set of static electric cables running between the

brain and other body parts. New networks and pathways of nerve cells develop as a result of learning. For example, when you learn a new skill, your existing neurons form new connections to other existing neurons, which can then be followed more easily the next time you attempt it. This works for everything from learning to drive or learning a new language, to learning how to dance the tango.

In this way, the brain acts like a bee colony. When bees face a new challenge, they communicate with one another until a solution emerges. What is more, once the bee colony has solved a problem, they know how to solve it more quickly the next time it comes around.

One of the most exciting things that research has demonstrated about learning is that there is no upper age limit for neural network formation. Those with a diagnosis of dementia also need continuing opportunities to form new networks, learn and develop.

Throughout our life we should aim to keep our brains and body as strong as possible. Some ways to get the most out of our minds and bodies are to avoid stress, get enough sleep, ex-

ercise, avoid smoking, and control blood pressure.

However, we get to a point in life where we cannot increase this strength, but we can slow down the inevitable decline. The difference between the rate of decline with and without brain and body exercise is called the fitness gap. The more we do to close the fitness gap, the better off we will be as we age, ‘adding life to years’, not just years to life – which means having better quality of life for as many years as possible.

It is important to keep our brain active as we age – by learning new skills, such as playing a musical instrument, starting a new business or playing bridge. We should do our best to engage in purposeful work, maintain and increase contact and interaction with other people. This is much easier to do when we care for our hearing and vision so that we can continue receiving stimulation.

The NOTL Community Wellness Committee recommends supporting “the provision of programs supporting life-long learning for all residents. Consider partnership with Niagara College in this development.” For example,

the concept of Universities for the Third Age (U3A), first developed in France, is offered in many communities. U3A is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of older adults in the community – those in their third ‘age’ of life. Generally, U3A are groups of older adults that come together to continue their enjoyment of learning subjects of interest to them. An interesting feature of U3A is that there is no distinction between the learners and the teachers – everyone can take a turn at being both if they wish.

Another option is the federal government’s Life-long Learning Plan, which allows Canadian residents to withdraw funds from their Registered Retirement Savings Plan to help pay for lifelong learning. However, the funds can only be used for formal learning programs at designated educational institutions.

Learning does not need to take place in a formalized setting – one can just as easily exercise our brain through reading the newspaper, playing mahjong, working at a part-time job, or pursuing a hobby.

Life-long learning is ongoing, voluntary, and

self-motivated seeking of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. It enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability. Life-long learning is a key component in the formula that helps close the fitness gap and add life to years.


Larry W. Chambers has authored 175 articles and books concerning disease prevention (e.g. dementia), quality improvement in long-term care homes and innovative approaches for continuing professional development. He is research director of the Niagara Regional Campus, School of Medicine, McMaster University. Eva Liu and Hanna Ley are medical students at the Niagara Regional Campus of the McMaster University School of Medicine. They are interested in improving community wellness of frail older adults in NOTL by narrowing the fitness (physical and brain) gap, diversifying housing options for older adults, and increasing economic activity within the community that also increases ability of our minds to interact with people and ideas.





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DSBN should look again at how it deals with issues



**Ted Mouradian
The Local**

I have noticed that there seems to be a rise in board and council conflict in the news recently.

I would like to share my experience on many boards since the early 1970s, to currently conducting board governance and human skills training.

Boards that have been around for years usually have a small group of long-term members whom we will call the old guard. These people have been the kingpins on their specific board and they bring many years of history and continuity to board deliberations that

should not be discarded in any way. But sometimes these stalwarts get into a rut and a mindset that they, and only they, have the right view and the right answers for how the board is to move forward.

In 1981, I joined the Ontario Real Estate Board of Directors as the regional director for Niagara, a young man from Niagara sitting on a Toronto board of about 25 successful realtors from across the province in an oak boardroom with a group of paid staff to assist. It was pretty awesome.

There was also an executive committee of the past president, the current president and the two vice-presidents. Apparently, they met to discuss many of the items on the agenda and comment on those items to

give guidance to the rest of the board.

During these discussions, I kept asking questions about issues that I needed more clarification about, in the belief that if I am being asked to vote on something I need to understand it, not just rubber stamp it because the old guard or an executive committee say they are in favour of it.

I ended up with a target on my back, was labeled as an outsider, and even by some a disruptor. It took many years to get that target off my back, and some still see it to this day.

When new people come on a board who are known to be questioners, they may automatically get this target on their backs and are discounted. Sometimes a concerted effort is made by the

old guard to get rid of them so the board can get back to being run the way the old guard thinks it should be run.

Not all old guard are bad, and not all disruptors are good. But this type of mindset can in itself be more disruptive than the disrupter could ever be.

And sometimes a board needs to take a critical look at itself to see if there is any merit to what this newcomer is actually saying or doing.

Two things can stop the conflict. First, the newcomer can slow down a bit, ask questions respectfully and not look for a fight or to disrupt simply to disrupt, do their homework and test the waters.

As for the old guard, get rid of the targeting and the circling of the wagons when someone

simply wants to make the board better. Look to see if you might actually be the problem.

Also, when the target is placed on the newcomer, sometimes the old guard actually crosses a line to look for any excuse to punish the newcomer far more than they would their own.

A good example of this seems to be the current rift between some of old guard on the DSBN Board and newcomer trustee Kate Baggott, who represents St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake, when she looked into a complaint from a parent about a student outside her area. She was suspended for one DSBN meeting.

Ed Smith, chair of For A Better Niagara, spoke at a recent board meeting, and said Baggott was

found guilty of a code of conduct violation that was not based on any well-defined rule, but on the way things have always been done. He has complained to the Ontario Ombudsman about her suspension.

Members of any board who see the old guard target certain members need to stand up for what is right. It's ironic that in this instance, a school board has targeted the new kid being different.

I think some deep self-reflection is needed by all parties involved in this one.

Ted Mouradian is the President of the 2% Factor Inc. and the creator of the Law of Cooperative Action. He is an author and a professional speaker and can be reached at ted@the2percentfactor.com.



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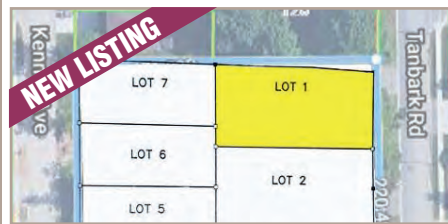
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Library offers new programs for homeschoolers

Penny Coles
The Local

Every Thursday morning, a group of moms and kids gathers in the Rotary Room at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library. The kids are school-aged, but they don't go to school. Their parents have chosen to teach them at home.

Kasia Dupuis, the children's library associate, has organized two programs for children who are homeschooled, after a request from a mom looking for space for moms and their kids to gather.

"We have a homeschool community," says Dupuis. "We wanted to have something to offer them."

She asked whether they wanted an informal drop-in setting for moms and kids, or a more structured learning program for the kids.

The answer was both. So every Thursday morning, she puts out chairs for the moms and educational toys for kids, and they gather for a social time from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Moms chat and trade tips, such as what is available in online educational programs. Sometimes kids bring board games to play with the others, sometimes crafts to share.



This group of homeschooled students at a library program last Friday learned about nutrition from Kasia Dupuis. (Penny Coles)

One Friday morning, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Dupuis organizes a lesson for kids in Grades 1 to 6. It's semi-structured, with an hour and a half for the

kids to listen and follow instructions, but they can be stretched out on cushions on the floor, discussing the topic of the day, while watching their lesson on a TV screen, or doing a

hands-on activity. "It gives them a taste of a school setting, and they are very engaged. It's a really nice dynamic," says Dupuis.

Last Friday their class was on nutrition. Dupuis had them peel and chop up vegetables for an Instant Pot, and then, as they wait-

Continued on page 13

Newark preparing for arrival of farmworkers

Suzanne Vaillant
Special to The Local



Everyone at Newark Neighbours is now getting ready for our farm workers

to arrive. We always look to our giving community for assistance with work wear needed in a still-cold climate, hoodies, boots, back packs, work pants and gloves. This year NN has donated \$500 to the Niagara Workers Welcome Organization for them to purchase 15 Welcome Kits, which include a safety vest. Dress to Impress is assistance for college students

to prepare for interviews for upcoming jobs, and NN gave the organization five bags of outfits for young women and men to prepare for the next phases of their careers. The NOTL campus was most appreciative of the bags of clothing we were able to donate. Prom Project: We continue to save prom wear, shoes and accessories for this project. The event for

students to make their selections will be April 4 at the St. Catharines Collegiate. We were off to a successful start this year with a very generous donation of \$5,000 from Canopy Growth, and we have received several food donations to stock our food bank shelves. Thank you to the very kind gentleman who sent us a lovely flower arrangement for Valentine's Day, a very

sweet gesture and appreciated by all the volunteers. A note of thanks also goes out to the following for their generosity: The Shaw Festival, The Scottish Loft, and St. Michael Catholic Elementary School for their kind food donations, and The Lewiston-NOTL Rotary Club for their monetary donation. Please consider becoming a member of Newark Neighbours. The annual fee

is \$10 and forms are available at our store. We appreciate and value the generosity of our community for your donations, which allow us to continue our mission of "Serving our Community with Compassion, Care and Concern." Making this mission a reality would not be possible without all of our volunteers, whose time and effort we greatly appreciate.

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Open Mic at the Legion a popular Sunday event

**Kim Wade
Special to The Local**

Talented locals came out to the Royal Canadian Legion Hall Sunday for an afternoon of musical entertainment. These Open Mic sessions, hosted by local singer/songwriter Buzz Hummer, have been taking place on afternoons on the first Sunday of the month since October.

Hummer started the sessions to give members of the community an opportunity to explore their musical interest in a safe and positive environment.

It's a "nice, steady thing, and very relaxed," he says, and also helps the Legion fill its King Street hall during a slow Sunday afternoon lull. He says about half of the performers return regularly, while the other half show up occasionally. He is always happy to see new performers attend. There is "a lot of talent in this town and it's nice to be able to showcase it."

First to kick off the afternoon were Gail Hawkins and Arlyn Levy with *No One Will Ever Love You*, by John Paul White and Steve McEwan, following it with

a Linda Rondstat/Johnny Cash song, and one by the Civil Wars. Hawkins was clearly at ease with the microphone for her second time performing at the Legion. She had seen posters for the event around town and thought she'd give it a try, she says, noting there was a better turnout than last month, with about double the size of the crowd.

Terry Sauchuck played *Keep Me From Blowing Away* by Paul Croft, and the Johnny Cash rendition of *Personal Jesus* originally written by Martin Gore of the 80s electronic band, De-



Julie Van Horne, Steve Goldberger and Rayburn Blake sing together at the Legion Hall Sunday. (Photos by Kim Wade)



Gail Hawkins and Arlyn Levy enjoy a chance to perform.

peche Mode, and finished his set of three songs with *One of Us* by Joan Osborne.

Bob Gunns let his harmonica do the singing for him as he performed his instrumentals with a jaunty version of Patsy Cline's *Crazy*.

No stranger to performing, Steve Goldberger, took the stage and entertained the audience with tunes such as *Come From the Heart* and *You Turn*

Mashmakhan and current performer with The Niagara Rhythm Section. She first sang the Janis Joplin tune, *Me and Bobby McGee*, and followed it with Michelle Wright's *Love Has No Pride*. Lastly, Van Horne picked up her ukulele and strummed to *Cold Cold Heart*.

Van Horne says she enjoys the event because people "respectfully listen" to the performers. She has sung in a church choir for

Next up was the youngest performer of the afternoon, 19-year-old Aidan Longo. He started his set with the Tragically Hip's *Bobcaygeon*, which he followed up with two songs by St. Catharines native Dallas Green, *Sleeping Sickness*, and *Death of Me*.

There was a late addition to the performance list, then since it was well before 5 p.m., Hummer cycled through the list again to see



Sal Fasullo and his harmonizing partner Phaedra entertain at the Legion.

Me On I'm a Radio, by Joni Mitchell. Goldberger also performs in three bands as well as a regular at the Open Mic afternoon. He can be found at the Old Winery Restaurant on Friday nights with his band The Old Winos, and also around town playing with the Niagara Rhythm Section, and his newest band The Gentle Spirits. Goldberger won Country Artist, Producer and Songwriter of the Year at the 2015 Niagara Music Awards for his work on the album, *Cosmic Cowboy*.

Next up was the woman with an infectious smile, Julie Van Horne. It was obvious she enjoyed performing, with a laugh as delightful as her singing. She was accompanied by Steve Goldberger and Rayburn Blake, former member of the 70s rock band,

over 25 years, and picked up the ukulele about three years ago and "got hooked." She also likes to bring her mother to the Sunday afternoon event because she lives just around the corner and loves the Legion. It gives her mom a chance to get out and enjoy some music and watch her daughter sing, she says.

Sal Fasullo and his harmonizing partner Phaedra entertained the audience with original songs written by Fasullo. He first sang a song entitled *Bleeding Hearts*, followed by a personal song about a divorce, called *Oranges and Lemons*, which received more than a few chuckles and nodding heads from the audience. Fasullo and Phaedra, who work together at Peller Estates, closed with a tune titled *Bended Knee*.

if any performers wanted to have another set.

Gail Hawkins, Terry Sauchuck, Sal Fasullo, and Julie Van Horne, accompanied again by Steve Goldberger and Rayburn Blake, performed a few more tunes.

Aidan Longo performed his encore with Bob Dylan's *Don't Think Twice, It's Alright*, to which Buzz Hummer commented, "It's nice to see someone under 35 singing a Bob Dylan song."

For the last performance of that set, Buzz Hammer, Scott Harris, and Rayburn Blake performed *Wagon Wheel*, another Bob Dylan song.

The next Open Mic afternoon at the Royal Canadian Legion will be on Sunday, April 5 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., or until the last riff fades.

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Kids learn at own speed and interest level

Continued from page 11

ed for their soup to cook, showed them a video about healthy eating while the Rotary Room filled with the aroma of home cooking, which they got to eat when the soup was ready.

There are about 10 to 12 families who attend regularly, she says, and she's hoping to attract others from around the region. Last week, she had one family from Fort Erie — there isn't anything similar provided elsewhere that she is aware of.

"It gives moms and kids a change of scenery, and it's a good opportunity for kids to become more familiar with the library," she says.

"I try to do a mix of subjects, such as science and art, to offer them a well-rounded scope of projects."

While the kids were learning about nutrition, three moms sat and chatted about their experiences with homeschooling, and the reasons for their choice.

Amika Verwegen has three children, two school-aged girls and a young son. Her kids would have gone to Parliament Oak, she says, and when it closed, "I didn't like the idea of a super-school."

She says some of the moms who homeschool began meeting in each other's homes, but now find the library so much easier — all they have to do is show up, and they know their kids have a safe place to play.

She's been homeschooling for the last five years, but with a baby on the way, and a little one at home, she is going to send her kids to Crossroads Public School in the fall.

Her husband passed away last fall, and she's on her own. "With number four on the way, I want to give this baby the same dedication and attention I gave the others. I've loved

having the kids at home — it's been absolutely wonderful. I feel like I've been learning with them, and seeing the world through their eyes. I feel I'm giving them an emotional foundation to survive in this big world."

Patricia Fry, with two boys, aged eight and 11, adds, "you get to see all their firsts. When they're learning to read, you see that moment when they get it."

Shannon Wright explains she feels it's "very special" to spend that

time with her kids, knowing what each child needs and being able to give it to them.

"They really thrive in one-on-one sessions," adds Fry.

The moms agree they feel it's important to let each child learn at his or her own speed, to never make them feel they're behind, and to allow them to spend time on what interests them.

They also laugh about the concern they hear from other parents, that their kids won't be socialized.

Wright believes her children will have a "more realistic understanding of how society works," than they would sitting in a classroom with a large number of kids — and, she adds, she's very concerned about "who is looking after my kids. We're passionate about foundational learning, and after that, they can learn about whatever interests them."

"All we do at home is talk all day, and learn," Wright says. "We also place a lot of value on time outside, exploring the woods.

They love it, and it's another way to learn."

Fry says her two boys are very outgoing, and very comfortable with other kids and adults.

"They don't need socializing," she says. Her oldest son started out in school, but ran into issues with bullying, and when Fry realized it wasn't going to be an easy situation to fix, decided he was better off learning at home.

"Learning social skills from a group of seven-year-olds maybe isn't the best idea," she laughs.

They all also agree the library is a great resource, and they are delighted with the programs that are being offered.

"It's great to use the library during the day, when it isn't so busy," says Fry, whose boys enjoy playing Minecraft on library computers when the homeschooling program ends.

And best of all, "there are no labels. Nobody is ever behind. They are just who they are. Their self-esteem is so fragile. When they're homeschooled, that's not a problem."



Ella Wiens peels carrots for the vegetable soup the kids made at their class on nutrition.



Ella Wiens and Raya Wright (right) watch as Kasia Dupuis shows Yuna and Nova Versteegan how to chop carrots. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Naomi Wiens places cut vegetables into an Instant Pot for soup in the Rotary Room of the NOTL Public Library, during a nutrition class for homeschooled students.

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Ellery Sawatzky, "I pledge to help everyone and stand up for those around me." (Photos supplied)

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Grade 8 Crossroads students join the #iPledge Challenge to be kind.



Miaya Smith pledges to be kind. The DSBN is encouraging students and the community to take the #iPledge Challenge to end bullying. The campaign asks the public to help amplify awareness about bullying, and be a part of the movement to stop it.



You can Count on Me: Grade 7 students Hailey Epp, Allie Kroeker, and Lucy Hopkins sing their #iPledge Challenge.

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Sham Raad's kindness pledge: I pledge to help anyone in need.



Crossroads Staff shows support for Pink Shirt Day. Wednesday, Feb. 27, was pink shirt day at DSBN schools. To show their support in the effort to end bullying, students and staff wore their best and brightest pink items to school.

Local man leads Canucks entertainment team

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Nineteen thousand fans are sitting on the edge of their seats, waiting for their home team, the Vancouver Canucks, to take to the ice.

Suddenly, an army of 30 demon zombies, dressed in the uniforms of the other 30 NHL teams, invades the Rogers Arena. It resembles a scene out of Game of Thrones.

The crowd roars. It's up to the Canucks to defend their home ice. The puck drops, and the players quickly skate into action, throwing hip checks and playing with a fierce determination to vanquish the invading horde.

Forward Micheal Ferland levels a punishing check, knocking a zombie through a shattering panel of tempered glass. Centre Elias Pettersson takes the loose puck on a breakaway. His slapshot from the point shatters the zombie goalie, just like that panel of glass. The puck continues its arc into the zombie net, and team captain Bo Horvat skates to centre ice, firmly planting the team flag to claim their territory.

The roaring crowd at Rogers Arena is real. The zombies are not. They are part of the opening scene in a film written and directed by Niagara-on-the-Lake native Michael Pohorly.

Pohorly was brought in by Canucks owner Francesco Aquilini about a year ago to revamp the in-game entertainment. With this year's 50th season approaching, it was important to Aquilini that the milestone be marked with renewed excitement.

From his younger days growing up in rural NOTL, hockey has always been part of Pohorly's life. He fondly remembers rushing home from St. Davids Public School to skate on his family's outdoor rink. Later, he played Junior B for the St. Catharines Falcons, and spent four years as a member of the Concordia University Stingers while earning a degree in communications and film.

With his background in the sport, Pohorly was a natural for the job. It didn't hurt, of course, that he also had close to 20 years working in the film and television industries, with credits in films such as *The Grey* and *The Incredible Hulk*, and TV series such as *DC: Legends of Tomorrow*, and *Prison Break*.

Pohorly came up with the concept, deciding to make the players stand out

as warriors on the ice. He gathered a team of film industry professionals, including cinematographer Stephen Jackson and stunt coordinator Paul Wu. For the demon zombies, he hired actors who could skate, and members of the UBC and Simon Fraser University hockey teams. He also called on former Concordia Stingers teammates, such as goalie Angelo Karitsiotis.

The result is a three-minute, Hollywood-quality run through a fast-paced, action-packed sequence designed to get the crowd excited about the game to come. And it works, says Pohorly.

"Basically, the Canucks had become known around the league over the years as being very conservative in how they approach game entertainment at the arena," says Pohorly. "Francesco brought me in to change the vibe and atmosphere. The message is, you're here for entertainment, you're here to have fun."

The entire opening sequence, with the video, the new projection system and lights, is designed to urge people in the stands to start cheering and to get loud. Pohorly adds, "there are three key moments when the noise level rises, and the team, getting ready in the dressing room, can hear that the fans are already getting into the game."

Pohorly's responsibilities as in-game entertainment director this season give him carte blanche to design and script what amounts to an engaging mini-movie 41 times a year. "It's a four-hour live show that we're running, with breaks in-between for hockey, that's the way I look at it," he jokes.

From installing fog lights below the scoreboard, to choosing a new soundtrack, to goals scored by the Canucks (a loud loop of the word "Hey" from Van Halen's *Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love*), it's all Pohorly's vision.

He raves about the fun he's had with Canuck Idol, a crowd karaoke contest, and the Top Dog competition, during which players' wives accompany their family dogs to the ice surface for an end-to-end race. Its popularity has seen stars such as Bo Horvat approaching Pohorly to get their pooches a spot in the next event.

Pohorly oversees a team of 15 full-time employees and almost 50 game-day staffers who bring it all together. "I did not realize everything that goes into this," he admits. "And the



Michael Pohorly films a sequence with the Canucks goalie to entertain and pump crowds at the Rogers Arena in Vancouver. (Photo supplied)

more you add into it, the more variables there are."

It seems to be working. After two straight years of declining ticket sales, the Canucks are averaging 18,703 fans per game this season, up almost 700 from 2018-2019. Their attendance figures place them in the top 10, up from 14th last year. "We're way beyond last year, and far beyond all of our sales targets, with 10 games to go," says Pohorly.

And Aquilini must be happy the team is seeing success on the ice, as well. Having missed the playoffs last year, the Canucks at press time were sitting in the first wild card slot in the west, with 34 wins, just one less than last year, and with lots of hockey still to play.

Despite the success, and the fun he is having at Rogers Arena, Pohorly is looking beyond the Stanley Cup playoffs already. He has a new television series in development in Bali, where he first visited in 2008. The idyllic island has become a bit of a second home, as he returned last summer to shoot some commercials.

His long-term goal, however, focuses on his first home. "Eventually one of my aims is to be able to shoot a film in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and I think it would be fantastic to be able to shoot in and around the vineyards, and to create a script that allows Niagara to be one of the stars in the film."

Maybe that film will

feature Pohorly's uncle Joe, the Niagara wine pioneer who was originally involved in Inniskillin Wines, or his parents,

Frank and Susan, who, along with his brother Steven, still operate the family vineyard.

Or maybe it will feature

demon zombie hockey players.

With Michael Pohorly, one never knows what to expect.

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Pickleball fastest-growing sport

Penny Coles
The Local

Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in Canada, and its success is being mirrored in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

John Hindle of the NOTL Pickleball Club credits in part the Town and its facilities for the popularity of the sport locally, with “the premier facility in the region.”

He is referring to the three outdoor courts opened last summer on the former tennis courts in the Virgil Sports Park.

The Town has also provided space at the community centre from the earliest days of the sport in NOTL, when in 2017, 55 players enjoyed eight hours of scheduled time, Hindle told councillors in a recent appearance at council to explain the growth of the sport.

Currently, to accommodate all levels of players in 20 sessions throughout each week, the gymnasium in the former Virgil Public School is also being used by the club, adding three more courts to the three at the community centre.

During the summer, says Hindle, while many players will enjoy the six outdoor courts, other club members will continue to play indoors, out of the sun, and without the wind that changes the game.

The club now has more than 200 members, and it's expected to continue to grow. In addition to many regulars away for the winter, the club sees beginners walking through the doors of the community centre each week, and all of them stay.

Hindle, who has played many sports, says a comment he hears often from people within their first three games, is “I'm addicted.” He's never heard that about any other sport, he adds.

He talks of a “Santa Claus effect” among players who come out to play for



Members of the NOTL Pickleball Club play at the community centre and the former Virgil Public School gymnasium. It's a good workout, but not as fast or aggressive as other racquet sports. (Penny Coles)

the first time. “They feel the joy, and they keep coming back. They come through the community centre doors with a smile on their face.”

As the club has grown and expanded its schedule, it has evolved to offering beginner, intermediate and advanced games, with some cross-over, open and transitional sessions, as well as skills instruction, says Hindle. Beginners get about six weeks of instruction, and starting next week, the club will also be offering sessions on techniques and strategies for advanced players.

There is a “pyramid” of levels, he says, with the divisions narrowing until they get to the top, which includes members who play competitively, with regional, provincial and national tournaments for those who are interested. There are only a few members who have competed, but they've done very well, he says.

One of the beauties of the sport that has contributed enormously to its popularity, he explains, is that four people are on a court for about 10 minutes, playing to a score of 11 to win, and then rotating off to allow others to play.

“With three courts, there are 12 people actively involved in games that are only about 10 minutes long. Then they come off and the next four people go on.”

Thus a scheduled session can allow many more people court time than would be seen in any other racquet sport, he adds, while also allowing for socializing between rotations. Players get to know each other and become friends on and off the court, and enjoy social events after the games, as well as those arranged regularly outside of game schedules.

“People interact between games, and then they go out on the court to play. This is a sport that brings people together with others who have something in common. The question of what they did for a living never seems to come up. They talk about family, plays they've seen, the protests — some of it's very localized, about what goes on in town. Pickleball was designed to be a social activity.”

It's also designed to be a relatively gentle, “delicate” game, with rules that require the ball to bounce on both sides during a rally, and a “no volley zone” in front of the net. Although shots can be aggressive, more often points are won by being patient and waiting for one side to make a mistake, Hindle explains.

Although it's a great sport for all ages, including families, many players are seniors, with hip or knee replacements, some wearing braces to protect joints,

and enjoying an activity that does not require a high level of fitness, says Hindle.

The outdoor courts in Virgil have created “quite a stir in the region,” he says, allowing it to become a year-round sport locally.

It was the outdoor courts that brought him to council last week.

The club is planning on spending money on the town facility, hoping to put up a screen to protect from the wind, which impacts the game.

He also hopes to partner with a youth summer program, offering lessons at no cost.

But the club is concerned about damage that has occurred to the public courts, from people using them for other reasons.

Since they opened, the courts have been used for soccer, road hockey, skateboarding, and rollerblading, damaging the surface and the nets, he says.

He suggested the Town could provide some protection, while continuing to have the courts available to the community, through locked gates that can be opened by a four-digit code.

The club “would take ownership, and would work with council to do whatever it can to ensure continued public access,” he says, hoping for a positive response from the Town.

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FAMOUS & INFAMOUS: PEOPLE & EVENTS

March 23 @ 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.

On the fourth Monday of the month the Niagara Historical Museum offers a free Community Day and the popular Famous & Infamous biography series open to all. On March 23 Suzanne Hebert will talk about The Medicis (part 1). Call 905-468-3912 or email contact@nhsm.ca.

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Sunday, March 8th

Message by:

Kevin Bayne -
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SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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

- Across:**

1 Pitcher's error
5 Hall amphibian?
9 Enhancement
14 Country singer/songwriter Jake ---
15 S American flightless bird
16 Light gray-brown
17 How to start a pudding race?
18 Bring in
19 Garden tool
20 Slant
21 Marx or Warners, e.g.
22 Adjusted
23 Longing
24 Place for experiments
25 Series of church intercessions
26 Prom partner
29 Sarcastic praise
31 Reluctant
33 Ugly encounter
34 Oil well equipment
37 Arc
38 Apollo 11 lander
39 New in Tijuana
41 Arid
42 Stand-in
44 Wept
- 45 Thin pancake
46 The Volunteer State (Abbr.)
47 Wooden hammer
50 Batter's stat.
52 A long way
55 Castaway locations
56 Bathtub residue
57 Where to find Pikes Peak (Abbr.)
58 Trim
59 Rent
60 Saturnalia
61 "Peace on earth, good will ---"
62 A k a C C C P
63 College sporting org.
64 Commence
65 Court dividers
66 Unload for cash
- Down:**

1 Dictatorial
2 Up
3 Fabled
4 Recognize
5 Junior's voice
6 Vivien Leigh's G W T W role
7 Strenuous activity
8 Aykroyd and Quayle
- 9 Teetotalism
10 Second-in-command
11 Actress --- Rigg
12 Poet --- Nash
13 Wanting
25 Wolf Man --- Chaney
27 Off-roader
28 Now
30 --- Martin, cognac
31 Flat panel TV type
32 Belonging to us
33 Pigswill
34 Strengthen
35 "--- Got No Strings..." (Pinnocchio)
36 Deity
40 Gravetop vase
43 On a pension (Abbr.)
45 Brainy
46 Stopwatches, e.g.
47 Light fogs
48 --- in the arm
49 South American ruminant
51 Pop
53 Kind of pond bloom
54 Kingly
56 Ostracize
57 Drawbacks

EVENTS



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PUZZLE ANSWERS

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

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

Sudoku solution from Feb. 27, 2020

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



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Pickleball club founder saw outdoor court open

Penny Coles
The Local

Case Bassie, the man who introduced pickleball to Niagara-on-the-Lake and pushed to have the former Virgil tennis courts resurfaced and converted for the sport, died Feb. 6 at the age of 72.

His death was as a result of two tragic accidents that both caused brain injuries — one he recovered from, the other he did not.

Last April, his wife Brigitte explained, he was discovered lying in a ditch on Line 2, where he had been cycling. He had had a heart attack, and when he fell, he hit his head.

A “good samaritan” came along and managed to resuscitate him, she says. “He crashed three times that day,” she recalls, and was in a coma for some time. He spent six months in the hospital recovering from the effect of lack of oxygen to his brain. But he had worked hard at his recovery and was doing well, and by January was living “the new normal.” Brigitte says he had been playing cards with his friends that afternoon, and later in the day he slipped and fell backwards down the stairs at home, hitting his head again.

“It was just a tragic accident,” Brigitte says. “He was gone within 24 hours.”

Case and Brigitte moved to St. Davids from Haliburton about four and a half years ago.

“When we got here, he said, ‘where’s the pickleball?’ she recalls, “but there wasn’t any.”

He went to the Town to ask about it, and Lord Mayor Betty Disero “was amaz-



Lord Mayor Betty Disero cut the ribbon on the new pickleball courts in the Virgil Sports Park last June with Dan Maksenuk, Brigitte Bassie, wife of NOTL Pickleball Club president Case Bassie, and Kevin Turcotte, the Town’s acting director of operations. Case was in the hospital and couldn’t be there, but was able to see the outdoor courts before he died. (Penny Coles)

ing. She helped get it going,” says Brigitte.

A club he helped establish soon had 55 members, and as it grew, he began to push for outdoor courts to make it a year-round sport.

He and Brigitte, who always did a lot of travelling, had had several great trips together in a short amount of time, during the year and a half before his accidents. They had also come to love their St. Davids neighbours, doing some travelling with them. They became a tight community, which was helpful during Case’s recovery, and again since his death, Brigitte says. “They embraced Case, and they embraced me. Their support has been wonderful. It’s a great place to live.”

When the six courts opened in the Virgil Sports Park last June, Brigitte and Disero cut the ribbon. Case was still in the hospital at that point, but he was able to

visit them once he was home and see what had been accomplished, not only with the conversion of the courts but with the astounding success and growth of the club.

Brigitte describes him as a man always involved in his community, and always ready to tackle whatever needed to be done. And he loved that people in town embraced the sport that meant so much to him.

But he was also a humble man who wasn’t comfortable with compliments — he would instead deflect praise to others who had been involved, she says.

She has a photo of herself and Disero on the day of the ribbon-cutting for the outdoor courts, she says, which she had printed and framed for Case, and which will be on display the day of the celebration of his life. It will be held April 19 at Navy Hall from 2 to 5 p.m., with tributes to Case at 3 p.m.

Games night raises money for cancer unit



St. Davids Leos organized a family games night at the St. Davids Lions Hall Sunday, to raise money for the MacKids Teen Zone Project, to upgrade a teen cancer unit in Hamilton. Jaeda Smith, Jason Christie, Tanner Smith, Ella Turner, Maya Dueck and Calvin Schouten were there to play board games. (Fred Mercnik)

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