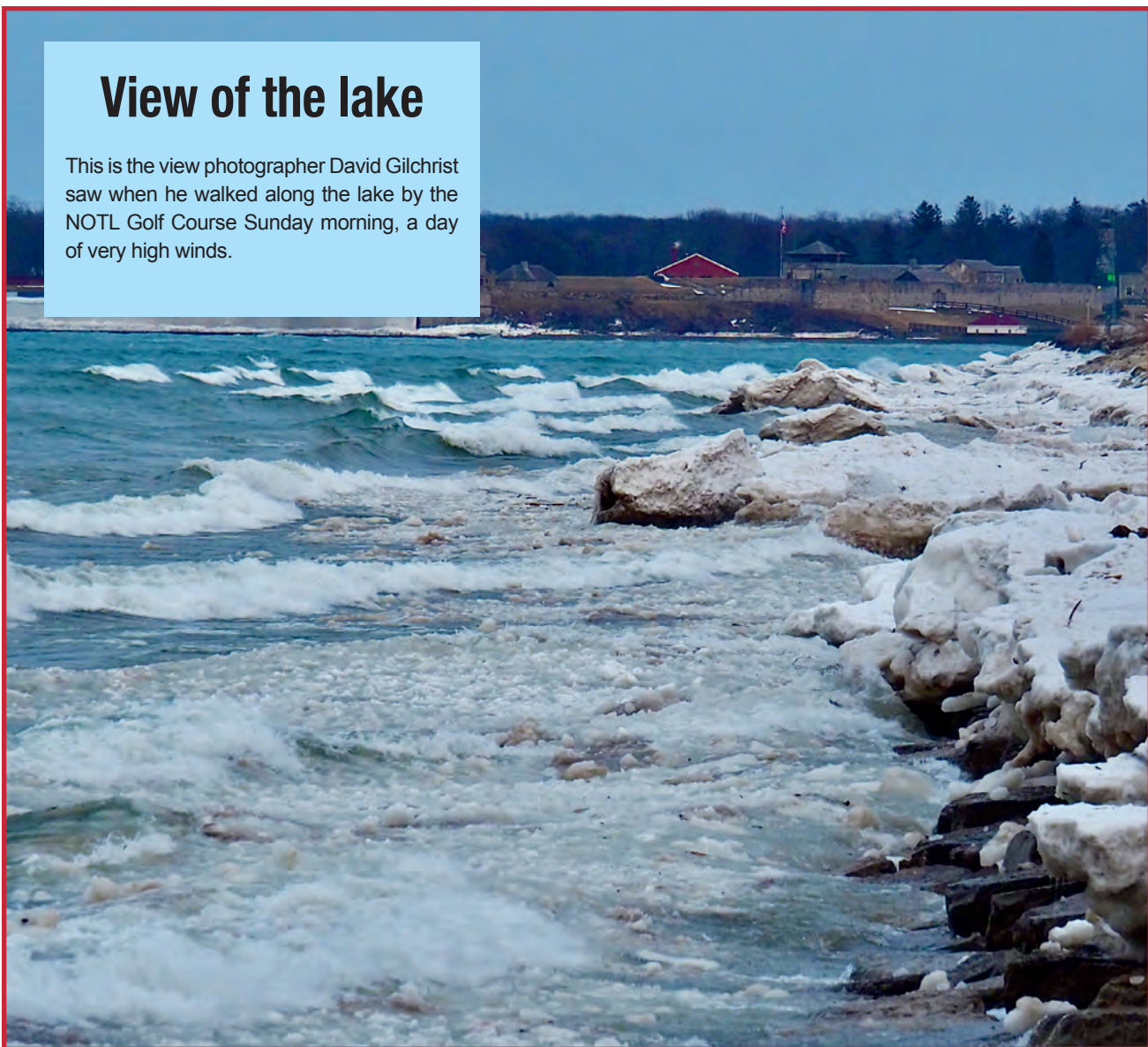




View of the lake

This is the view photographer David Gilchrist saw when he walked along the lake by the NOTL Golf Course Sunday morning, a day of very high winds.



Work continues to help Ukraine

Penny Coles
The Local

While locals continue to worry about the safety of relatives in Ukraine, some have turned to helping organize humanitarian aid.

There is a lot of work being done, and a lot of help needed, especially at one Ukrainian church in St. Catharines, where people from across the region are donating goods and volunteering.

Before the Russian attacks started threatening their families two weeks ago, Shirley Madsen and Helen Arsenault had never met, although they have a lot in common. Both have relatives in Ukraine they are concerned about, and both are keeping busy trying to help with humanitarian aid.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero knows them both, and after their stories were told in The

Local last week, she connected them.

On the weekend, they met in person at the St. Catharines church that has been the headquarters for donations to be packed and delivered to Poland, to be distributed in Ukraine. St. John Ukrainian Catholic Church on Lakeshore Road may be known to many as the place to buy the best home-made perogies, but lately it has become a hub of activity as volunteers sort, box and label military and medical aid, as well as personal hygiene items, the supplies most immediately in need.

Both Madsen and Arsenault are women who like to organize and get to work doing what needs to be done, and both spent a long 10-hour day at the church Sunday.

Laryssa Tymczyszyn, a

Continued on page 3

Councillors consider repairing St. Davids Pool

\$5 million pool not in the cards

Penny Coles
The Local

Lord Mayor Betty Disero wants to ensure something good comes of the years of work put into ensuring St. Davids residents have a swimming pool in their community.

At Monday's planning meeting, she said the town's St. Davids swimming pool committee has been working hard to determine how to keep the pool going, including repairing it if a new pool is not a possibility.

However, she recently discovered the mandate of

the committee is to raise money to replace the pool, not repair it.

The town has already gone through the process of paying for a design and holding meetings for public input — there were two held at the St. Davids Lions Club hall in 2019, with changes made to the design in response to residents' comments.

The mandate for a new pool makes it complicated to now consider looking at

ways to repair it, said Disero, but she has learned of other municipalities using other solutions, such as containers rather than new buildings. "They look amazing," and they're a third of the cost, she said, urging councillors to check out projects in Welland and St. Catharines that have gone that route. "Let's see if we can look outside the box."

Coun. Gary Burroughs, a member of the pool

committee, agreed that although the town has been working toward "this beautiful \$5 million pool, without upper-level funding we'll never be able to afford it, and we've had no success so far."

The town has gone through two rounds of grant applications, with nothing positive to report, he said.

"I thought the upcoming provincial election might loosen the pockets

a little bit, but that doesn't appear to have happened," said Burroughs.

At the pool committee meetings, members have talked about repairing what's there, rather than building new, he said.

"It's time to say without upper-tier funding we can't replace it. We need another approach."

Coun. Allan Bisback said he agreed with looking

Continued on page 13

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Butterfly release will celebrate lives lost during COVID

Penny Coles
The Local

Families who have lost loved ones during the pandemic are being offered an opportunity to honour them, at an event organized by Bonnie Bagnulo, executive director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service.

Loved ones who died during the COVID years deserve to be remembered, says Bagnulo, and their families deserve to be comforted, and have their grief witnessed.

“Many of our families had no proper funeral arrangements made, nor could they have their families attend if they did manage to have a gathering after their loss during this time,” says Bagnulo.

The Community Celebration of Life and Butterfly Release, to be held June 18 at 1 p.m., is an event created for those families, to honour those who have been “whispered away,” during 2019 to 2022.

“We decided to create an atmosphere for people to have their grief and mourning witnessed, a venue where their friends and family can attend and support

them, thus aiding in their bereavement journey,” says Bagnulo. The community centre will be set up inside with tables to allow for a small memorial or picture space for families to share and acknowledge their significant others. “This will also give the town a little glimpse into the lives we lost over these COVID years,” says Bagnulo. “We hope to make memories on this day that our families can carry on into the future with new hope, acknowledging that their previous experience was less than conducive to the healing process of grief.”

Lord Mayor Betty Disero will read the names of loved ones being honoured, after which painted lady butterflies will be released as a group.

These butterflies are indigenous to our area, born of a Butterfly Hatchery in Alberta, and are very helpful to our wildlife and ecosystem, says Bagnulo. “This is the perfect time of year for their release.”

The event may also be a fundraiser for palliative care, if there is money left over after covering costs. “There is a mark-up on the butterflies, and those funds will go toward shipping the but-



terflies, rental of the venue, and any extra costs incurred for refreshments, etc. If by chance there are any leftover funds, we are currently launching a new children’s bereavement program as well as a pet loss support program. It would be wonderful to help fund those new programs. Every dollar NOTL Community Palliative Care Service receives, 100 per cent goes back into our ever-expanding services.

There is a form to fill out to reserve butterflies, and return through email, scan, or regular mail. Payment can be made by cheque, and mailed to PO Box 130, 176 Wellington Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, L0S 1J0. E-transfers can also be sent.

Butterflies are \$25 each, and must be reserved by May 20.

A cash payment can be made at the palliative care office from Tuesday to Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There are forms that can be filled out online on the palliative care website at www.notlpc.com

For more information call 905-468-4433.





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Volunteers needed daily for packing, driving

Continued from page 1

busy young mom and member of St. John, is the lead organizer of the activity at the church. "This has probably been the most chaotic two weeks of our lives," she told The Local Tuesday.

With family in Ukraine on both sides, "and watching what the rest of the world is watching," she said she needed to do something to help. "I just couldn't sit and watch any longer."

She started out small, ordering T-shirts and doing some baking, and in no time, she says, "it turned into this enormous humanitarian effort."

The church has a large hall, and has become the centralized hub for other churches to deliver their donations to be sorted and packed, and social media has helped spread the word, she says.

There is a private company that has chartered some flights for supplies to be sent to Poland, and Meest, an international delivery company that sends a lot of packages to Ukraine, is also helping, at first at a discount. "But we're sending so much, they couldn't keep it up, so now we're using some of our mon-

etary donations to pay for it." By Tuesday, St. John on its own had raised more than \$64,000, says Tymczyszyn.

The outpouring of support is evidence of the strong ties between the Niagara community and Ukraine, she says.

"Everyone has a connection. They come from Ukraine, or their neighbours do, or their great-grandparents, and they come to the church to help. We're all connected, whether we're Ukrainian or not. It has been so heartwarming to see the support."

If we're not connected by heritage, we are through the images of the brave, strong people we are seeing on TV, and their struggle to survive.

"I have a five-year-old daughter who loves to sing the song from Frozen. When she saw a little girl singing the song in Ukrainian on TV, she wanted to learn the words so she could sing along with her," Tymczyszyn says, becoming emotional as she relates the story — as does the reporter listening.

"When people come here to help, they all have a story to share," she adds. "There isn't a day goes by that I don't cry."

Those are the kinds of connections we're all feeling,

and that make people want to do something positive, she says.

For Madsen, it's the connections to her family, but also the need to keep busy that sent her to the church to work.

She has relatives in Ukraine who have found safe havens, she says — she believes they are safe, at least for now.

But she is seeing what we all throughout the world are seeing, she says, as Ukrainians struggle to hold back the military and women and children flee to safety, and it's hard not to worry. "It's so disheartening. Part of me is numb, but I just keep wanting to do things, to help in any way I can."

It's far more satisfying than worrying, she says, and it gets her away from the TV.

The work at the church is well-organized, with donations arriving throughout the day "non-stop," she explains.

One gentleman she met there had come from Fort Erie to help. He had no connection to Ukraine at all, says Madsen, he just wanted to pitch in. "A lot of people want to help, but they're not sure how."

Arsenault has been at the church a few days over the last week, and during that

time, had lost touch with one of her Ukrainian cousins, who lives in the East. She was terribly worried, praying he was safe.

But after five days of no communication, he messaged her to say he's okay, in Zaporizhzhia, where the Russians have control of the nuclear power plant. "He wants his wife to leave with their one-year old, out of fear of being bombed on their journey to Poland. Damned if you stay, and damned if you leave."

He told her communication towers and villages just 50 kilometres away were "completely obliterated."

"He said not to believe all the misinformation and propaganda. The residents in his region are holding down the fort and fighting vigorously. They have dug trenches, destroyed bridges so Russians can't cross, and prepared thousands of Molotov cocktails. They are also all armed — men, women and children. They are not giving up. They are fighting to the last bullet, to the last drop of blood, to the last man standing."

People are extremely resourceful and creative in ways to defend themselves, he told Arsenault. He also said the Russian atrocities



NOTL resident Shirley Madsen sorting and packing military supplies at St. John Ukrainian Catholic Church on Lakeshore Road in St. Catharines, to send to Ukraine. (Photos supplied)

and brutality shown to the world "pale in comparison to what's really happening."

They are already at the start of the Third World War, and are running out of supplies, he said.

His father and mother are taking cover outside of Kherson, "which has been bombed to bits and is in Russian hands, but for now they are safe," says Arsenault.

Another cousin, a young mother, has hunkered down with her children and husband, and was hoping to stay in Ukraine with him. She doesn't want to leave on her own, but has everything she needs to take with her at the



Helen Arsenault sorts toys that will be sent to Poland for Ukrainian children.

Sunflower initiative rapidly growing

Penny Coles
The Local

Shirley Madsen has been overwhelmed with the response she is receiving to an idea that started out pretty simple.

Last week, with support from the Canada Ukraine Foundation, she set up a website to encourage people to donate money, and to start sunflower gardens. Sunflowers are Ukraine's national flower, and she thought it would be rewarding to see sunflowers bloom this summer in support of Ukrainians.

On her website, sunflowersforukraine.ca/, Madsen calls on those who are gardeners and those who are not to take part in her Sunflowers for Ukraine initiative, by

committing to planting sunflowers, and registering their planting. She also is encouraging businesses, groups and any organization who wants to be involved to also plant sunflowers, and let her know on her website. She has a limited amount of seeds to give away to those organizations interested in planting them.

"The plantings you do will show support to the brave people of Ukraine and the world, that the sunflowers you are planting are sending a message that everyone wants peace," she says.

Madsen now has four seed companies on board, offering discounts and donations of some sales to the Canada Ukraine Foundation, and she is working with two others who are coming online, one from B.C., and the other a

large international seed company.

Stokes Seeds, a local business offering a discount through her website, says sunflowers are a 60-day crop, and should be planted in June, or started indoors in May.

"Plant them in late spring, once the ground is nice and warm. Most sunflowers germinate when soil has reached 70 to 85 degrees F. The best time to plant is just before the soil reaches this temperature."

Sow the seeds about an

inch deep and about four inches apart, and in a week, they should be sprouting. In about two to three weeks, they should be seedling size, with two or three leaves.

Continued on page 13



ready, if she decides it's not safe for her children to stay, says Arsenault.

Volunteering at the Lakeshore Road church, which helps her to feel useful, Arsenault sees people bringing all kinds of goods — "clothing, toys, food, everything." But the crunch has been to get the most-needed items sorted and on their way to Poland.

In addition to requiring volunteers to sort and pack, work that goes on every day of the week, Tymczyszyn could also use drivers to pick up items and drop them off at the church. She is trying to keep a schedule, so anyone interested in helping can text or call her at 289-696-1100.

A complete list of items that are needed can be found at <https://www.stjohnnuc.com/>

The church is also accepting cash donations.

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Sale of property could be better or worse for neighbourhood

Current application continues through planning process

Penny Coles
The Local

Despite a five-page document available to developers who might be interested in purchasing the Parliament Oak property, the application by the current owner currently before the town continues to be processed.

There have been rumours for at least a month that the property would be put up for sale, but although it is now being advertised, neither the owners nor the company charged with selling it are saying much — the price is a discussion to be had only with a company interested in purchasing, not to individuals, The Local was told.

Jeff Davidson, vice-president of CBRE Real Estate Brokerage, said the property is listed for sale, as shown in the document, as a site suitable for low-density townhouses and single family homes, which is what is allowed in the town's Official Plan. The document also includes a concept drawing of the Liberty Sites proposal

that includes singles, semis and an apartment building, similar to the application now being processed by the town's planning department.

The outcome of what happens to the property is up to the town, says Davidson. "It's not up to us to speculate. What will be approved is out of our hands. I hope Niagara-on-the-Lake will have a good development that everybody will be happy with."

While Liberty Sites may be looking for a purchaser, the plan before the town will continue to be processed, says Stephen Bedford, a former town planning director now consulting with Liberty.

The next step, he says, "is for staff to prepare a recommendation report to council. We are hoping the staff will see the positive planning position that has been presented to them. This is an opportunity for the town to add much-needed apartments to the mix of housing in the Old Town, in an excellent location for apartments. The singles and

semis proposed provide a good transition to the existing adjacent dwellings."

"We await the staff recommendation," he added.

Alan Gordon, one of three original members of POST (Preserve Our Special Town), says he has "very mixed feelings" about the property being put up for sale.

"What happens going forward is anybody's guess," he says.

"It may be a rare occasion of a benevolent developer," who would be looking at low-density housing consistent with the surrounding neighbourhood. "Or it could be a developer who would look at the property and want even more than this developer."

It could also be someone who might just "wait it out," and hold on to the property while it increases in value.

The process could be settled quickly, in a few months, or it could go on for years, he added.

The concept plan shown on the CBRE document shows 16 units of single homes and townhouses, very similar to a concept POST is suggesting, that would be also be low-density, with 14 units.

Realtor Tom Eltoft has looked at the concept plan,

and says "it's refreshing to see an additional plan incorporated into Liberty's recent listing that resembles the surrounding neighbourhood."

"I appreciate the attempts in both of their plans to incorporate the significant heritage of the site," Eltoft adds. "Perhaps the original building itself could serve as something more useful and community-oriented going forward,"

In his opinion, he says, "the town needs to address more proactively the pillar properties such as the Parliament Oak school site and the former hospital. It would be wise to identify their future use prior to resale or development applications coming forward. This would be very beneficial to all involved, both financially as well as their long-term impacts on the surrounding communities could be identified."

Members of the urban design committee have completed a detailed report of concerns they would like to be considered at a charette, which they presented to a recent meeting of the municipal heritage committee. It is intended as an opportunity to work out some of the issues with the developer, but no date has

been announced, and it's completely voluntary, with no way of knowing whether it will go ahead.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said Monday with the property up for sale, she can't imagine why the current owner would continue the process with the application now before the town, but at this point there hasn't been any mention of withdrawing it.

While the rumour mill has been indicating the property would be put up for sale, "it was still a surprise to actually see the ad,"

she said.

What happens to the property in the future likely depends on how much a purchaser pays for it. "The higher the price, the more density the owner will require, or desire. That's worrisome to me."

However, with a new owner comes the opportunity to begin again, "and strengthen what we believe belongs on the site. We would ask that they do community consultations to understand the concerns of the community, and do a charette with them."



Connie Tintinalli, Marilyn Bartlett and Alan Gordon of POST have developed a concept for a residential development that complies with NOTL's Official Plan, keeps the historic front of the building, and includes 14 lots. CBRE, which is listing the King Street property, shows a very similar concept plan, only with 16 lots. (File photo)

CAO has praise for female staff, councillors and community members

Penny Coles
The Local

Town CAO Marnie Cluckie celebrated International Women's Day with a brief announcement Monday night.

Tuesday, she told councillors attending the committee of the whole meeting, the global day to celebrate and commemorate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements

of women, was the time to raise awareness of the progress still to be made.

This year's challenge is called Break the Bias, with a goal of imagining "a gender-equal world that is diverse and equitable, and a world where difference is celebrated," said Cluckie.

"I hope we are empowered to challenge gender stereotypes, discrimination and bias, because together we can break the bias in our

communities and workplaces to forge women's equality in Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Cluckie recognized "our incredible female council members, our staff members and community leaders who contribute to the town," and thanked "all council members, staff and community members who help to create a more gender-inclusive environment, and a more inclusive environment in general."

Town hires new planning director

Penny Coles
The Local

As Niagara-on-the-Lake's CAO Marnie Cluckie spoke of International Women's Day being celebrated Tuesday, she took the opportunity to welcome another female staff member to the town.

During Monday's committee of the whole meeting, Cluckie announced a new planning director, Kirsten McCauley, has been hired.

She takes over from interim director Rick Wilson, and is replacing Craig Larmour, who left the position in January.

"Kristen comes to us with 20 years experience in the planning field, working for various levels of government, including the City of Hamilton, the Township of West Lincoln, and most recently, the region of Niagara."

At the region, Cluckie said, McCauley participated in projects with NOTL,

working on the Glendale District Plan, and the Glendale Secondary Plan. With her experience, "she can hit the ground running when she joins us."

She is a registered professional planner, as designated by the Ontario Planners Institute, Cluckie said, and has a degree in environmental studies from the University of Waterloo, as well as multiple leadership training courses.

Her role with NOTL begins March 28.



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Partnering with local venues and businesses, Anchor Niagara focuses on executing exciting events through ticket sales, with all proceeds going to a designated charity or not-for-profit organization.

Through the years, Signature events have raised over \$140,000 for charities including; Pink Pearl Foundation, Hotel Dieu Rehabilitation Foundation, Wellspring, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Niagara Jazz Festival, Niagara Community Foundation and Pathstone Mental Health.

2022 promises to bring bigger events that will make up for "lost funding" during the pandemic.

"Taking the risk that people will purchase tickets to these events, to ensure that costs are covered first is nerve racking," Mavridis says.

"Advertising, venues, food, and services are all paid for. Although some services are discounted for the charitable event, Anchor Niagara's goal is always to boost

business during the tourism off-season. That is why most of our events are scheduled September-May. Once all expenses are covered through ticket sales, proceeds beyond that is what is donated to the beneficiary."

For example, handbags are purchased for every Designer Purse Bingo. These large companies do not donate handbags. The Charity Concert Series, featuring Grammy award winning Boyz II Men are paid at full tour price.

Ticket prices reflect the event model, and every event Anchor Niagara hosts guarantees an experience. There are always value adds, and the memories created along with the community impact at these events are priceless.

The Boyz II Men concert was originally scheduled for February 5th 2022, with the pandemic restrictions, the show has been rescheduled to June 4th 2022.

It is an intimate concert, with only 900 seats, venue seating with tables, food & drink and a guaranteed up close experience with one of the most harmonized music groups of all time.

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Joe Pillitteri at a recent Anchor Niagara Fundraiser during a live auction. (Donavin Delaney)

fer value such as Meet & Greet, wine on the tables, food, swag bags and more. Proceeds will benefit Hotel Dieu Shaver Rehabilitation Foundation, to purchase important equipment for

patient care.

On another large scale event, Anchor Niagara has partnered with STYLE Canada, to bring Canadian funny moms Cat + Nat to Niagara Falls, Saturday June 11th

2022. Shop & Sip during the day at THE STUDIO, with some amazing international and local brands, FREE to attend, and purchase your tickets to head next door for The Cat + Nat Reunion Tour, in

support of Pink Pearl Foundation. The foundation helps young women facing cancer across Canada.

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EDITORIAL

Our goal should be breaking the bias for all

On Monday, the town's CAO Marnie Cluckie spoke of International Women's Day, which was Tuesday.

She spoke of the strong women on town council, among town staff, and in the many community organizations in town.

And she ended by thanking everyone who helps to create a more gender-inclusive environment, and a more inclusive environment in general.

Some people might look around this town and think it already includes everybody, that this is a town that embraces diversity, inclusivity, and equality. We'd certainly like to think so. We hear that often in the letters we receive. Yet some of those letters, including a small

number we can't print, indicate otherwise. It would be a safe bet that many who work at town hall, those who are leaders of organizations and businesses, and anyone else who has eyes open to it, all see the same signs. Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of the best, safest places to live, but it is not perfect.

This year's International Women's Day theme is Break the Bias — the bias that holds women back. And we are all encouraged, regardless of gender, not only on one specific day, but every day, to help change that. Although yesterday was about one particular bias, the town's CAO made a very important point when she mentioned creating a more gender-inclusive environment,

and a more inclusive environment in general. They go hand in hand. It's important to fight for inclusivity for all, not just women, not just any one group.

We know that women of colour, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities have an even harder time, not only in the work place, but in society in general. We fight for them too.

Around us we see many strong women, and we celebrate them.

We see them in our community, all around us, and we see them far away, in a war-torn country where they struggle to keep themselves and their families safe, while their men are fighting to protect them and their homeland, sometimes with women alongside.

We see strong women close to home, doing what they can to make life just a little easier for those who are far away, who are right at this moment living in a world so dangerous that just a couple of weeks ago we wouldn't have believed possible.

So this is a plea to women. We tend to think it's men in this world who hold women back,

in business and in so many other ways, and it's the men who need to smarten up. Sometimes it is. We need to look no further than the news we watch on TV to see it.

But that too can be a bias, and it can come from unexpected places, including other women.

Women need to stand up for themselves against any

kind of bullying. To speak up for themselves, and for others. And yes, we all need to do everything within our power to create a more inclusive environment for all. As we teach our children, if we stand back and watch it happen, we are no better than the bully.

Penny Coles
The Local



Time for a provincial plan for relief at gas pumps



Walyne Gates
MPP for Niagara Falls Riding
Special to The Local

Residents need some breathing room on gas prices, and I believe the Ontario government can play a role in providing that.

As of the time I am writing this, gas prices in Niagara are \$1.87 a litre. In some parts of Toronto they are expected to go above \$2 in the next few days – Niagara residents rightfully cannot stomach that. Here in Niagara, we have 12 municipalities separated by a number of highways and roadways that cross urban and rural zones. If you're going to work, school or the hospital, the odds are high that the only way you can do so is with a car. Given the rising prices of almost everything, drivers are reasonably stretched to the limit and scared to look

at these prices when they pull into the station.

First, let me say that much of what affects the price of gasoline are international supply chain issues, which the province has little control over, however, that does not mean doing nothing is the right answer. As much as the Premier may wish this crisis wasn't before us, burying our heads in the sand won't make it disappear. I believe Canada's largest province can and must immediately play a role in doing what it can to offer relief at the pumps for the residents who live here.

That is why this week I stood in the Legislature and asked our Premier to join with us to create a provincial plan to lower gas prices and offer relief, quickly investigating exactly what we can do to offer positive help in this situation. Coming after two years of lost income due to the pandemic, elected officials cannot allow so many residents to fall even further behind because they can't afford gasoline to go about their daily lives.

We must have a provincial response to gas prices, and we must have it now. If there are tools in our provincial government that we can use to reduce these prices we must discuss and consider all of these options to try to stabilize these costs in the near-term. As I said in the Legislature, the Premier stating that he put a sticker on gas pumps offers us no real solutions, so we're inviting him to sit down with us and work out a solution that provides real relief in the terms of lower costs of fuel.

Political parties do not need to agree on everything, but we must agree that these prices are breaking people. We must set aside partisan lines and come together to acknowledge the urgency of this problem and the need for a response. We must jointly look at the options on the table and move forward with the ones that can be implemented quickest.

As many of you know, this is an issue I've been particularly passionate about in

the past. I first began raising this issue in 2015 when we saw evidence of clearly unfair gasoline pricing occurring across Ontario. Pumps in the same city would have prices fluctuate dramatically, or we'd see prices increase before long weekends, which were the telltale signs of gouging. It was then that I learned about the startling lack of transparency in this sector, especially when it comes to the process of refining oil and transporting gasoline products to the stations themselves. Given that the major companies overseeing our gasoline are multi-billion-dollar operations which

have dubious records as global citizens, I believed then, as I do now, that there should be some regulation over this process.

This is why last week the Official Opposition NDP tabled the Fairness in Petroleum Products Pricing Act in the Ontario Legislature. Having seen this bill tabled under both Liberal and Conservative governments almost half a dozen times, it's not a new idea. This bill would bring the regulation of petroleum and gasoline under the Ontario Energy Board, which already regulates other critical energy sources. It would shine a

light on this system and allow us to route out any instances of gouging, which it would also ban. It would also stop the rapid fluctuation of prices without cause. Regulation of gasoline currently exists in five other provinces, though in varying forms with varying degrees of success. We propose that a made-in-Ontario approach would help us get rid of the most obvious forms of gouging and allow consumers to feel confident there is a government watchdog in this sector. We can build on what has or hasn't worked elsewhere to provide stability and fairness for consumers.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In *Special Correspondents* (Netflix 2016) two radio reporters scheme to fake their kidnappings in Ecuador, and there ensues an endless

string of improbable situations. This early Gervais film is totally silly, and badly reviewed by the critics; however, I was totally engaged and laughed a lot.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves

to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

Local

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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Local VOICES

Springtime approaching, and a new life without trauma



Doreen Bell
Special to The Local

In previous articles, I shared my journey through the darkness of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other traumatic experiences that surfaced as a byproduct. That journey ended on Sept 3, 2021, and since then I have been seeking answers to the burning question: Who am I today — post PTSD?

During the PTSD journey,

I took solace in the words of a song written by Albert Hammond and John Bettis, *One Moment in Time*. That song anchored me throughout that trip and resonates with me today as I discover my new self. It was one moment in time that my life changed, when my husband's heart attack threw me into the unimaginable and frightening world of PTSD. In that one moment in time, it seemed I was "racing with destiny," rummaging around for answers about my future; then, in one moment in time, PTSD went and I am free today.

For several months after being rid of PTSD, I lived on

cloud nine, recognizing I was a new person and, for the first time since my early teens, trauma free! Life excited me more than ever, but everything seemed surreal. With PTSD gone, I felt I was good-to-go, and didn't need more therapy. How wrong was I? Very much so. I remember waking up one morning feeling like someone suffering from amnesia. Who on earth am I? I began feeling fragmented and confused about my identity. Although the narratives that surrounded my traumatic experiences no longer controlled me, I realized something was unfinished, and I needed a new

phase of therapy to learn to understand the new me. Therapy needs vulnerability, which can often be painful, but therapy has been the balm to my confused mind, body, and emotions. In my current therapy, I learned that because of past traumatic experiences, different parts of my personality — youth, angry, ashamed, and functioning—became poorly integrated. Each part operated as an independent entity and sometimes conflicted with others, giving rise to the feeling of fragmentation. My youth part experienced abandonment and rejection at the death of my mother, which resulted in an intense need for

love, security, protection, and comfort. Mama was my reason for living, and losing her at age 15 was traumatic. During therapy, I realized I shifted my hopes and expectations to my 16-year-old boyfriend, Michel; he became my reason for living. And it's his heart attack in 2018 that was the tipping point for my PTSD — the possibility of losing my reason for living resurfaced and devastated me. I am happy we resolved issues dealing with this part. I identified most with my angry part that developed for self-defence and self-protection when traumas arose. Often the ashamed part would

express shame at my angry outbursts. While the daily functioning part allowed me to do needed daily activities: the roles of a wife, mother, and grandmother. These days I continue therapy, and am excited about gaining valuable and useful information about myself. I am learning about each fragmented part, its importance and function while I lived with unknown trauma. The good exciting news is my therapy is helping to integrate these personality parts into a whole-some self. How do I feel today? Hopeful, joyful, peaceful, and excited about life!

Local LETTERS

Resident asks for help from councillor

Coun. Burroughs,
As one of my representatives on council, and given my current absence from Canada, I am requesting that you present on my behalf the following proposal to council at the next meeting.
Recent reporting from Coun. John Wiens indicated the Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Committee is in favour of public consultations on the matter of rainbow crosswalk locations and benches only, but no public input on the crosswalk approval.
How do they plan the public consultation? Another Mickey Mouse slanted unscientific survey? There appears to be an urgency, like the approval, to ram the location selection through. To reiterate my sense of the general public's opinion of this toxic and divisive matter: they are not in favour of the crosswalk. They, to date, have successfully silenced the taxpayer majority.
If the council, the LGBTQ and diversity

group are so convinced the majority of the residents are in favour of the crosswalk, why do they fear a vote so much? I think we know the answer.
Accordingly, if the group is serious about public consultations on the location, let's organize a serious survey, and in concert with the same, use this opportunity to afford the public their input on a yes or no, in favour or against the crosswalk, which they have been denied. No more condensed surveys which included out-of-town taxpayers.
My proposal for submission to council on behalf of all taxpayers, are as follows:
• Establish a date certain for the public consultations
• Select perhaps three locations for the survey - the community center, Virgil Arena and The Lions Club in St. Davids.
• Advertise the date and locations to the public.
Format the survey (or

consultations) as follows:
1 Are you in favour of the rainbow crosswalk?
YES NO
2 If you answered yes to question #1, please select one of the following locations:
• Queen Street at Mississauga Street
• Wellington and Picton Streets
• King and Ricardo Streets by Queens Royal Park
• Niagara Stone Road near the Community Center (Anderson Lane)
• Other
I am requesting that all residents, and invested parties, accept and abide by the results of the consultations. Let's put these issues to bed once and for all. It's the democratic thing to do.
Coun. Burroughs, thank you for submitting this informative request on behalf of your concerned constituents.

Samuel A. Young
NOTL

Thanks to those who look after little libraries, says reader

I was on my morning walk this past week and stopped at one of the many Little Libraries in town. After a quick look, I grabbed a fiction by Sandra Brown. Although a fierce reader, with over 30 books to read in my personal library, I devoured my new novel in a few short days.
Last May, the Village Community Association (VCA) installed two new little libraries in The Village and the boxes have seen a lot of turn-

over. Custom-designed (and meeting The Village architectural codes requirements), we added two promotional windows, one for the VCA, and one for the NOTL Public Library. (I want to thank Debbie Krause, the library's community engagement coordinator, for supplying us with library community programs for our little libraries.) Back to my new book, now that I have been introduced to a new author, what better place to find more Sandra

Brown books than our local library. I checked online and there are several copies of her books.
I regularly walk by two little libraries, on Shakespeare Avenue, Front Street, Anne Street, Perez Road, and MacDonell Road, and periodically look inside, when I want to carry a book with me. Thank you everyone for leaving books and keeping this amazing service alive.

Mona Babin
VCA President

Niagara Riding Stable owner still in need of help, friend says

On behalf of Dinah McGibbon, the owner of Niagara Riding Stables in NOTL, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to the generous members of the community who made donations to help build a new barn roof, which collapsed

due to heavy snow on Feb. 4. The rebuilding expense is enormous, and so far we have raised \$13,000, a good beginning. Anyone still wishing to donate, or to support Dinah by reserving a delightful trail ride along the foot of the

Niagara Escarpment, can find information on her beautiful website: niagarariding.com

Helen Kopec
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Author J. Robert Janes leaves collection of 33 books

Penny Coles
The Local

Canadian author J. Robert Janes, much-admired by a large fan base of readers who like mysteries and thrillers, has died at the age of 86, after a two-year battle with cancer and heart disease.

Known to locals as Bob, he was often seen walking through the streets of Old Town, head down, looking as if he was engrossed in deep thought. Those who knew him thought he might be working out some detail for his next novel. And that's exactly what he was doing, says Gracia, his wife of 65 years.

Speaking about her husband at her King Street home, sunshine bathing a small collection of the large number of books he's written and had published, she picks up each one, and each has a memory attached to it.

With a degree in biology from the University of Toronto behind him, there were the early books Bob wrote about geology that were used as textbooks for young students up to university level, and which included photos he had taken himself. Then came adventure novels aimed at young

boys, when their four kids were young, and some adult thrillers before he started working on what became a 16-book series that made up the bulk of his writing career, which began in his early 30s, and continued until about three years ago.

His early years after university were spent in Alberta and Saskatchewan oil fields, where their oldest daughter was born, says Gracia. Then they returned to Ontario, where he worked for the Ontario Research Foundation, and with the Ontario Science Centre.

They moved from Toronto to St. Catharines when Bob accepted a position at Brock University. It wasn't the job he expected or wanted, but it did lead to one of the couple's favourite times, a trip across Canada with a group of adults and young people, arranged through the university, to study the geology of Canada. It was the only program of its kind, she says, and was great fun — the teachers worked all day with the kids, and then were able to relax in the evenings. "We had a lot of good memories from the trip," she says.

By the time they moved to NOTL and neighbours would see Bob walking head

down, deep in concentration, he was into his St-Cyr and Kohler series — the first was published in 1992 — set in France in the Second World War. It received critical acclaim from the likes of The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and Publishers Weekly, and gained a large following of readers who couldn't wait for the next in the series.

Deadly Pleasures, an online mystery magazine, learning of Bob's death, remembered him with tributes from other authors, including one who writes *The Rap Sheet*, a newsletter for mystery writers.

"I consider myself blessed to have met and exchanged missives with this quiet, kind, and generous author I so admired, and am glad also that I still have three or four of Bob Janes' novels I haven't yet cracked open," said J. Kingston Pierce, author of *The Rap Sheet*. "I'd been hoping for more, of course, but the fact that such an abundance—including 16 St-Cyr/Kohler yarns—already exist is testament to the welcoming breadth of modern crime fiction. I hope that many new readers will discover Janes' work in the future with the same joy and en-



Bob Janes at home in his office. (Photo supplied)

thusiasm I have long experienced."

Another contributor, Canadian author Steele Curry, wrote, "I will miss him tremendously. He was a nonpareil storyteller of immense dedication to his craft."

Gracia says Bob had an early memory of his mother, a talented, interesting and complex woman and a fine artist, who knew all of the Group of Seven, and often would sit with them and share fascinating conversations about art and other topics. He spoke of being bundled up, at about three years old, and pushed out the door to play in the garden while she painted. When he asked what he was to do outside, he was told to use his imagination.

Bob could read before he went to school, loved to write at an early age, and felt playing outside, alone with nature, became the inspiration for his writing, Gracia said.

His father was a reporter for *The Northern Miner* and *The Toronto Star*, before he went into public relations.

"Bob grew up in an interesting world, in an interesting family," says Gracia, "surrounded by artists and writers."

Bob and Gracia both grew up in Toronto, although in different areas, and ended up meeting through her cousin, who briefly dated him. Then, faced with a dance for which she needed a partner who could produce a tux to wear, Bob was the third person she asked to go with her, but the first who could get his hands on a tux.

"He had a strong personality, he was a very intense, interesting person, one who held strong beliefs, and enjoyed engaging in intelligent, thoughtful, deep conversation," Gracia says.

Those who liked his later books were often interested in history and the Second World War era — they were very detailed, and Bob made

sure, through extensive research, that the details were correct. Most of his research was done locally at libraries and through inter-library loans, even once the internet came along.

He wrote out all his notes and drafts by hand, she says, spending long days immersed in his work, but once the evening came, he would relax in front of the TV.

He didn't get involved in Gracia's work with the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS), the Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy, or other organizations or causes she was passionate about, but he was always interested and supportive — they just agreed early on he was best to stay away from her meetings and let her carry on.

However some of the same causes show up in his books, she says, pointing out two of his early children's adventure stories. One, *The Fort War*, published in 1976, has a plot that involves stopping a development on an apple orchard, and another, printed in 1982, *Danger on the River*, is about pollution in a river, which was modelled on Twelve Mile Creek.

Another, *Theft of Gold*, was about four children combining forces to outwit a gang of gold thieves planning to loot the Royal Ontario Museum — Bob was connected to the ROM through his expertise in geology, says Gracia.

Of the children's books he wrote, some published by Scholastic are likely still available — she's not sure of the others.

Throughout his career as an author, and his 33 books, several different publishers in different genres were involved in printing them, and like many writers, Bob found that often stressful. "It was a difficult road," says Gracia. Some of the publishers remain in business, but others were bought out, or folded, leaving him to deal with new editors and con-

tracts. "The more publishers were involved, the more pitfalls there were."

In between the kids' books was one of his most popular, the adult thriller, *Toy Shop*, published by Paper Jacks in 1981, along with three others that followed in the next 10 years. They are no longer in print, but can be found online, as can the St-Cyr books.

One of Bob's greatest pleasures after he stopped writing was to be invited to McMaster University Library, where more than 150 boxes of publications, manuscripts, drafts, research and reference materials and more are now stored.

Gracia and Bob were invited to the McMaster library to see the archives, and it thrilled them both to see the extent to which his work was valued, and understood, alongside other highly respected Canadian authors. "This is the best place to be for the work of Canadian authors," she says, although most of his books were sold in the U.S.

Gracia says like many writers, Bob never made a lot of money for his books, "but he knew he had done the right thing" in deciding to make writing his career, and felt proud of his accomplishments.

About three years ago, his health failing, he knew he couldn't write any more, and his life changed. He continued to walk for as long as he was able, but without his writing and plot details on his mind, he was more relaxed, and spent more of his time chatting with people along the way.

He was also more relaxed at home. Gracia has a beautiful antique piano in their living room, covered with a selection of family photos of their two daughters, two sons, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She also has a list of songs she

Continued on page 9

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McMaster library archives 150-plus boxes of Janes material

Continued from page 8

plays, but couldn't while Bob was working, she says. "After he stopped working, he liked to hear me play. I've become a much better piano player in the last couple of years," she laughs.

On his outings, he often stopped to chat with Donald Combe, who walks regularly with his dog, and Jim Reynolds and his wife Pat Hartman, when they were out.

On hearing of Bob's passing, Combe said, "I have very fond memories of Bob and had many conversations with him over the years. He was a bright man with meaningful observations. He was also very helpful with the St. Mark's trees as he collected bottles on his walks and the refunds certainly turned into a tree. I will miss him, but I am glad our paths crossed, and we did consider ourselves friends."

In describing the church's tree project, Combes says, no citizen of the town was more appreciative of the importance of trees than Bob, who had a deep interest in the collection of trees in the cemetery, and was concerned about them.

When a church committee undertook a long-range program of tree-planting, Bob "was thrilled to see

what was being done to ensure there would continue to be new trees planted." He made a personal contribution to the work, and also hit on a scheme "whereby each and every one of his daily walks would help contribute, so he began picking up beer bottles and cans and then setting aside the refund monies in his own Tree Fund," presenting the Tree Committee with a cheque for \$128.80, says Combe.

Jim Reynolds, who has degrees in German and French, got to know Bob when the author came to him to edit the German and French dialogue in his mystery series.

He and his wife would often chat with him when they encountered him on his walks.

"He had a good sense of humour," says Reynolds, "and he was intelligent and interesting to speak to." Bob had "a huge fan base, quite astonishing."

Although Reynolds says he has just started to read the St-Cyr stories, he could easily see them as a Netflix series, with the European setting during the Second World War, a period in history in which there remains great interest.

Pat Hartman is a retired teacher, including a stint at the now-closed Parliament Oak School on King Street, just along the street from

Gracia and Bob's home. When Hartman asked him to speak about writing to her class of students, "he agreed, and did a wonderful job with the kids. They responded very well. His subject was something he was very passionate about.

And they really appreciated meeting a real author."

Reynolds recently contacted a friend in Toronto, Ed Hill, a former resident of NOTL and a retired corporate lawyer with Inco, who has written and published a couple of mysteries of his

own, to let him know of Bob's passing. "He remembers good-natured sparring with Bob on various issues, but what impressed him most was Bob's courage. He always admired the guts that he showed in leaving what was a very successful career

as a geologist to become a full-time author, not knowing whether the risk would pay off. He admitted that he never would have had the gumption to do the same."

He may not have got rich from hiw writing, says Gracia, "but he lived a good life."

An unexpected surprise



Corrado Franzo was going for a walk Sunday when a large tree was suddenly downed by the high winds, on Niagara Stone Road at Anne Street. Luckily, no one was injured when the tree crashed across the busy street. The town and fire department responded quickly, and the police arrived to block the road and divert traffic right away, said Franzo, who snapped this photo.



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Provincial announcement signals success for local girl

Penny Coles
The Local

Maya Webster was just seven years old when she started a petition to take to Queen's Park three years ago. Last week, the request on her petition was granted.

Diagnosed at the age of two with type 1 diabetes, Maya's experience with the disease turned her into an advocate for provincial medical coverage for life-saving continuous glucose monitors, a game-changer for diabetics who struggle to control their sugar levels with frequent finger pricks.

The petition she started in 2019 was just the beginning of her efforts, which included two trips to Queen's Park, the most recent one to speak at a rally attended by many others, diabetics, family members and politicians.

On Friday, Minister of Health Christine Elliott, announced that coverage for real-time continuous glucose monitors would be made available through the

province's Assistive Devices Program, beginning March 14 — to some with type 1 diabetes, although not all.

"Eligible individuals include those with type 1 diabetes who are at risk of severe hypoglycemia or who are unable to recognize, or communicate about, symptoms of hypoglycemia," the government announcement said.

In the summer of 2019, Maya began going door-to-door through her Glendale neighbourhood for signatures on her petition, and set up tables locally, including one evening at Phil's Independent (then Valu-mart) to ask for support.

She was already benefiting from the monitor, but she wanted to ensure it was available for those who couldn't afford the cost.

With a continuous glucose monitor, Maya wears a small sensor on her arm that automatically tests sugar levels every few minutes throughout the day and night, instead of the 10-times daily finger pricks. It saves many hospital trips that were necessary before she began using the monitor, which is more accurate and avoids long stretches be-

tween testing, she explains.

Maya also wears an insulin pump on her leg — the continuous monitor on her arm tells the pump what to do. The pump is funded by OHIP, the monitor is not.

The monitor also has an alarm that notifies her and her mother through their phones of low glucose levels, allowing them to take action to prevent health emergencies and keep her out of the hospital.

Maya understands she is fortunate — although her family's drug plan helped cover the cost of the monitor, she knew of others with type 1 diabetes, including some of her young "diabuddies," whose families don't have coverage, and who have had to rely on finger pricks to determine their sugar levels.

There was a time when Maya's family was without benefits, but when her mother's employer, Bethesda, which supports and provides programs for special needs children, decided the monitor should be included in its benefits package, Maya learned how much better her life was with it, and wanted others like her to have the same experience.

Christi were elated with the announcement. Maya says she wasn't always convinced this day would come, "but I was sure hoping."

"It always seemed like a realistic goal," adds Christi, "but a distant one." She has a sister with diabetes, a dairy farmer without benefits, who will hopefully now be able to purchase a monitor, she says. A Facebook page for young people with diabetes shows "a number of children are very excited."

Christi explains government assistance is now being offered to type 1 diabetics with hypoglycemia and don't recognize the symptoms — she uses the term hypo-aware — which means their glucose level can be lower than normal, without them realizing. That would apply to "a fair number" of people with type 1 diabetes, although not all, she says. They are, however, the most vulnerable, and the ones who would bene-

fit most from the monitor alarm telling them they need to do something quickly.

Maya says she has two more goals to accomplish — one she has spoken of often, which is her determination to find a cure for diabetes, the other, more immediate, to advocate to expand coverage of the monitor to all those with diabetes.

Gates can't say enough about the Websters' deter-

Continued on page 11

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Wayne Gates
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Steve Hardaker's continuous glucose monitor, and the alarm it triggers on his phone, save him from life-threatening health problems. (Photo supplied)

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Young activist not finished fighting for all diabetics

Continued from page 10

mined efforts to have funding approved. There have been many others in recent years who have lobbied for the coverage, but Maya, who is a self-confident and very articulate youngster, has definitely made an impact.

“People were dying,” he says, addressing Maya and Christi. “You are saving lives by what you have done since 2019.”

It’s unfortunate it has taken so long, he adds, “but you didn’t give up, and they finally listened.”

He recalls the rally outside Queen’s Park in October, 2021, with a large gathering of people, including some of Gates’ colleagues. Maya had a megaphone, and started a chant, “CGM for all.” She received a lot of attention that day, he says.

“It helped Maya and other families put a personal face on what we have been asking for,” says Christi.

“Maya did a great job of gaining support,” adds Gates. “I was honoured that she took me along on this journey. She made people aware of the need, and the whole community rallied around this special young girl who said ‘I already have it for me, and I want it for others.’ She

never gave up, her family never gave up, and her community never gave up.”

Christi says she and her family “can’t thank Wayne enough. We had the experience, he had the voice to speak for us. It was definitely a team effort. It wasn’t just a mom and a girl going door-to-door. It was a whole team rallying around us.”

Steve Hardaker is one of those community members who signed Maya’s petition when she knocked on his door, and is grateful for her advocacy and the government decision to fund the monitor.

As a person living with type 1 Diabetes for 45 years, he says he’s seen many advancements to help diabetics better manage this chronic, life-threatening disease. For the last two years he has been using an insulin pump with a continuous glucose monitor.

The monitor is especially important for those like him who are unaware of the glucose lows — its alarm woke him up at 3 a.m. just a few days ago, he says. It meant he was able to get up and have something to eat, avoiding a much more dangerous situation that can lead to unconsciousness and an emergency trip to the hospital — or worse.



MPP Wayne Gates and Maya Webster, with the monitor on her arm that saves her from severe health problems, have accomplished one of Maya’s goals. (Photo supplied)

“The alarm is a life-saver for many diabetics.”

The monitor has also improved his health by lowering his glucose level from a dangerous 8 to a much-improved 6.4, in less than a

year. The specialists he sees regularly throughout the year are impressed by the improvements in his health since he began using the pump and continuous glucose monitoring system.

He has a drug plan that pays a portion of the monitor and other supplies, but many diabetics are not so fortunate, he says.

“There has been a lot of advocacy in the last couple

of years, and a lot of pressure on the government. I’m so impressed by Maya. I remember her knocking on my front door with her petition, and I’ve been a big fan of hers ever since.”

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Decision about pool put off until council votes next week

Continued from page 1

at repairs, but first wanted to hear if town staff thought that would be feasible. Operations manager Sheldon Randall quickly burst the bubble, saying in his opinion it isn't.

"Personally, I don't think that's a good idea," said Randall, explaining there are a lot of challenges, including accessibility issues, and meeting regional standards for chlorination.

"I think we'd be looking at spending a lot of money to keep it going every year until we come up with a permanent solution," he said. And repairing the pool is "definitely not part of the facility master plan."

Burroughs said they were not considering "an ongoing solution to patch it," but did need to look at options that don't cost \$5 million, "because we are unable to raise that kind of money."

When Kevin Turcotte, parks and recreation man-

ager, said the fundraising committee had raised about \$52,000, Coun. John Wiens, also a member of the committee, said the real work hadn't yet got started, and that the committee was waiting to hear about a grant before moving forward.

While there are issues with repairing rather than building a new pool, he agreed with changing the terms of reference to allow the committee to look at alternatives, or perhaps, he added, "we keep it going

for another year or two, and keep looking for upper-tier funding."

Although Disero was ready to make a motion to change the mandate of the committee so it could consider repairs an option, town clerk Ralph Walton suggested that since council had already approved the mandate and there is a bylaw to support it, there should be a notice of motion for next week to reconsider council's decision, and no vote was taken.

Sunflowers grow in full sun

Continued from page 3

That's the time to transplant them to their final home and watch them grow, in a spot in the garden that gets full sun.

Madsen's website also has a link to the Year of the Garden, 2022, hoping that some will plant a sunflower garden to celebrate the year; and a link to Canada's Local Garden magazine, which is supporting her initiative and asking for help for Ukraine.

She is also working with the town, hoping for a location to plant at least one sunflower garden this year, and maybe more in the future, similar to the Daffodil Gardens of Hope.

She has set up Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts to promote the initiative, and is hoping for volunteers to help her manage them.

For more information e-mail: donatesunflowersforukraine@gmail.com or contact Madsen at 905-468-2325.

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Goldberger new release includes some surprises

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake musical mainstay Steve Goldberger's new CD release, *All Roads Lead To You*, has a lot of what you might expect from the bassist and band leader, with some surprising song selections thrown in to shake things up.

Recorded over a two-year-plus period that began before the pandemic, the record was put together in his revamped Shed Studio on his NOTL property. About half of what you hear on its 13 tracks was recorded inside the facility, while many of the ever-expanding Gentle Spirits band and guests contributed their parts remotely.

Listening to the finished product, you'd never guess that all the musicians weren't in the same room when it was recorded. Goldberger's production skills, honed over many years building and rebuilding his studio and working with a slew of artists both local and beyond, tie it all together with a polished rootsy Americana feel that would fit right in with that radio format in the U.S.

The collection kicks off with two familiar classics, both of which jibe thematically with our current times, though they originally were recorded more than 50 years ago. *Something In the Air*, a

U.K. chart-topper in 1969 by the short-lived band Thunderclap Newman, is a song about revolution and rebellion, while Spirit's 1970 hit *Nature's Way* is an ecological anthem.

"They just happened to be appropriate," Goldberger laughs, "but I chose them because I just love them."

Something In the Air shows Goldberger's Tom Petty influence, with chiming guitars by Mike Glatt, Dave Norris keeping time and Steve handling bass, Hammond organ and mandola duties. NOTL cellist Helen Kopeck helps him out on the low end, and plays a masterful, tasteful solo that makes this version of the song unique amongst the many that have been recorded.

Glatt adds slide guitar to *Nature's Way*, while Laurel Minnes of local acts Laurel & Hulley, Miniscule, and Majora contributes backing vocals.

True Love was a 1991 hit for country crooner Don Williams, written by Pat Alger. Serena Pryne of the Mandevilles harmonizes seamlessly with Goldberger here, while Jim Casson lays down the beat aided by Penner McKay on percussion.

Casson is back on the skins for the Bob McNiven-penned *One More Time*, along with the Waterloo-area outfit Western String Authority. It's a song that harkens back to Goldberger's



Steve Goldberger, in his newly revamped studio, has worked for two years complete his new CD.

almost two decades playing in the Toronto-based bluegrass band Black Creek.

"I was so lucky to get those guys to play on it," he says. "It's such a great song, and Bob was such a great songwriter."

McNiven, formerly of country-bluegrass bands Open Road and Whiskey Jack, and a regular on CBC-TV's Tommy Hunter Show,

was a close friend of Goldberger's. *One More Time* was McNiven's signature song, and clearly its inclusion on *All Roads Lead to You* is a labour of love for the bassist. McNiven lost his battle with ALS in 2020, and his death deeply affected Goldberger.

Goldberger dedicates the album to McNiven, singer-songwriter Nanci Griffith, who passed away

in 2021, and late Texas troubadour Guy Clark. All 13 songs on the album are covers, but many, such as the two Shawn Colvin numbers, Kim Richey's *Just My Luck* and a song by Griffith, are just about obscure enough that many might mistake them for Goldberger's own compositions.

"That's my favourite go-to," he says when asked

about his ongoing love of female singer-songwriters. "I just relate to them better. I have a dozen Kim Richey songs I want to do, and I may even do a whole Nanci Griffith record one day. The Shawn Colvin songs, those two just speak to me."

"I didn't have any new originals to put on there,"

Continued on page 15

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Lots of plans for other recordings in new studio

Continued from page 14

he adds. “I just haven’t been writing lately. Redoing the studio took a lot of time, and just working on the songs too. My work flow method is probably not the way most people do it. I take a lot of time on each song and arrange it as I go.”

The self-professed ‘old hippie’ covers two Bob Dylan numbers on this release. His version of 1965’s *She Belongs to Me* is the

hardest rocking track on the disc, featuring Norris, Glatt and Andrew Aldridge on guitar. And Dave Matthews’ banjo work on *You’re Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go* steps up the country feel of one of the most country-style songs in Dylan’s canon.

Minnes returns along with Lisa Winn for harmony vocals on the Poco song *Keep On Trying*, written by Timothy B. Schmit of Eagles fame. And Steve picks up a ukulele for a slowed-

down version of the American classic *Sister Golden Hair*.

“It’s totally different, with a bit of a reggae beat,” Goldberger says. “If I’m going to do it, do it differently. When Cam (MacInnes) put that guitar part down it took it to a whole new level. I had a horn arrangement for it, but once he did that guitar arrangement I went with that instead.”

The record closes with a take on the Badfinger power-pop classic *No Matter What*, featuring Glatt play-

ing a ringing Byrds-style 12-string. The Goldberger version cuts away the wall-of-guitar bombast of the 1970 hit that was released on the Beatles’ Apple record label, instead giving the number more of a George Harrison feel.

Despite the older vintage of many of the songs covered on the collection, Goldberger is not one to decry the state of music today.

During the two-hour chat he raves about the fresh new work from veterans Robert Plant and Jackson Browne, and gets excited talking about Trombone Shorty and Britany Howard of Alabama Shakes. He also lays out his plans to see Browne on a double bill with James Taylor in Toronto in April.

And the question arises, of course, of the return to the Friday night Old Winos and Saturday night Niagara Rhythm Section gigs at The Old Winery. He’s itching to get back on stage after a two-year COVID-forced pandemic.

“We’re looking at April, hopefully,” he says. “But we do have some gigs scheduled. I have a duo set with Andrew (Aldridge) at the Vegan Hippie Chick (in Welland), and a concert in Ridgeway on July 10. There’s also a Jimmy Buffet show July 23, with the Niagara Reefers Band at Sherkston.”

With 22 musicians guesting on the new album and an open door policy on

stage over his entire 28 years living in town, it’s suggested that if anyone in Niagara deserves recognition for providing opportunities for local musicians to perform on stage and on record it’s Goldberger. He shakes off any acknowledgment for those efforts.

“They’re great musicians. Why not give them the opportunities?” he says. “I’m conscious of doing it, I want to. People like Mike Harrison of Mainline, Terry Wilkins of Lighthouse, they treated me like brothers in the early days. And Black Creek’s producer Syd Kessler taught me a lot in the studio, too.”

He’ll be twiddling the knobs at his Shed Studio for some upcoming recording sessions. Local poet Holmes Hooke, the former booking agent at Toronto’s Hugh’s Room, has scheduled time to record some of his spoken word work before his voice begins to decline. And fellow bass player Dave Leprich of the Brant Parker Band is planning to lay down some tracks for a project with his two daughters, Alana and Lauren. He’ll be playing guitar, while Alana will be handling bass and percussion duties. Lauren, who is a manager at Silver-smith, will be playing violin on the songs that Goldberger describes as rootsy, right up his alley.

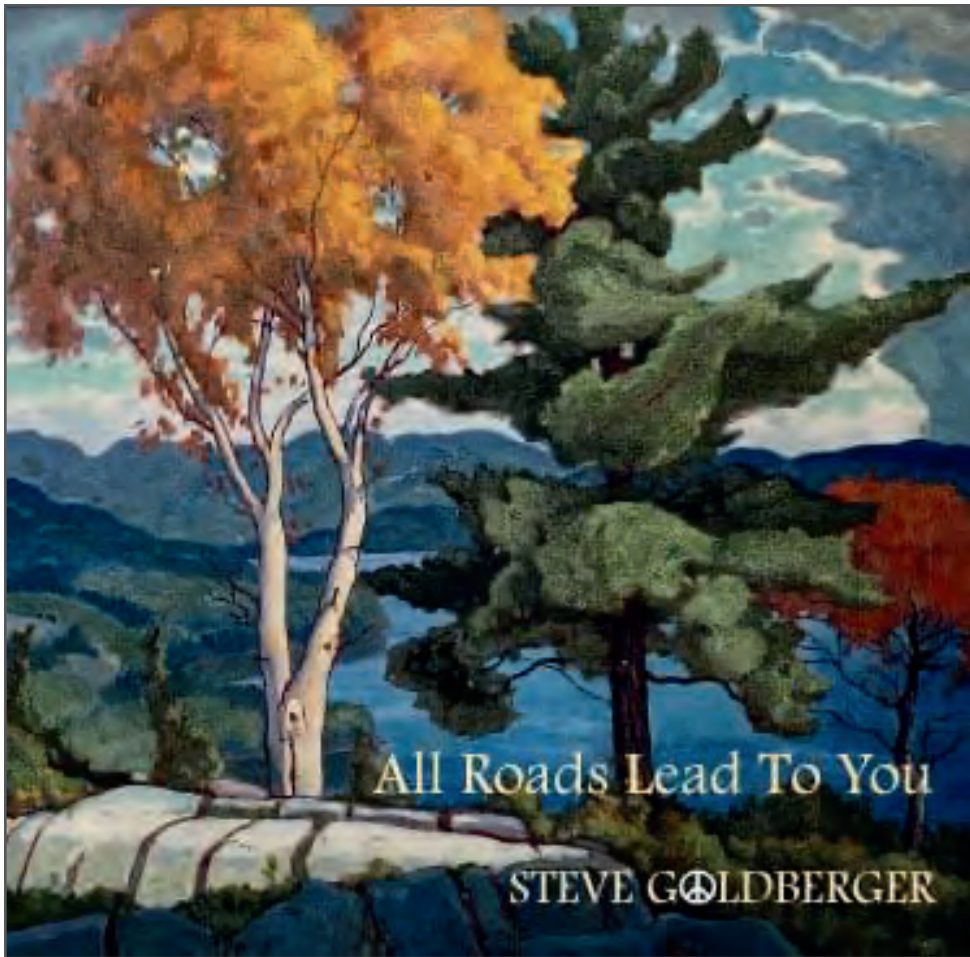
And lately, he’s been going through some old recordings from his Black

Creek days, which ran from around 1972 until 1989. The band played clubs, concerts and festivals, opening for the likes of Supertramp, Arlo Guthrie, Melanie and Lester Flatt. They even played a series of gigs with a troupe of performers called The Tramp Champs, who performed on trampoline while the band played *The Orange Blossom Special*. Some of the recordings capture the band in all its bluegrass, often-drunken glory on stage.

“The one from Georgian College, where we do that gospel thing,” he laughs, “the green room had so much booze and food. The drummer was really out of it. At the end of the last song he fell off the stool and passed out. We left him there on the stage.”

You can listen to his Black Creek recordings, including their lone RCA single *Bright Side of Tomorrow*, which won them a Genie Award for its inclusion in the Canadian movie *Lions for Breakfast*, on his Bandcamp page at stevegoldberger.bandcamp.com.

The new album *All Roads Lead To You* is out now on all major streaming platforms. The CDs, with an album cover designed by Goldberger from an original Frederick S. Haines landscape, should be available this week. Contact Goldberger at steve@stevegoldberger.com to get your copy.



Steve Goldberger's new album cover, which he designed from an original painting.

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LocalARTS AND CULTURE

Origami crane community project opens March 24

Pumphouse looking for names of essential workers

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

This month, Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre staff will be working on installing a new art exhibition consisting of 1,000 paper origami cranes at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre. The exhibition of these colourful cranes will serve to honour the dedication of essential workers and thank them for their service. There will be a reception for the opening held at 2:30 p.m. on March 24 to mark the two-year anniversary of COVID-19 lockdowns in Ontario and Canada.

In January, the Pumphouse embarked on a project to produce 1,000 origami paper cranes to honour essential workers and to make a wish. According to board chair Lise Andreana, an ancient Japanese legend says that any one person or a group of people who fold 1,000 origami cranes will be granted a wish by the gods,

or bring happiness and good luck.

“When the exhibit opens, we invite everyone to see the remarkable and stunning origami cranes on display that represent the collective effort of many volunteers and organizations. Fulfilling the legend of the crane, the assembly during the opening ceremony will make a wish for the end of the pandemic,” said Rima Boles, art centre director.

Each delicate crane was constructed by Pumphouse staff and members of the community. “We have had incredible community support, with volunteers coming in droves to participate in this project” adds Boles. “It was inspiring to hear stories of neighbours, families and friends folding cranes together, in-person or online.”

Even members of the town council have joined in. “I am honoured to be a part of sharing such a wonderful message with

our community, and would like to thank the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre for their leadership in this heartwarming initiative,” said Lord Mayor Betty Disero. “I am looking forward to seeing all of the origami cranes displayed at the Community Centre, including the 50 made by CAO Marnie Cluckie and me. It is my hope that community members will look upon these cranes and reflect on the dedication of all essential workers throughout this pandemic.”

According to several websites, a group of cranes can be referred to as a dance, a sedge, a swoop or a construction.

In this instance, it seems appropriate that this construction of cranes will be seen flying the windows of the community centre until April 7.

When the exhibition is dismantled the Pumphouse will be donating a strand of the cranes to nominated essential workers. The public is invited to nominate an essential worker to receive a strand of origami cranes from the exhibit by sending an email to office@niagara-pumphouse.ca.



Volunteers are making 1,000 cranes, or more, to decorate the community centre window. (Photo supplied)

Academic and actress debate 60 years of Shaw

Local staff

The next virtual lecture hosted by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum brings together the academic and the actress.

Leonard Conolly, the Shaw Festival’s resident scholar and literary advisor of the Bernard Shaw estate will be in conversation with ensemble alumna member Barbara Worthy, celebrating, debating, and remembering 60 years of one of the world’s great theatre companies.

Together they will reminisce on the highs and lows of the Shaw Festival, its enormous impact on Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the personalities and performances that have made it one of the world’s great English-speaking theatre companies.

Conolly brings substantial academic credit to his role. He is the past president and Vice Chancellor of Trent University, holds degrees from four universities around the world, was Professor of English at the Universities of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Guelph, and Trent, and has authored more than 60 articles and 20 books, including many about Bernard Shaw. He also founded the Theatre Archives at the University of Guelph, the largest collection of Canadian theatre archives available, and one of the world’s most important collections of Bernard Shaw material.

Barbara Worthy has had a long-term relationship



The late Christopher Newton, former Shaw artistic director. (Photos supplied)

with the Shaw, from acting in the Christopher Newton company, directing and writing under Jackie Maxwell, teaching during the Tim Carroll years, as well as producing the Bell Canada Shaw Festival Series for a decade with CBC Radio. And apart from working with the NOTL Museum, she has since produced a long list of historical documentaries, with a special focus on the Niagara region.

Join the conversation and travel down memory lane with Conolly and Worthy on Wednesday, March 16, at 11 a.m.

The final lecture in the NOTL Museum’s winter virtual series is on March

30, when local author and researcher David Hemmings explores Heritage Homes of Niagara, also starting at 11 a.m.

Registration is required at www.notlmuseum.ca

For more info, email aklassen@nhsm.ca



Current artistic director Tim Carroll



Former artistic director Jackie Maxwell



Barbara Worthy will be remembering the Shaw Festival.

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The newly released book “Increase your Brainability and Reduce your Risk of Dementia” contains information about these and related topics.

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“It is never too late to change your life, reduce your risk and live better for longer.”

Music Niagara concert supports Ukrainian community

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Music Niagara artistic director and co-founder Atis Bankas couldn't just sit back and watch the invasion of Ukraine by Russia without doing something about it.

The Lithuanian native reached out to that country's ambassador Darius Skusevicius this week to enlist his support in organizing a special concert planned for this Friday, March 11 at Lithuania House Banquet and Event Centre on Bloor Street in Toronto.

"I called the ambassador, then I organized some volunteers from the Lithuanian and Ukrainian communities to put the program together," he tells The Local. "The musicians are

mostly from the Toronto Symphony. They were very supportive of the idea.”

The concert takes place on the anniversary of the day in 1990 that Bankas' homeland became the first republic to declare its independence from the former Soviet Union. After that many other Soviet republics followed in that country's footsteps.

"Lithuania shares that common interest for independence with Ukraine," Bankas says. "Every country that used to belong, so to speak, to the Eastern Bloc, has the same fear, that they're next. What would preclude Putin from coming to Canada, even?"

Bankas expresses frustration with the West's guarded response to Putin's current aggressions. He

feels it is a timid response that has been unsuccessful in deterring the Russian leader.

“He’s killing civilians,” Bankas says, exasperated. “He’s committing war crimes. Look at the buildings. Look at the corridors that were made for civilians to escape. They bombed the train, they bombed buses, and they put the corridor leading to Russia or Belarus. Is that some kind of joke, that to escape you have to go there?”

In a statement sent out to Music Niagara supporters via email, Bankas expressed the local non-profit organization's support for the citizens of the county under siege.

"In solidarity with the people of Ukraine, Music Niagara condemns Rus-

sia's unjustified war that has already caused countless unnecessary deaths of civilian population and a humanitarian crisis of unimaginable proportions," the statement reads. "Along with millions of people of good will world wide, including American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, Music Niagara Festival supports all the people on all continents that speak out against Russia's military aggression and calls for an immediate end to barbaric atrocities against Ukrainian people."

Bankas says showing support for the Ukrainian community is important right now. He also fears an escalation from the Kremlin.

"If Putin decides to push the button, he'll push the button, no matter what," worries Bankas. "Who is he to decide whether the country wants to be independent? He has no right to invade and to kill people."

Titled *For Freedom - Yours and Ours*, the concert will feature Bankas on violin along with more than a dozen other accomplished classical music performers.

Violinist Tanya Charles
Iveniuk, Oboist Colin Mai-
er, pianist Victoria Kogan

and accordion player Matti Pulkki have all appeared in previous Music Niagara performances. Others, such as clarinetist Eric Abramovitz, violist Rémi Pelletier and flautist Kelly Zimba Lukić are colleagues of Bankas with the Toronto Symphony.

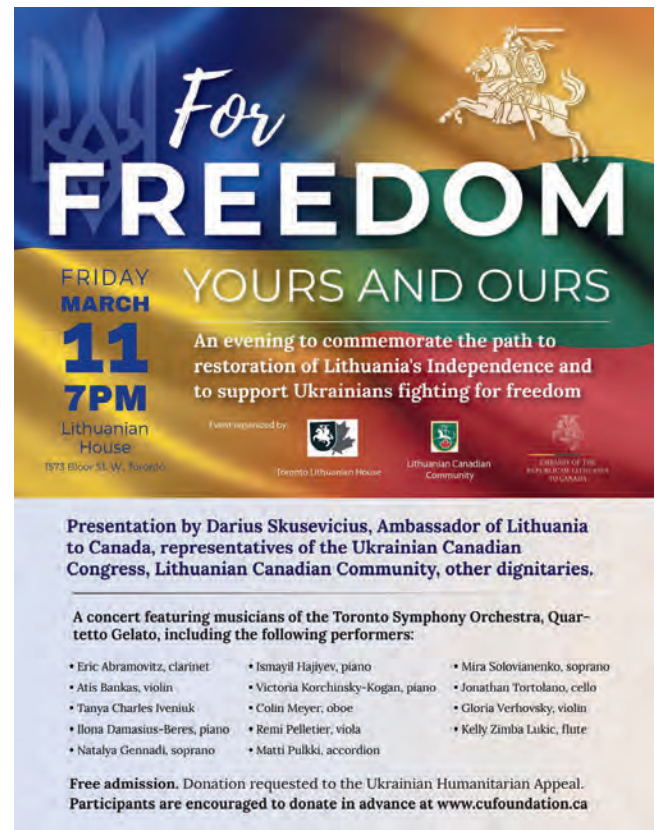
Presented by Ambassador Skusevicius along with representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Lithuanian Canadi-

an Community, and other dignitaries, the program begins at 7 p.m. As it is a fundraiser, donations are requested ahead of time to the Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal at cufoundation.ca.

Admission to the concert is free of charge, but registration at eventbrite.ca/e/for-freedom-yours-and-ours-tickets-290980920767 is mandatory. Capacity is about 400 guests.



Atis Bankas will perform in a concert he has organized to support the Ukrainian community.
(File photo)



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Lots to explore in NOTL's urban environment



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Did the tease of decent spring weather cause a pulling sensation to get outdoors this weekend?

Given the endless list of wondrous and diverse natural areas in Niagara Region, I took the time to hone in on the ones closest to our homes. Particularly, with a focus on places located within or adjacent to our urban boundaries that you can get to within minutes.

We're talking about a short stroll from your suburban doorstep for the next time mother nature calls "get outside!"

For the sake of this conversation, these described areas meet the following criteria: close to or surrounded by developed spaces, within walking distance of residential areas, and they are the types of places where you can still get the sense of feeling encompassed by greenery.

There is something psychologically significant about feeling deep in nature, without being in a wilderness setting.

In the summer months, green foliage occludes the long views and closes you into a more immediate area, demanding you feel present with the sights, sounds, and smells immediately around you.

When standing in the bottom of a valley, we forget the noise and concrete that may reside up above the rim on either side. Suddenly, we feel like we've achieved some sort of healthy escape.

Let's begin in downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake, and hey, who wouldn't?

Two Mile Creek Conservation Area features a snaking creek nearing its final journey to Lake Ontario. A walkable distance for most of Old Town, the trails are wheelchair accessible and get you close to significant wildlife within minutes. Beavers snoop around for lumber while rainbow trout follow their ancestral routes upstream every spring. Blue herons and green herons take a stab at tasty frogs, while mink skirt the muddy shorelines

secured by giant willow trees, elms, and ash.

Out past The Commons lies a series of agreeable hiking trails in Paradise Grove forest. There are paved trails leading to both sides of this impressive forest, the largest left of its kind close to downtown. This woodlot has been sampled by local nature clubs and has been declared a forest of significance, largely due to the presence of ancient oaks that push towards the 250-year-old age boundary.

The odds of seeing white-tailed deer gracefully grazing in this area are high, and it is an important refuge for returning migratory birds every spring.

Heading out of Old Town, Virgil sits at a nice centralized location as NOTL's second most populated area. Hence, Virgil Conservation Area. I would wager that anyone in Virgil could walk to this site without groaning about it being too far.

Four Mile Creek weaves its muddy course through a valley, after exiting a double set of manmade dams. The valley section, in summer, provides some of the most excellent viewing opportunities for basking snapping and painted turtles that I'm aware of. Although no old-growth trees seem to exist in the area, there is a variety of regenerating habitats to be seen including swamps, deciduous forests, a marsh, meadows, and for a little taste of up north while down south, a substantial area of pines, whose needles carpet the forest floor and create an odour more often enjoyed north of Barrie. Continuing to check off the list of small but booming villages within NOTL's municipal borders, St. Davids is arguably the best area for Bruce Trail access. You can hit up Canada's longest and oldest marked hiking trail, and within minutes, be in awe of enormous trees, veiny valleys, and classic rock cliffs of the UNESCO-protected Niagara

Escarpment. Head east on the Bruce for dramatic escarpment features and excellent fox habitat. Head west for rolling hills marked with cherry and tulip trees backing onto wine country.

Lastly, but certainly not the least, let's talk about Queenston. I dare say this now sleepy and remarkably quaint and historic village is the reason why I am writing this article today. Queenston is truly surrounded by nature, essentially nestled into a pit at the base of the Niagara Escarpment where Niagara Falls once plummeted down over 12,000 years ago.

Queenston not only has access to the Bruce Trail within walking distance, but also two Bruce Trail side trails (marked in blue, instead of the classic white).

A series of unnamed trails work their way up the Niagara Escarpment through various vegetation zones, featuring a moment in a rare stand of cedar forest. Someone from Queenston could find themselves standing in wonderment in said forest, and minutes later, gazing off a cliff down to the turquoise swirls of the Niagara River below. The river is also approachable on foot and provides some of the best fishing opportunities in the country.

I hope we all know we are so lucky to live in NOTL. We are fortunate to have some of the nicest restaur-

ants, shops, gardens, country roads, and historic sites right at our fingertips. Luckily, even in the ever-growing suburbs, we still have nature right outside the door.



A springtime confluence of streams in an area of the Niagara Escarpment close to St. Davids is a good place to explore. (Photos by Owen Bjorgan)



A foggy forest is common in winter to spring transition season. This woodlot is a short walk from one of NOTL's most urbanized areas.

A March break tea party fun for kids to enjoy

Local Staff

Calling all kids, and those young at heart — The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and the Friends of Fort George are invit-

ing you to a special March Break Tea Party. Enjoy an afternoon tea with your family and friends with special tea party packages. Each package will include instructions on how to make the per-

fect cup of tea, six cookies (from the Fort George Bill of Fare cookbook), a scone and jam, historic recipes to try at home, special activities and a gift from the Fort George and museum gift shops.

Packages can be ordered online through the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum (<https://notlmuseumshop.square.site/>) and the Friends of Fort George (<https://friendsoffortgeorge.square.site/>), with final orders due on Monday, March 14 at 5 p.m.

Packages will be available for pickup from the NOTL Museum (43 Castlereagh St.) on Thursday, March 17, and Friday, March 18, between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Cost is \$15 per package. Proceeds will help support student summer employment at Fort George and Brock's Monument. For more information, call the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, 905-468-3912, or email admin@friendsoffortgeorge.ca.

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www.thehubnotl.ca

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LocalSPORTS

Shipton jumped at chance to help Predators

Assistant coach played on a number of GMHL teams

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

When the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's Predators moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Toronto for the 2021-2022 season, they brought at least one holdover from the team's days in the 'Big Smoke'.

Twenty-two-year-old Connor Shipton serves as assistant coach and assistant general manager for Robert Turnbull, the team owner who sits above Shipton in those roles. Turnbull is also joined behind the bench at each game by 21-year-old Samantha Marson, another assistant general manager and the team's trainer.

"I'm fortunate to have both of them," Turnbull told The Local. "They both have the work ethic of a 30-year-old who has been in the hockey business for years. They're great to be around. I believe either one could be a general manager of a hockey team down the road."

Prior to stepping into his current role, Shipton was a presence on the blue line for a number of GMHL teams. He broke into the league in 2015 with the North York Renegades and was traded to Toronto shortly after the start of the 2016-2017 season. The following year he had short stints in the GOJHL with Chatham and in the PJHL with Blenheim, then closed out that season with the GMHL's Windsor Aces.

Shipton became disillusioned in 2018-2019 after playing six games for the PJHL's Port Dover Sailors and decided to hang up his skates. The Stoney Creek resident had given up on hockey until Predators own-

er Robert Turnbull came calling late in the 2019-2020 season. Shipton helped the Preds close out their last few games and was part of their playoff run that year.

"I had had enough, I was tired of it all," Shipton says. "Then, right before Christmas in 2018, Rob sent me a message asking why I wasn't playing. He asked me to come back, and I realised I missed it. Then, when he purchased St. George, I was going to go play there. But COVID cancelled the (2020-2021) season and I missed my last year (of junior eligibility)."

When Turnbull told him he was moving the Predators down to Niagara this year, he jumped at the chance to help out. And with original Niagara coach Andrew Whalen leaving the team after only a handful of games, and then general manager Johan Eriksson departing for a full time role as an agent, Shipton began to take on added duties for the Predators as the season progressed.

Despite being just a year older than many of the players he is coaching, Shipton has found his groove and is discovering a love for coaching far beyond any expectations he might have had.

"I'm loving it," he tells The Local. "It's just as much fun as playing for me. I'm having the time of my life. It's different, but I'm still really involved in the game, it's more hands-on, and there's the mental strategy too. I still get the same feelings before a game as I did when I was playing, the energy and thrill."

Any onlooker can feel the passion Shipton has for the game and for his team.

He eagerly watches every moment on the ice from his perch behind his skaters and has an easy rapport with each member of the Predators. Turnbull often turns over the responsibility for between-periods dressing room pep talks and post-game breakdowns to his young charge.

Shipton enjoys lacing up his skates for practices at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, working mostly with the Predators defensemen, some of whom are the youngest players on the team at 16 to 18 years old.

"We have four young defensemen, and I can see how I was at that age," says Shipton. "I'll jump into drills with them, and do the morning skates when I can. It keeps me in shape. There are still certain times where mentally I see myself as a player during practices."

Over the Family Day long weekend, he and Marson had a chance to lead the team sans Turnbull for a 5-4 victory in Windsor.

"It was different, a fun experience to be able to call the shots," he says. "I usually let Rob handle the forwards and I deal with the defence. With Sam's help up front, I felt pretty comfortable behind the bench. I can see myself doing this on a regular basis."

Turnbull credited the work of both of his young charges for managing the team to that come-from-behind victory after a four hour bus trip and a Friday night win over the second place Renegades. In turn, Shipton credits Turnbull for the faith he shows in both of them.

"He acquired me when I was 17," remembers Shipton. "He's the most honest guy I've ever met in hockey. He's done more for me in my hockey career than anyone else other than my family. That's why I came back to work for him. He's a great

mentor, with 50-plus years in hockey, and he's advanced so many players onto the next level. He's the perfect guy to learn from."

Shipton's parents are at nearly every home game in Virgil. His mother Ann, in particular, can be seen roaming along the boards with her DSLR camera, diligently snapping photos of the players that she posts to an online folder for the entire team to access.

"I'm an only child, and they've done so much for me," Connor says of his parents. "With my Dad driving me everywhere, my Mom getting the pictures. Even back during minor hockey, I'm so thankful to have those memories to look back on."

"All the guys always ask about their pictures," he adds. "She keeps in touch with all the parents from when I was with the Preds before. For the Europeans, their parents don't get to see them play, so getting to see those pictures is a big thing for them."

Shipton balances his duties with the Predators with his full time employment in the dairy, frozen foods and meat departments at Walmart in Stoney Creek. He's



Connor Shipton helps Preds from behind the bench. (Ann Shipton)

in his fourth year working there, and says his hours are flexible, allowing him to attend most practices and games this year.

Like Marson, he is hoping his current involvement with the Predators is a first step in a continued career in hockey. Also like Marson, he is considering attending Niagara College in September, but he'll be studying something very different from her Sports Management program.

"I need to go back to school and get my life outside of hockey going," Shipton says. "Sam has been telling me to join her in that program, but I've kind of gotten

interested in the Brewmaster program they've got there. I'm thinking of signing up for that one and seeing how it goes."

He admits that he at one time had aspirations to play the game either professionally in Europe or at a US college at one time, but this year has shifted his focus to coaching, and he seems to be a natural fit in the role.

And, speaking of natural fits, is there a better one than hockey and beer? Surely the players he coaches on his own one day will want to learn all about his future skills as a brewmaster if he does indeed pursue that vocation.



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Predators win three, end regular season in third place

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

A thrilling 4-3 shootout victory in Plattsville capped a perfect 3-0 weekend for the Niagara Predators. The three wins see them finishing the season with a 28-9-1 record and carrying some momentum into this week's Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League playoffs that start on Wednesday against those very same Lakers.

"The referee came over after the shootout and said it was a hell of a game," head coach, general manager and team owner Robert Turnbull tells The Local. "I wanted us to compete hard."

Turnbull, who stepped in behind the bench when Niagara's original head coach resigned in late October, gets a bit emotional talking about the game and the season. The 73-year-old says this is his final regular season game as a coach.

"I didn't want to go out any other way," he says. "We finish not too far (five points) from second place. This has been a very special year with a very special group of young men."

He reflects on a lineup that was in constant flux throughout the 38-game season. A total of 32 players donned the team's blue and yellow uniform this year, yet they played many games with as few as 15 players on the bench, as they did in Sunday's victory.

"What we started out with was totally different than what we ended with, with guys hurt and sick and whatever," Turnbull says of the ever-changing line-up of Predators this season. "But good teams find a way to win."

The weekend began with an 8-0 romp over the

last place Tottenham Thunder. Reese Bisci led the way with a hat trick in Friday night's home game. Alexander Andrews, Alexander Insulander, Pontus Madsen, Mackenzie Okumura and Alex Page all added singles, while Iain Riordan recorded the shutout. The Predators swarmed the Thunder for 60 minutes, outshooting them 75-24.

Saturday evening's game in Tottenham wasn't quite as one-sided, though Niagara sprinted to a quick 4-0 lead in the first period with two goals by defenceman Brenden Morin and one each from Georgy Kholmovsky and Okumura. Kholmovsky added a second goal, Bisci scored twice and Dante Massi and Andrews also contributed to the score sheet. Shots on goal again favoured Niagara at 68-22.

Heading into Sunday's contest in Plattsville, Turnbull knew it would most likely be a first-round playoff preview, despite the very slight chance they might meet the Streetsville Flyers. The team needed to make a statement against the Lakers on the road.

But the Preds came out flat in the first period, coughing up an early power play goal to Hunter Mabee and an unassisted marker by Noah Bright with 12 seconds left in the first period.

"It was our third game in a row with only eight forwards," Turnbull says. "They were bagged. And the Lakers played a good, physical game. In the dressing room after the first we went over a few things. I told them if they didn't put forth their best effort, whether it was 90% or 80%, they would continue to physically walk all over us."

The Preds emerged from

the dressing room throwing body checks and skating harder. Insulander finally got them on the scoreboard with a slap shot from the right side for his first of two in the game. He also assisted on Kholmovsky's marker later in the second.

When Kyle Struth's third period goal put the Lakers up 3-2, it looked like the game would end that way. But Turnbull pulled goaltender Morgan Penwell in favour of a sixth attacker with just under a minute remaining.

The move paid off at 19:32 when Insulander took a pass from Massi in front of Plattsville goalie Owen Neomytka and knocked it in for the tying goal to force overtime.

Penwell came up strong in the extra frame, stopping the Lakers on a breakaway to keep the score knotted at 3-3. Heading to the shootout, only the second of the season for Niagara, Turnbull gave his squad some direction.

"Last time we had a shootout, they all tried to deke except for Jason (Humphries), who hit the post," he says. "I told them there was so much snow on the ice, don't try to deke, just shoot."

Madsen was first up and what did he do? The defenceman approached the crease, faked to the left, swept the puck right and slipped it behind Neomytka's outstretched left leg and into the net for a picture-perfect goal.

Penwell stopped Bright, and then Andrews rang his shot off the Plattsville net. After Penwell iced Alex Mourani's attempt, Humphries put his wrist shot into the top-shelf to seal the victory.

Heading into the best-of-three first round playoffs against the Lakers, Turnbull is hoping to have defenceman Josh Davidson back in the line-up. Nathan Fehr, who was out Sunday to attend Junior B lacrosse tryouts, will return as well. He expects strong forwards Mario Zitella and Noah Caperchione to remain unavailable, but isn't letting that darken his optimism for Wednesday's opening game.

"Through us not having our full roster, it's allowed us to improve immensely over the season," he says. "We're scoring goals, killing penalties, cheering each other on."

Niagara holds a 5-1 edge in the season series against the Lakers, their sole loss coming Feb. 27 in a 4-3 shootout in Plattsville. They've outscored the

Lakers 25-16 and outshot them 244-215 over those six games.

For Tuesday's practice he was planning to focus on the team continuing to do what they've been doing right all season. After that, he plans to say very little before the Preds take to the ice for Wednesday's playoff game.

"It's strictly the little things," says Turnbull. "Stop trying to pass through players, find the open man, do the little things right. Do the things we do best and don't worry about it, don't get over-excited. We're going to have to play a physical game and impede their progress."

With little ice time available for their playoff

run, the Predators will be hosting the Lakers at Port Colborne's Vale Health and Wellness Centre for the first round. Wednesday's opener begins at 9 p.m. Game two is Friday night in Plattsville, while the third game, if needed, will be Sunday, March 13 at 7 p.m. in Port Colborne. Adult tickets for the home games will be \$10.



Mackenzie Okumura causes trouble in the Tottenham crease in only his second game this season with the Predators. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Alexander Andrews scores on Tottenham's Jacob Sanders.



Reese Bisci moves in on Thunder goalie Jacob Sanders for his first of three goals Friday night.

Meet the Predators

Name:
Alexander Andrews

Jersey number: 10

Age: 20

Birthdate: July 9, 2001

Hometown:
Mississauga, Ontario

Nickname:
Andrews

Favourite hockey player:
Jason Spezza and Morgan Rielly

'Hype' song: "Chop suey!" - **System of a Down**

Hockey highlight:
Playing hockey in Medford, Oregon for the Southern Oregon Spartans

Other sports you play: **Baseball, Golf and Soccer**

Favourite 'cheat' meal: **Pizza**

Secret talent: **playing guitar and drums.**



Lacrosse returning to NOTL this season

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

For the first time since 2019 there will be lacrosse action inside the arenas in Virgil this summer.

Registration opened on Feb. 17 for Niagara Thunderhawks Minor Lacrosse. Registrar Christa Rawsthorne sees this year as an important step to getting the sport back on track in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

And with the December, 2021 announcement of the Junior B Thunderhawks folding, building up the numbers playing lacrosse in NOTL beginning this summer is crucial.

Following a 2020 summer with no lacrosse, about 80 kids registered to play last year. But it was a season that was far from business as usual. With indoor gatherings for amateur sports out of the question across the province, the game switched from box to field lacrosse in an effort to get sticks back into hands.

A temporary new loop called the Niagara Lacrosse League was formed in partnership with Fort Erie, Lincoln, Pelham and St. Catharines for summer 2021. NOTL players were matched with those from the other clubs to form teams of similar skills at each age group. Rather than competing against teams from those centres they found themselves playing alongside their usual opponents as teammates.

The Local took in some of those early sessions that were held at Virgil's Centennial Sports Park. From this vantage point it seemed that the kids from all five clubs were having a great time working with the coaches and were deeply appreciative to be playing the game whether inside or outside. To that end the redesigned season kept the interest up for a return to normal play this summer.

Rawsthorne says in a typical year as many as 140 kids play in NOTL, and a

sizeable number of those players cross the U.S. border to come here. Last year, with the bridges from the U.S. closed to non-essential travel, those American kids were not able to register in town.

As registration continues, there is still uncertainty facing those American players hoping to play lacrosse in NOTL this summer. That has resulted in registrations coming in a little more slowly than usual.

"We're unsure of what the borders will be like in April or May," laments Rawsthorne. "The concern, of course, is are they going to have to show a negative rapid test every time they come over? They could be here two or three times a week, depending on divisions, leagues and times. We don't have firm answers to that yet."

Over the years the NOTL club has continued to be a viable option to many out-of-towners, largely due to the reputation the club has earned amongst the sport's cognoscenti. Many of the club's coaches carry with them years of professional experience in the game.

As well, in recent years a number of former NOTL players have found their way into the NCAA college and National Lacrosse League (NLL) ranks. Ryan Wagner (Philadelphia Wings), his brother Johnny (Rochester Nighthawks), Jay Thorimbert (New York Riptide) and Chris Weier (Toronto Rock) are all in the thick of this year's NLL season.

Weier remembers his minor lacrosse days in

NOTL fondly.

"I was four or five when I started playing," Weier says. "We had dedicated coaches who used to play the game. We had great commitment from the players. I still keep in touch with guys I played with back then. It's not all about lacrosse, but also about the relationships you build with your teammates away from the arena."

Weier mentions coaches such as Darris Kilgour, a Tuscarora from the Lewiston area and former professional lacrosse player, as an important mentor, as well as Andre Lemieux, Kevin Buis, Marty Werner and Andy Boldt.

"I still use some of the basics I learned in those early days," Weier says. "Passing, catching, throwing over the shoulder, I may not think of it much today, but I use all those skills in every game."

Johnny Wagner says he was born with a stick in his hands and eagerly awaited his turn to play in NOTL while watching his older brother Ryan play the game first. With their father Mike helping out as a Thunderhawks coach, lacrosse has been a family affair for the Wagners.

When Johnny is in town he often visits the arena with some friends for a game of pick-up hockey, and is reminded about his early minor lacrosse success.

"One year we won the provincials in a 6-5 game," remembers Wagner. "My best friend Zach Luis got a penalty with four minutes left in the game and we still ended up winning. That was



Outdoor lacrosse took place last year, and in a different format from other years. (Mike Balsom)



Chris Weier still relies on skills he learned playing lacrosse in NOTL. (Photo supplied)



Jay Thorimbert (far right) working with Thunderhawks Nate Malone, Aidan Buis, and Devin Napoleon in 2019. (Photo supplied)



Brothers Ryan Wagner (Philadelphia Wings), and his brother Johnny (Rochester Nighthawks) developed their love of the game in NOTL. (Photos supplied)



probably one of my best memories. And we won the Intermediate championship in 2014. Those teams are hung up in the arena. It's always a great memory to see that and relive the experience."

Wagner would love to one day follow the example set by his former NOTL coaches and come back to coach in town. He feels it's important to spread his love and knowledge of the game to the next generation, and as a former Junior B Thunderhawk would like to see that team return in the near future.

Thorimbert is probably the pro player in the best position currently to make that happen. The father of two still lives in Niagara, and is the club's vice-president.

Unlike Wagner and Weier, Thorimbert didn't pick up a stick until his Grade 10 year at Niagara District Secondary School. But he fell in love with the game, and credits his NOTL coaches for his fast learning curve.

"Small town, small team, so I got lots of touches," he says about his minor box lacrosse experience in NOTL. "And my group of friends benefited me and helped me grow a lot faster than I would have in other centres." Thorimbert has continued to be associated with the local club, coming back to host skills sessions for the Junior B squad. This summer he will be coaching his

son Owen in the tyke age group. His daughter Nora has her eyes on playing the game in the future, too.

Rawsthorne says registrations are open for all ages between three and 21 years old. To make up for the folding of the Junior B team, the club is offering an intermediate team composed of those who are of junior age. Though they wouldn't be playing in the Junior B loop, she feels the team could still be competitive enough at the provincial level.

"They're at that age where other things become a priority - cars, jobs, things like that," she says. "And they haven't had box lacrosse for two years now. Some played on the field last year, but for the others, we hope they haven't gone on to something else."

The club offers a free soft lacrosse division for kids born in 2018 and 2019 this year. It's a no-risk, no-cost opportunity for the youngest ages to try the game. Other registration prices range from \$225 for the paperweight age group (born in 2016 and 2017) to \$375 for intermediate players (born in 2001 to 2005).

Box lacrosse practice sessions will begin in mid-April, with games starting about a month later. It runs until the first two weeks of August when the provincial championships are usually held.

For information and to register, please visit niagaralacrosse.com.

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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 Drawback

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

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CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Celebration of Life

David James Cole
Jul 9 1948 - Mar 20 2020

St. Davids Lions Hall
Saturday, Mar. 19, 2022 at Noon

Join us to celebrate David's life. Husband of
Andrea (Piper), father of Robert, Teresa, and Adam,
grandfather of Cherrie. Light lunch.
Bring memories, stories, photos.

RSVP to Andrea 905-262-4543 – akcole57@gmail.com

OBITUARY

FRASER, ANGUS ROBERTSON—Angus Robertson Fraser (1930-2022) passed away peacefully and comfortably in the care of supportive staff and family at Kipnes Centre for Veterans in Edmonton, Alberta, Thursday, March 3rd. He was predeceased by his wife Elna (2002) and brother Hugh (2016). Daughters Linda Fraser and Sandra Cowan (Blair) will miss him greatly, as will grandchildren Erin (Shawn), Kim (Chad), Sara, Brad and Jenna. Loved by great-grandchildren Alyvia, Avery and Mila as well as extended family. He had many friends from his long career in insurance, had close golf buddies and was a long time member of the masonic lodge and the Scottish Rite, being a 33rd degree mason and past master of St John's 20 (1975). He served in the RAF at Gibraltar and he came to Canada from Dundee, Scotland in 1956 with Elna as newlyweds, living in Toronto, Collingwood, Woodstock, London, and Niagara before moving to Edmonton. He touched many lives in all those places and will be remembered fondly as a kind gentleman by many. There will be a celebration of life in London, Ontario in the spring with details to follow. Donations to Edmonton's Zebra Child Protection Centre in lieu of flowers would be appreciated.



JANES, ROBERT (BOB)—The Janes family is very sad to announce the death of Robert Janes, peacefully early on Monday, February 28th. Bob, aka, author, J. Robert Janes, was born in Toronto in 1935 to well-respected artist Phyllis Janes and Toronto Star and Northern Miner reporter, and later, Public Relations expert, Henry Janes. Educated at North Toronto Collegiate, where he played a mean trombone and the University of Toronto, where

he graduated with a BSc. in Geology,

Bob's early career included work in Alberta and Saskatchewan oil fields, at the Ontario Research Foundation, Don Mills Collegiate, the Ontario Science Centre, and later at Brock University where he led the first, and perhaps only, cross-Canada trip on the "Geology of Canada". At age 32, he found his true calling, as a writer, and was known in Canada and internationally through his 33 published books in five genres i.e. geology for grades three to university level, children's fiction, thrillers, a tabletop book -The Great Canadian Outback - and the 16-book St-Cyr and Kohler series set in France in the Second World War. All of this prodigious output, plus every letter, memo or other background information about his life is in the McMaster University Archives collection.

He will be dearly missed by his wife Gracia, daughters Anne and Cathy; sons, Peter and John; grandchildren Emily Sophie, Patrick, Sarah, Mackenzie and Jeannette; and great grandchildren Rocco, Pippen, Teddy and Madeline – all of whom he "loved to bits." There will be a private family picnic celebration of his life at the Prince of Wales Hotel, near his home on King Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake, or, if need be due to COVID -19, on our back porch or garage sometime in the summer. As Bob was a strong supporter of Niagara Fruit Land preservation from the first year he moved to Niagara in 1968, it would be appreciated if donations in his memory were sent to the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS) at Box1413 Niagara-on-the-Lake ON L0S 1J0.



WISSENZ, FLORA MCLENNAN (NEE COOKE)—Passed away peacefully on February 16th, eight days before her 98th Birthday. Beloved wife to the late Henry (2008), adored by her children Ellen, Hank (Brenda), Robert (Karen), and Janet (Eric). Loving grandmother to Aaron, Jennifer (Hale), and Adam. Great-grandmother to Wade and Ember. At the age of 93, Flora found the family of her birth mother and was welcomed with

open hearts. Flora met her brother Alexander, niece Wilma from Scotland, spoke with her brother William John, and was preceded in death by siblings Mary Flora, John Alec, and Jessie. Flora will be held dear in the hearts of her brothers-in-law (Richard & Fred) and sisters-in-law (Shirley & Mary), as well as many nieces and nephews. Flora was cherished by her friends that were as close as family. Scottish by birth and Canadian by choice, Flora served as a corporal in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force during WWII. She was always ready for a conversation with anyone she met, especially around a kitchen table or a campfire. For such a wee lassie, Flora had a huge impact on all who knew her. Our Family is very grateful for the care and kindness given to our Mum by the wonderful staff at Pioneer Elder Care in St. Catharines. As per Flora's wishes, cremation has taken place and a celebration of life is planned for the summer. As an expression of sympathy, those who wish may make a memorial donation in memory of Flora to the March of Dimes Canada <https://marchofdimes.akaraisin.com/ui/MODCDonationEN/donations/start>. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the MORGAN FUNERAL HOME. Memories, photos, and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



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NOTICE

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Deadline is Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from
March 2, 2022

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

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

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

Professional Billy Simkin leaving NOTL Golf Club

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

After achieving his goal to become the longest-serving head professional in the history of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, Billy Simkin is taking on a new role at a new club.

"It is time for me to move on to a job that will give me more time to be with my boys, Avery and Emmett," he said in an online post. "This move will also allow me to enjoy and play the beautiful game of golf again."

A Guelph native, Billy fell in love with the game while playing as a junior

at Victoria Park West Golf Club. After rising through the region's junior golf ranks, he moved on to play at Puslinch Lakes Golf Club in Cambridge.

His career in golf began at age 12 at Victoria Park West in his hometown. At 16, he moved across the road to Victoria Park East and a year later began working at Guelph Lakes Golf Club.

The class A head professional spent three years after high school studying at Georgian College while working at Blue Springs in Acton. He continued to work in Acton for another three years after graduating

from Georgian.

In 2006, Billy moved to NOTL to take on an assistant professional role. After a year, he was hired by the club's board as the head professional, taking over from Scott Cochrane, who had held the position for the previous two years.

John Wiens purchased the club in 2007 during Simkin's first year as head professional.

"He's done a lot of good things here," Wiens tells The Local. "We worked well together. We were both new to the club at the time, so we learned and grew together here the first few years. It was all good, very positive."

Simkin thanked all current and past members and all locals who visited the club over his 15 years for what he called an incredible ride at North America's oldest course. He also praised the board of directors for giving a then-24-year-old unproven pro a chance.

"I will never forget what Bob Cheriton, Bruce Murdoch, Ron Ashenhurst and the late Glen May and Rex Williams did for me," he added. "And thank you to owners Jill and John Wiens

for the past 15 years."

Simkin also gave special thanks to assistant pro Ricky Watson, whom he referred to as his co-pilot at the club and in life. Late last year Watson also announced his departure from the club to pursue a career in real estate.

Simkin and Watson have been a welcoming, enthusiastic team in NOTL the past eight-plus years. Their exuberance and love for the game made members of all ages, as well as casual golfers, feel at ease on the links and in the pro shop. They especially had an effect on young golfers through their patient, relatable approach during youth golf camps.

The pair organized a number of trips with members over the years, and invited some to play in programs with them across the province.

"I want to thank every member who ever made an attempt to join in the club events and getaways that I organized," he said. "Without (their) support I could never have grown the club to what it is now."

"To all the staff that have ever worked for me and



Billy Simpkin (Photo supplied)

gave 100 per cent, I thank you," Simkin continued. "I want all members to know that I truly strived to make Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club a great place to be a golf member and I hope the club continues to grow and improve on what Ricky and I have built."

Simkin is joining the staff at Peninsula Lakes Golf Club on Highway 20 in Fonthill as the head teaching professional for the 2022 golf season.

Wiens says the process has begun to hire Simkin's replacement. The job opening has been posted through the PGA of Canada's website, and he hopes to have the new head professional in place by the end of March, with the club opening the first week of April.

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