



Don't miss
cat rescue
fundraiser
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Spectacular surprise rainbow

Owen Bjorgan has shared his all-time favourite photo, taken from his front porch Sunday. He said he was outside with the family dogs when he believed he saw a bald eagle fly in front of Brock's Monument. He grabbed his zoom lens, and although the eagle was gone, "a surprise rainbow performed the ultimate display of beauty over the Niagara Escarpment," making a great end to what had been a busy day for the tour guide.

Budget approval postponed as council debate continues

Zahraa Hmood
The Local

The clock ran out during what was supposed to be councillors' last meeting on the 2023 budget: with a hard stop at 6 p.m., at which time Tuesday's council meeting was to start, the operating budget failed to pass.

Last-ditch efforts by councillors, first Sandra O'Connor, then Wendy Cheropita, to reduce the planned tax hike of 8.85 per cent, or approximately \$108.22 for the average residents, failed.

Council was able to approve plans to spend \$9.96 million on capital projects during its special meeting on Tuesday, March 28, but when faced with its plans to spend \$43.9 million on operations, the three-hour meeting ended with no time left to put that budget to an approval vote.

Senior staff have reiterated

throughout budget proceedings that the town is facing financial pressures this year as a result of inflation, rising insurance rates, increasing wages to keep up with rising cost of living adjustments, and an increase in pensions under the Ontario Municipal Employee Retirement System (OMERS).

"2023 is largely seen as an investment year that's seeing significant investments in operating and capital," said finance director Kyle Freeborn.

The largest portion of 2023 operating expenses will be spent on salaries, benefits and other personnel costs, at nearly 36 per cent of the budget. Thirty-six per cent of its revenues will come from the tax levy, at \$15 million, and user fees and penalties at 39 per cent.

For residents in urban

Continued on page 2

Businesses rebounding, a strong season anticipated

Sharon Burns
The Local

Tulips are poking through the soil, spring flowers are being planted in sidewalk boxes, and local businesses are preparing for tourist season.

There are signs that it will be a good year for them, with last season showing the industry bouncing back, recovering from two seasons through the pandemic.

"2022 was a very strong

year for us tourism-wise, and we expect that this year will be even stronger," Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce President Minerva Ward told The Local.

Hotels and B&Bs enjoyed very good occupancies and very strong rates, retailers did well, and wineries reported good revenues, said Ward. "Even our outlet mall has reported strong revenues, despite the bus traffic not coming back."

"We are incredibly proud

of how we have begun to recover," said Paul MacIntyre, vice-president of operations for Vintage Hotels.

"We definitely have seen a travel resurgence, and ranking second in Canada as Best of the Best popular destinations shows the commitment towards recovering with the highest level of service and hospitality to our guests," said MacIntyre, referring to Tripadvisor's 2023 Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Popular Destination in

Canada award.

"We also all have a loyal guest following and an extremely high guest return rate," said MacIntyre. However, he added, "as a destination during recovery we provided these experiences within changing expectations, continued labour shortages and rising costs. It hasn't been easy."

What the retailers have missed, but are hoping to see this season, is the volume from bus traffic, said Ward.

"The U.S. border restrictions have been lifted completely, so we expect to see some U.S. bus traffic come back. Last year the border restrictions were lifted very late in the season and even then there was still a lot of confusion about ArriveCAN."

"Destination Canada is advertising in the U.S. that Canada is now open, and we expect that to yield results to bring back bus traffic."

Ward noted that Niagara-on-the-Lake will not see

increased visitors from all countries just yet. "China still has restrictions on its citizens travelling. We expect to see some, but not to pre-COVID levels. Chinese visitors," she added, "spend significantly at the wineries. Other communities such as Yellowknife also saw that market completely disappear. As restrictions lift in China, and people get more comfortable travelling, they

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Some councillors concerned about tax increase

Continued from page 1

areas, the tax boost will include an additional \$9.36 increase to the storm levy.

O'Connor's defeated motion asked for town staff to go back to the drawing board and develop options for a nine per cent tax hike for the budget, or two per cent not including the seven per cent transit levy.

Cheropita's motion, defeated 3-6 in a non-recorded vote, asked staff to reduce the tax hike down to six per cent.

However, for some councillors, the time to request these sorts of changes had well-passed.

"We went through six meetings," said Coun. Erwin Wiens. "It's not fair to go back to our staff and say, 'I want to look good politically, essentially, by you reducing it.' Come up with the numbers that you want to reduce it by."

Coun. Nick Ruller argued it is council's responsibility to support a budget that delivers municipal services to residents, visitors, and the business community.

"We know this is not the most strategic budget ... but that's OK, because staff understand what the challenges are," Ruller said. "They're trying to deliver on the expectations that council's bringing forward, and they've brought

their best proposals forward."

Originally, the town was going to keep its budget contribution to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library status quo for 2023, rather than granting the library board's increase of approximately \$53,189.

However, after hearing a delegation on Tuesday from library board member Wayne Scott asking the town to reconsider, council voted in favour of increasing the library budget by \$36,468 for its staff salaries and OMERS, raising the originally-planned tax increase of 8.58 per cent to 8.85 per cent.

Other financial pressures this year include provincial legislative changes, many under the recently-passed Bill 23 and Bill 109, including a reduction in development charge fees, plus regulations related to storm pond management, impacting the municipal storm levy (set at approximately \$952,000 this year).

Freeborn has been asked during recent budget meetings to explain transit costs, and how they relate to this budget. Transit has now been taken over by the region, and will be funded through a regional levy for that purpose.

Freeborn said the town is offsetting what would have been an additional 7.3 per cent increase to the tax levy (from the regional levy) without this

saving, by transferring \$1 million from parking reserves.

This new budget includes hiring 13 full-time employees and converting five contracts to full-time positions. Council spent much of its proceedings in March debating which positions to keep in the budget and which to push to 2024, but ended up keeping most of those prioritized in the budget.

As of Tuesday evening, the date for the final meeting on the operating budget had yet to be determined.

As for the capital budget, the municipality's big-ticket projects for 2023 will be reconstruction on Line 3 Road (the second phase of a project extending from Four Mile Creek Road to Concession 6) at \$2.4 million; replacing the water main on Line 5 at \$1.25 million; and replacing a culvert bridge on Simcoe Street, at \$538,000.

There are also plans for enhancing the streetscapes of both Niagara Stone Road and Glendale Avenue at York Road, at \$860,000 and \$400,000 respectively.

Some projects were added to the capital budget during deliberations, including \$250,000 to install a diesel exhaust removal system at one of its fire halls, \$150,000 to reinstate a sidewalk on Andres Street, and \$15,000 for a replacement div-

ing board at Memorial Park's swimming pool.

The town is also increasing its contribution to the capital reserve this year by

\$300,000, for a \$2.42 million transfer total. According to Freeborn, \$350,000 will be left in the capital reserve after the town pays for its cap-

ital projects this year. This balance will fund any new project requests that arise or unexpected and emergency capital needs.



Coun. Erwin Wiens is explaining why he doesn't agree with Coun. Sandra O'Connor's motion to go back to the drawing board so late in the process, with Coun. Wendy Cheropita on the left, and Couns. Gary Burroughs and Tim Balasiuk on the right. (Screenshot)

Niagara Health closing last of COVID clinics

Local Staff

Niagara Health's COVID-19 assessment centre and COVID, cold and flu care clinics will permanently close on Friday, March 31.

A news release from Niagara Health said COVID-19 testing will be available at some pharmacies across the region, and the prescription drug Paxlovid will continue to be available through family physicians and also at some Niagara pharmacies. Remdesivir infusion therapy, which aids in treating COVID-19, will be available in the community.

Niagara Health's first assessment centre opened on March 17, 2020, at its Niagara Falls site, and has since administered more than 327,000 swabs, the news release says. The centres

served as the primary screening and testing locations for COVID-19 in the region. The Niagara Falls centre is the final of the three to close.

Closing these operations will help health human resources efforts by allowing teams to return to their regular work or to NH priorities, and will also address staffing pressures and support for those providing frontline care.

"Working with our partners, we also opened an additional temporary location in Niagara Falls to test hospitality and tourism sector workers," says Zeau Ismail, director of interprofessional practice, research and education, and the director lead at COVID-19 assessment centre and COVID, cold and flu care clinic. "Community health-care profes-

sionals, including family physicians, stepped up to work at these centres, in addition to a number of redeployed hospital staff and physicians."

Niagara Health, along with partnering members of the Niagara Ontario Health Team-Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara, operated five clinics to test, assess and provide treatment for people with COVID-19 and other cold and flu-like illnesses. Since opening in 2022, the clinics and Niagara Health's clinical assessment centre have had more than 1,900 visits.

After March 31:

- If a person has symptoms of a respiratory illness, they are encouraged to call their primary care provider if they have one as the first option for guidance and care.

- If someone develops severe symptoms, they are urged to go to their nearest emergency department or call 9-1-1.

"We are incredibly grateful to our staff, physicians and partners, both on the frontlines and behind the scenes," says Ismail, for helping make the assessment centres and cold and flu clinics possible throughout the fight against COVID-19.



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Cemetery support group moving ahead with fundraising plans



George Webber and the Friends of the Forgotten are going ahead with fundraising plans, moving forward with the Negro Burial Ground archeology study, and hoping to also take on all the town's inactive cemeteries. James Russell has put flags on the graves he found with ground-penetrating radar. (File photo)

Zahraa Hmood
The Local

Findings from the historical Negro Burial Ground in Old Town will be presented to the town this spring, as the first stage of an archeological study of the long-unnoticed cemetery is expected to be completed at the end of March.

George Webber, a representative of Friends of the Forgotten, has asked for council's support of the organization fundraising to transform the cemetery, and nine other inactive cemeteries, into significant local sites.

Interest in the Negro Burial Ground on Mississauga Street began last spring when Toronto resident James Russell, a long-time Niagara-on-the-Lake visitor, commissioned ground-penetrating radar work to take place on the burial grounds, unmarked save for three headstones.

These burial grounds are where parishioners of the old Niagara Baptist Church were laid to rest more than 100 years ago. Dating back to 1830, the church's congregation was primarily Black people who fled the U.S. during the era of slavery.

There are thought to be 18 gravestones lying beneath the grass of the burial ground, as determined by Russell's radar work. However, the municipality requires archeological research be done to get more facts and information before approving any excavation.

Webber stepped in to help

with fundraising, and to be the face of the project in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Russell, however, has argued it should be the town's responsibility to pay the \$64,000 for archeological research, and since last fall, Russell and Webber have diverged paths on the project.

Through Friends of the Forgotten, \$5,000 was raised to fund the first stage of archeological assessment, through donations from foundation members, friends and family.

"We want to transform the state of the burial ground into something that we can all take pride in," Webber said during the March 21 meeting.

Council voted in favour of supporting Friends of the Forgotten in principle and of them returning to council to present the findings of the first archeological assessment once it becomes available at the end of March, and for staff to continue supporting fundraising efforts — such as accepting donations on the municipal website.

In total, the group wants to fundraise \$150,000 to carry out all three stages of archeological work, to be completed by Kitchener-based company ARA, alongside preliminary research, finding if a dig is warranted, a conservation plan for the buried gravestones, and extensive work beyond this.

Friends of the Forgotten's work, however, will expand beyond this burial ground, Webber said: "We started thinking about this from the perspective of that particular

site but realized there were 11 other sites in Niagara-on-the-Lake that needed attention."

The group, Webber said, has established a preliminary network of funding partners to help move forward with next stages, depending on what directives it receives from council, town staff and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario.

"We are playing the long game here," Webber said. "This is not a short-term project. This is a project that will take years for us to get to."

The goal, he said, is for the group to be a role model for others in the town who may be interested in developing the other cemetery sites within the town.

According to chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie, municipalities have to contend with several factors in taking over the management of inactive cemeteries, like costs, maintaining properties to comply with legislative and liability requirements, inadequate record-keeping of cemeteries, and the historical and cultural significance of these sites.

"It's very hard for rural municipalities to bear the cost of abandoned cemeteries, and that can become a burden to already-overburdened taxpayers," she said.

She said getting the archeological assessment off the ground has been necessary in order to figure out who is buried at the site and what to do with it next.

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Welcome Cole, we wish you all the very best as you continue your Real Estate practice here at Bosley. On your behalf, we invite your friends and past colleagues to contact you for timely answers to your questions and assistance in finding the right solution to your Real Estate needs.

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Golf Club dining room open and ready for season

Penny Coles
The Local

The course isn't quite ready for golfers, but it won't be long, and in the

meantime the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club has been spruced up and is open and ready for diners to enjoy the spectacular location with its lake view.

Looking out over the course last Friday, a beautiful sunny day, golfers seeing the carts lined up and ready to go would have been anxious to get out

with their clubs. Eva Reif, one of three owners of the club, says the maintenance crew is working hard to get the course ready, and if the weather cooperates, it

should be soon — but stay tuned for something more definite. While the course is public and open to anybody, the attraction of the

club, including the dining room, is that it's local, says Reif — the owners have been local, most of the members are as well, and the course, right here in one of the prettiest locations in NOTL, is the oldest in North America, and in two year's time will celebrate its 150th anniversary. "There is no place like it," she says, with its history and the best view in town, overlooking the water, which draws people to it.

The club, Reif clarifies, may have some new touches, but is not under new ownership. She, Rob DiDomenico, and Jim Forbes were partners with John and Jill Wiens for many years. The Wiens have retired, and Reif, DiDomenico and Marc Forbes, having taken over his father's share when he passed away, remain partners.

As Eva explains, many locals think Klaus Reif, her husband, is also an owner. He is not, she says — he focuses on running Reif Estate Winery.

Forbes has taken over the day-to-day management, and he is the right



Bobbi Wanamaker, Brenda Breen, Kathy Allen, Lisa Ermanson, dining room staff, with Eva Reif (seated), love working in the fun family atmosphere of the club. (Penny Coles)

Continued on page 5



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Sports Wall of Fame honours and recognizes residents who have made a significant contribution to the sporting community or have attained a significant athletic achievement.

Nominations can be submitted in two categories:

- **Athlete** - Must be or have been outstanding in their athletic field of endeavour.
- **Builder** - Trainers, coaches, officials, or executive members who have dedicated significant time to enhancing the Niagara-on-the-Lake sporting community.

The deadline for submissions is **May 5, 2023**. Nomination forms are available on the Town's website, and at the Community Centre (14 Anderson Lane), and the Town Administration Building (1593 Four Mile Creek Road). A Committee selects two individuals to be honoured on the Wall of Fame at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil. This ceremony will take place in August. Please visit **notl.com** for more information.



NOTL Golf Club owners Eva Reif, Marc Forbes and Rob DiDomenico are ready to welcome guests to the club house, and looking forward to the course opening soon. (Supplied)

Try out new menu and cocktails offered

Continued from page 4

person to run the golf club — as a well-travelled golfer he has “a really good eye” for all things relating to golf, says Reif.

She has sold The Grand Victorian, the elegant bed and breakfast on the Niagara River Parkway beside Reif Estate, and she and Klaus now live in their lake house in Port Colborne.

When the club partnership was first formed, Eva was busy with the Grand Victorian. “I put my heart and soul into it,” she says, but when COVID hit and travel was restricted, she realized she was exhausted from the day-to-day running of the inn, and knew it was time for a change.

The market had exploded, and it was the right time to sell.

Looking back, she says, “it was totally the right decision. It allows me to enjoy this,” she says, gesturing to the club dining room, “and it frees me up to enjoy the lake house.”

While she loves being at the club, it’s not a full-time job for her — she has a young granddaughter in Port Colborne whom she loves babysitting. However she has enjoyed being involved in making small changes in the club dining area.

There have been some

updates members and regulars might notice, she says, but she considers them superficial — new curtains and a coat of paint in lighter colours, along with a new carpet, present a brighter, fresh new look, but nothing has affected the traditional relaxed, friendly ambiance locals cherish.

As the partners get closer to the 150th celebration of the club, she says, “we’ll continue to do a little more refreshing and other minor changes.”

But it remains “a great place just the way it is,” she adds, “and as they say, if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

As Brenda Breen, a long-time server says, “this is like a family. It’s a very comforting place to come to. We know the members, and most of the staff have been here for a long time.

We’ve gone through life with them, not as staff, but as family members.”

There is, however, “a wonderful new team in the kitchen,” and Chef Jeff Hicks is expected to “get creative” with a few items on the menu, says Reif.

There will be some new seasonal items, without giving up the old favourites — although she admits liver and onions will be gone, but may appear occasionally as a daily special.

“The menus are going

to be fun,” says Reif. “We want to go for a light-hearted atmosphere.”

Although she’s not ready to give away new menu secrets just yet, Reif was excited to reveal there will be a brand-new, “amazing dessert menu,” and to make the desserts extra-special, when she left the golf club before heading home Friday she was going shopping to choose some new, elegant dessert plates to match the delicacies soon to be offered.

And to go along with the fun atmosphere the club offers, Bobbi Wanamaker, “a bit of a mixologist,” says Reif, will be keeping up with the “light, refreshing changes” by adding a new selection of cocktails, again, “without giving up the old faithfuls.”

The popular music trivia night is back weekly, on Thursday evenings — an event the staff enjoy as much as the participants, Reif adds.

“This is really a local place and always has been. Some think the town now feels more touristy, and the locals feel left behind. This is part of the community, part of the NOTL psyche. Come and have a coffee, have a glass of wine, a full-course meal or an amazing dessert,” she says.

“Or just come and say hello.”

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EDITORIAL

Councillors taking another stab at a responsible budget

Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors headed into a budget meeting at 3 p.m. Tuesday, with the expectation the 2023 budget would be approved — or maybe not.

Several councillors had told The Local they wouldn't support the budget as it was — although Coun. Erwin Wiens and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa were okay with it, judging by what they said at last week's budget meeting.

Discussions began in February with a different process to follow, one that would see all councillors sitting through all budget meetings,

along with special council meetings, closed session meetings, planning meetings, committee of the whole meetings and regularly-scheduled council meetings.

That's a lot to throw at them at the start of a term, especially new councillors, along with a budget process that in the end seemed not to be so user-friendly.

During the last term of council, staff was given direction from the beginning of budget discussions, with a target increase. Last year, it was between two to three per cent, and although discussions began at a much higher

number than that, the increase was gradually reduced to match that target — it was approved at less than three per cent.

This year, there was no direction to staff, and it took councillors several meetings to reduce the increase to just below nine per cent.

Coun. Nick Ruller had issues with some decisions being made without a strategic plan, but he said he wasn't focused on a number. Others told The Local Tuesday morning they couldn't support an 8.83 per cent tax increase. Some have been frustrated as they listened

to the budget presentations without having the opportunity to speak out and suggest changes, and then felt rushed when the time came to make those suggestions.

As Tuesday's meeting drew to a close, it was clear there were still issues to be decided and another meeting would be necessary. Councillors were chided by Wiens for waiting until the 11th hour to ask staff, after all the work they've done, to go back to the drawing board. He was standing up for staff and for the process, and frustrated by the delay.

Told the deadline for

council approving the budget should be considered mid-April, it was agreed they would have at least one more meeting to sort out the operating budget.

This might have all been avoided if the staff had been told how to sketch out the budget at the beginning stages.

It is very unlikely anybody on council would have agreed then to shoot for an almost 9 per cent increase.

It would seem the process didn't work as it should.

Councillors, whether it's their first municipal budget or they have decades of

experience behind them, have to be sure they're getting it right. Or at the least, that they've done their best to try to get it right. They know their responsibility is to the taxpayers who elected them, and coming up with a responsible budget is likely the hardest task they will face this year.

A week or two is worth the time to have one more stab at it, and they should be thanked for not taking their responsibility to taxpayers lightly.

Penny Coles
The Local

Natural spaces can be your personal time capsule



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Although this concept isn't foreign to me at all, it took a certain event this weekend to inspire me to put it into writing.

I was fortunate to take out a handful of selected colleagues, friends and family for an afternoon of educational training to become certified backup guides for my eco-tour business. This was a particularly special milestone as a local business owner, but more importantly, I had an epiphany about memories I have had in this exact forest.

I want you to think about a local forest, trail system, or

park that you routinely frequent. Maybe it is a spot you grew up, walk your dog or take guests when they visit town. As a fascinating mental exercise, I encourage you to try to find flashbacks at certain locations along your walk.

For example, do you remember having an important conversation with someone while standing next to the bend in the creek? Can you think of something funny that happened with your friends from your childhood on this hillside? To go deeper, who were you as a person when you walked these trails one, 10 or 30 years ago?

In the day and age where addressing and taking care of our mental health is paramount, the great outdoors can provide a free and non-judgemental tool of self-reflection. Our favourite trails remind us of how we evolve, change, overcome

and celebrate aspects of our lives.

Before I and the trainees stepped into the tree line at Queenston Heights, I found my mind perusing the shopping aisles of life, picking and pulling things off the shelves as I walked.

The first and arguably most sentimental part was that these woods are my hometown stomping grounds. A tiny Owen half my size would have attended his first class trip in this exact parking lot. My cousins used to babysit me up here while I enjoyed the swing set or searched incessantly for bugs under logs.

When I was old enough to roam from home with my walkie talkie, I was set free into these woods with my St. Davids Public School friends. We had no cell phones. I walked by a fascinating rock formation where I once had a birthday picnic with my friends, and another giant boulder where one of our most cherished family photos was taken.

Further along, there is a stretch of trail where I once took a first date as a teenager. Around the same time frame, I reflect on a corner of the trail I am about to round with the trainees. It was in this exact location two bud-

dies of mine and I had to fend off a vicious dog that chased us on our mountain bikes while in high school. Along this section on the Niagara Escarpment, I have filmed dangerous ice storms and beautiful sunsets over the past decade.

Alas, then there is the Bruce Trail. I can almost see the ghost of myself in 2014, walking up to Queenston Heights where dozens of people were waiting for me at the end of a 37-day hike, where I pushed my brother Garrett in his wheelchair through the finish line.

If I am mathematically accurate, I have statistically been through this section of forest hundreds of times.



Certain places along the Niagara Escarpment have become a sort of historical time capsule for Owen Bjorgan. "Where is your equivalent time capsule place in nature?" he asks.

I can scrounge up a similar number for places like the Niagara Gorge, Short Hills Provincial Park or Balls Falls. These spots behave as conservation areas for both na-

ture and my life story. Every year you walk by the same tree, and it creates a new ring of growth on its inside. That is what is happening to all of us as well.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In *Last Flag Flying* (Prime, 2017) a Vietnam vet must attend to the interment of his son who was killed in the Iraqi war. He wants to forgo a burial in Arlington, so he can bring his son's body

home for burial. He is aided on this journey by two of his Vietnam wartime buddies. The long train trip allows the three to reminisce and come to terms with the young man's death, and with their shared memories of war. Each man becomes more honest and the audience is deeply involved in

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

Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. We received several responses from people who realized Ben was at the community centre disc golf course, but nobody identified last week's cairn at Fort George.



The Niagara-on-the-Lake
Local
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COMMENT

Local

LETTERS St. Davids resident lists issues with development

A while ago, when I became aware of the proposed high-density Tawny Ridge Development, I sent an email to Gary Zalepa, Erwin Wiens and Adriana Vizzari asking them what their position was on the Tawny Ridge Zoning Amendments that will turn the neighbourhood into a high-density development involving three-storey high stacked townhouses and/or a four-storey, 70-foot-high apartment building. I only got one response, from Erwin Wiens who emailed the following:

“At this point in the process, it is prudent for me to listen and learn about the application before making any comments about it. As an elected representative it is important to the process that I have all the facts before I make comments. I am watching the process unfold and will be asking questions of all parties involved.”

Well, the facts are as follows:

The fact is the developer

purchased this property with the intent of making money and the purpose of his zoning amendment requests is to make more money. If council rejects the zoning amendments and leaves the property zoned as is, at R1, the developer will still make a healthy profit. And the town will be the beneficiary of property tax revenues and the like from this property’s development. It’s still a win-win situation.

The fact is these zoning amendment requests will deteriorate the market values of million-dollar homes in the neighbourhood.

The fact is that people purchased and built homes in the neighbourhood because there were no three-storey stacked townhouses or a four-storey, 70-foot-high apartment building.

The fact is that St. Davids residents trust their elected officials to represent the voices of residents, and make decisions that benefit them in a positive way.

The fact is that the zoning

amendments will significantly detract from the historic nature of the neighbourhood, the charm, fabric and attractiveness of St. Davids.

The fact is that the existing infrastructure to support high density falls short of what is needed in St. Davids. The pool is broken, there are no soccer pitches, no baseball fields, no basketball courts, no community centre, etc. There are bare essentials in St. Davids. We would like improvements but I think we understand there are priorities in the town’s budget process and council has to allocate funds where they are more direly needed.

The fact is traffic will be significantly increased with a high-density development, threatening the safety of school kids and exacerbating an already debated amount of traffic congestion at the corner of Four Mile Creek and York Roads, and speeding along Four Mile Creek. And not to mention an increased difficulty for residents exiting from their developments

or homes along Four Mile Creek, Warner Road and York Road. Thorough traffic studies were not conducted, but why ask for them? Everyone knows that the problem already exists.

The fact is that sewage, water runoff, settling ponds and environmental considerations have not been addressed, but these studies will be more complicated with a high-density development. It would be simpler and more expedient to leave the zoning at R1.

The fact is that the requested high-density development will not meet the region’s overall strategy of housing for various income groups because there is no guarantee the owner of these stacked

townhouses or the proposed apartment building will keep rents at a level described in the region’s Income Bracket Strategy. And neither the region nor the town will be able to stop or regulate rental increases in a high-density development. There is no doubt some of the homes in Tawny Ridge will sell for possibly \$2 million. How is this affordable housing? If the existing zoning is maintained, the developer will make a very healthy profit and the town will receive revenues from this development.

So, what is the motivating factor that would inspire the approval of a high-density development in St. Davids? I cannot find a rationale for council, staff or commit-

tees to approve these zoning amendments.

Finally, Adriana Vizzari publicly stated in her election platform that she wanted to represent the residents of St. Davids. Gary Zalepa has publicly stated that he wanted to listen more to the electorate than before. I hope that all of council, members of committees and all those who are employed by the town, work in the best interests of the residents of St. Davids, listen to the emphatic requests of St. Davids residents and reject the high-density zoning amendments proposed by the developer and Upper Canada Consultants.

Gienek Ksiazkiewicz
St. Davids



Letters! We want letters!

If you have a letter to the editor you’d like to see published, please send it to penny@notllocal.com. Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won’t publish anonymous letters. And please stick to the issue at hand, rather than attacking those involved. The deadline is Monday at noon.

Delirium: What we all need to know

Rebekah Sibbald
Samuel Thrall
Larry W. Chambers
Special to The Local

“My grandfather was always immaculately dressed; without exception, he wore a freshly pressed shirt tucked into pleated trousers, his hair combed back like Fred Astaire, with a matching twinkle in his eye. A Second World War veteran and career firefighter, he was sharp-minded but soft-spoken, always quick with a teasing remark about my fashionably distressed jeans and vegetarian diet; and with a perpetual appreciation for the small things in life — like my grandma’s scalloped potatoes.”

As one of our co-authors, Rebekah Sibbald, describes, “He went into the hospital with a broken hip, and never came out.”

She explains, “When he came out of hip surgery, he was no longer himself. It was heartbreaking: he could not leave his bed, but he kept trying to go home. He was so disoriented and confused that they eventually had to forcefully restrain him, and he lost trust in his loved ones. The healthcare staff kept raising their voices — assuming that his misunderstanding must be due to a hearing issue, though that was not the case at all. He rapidly deteriorated.”

Though poorly understood, delirium is experienced by a significant proportion of older adults; the prevalence varies, depending on where and how it’s measured. For older adults who

undergo hip fracture surgery, the rate is as high as 11 per cent. More broadly, it affects as many as 50 per cent of hospitalized adults over 65, with estimates reaching 87 per cent for older adults in intensive care, and 88 per cent for those in palliative care settings. In Canada, delirium is the third most common cause of unintended harm experienced by patients as a result of their medical treatment.

For some, delirium manifests as quiet withdrawal and mild disorientation; others may not be able to recognize their care team or family members, while becoming distrustful and anxious. Despite its prevalence, the cause of delirium is very poorly understood, and estimates of misdiagnosis are as high as 65 per cent.

With that in mind, there are three things that the public, including all healthcare workers and caregivers, should know about delirium:

1. Delirium is a sudden change in attention and thinking ability caused by an underlying medical condition.

Delirium is a brain disorder involving confusion, a reduced ability to focus and pay attention, and less awareness of the environment. It usually develops over a short period of time and fluctuates during the course of a day. By definition, these disturbances are caused by an underlying medical condition or a treatment, including drug-related side effects. Older adults are at a higher risk, especially those with demen-

tia and COVID-19; however, the causes are often complex and overlapping. Events commonly triggering delirium include surgery, stroke, infection, dehydration and pain.

Despite its prevalence, especially in older adults, delirium should never be considered a ‘normal’ part of aging, illness or care after an operation.

2. Delirium profoundly impacts the health of older adults — and their families.

With its sudden onset, it is assumed that delirium occurs only with acute period of illness or an isolated visit to an emergency department visit. Though this is often true, delirium can last for 12 months after the initial diagnosis, with reduced attention, disorientation and memory problems persisting the most often. Its impact can be profound: studies show that delirium is an independent contributor to health outcomes in older persons, including decline in physical and thinking abilities (in some cases dementia), future admission to a hospital or care home, and — as with our co-author’s grandfather — mortality.

The full impact of delirium extends beyond the patient. Family members report a lack of awareness about delirium, and experience feelings of loss, distress, shock, fear and frustration in caring for loved ones with delirium. This is complicated by the fact that, like physicians, nurses often do not recognize delirium, and report difficulty in distinguishing it from conditions such as de-

mentia and depression.

As our co-author describes, her grandfather’s experience with delirium had lasting effects on her family. As she explains, “For some of my family members, this experience with delirium has worsened an existing fear of hospitals, and especially of any procedure involving anesthesia — even those as routine as a colonoscopy.”

3. Most importantly, delirium can be treated and prevented.

If delirium is suspected, the patient should receive prompt professional support, with attempts to determine the underlying causes, alongside immediate treatment. This should involve supportive healthcare, management of symptoms, anticipating and preventing complications, restoring daily activities and focused treatment of the underlying causes.

Prevention is more straightforward; in fact, 30 to 40 per cent of hospital acquired delirium can be prevented with non-drug tactics. None of these are particularly novel or innovative — we’ve known about them for a quarter-century, and they are well supported by the scientific literature. These preventive measures are also extremely accessible, and can be led by families, caregivers and health care workers alike. We’ve highlighted them in the table below:

Non-Drug Actions to Prevent Delirium Triggers of Sudden Delirium: Unfamiliar surroundings and situation

Develop an orientation ‘board’ to familiarize patient with names of family and friends or the care team members and daily schedule; provide orienting communication at least once a day.

Trigger: Reduced thinking ability

Encourage activities to stimulate the brain, such as talking with family or care team members three times a day, and customized options according to leisure interests and physical impairments.

Trigger: Unable to move ‘naturally’

Promote early movement, such as walking or range-of-motion exercises, three times a day, depending on patient health status; avoid use of immobilizing equipment and physical restraints.

Trigger: Problems with hearing and vision

Provide visual and hearing aids; use special communication techniques, with daily reinforcement; ensure removal of communication impediments such as language barriers, or even earwax.

Trigger: Dehydration

Recognize dehydration and ensure satisfactory liquid intake; provide encouragement during meals; and multi-step instructions depending on patient health status.

Trigger: Unable to sleep

Use non-medical sleep supports, such as warm drinks, relaxing music or sounds and massage; reduce noise throughout living environment; reschedule medications and procedures to allow uninterrupted sleep.

Trigger: Using multiple drugs and inappropriate medications

Minimize or avoid drugs affecting mind and behaviour; monitor drugs daily, and discuss strategies with an interdisciplinary care team.

In the case of our co-author, we can’t know if a better understanding of delirium for both his family and treatment team would have changed the course of her grandfather’s end-of-life. He may still have never left the hospital; in the distress arising from his delirium, our co-author’s family never learned a cause of death.

She adds this final thought: “Either way, it would have made his time in the hospital less challenging for everyone involved — most of all him. That time might have been less fearful, more dignified more peaceful.”

Rebekah Sibbald is a medical student at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, McMaster University.

Dr. Samuel Thrall is a geriatrician at Niagara Health and an assistant professor in the department of medicine at McMaster University.

Professor Chambers is research director of the Niagara Regional Campus, Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, McMaster University, and maintains appointments at the Bruyere Research Institute; the Faculty of Health, York University; and ICES, an independent, non-profit corporation for health services research and population-wide health outcomes research in Ontario.

Retailers hoping bus traffic will return



The enclosed patio at Corks Wine Bar & Eatery was a popular place on a sunny, but chilly day on Queen Street. (Photos by Sharon Burns)



Town staff are getting Queen's Royal Park ready for the tourism season.



Queen Street wasn't busy by any means on a recent weekday, but those outdoors were enjoying shopping in the sunshine.

Continued from page 1

will come back.”

“The tourism industry in Canada was one of the hardest-hit sectors during the pandemic, and we have not recovered back to pre-pandemic levels,” said MacIntyre. “Regardless of demand, the complex workforce challenges have and will continue to impact recovery.”

“Across Canada and in Niagara-on-the-Lake, shortages in the workforce are still keeping some restaurants, retail and other businesses closed more days than usual,” he continued. “During recovery, hospitality workers were a high-risk group because they were front and centre with people every day. There is a diminished pool of workers because many retired or left the industry. So a full recovery will be slower than many think, regardless of demand.”

Sheila Wilcox, office and floor manager of Queen Street's Bistro 61, confirmed these challenges. “We are having labour difficulties. Getting new employees, especially for the kitchen, is difficult.”

Wilcox explained that “pre-COVID we had a plethora of people trying to come in to serve. The difficulty now is that staff are going to school, or have another job, and the hours they can work has changed.”

Wilcox finds keeping staff in the fall is also a challenge. “You're trying to provide a place for everyone to work and provide their hours, but we also have to staff and run a business. It's hard to find that balance.”

Ward recognizes that “last year there was a labour shortage” but is confident that “more and more people have rejoined the workforce now.”

“Businesses seem to be having more success than last year,” said Ward. “Labour shortages, especially with tourism, are not going to go away. We have Canada with a declining population, but this year was the first year we have seen a population growth, 95 per cent of which was new immigrants. We have systemic issues with population growth in Canada. We may still see some labour shortages, but not as bad as last year.”

Ward acknowledged that NOTL's biggest market is day-trippers from the GTA and that traffic on the QEW on the weekends can be horrendous. “We were hoping that the hovercraft would be operating this summer, but they are experiencing delays and have now pushed it back to summer 2024.”

As a hotelier, MacIntyre says he never worries about

recommending experiences throughout all the industry's neighbourhoods. “Whether it is the Shaw Festival, wineries, retail or restaurants, we all work together and recognize that we don't compete with each other, but as a destination, we compete with other destinations.”

“As the past chair of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, I found it amazing how all the tourism partners worked together and spoke the same language, even through COVID. That language was around commitment to stay quality assured,” added MacIntyre.

“We made sure coming out of COVID that regardless of all the obstacles COVID created, and that still exist, we are still providing a top premiere experience as a destination regardless of the additional operational costs. That has been the key to recovery and is the key to the future.”

The Chamber also promotes businesses in all of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which Ward explained is important.

“We are mindful about the carrying capacity, which means the amount of visitors the Heritage District can comfortably hold without seemingly being too many. There are various ways of measuring that. One is psychological, where one walks down main street and says ‘oh, nice to have visitors back’. Someone else might say ‘oh this is too much, it's overwhelming.’”

Physical carrying capacity addresses how many visitors in the Heritage District are too many, before infrastructure items such as parking and public washrooms are no longer adequate.

“We want to ensure that business is spread out across Niagara-on-the-Lake. Our visitors centre helps out with that, as well as our ambassadors program,” said Ward.

“The ambassadors are a group of volunteers who provide information to tourists in the Heritage District from May to October.”

During COVID they provided information on social distancing, and now they have transitioned to providing information about all tourist attractions and experiences in town, and they help to spread visitors across all of Niagara-on-the-Lake, rather than concentrating them on Queen Street, she said.

“We welcome absolutely everybody and in our own marketing, we are trying to attract multi-day overnight and multi-day visitors who come and stay in our hotels and B&Bs, and enjoy experiences across all sectors across all of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” said Ward.

Bunny Trail, egg hunt return April 8

Sharon Burns
The Local

Save a very important date in your calendars because the annual Bunny Trail and Kinsmen Egg Hunt are returning to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre on April 8, with almost 8,000 chocolate eggs to be distributed.

The event, put on by Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre, in partnership with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Kinsmen Club, will include a bake sale, activities, an Easter photo booth, and the ever-popular Touch-a-Truck.

"We are finalizing the confirmation from the fire department and we will also have some big construction trucks," said Laura Townsend, Niagara Nursery School fundraising director, about the child-friendly Touch-a-Truck activity.

"The Niagara-on-the-Lake Kinsmen hold their Easter egg hunt in tandem with our event each year," said Candice Penny, executive director of the nursery school. "The Bunny Trail has become a much beloved annual tradition for our community."

"This is the 46th year for the egg hunt," said



Kids hit the field at the community centre at last year's Kinsmen Egg Hunt, held in partnership with the Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Bunny Trail. (File photo)

Kinsmen executive member Ken Slingerland. "We missed two years because of COVID and came back last year. Last year was a really good crowd."

The egg hunt starts at 10 a.m. sharp, and the three age groups (under three years old, four to six and seven to nine) start

at the same time. "Parents are welcome to go in with the under-three age group," said Slingerland, who added that the Easter Bunny will be there for photo opportunities after the egg hunt.

"We are buying 60 kilograms of eggs this year and we will go through

them all," said Slingerland. "Each and every year we get close to 500 children."

The Bunny Trail event will kick off what will be a year of celebration for staff, students, and the Niagara-on-the-Lake community. "With the nursery school's expansion open-

ing during the height of COVID, the staff and students are looking forward to what the 2023 year will bring," said Penny.

"We are currently busy working on many upcoming events for our school, including a celebration for our 50th anniversary, which we have had to de-

lay due to COVID. With life getting back to 'normal', we are looking forward to finally marking this momentous occasion properly," said Penny.

A new addition to the nearly 30 year-old Bunny Trail is a petting zoo, said Townsend, but not the kind involving bunnies, ducks and chickens. "The Niagara Symphony Orchestra is going to set up their 'petting zoo' with a bunch of different instruments for the kids to explore."

Townsend hopes to exceed last year's crowd of over one thousand people at the event. Activities and bake sale run from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., with the egg hunt starting at 10 a.m., rain or shine. The cost for the Bunny Trail is \$5 per child and \$15 for three or more children. The Easter egg hunt is free.

All funds raised from the event go back directly into programming and much-needed educational resources, such as updated tablets for classrooms as well as equipment for three playground spaces.

"As a not-for-profit, we rely greatly on our fundraisers each year," said Penny.

For more information on the Bunny Trail, or to sponsor the event, visit niagaranurseryschool.ca.



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Transgender Day of Visibility to be held March 31

Sharon Burns
The Local

International Transgender Day of Visibility, observed on March 31, will honour the joy and resilience of trans and nonbinary communities.

The event starts with a celebration at St. Catharines City Hall, followed by a walk culminating at Silver Spire Church, and “anyone in the Niagara area is welcome to join us,” said Colleen McTigue, facilitator at Transgender Niagara, a trans peer support group.

On Nov. 20, a more solemn recognition occurs: The Transgender Day of Remembrance is a day to memorialize those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia.

“Someone along the way decided it would be a good idea to have a day to recognize transgender people and celebrate them for their contributions to society,” said McTigue. “We want to raise the visibility of the trans community so that people can see that we are just trying to live our lives. We are pretty ordinary people. We have no agenda other than to be who we are.”

The Day of Visibility is sponsored by The Niagara Transgender Action Coalition, which “formed around a need to provide services for the transgendered community, primarily around planning things like the days of remembrance and visibility, as well as meeting other needs such as providing after-care packages for people who undergo surgery,” explained McTigue.

The celebration will begin with a flag-raising ceremony at 4 p.m., remarks by local transgender activists and municipal politicians, as well as a performance by the award-winning Indigenous collective, Strong Water Singers.

On display at Silver Spire Church will be information tables provided by a host of local organizations including OUTniagara, Positive Living Niagara, Brock University, PFLAG Niagara, Quest Community Health Care Centre and Niagara Falls Community Health Care Centre.

“This is a great opportunity to build community and show allyship, for the Niagara community to come together and rally in support of Two-Spir-



Colleen McTigue, facilitator at Transgender Niagara, is helping to organize a day of awareness for the trans community. (Photo supplied)

it, Trans, and Non-Binary individuals,” said Celeste Turner, LGBTQ2+ support coordinator at the Niagara Falls Community Health Centre.

“We are also seeing an uprising in anti-trans hate speech across North Ameri-

ca,” said Turner. “This event is also an important opportunity to celebrate the strength, resilience, achievements, and dedication of trans folk in our community.”

“We hope to demonstrate that there is a fairly large and thriving transgen-

der community in the Niagara area. We also want to provide information about some of the more illustrious trans people who have made major contributions, like Wendy Carlos who pioneered the use of the synthesizer in music and wrote the score for the movie *Tron*, and the Wachowskis, who created *The Matrix* franchise,” said McTigue.

“We want to demonstrate that the transgender community is actually a vital part of the community. We do good things in the community,” continued McTigue. “The transgender community should not just be tolerated or accepted, but celebrated in society. A lot of us feel we don’t have permission to exist in public and that’s what needs to change.”

McTigue also hopes to further the conversation around the fact that trans women, in particular, are often a specific target. “We are not trying to deceive people,” she said. “We are just trying to be who we are.”

“One of the things about transitioning,” explained McTigue, “is that you need to quickly present and live

in your target gender in order to access medical treatments like hormones and surgery, if surgery is where you are headed. In public, you need to dress full time as a female, which means that you need to use the women’s room because you could get beat up in the men’s room.”

“Unfortunately, there are still many challenges faced at no fault of the individual. I deal every day with folks who are experiencing undue hardship and discrimination simply for who they are,” said Turner. “This affects well-being including healthcare, housing, and employment, to name a few. Laws have changed and human rights have come a long way but this doesn’t always lead to lives free of oppression, discrimination, harassment or worse.”

On Trans Day of Visibility, McTigue and Turner encourage everyone to take the time to learn more about challenges faced by trans folks and how to support transgender individuals in their lives. Together, they said, we can work towards creating a more just and equitable world for all.

Pumphouse exhibit ‘bold and beautiful’

Maria Klassen
Special to The Local

There is a new art exhibit being featured at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake that will run for the month of April, opening March 30. This display is entitled *Lines in Nature* and is the work of Kimberley Laspa.

As a young child, Laspa enjoyed art classes in school, and found her teachers very encouraging; she assumed everyone enjoyed art the way she did. She eventually realized that wasn’t so.

Her career path took her into fashion designing, and only in 2016 did she seriously start painting with acrylics. She has worked with watercolour as well, but acrylic has become her medium of choice.

Her landscapes are dark silhouettes outlining bold, vibrant, beautiful colour. She is inspired by nature,



Kimberley Laspa and her paintings are the subject of an exhibit at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre for the month of April. (Maria Klassen)

the scenery around her, especially the escarpment, or scenery from other places she has visited in Western Canada. Her abstract versions of nature focus on line, shape and colour.

Laspa may paint every

day all day until she has finished a certain piece of art, she says, or she may be working on several pieces at the same time. Or she may have a few days where she is not painting at all. Laspa is mostly self-taught, with

a few lessons sprinkled in, and input from her artist husband. She doesn’t paint from a photograph, but from her memory of what she saw, she explains.

Part of the enjoyment of abstract painting for Laspa

is to hear how people interpret her paintings differently.

It is a great show — come by and have a look, and enjoy what you see.

This exhibit runs from March 30 to April 30 in the

Joyner Gallery. All are welcome to the opening reception on April 2, from 2 to 4 p.m. Refreshments will be served. The art centre is located at 247 Ricardo Street. For more information call 905-468-5455.



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Big names in Canadian jazz coming to Hare Wine Co.

Mike Balsom
The Local

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival has just announced its spring lineup for its Jazz and Blues Series at the Hare Wine Co and it includes some of the biggest names in Canadian jazz.

It kicks off this Monday, April 3, with the all-star septet The Canadian Jazz Collective.

The group is fronted by saxophonist Kirk MacDonald, guitarist Lorne Lofsky and trumpeter Derrick Gardner.

“This is really big news,” says festival co-creator and executive artistic producer Juliet Dunn. “We couldn’t ask for a better beginning for the fifth edition of the Twilight Series on this, our 10th anniversary year.”

The CJC is the brainchild of artist manager Judith Humenick, who had a feeling that putting together a group of powerhouse musicians, each with their own seemingly endless string of both live and recorded credits, would create something special.

“She wanted to establish all three of us more widely in the European market,” says MacDonald on the phone from Toronto. “I had worked with Derrick, and also with Lorne before, and Judith thought we would have good chemistry together, a nice blend of personalities between us.”

Accompanied by pianist Brian Dickinson, bassist Neil Swainson and clarinetist Virginia

MacDonald, the trio embarked last year on a trip to Villingen, Germany, where they connected with drummer and German native Bernd Reiter. There, they recorded the eight original compositions that make up their debut album, *Septology - The Black Forest Sessions*, out March 31.

A European tour followed, culminating in a performance at the famous Ronnie Scott’s Jazz Club in London.

“We had a wonderful time,” MacDonald says. “The response was fantastic, standing ovations at every gig. I think as good as everybody plays in the group, there’s a special kind of energy when we all play together. We’re real simpatico, musically and personally. It’s very special.”

Scheduled to head back to Europe in May to promote the new album, Humenick has booked the septet for a number of gigs in Ontario and Quebec, including the show in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The first two tracks from the CJC album are available to hear now on streaming services. *Dig That*, written by Gardner, showcases the trumpeter’s chops with a cool jazz tempo set by the rhythm section. Lofsky’s *The Time Being* gives freedom to pianist Dickinson to shine like the composer’s former bandleader, Oscar Peterson.

“We’re all accomplished composers,” MacDonald explains. “Original compositions

is what this group is all about. When we do these concerts we play repertoire from the recording, and you’ll be hearing other things as well. We will occasionally add a standard or two, something from Horace Silver or Wayne Shorter.”

The Humber College Jazz faculty member and two-time Juno Award winner goes on to speak of the vast knowledge of the genre that each member brings to the CJC, and he insists that the combo’s youngest member, clarinetist Virginia MacDonald, is just as accomplished as her bandmates.

“She is equal to anyone in the group,” the proud father says of his 27-year-old daughter. “She is a world class musician. She’s turned into an incredible virtuoso. Her approach to music was never a technical one. There was always a depth in her playing even when she was very young. Probably from being around music all her life.”

In fact, with Virginia in demand recently on albums by trombonist Michael Dease, drummer Sanah Kadoura and Juno Award winning singer Caity Gyorgy, the CJC has actually had to work around her schedule. But she was able to make the trip last year to the Black Forest.

“Touring with her is fantastic,” MacDonald adds. “The way people respond to her musicianship is really quite something. She really captures a room with



The all-star Canadian Jazz Collective kicks off the spring lineup at Hare Wine Co. April 3. (Supplied)

her energy and the sound of her music. She really draws people into her playing. And the other guys in the band love her.”

MacDonald says each member of the group brings something unique to the band.

“It truly is an all-star band,” he says. “And at the same time, nobody comes in without their ego truly in check. No one comes in with any kind of attitude. This is a band of leaders working together in a group context. We’re as good as anything you’ll hear on any given night.”

On April 17, London-born bassist, former St. Catharines resident, Lakeport Secondary School and Brock University grad Duncan Hopkins brings a quartet featuring Reg Schwager,

Ted Quinlan and Ted Warren to the Hare Wine Co. The bassist will be leading a tribute to another former resident of the Garden City, the late trumpet and flugelhorn player Kenny Wheeler.

The series shifts to a Sunday night on April 30 to celebrate International Jazz Day. Fittingly, the surefire future international jazz sensation Caity Gyorgy appears at Hare that night.

At only 24 years old, the Humber College grad has already earned two Juno Awards — for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year in 2022 for her EP, *Now Pronouncing: Caity Gyorgy*, and just this month for her debut LP, *Featuring*.

Georgy brings a youthful, joyful exuberance to her own compositions that are often

written in the style of the Great American Songbook. Her song *Secret Safe* won the grand prize in the Jazz category of the 2021 John Lennon Songwriting Contest. Georgy’s third album, *You’re Alike, You Two*, a collection of Jerome Kern songs performed with pianist Mark Limacher, will be released in July.

The Twilight Jazz and Blues Series continues on May 15 with the Denielle Bassels Trio, and concludes Monday, June 5, with a night of blues from the Bentley Collective, featuring composer, singer and guitar player Brooke Bentley Blackburn.

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Cat rescue fundraiser coming up on Saturday

Sharon Burns
The Local

A Niagara-on-the-Lake cat shelter has been very busy this winter caring for cats who have been dumped or surrendered, said Tanya Rice, volunteer and director of fundraising at NOTL Cat Rescue.

“It’s an epidemic post-pandemic,” she said. Many domesticated cats in the past several months are being surrendered or

dumped on rural Niagara roads because “people have gotten back to their lives.”

This is a global problem, she said, citing as an example her daughter, who fosters domesticated dumped rabbits in Australia.

“In the last eight years my husband and I have become advocates,” said Rice. “NOTL Cat Rescue is 100 percent volunteer driven and non-profit,

but it literally takes the community to take care of these wayward strays.”

Rice and her husband, Peter, are hosting the third annual spring fundraiser for NOTL Cat Rescue on April 1 at 456 Line 2 Road (behind Crossroads School) from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

They have recently lost one of their beloved family cats, and are asking that this year’s fundraiser be in memory of Indiana. “We have had some really very

nice donations from local businesses and benefactors,” said Rice, who also noted that The Kauzlaric Family Farm is sponsoring a substantial portion of the costs associated with the tulip and daffodil planters for sale at the fundraiser.

However, she added, the cat rescue still needs help. “We lost four foster families at the beginning of March due to lifestyle change, travelling or a

change of job.”

“We are in desperate need for foster families who have an open heart and space in their home,”

said Rice. “A foster family would incur no expenses, and volunteers drop off

Continued on page 13



Antonio is socialized and in need of a forever home. (Photos supplied)



The Rice family was sad to say goodbye to their beloved family pet recently, and is asking the Niagara Cats Rescue spring fundraiser be held memory of Indiana.



Spring planters make great fundraisers to aid the local cat rescue organization.

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Spring planters will brighten up your home

Continued from page 12

the food, the cat litter, cat toys and a bed.”

“If the cat needs medical attention for any reason, a volunteer driver will come to the house and take the cat to the vet and back. We also need volunteer drivers who could be available up to three times a month to take cats or kittens to a vet appointment.”

Currently NOTL Cat Rescue has seven cats up for adoption, down from 23 earlier this year.

“Six-month-old Ginny

is as friendly and as social as you can imagine, signs of a domesticated, not a feral cat,” said Rice. “A good Samaritan on Henry Street noticed her and contacted us. She was spayed and vaccinated last week and once she has recovered she is available for adoption.”

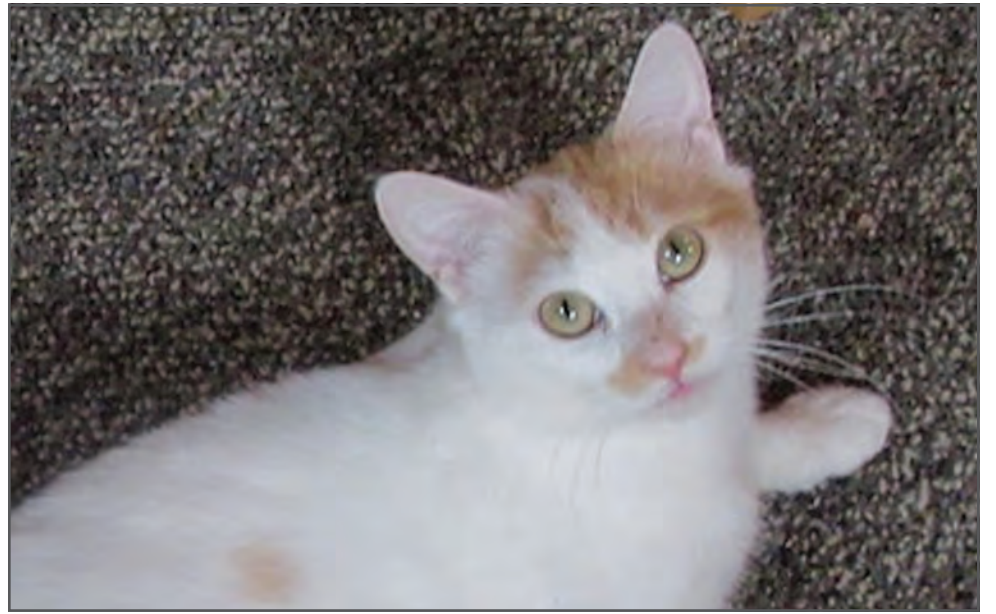
“Willow has feline coronavirus but she is responding to the trial we have enrolled her in very, very well. Willow will go up for adoption when the vet says she is cleared.”

“Ginny and Antonio are completely socialized and are ready for adoption

right now. Others take a little longer because they are rescues, and all they knew was living on the streets and fending for themselves. They require more socializing.”

If you are aware of a cat needing services, or would like to donate your time, cat products or money, please visit notlcats.weebly.com or search notlcats on Facebook.

Please consider fostering, pleads Rice. “It is really rewarding when you know that you have prepared them for their forever loving home.”



Ginny is very friendly and ready to be adopted. (Photo supplied)

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Whitney Fowler's first album is a sing-along gem

Mike Balsom
The Local

A good children's album,
a truly good one, doesn't feel
like it's just for kids.

Rather, it has to have something for all ages, music to which young and old alike can snap their fingers and sing along. Music that the entire family can revisit long after the kids are grown up, without evoking memories of excruciatingly long car trips with the same annoying song played over and over.

Sure, there's plenty of room in the children's music universe for the classics, like Sharon, Lois and Bram with their *Skinnybop*, Raffi with his *Wheels on the Bus*, or The Wiggles with their version of *Fruit Salad*.

But let's face it — the sheer mention of those silly earworms can send chills down your spine.

Former Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Whitney Fowler's new *Singing Hen* album is one of those truly good children's albums that can be listened to again and again without eliciting those chills.

Released in December, the album features 11 original compositions, all with the former Whitney Peterson's

gently-strummed acoustic guitar, ukulele or piano, and soft vocals that at times seem almost whispered.

The songs were recorded in the Cayuga, Ontario, home she shares with her husband Jordan and their children John and Melody.

It all came together organically in their home studio, a makeshift setup in the couple's farmhouse bedroom. Jordan captured his wife's performances and the tracks were sent to St. Catharines producer Joe Lapinski for mixing. Fittingly, sounds of the farm often creep into the mix, with birds chirping at the start of some numbers.

The album title is also the name of the singer-songwriter's new musical persona, which she told *The Local* last year was a natural fit.

"I saw myself as this flightless bird that has a lot of adventure-seeking personality, that loves to sing," she said. "I don't think of my voice as this pure, sing-erly voice. The name hum-bles it down to the chicken. We don't think of chickens as being particularly good singers. They squawk."

Songs such as *Seeds*, *Combinations* and *Sister Brother* are simple folk



Whitney Fowler with her daughter Melody, who has a song named after her on her mother's new album. *(Photos supplied)*

songs. They could have easily fit on any of Fowler's earlier albums released under the name Whitney Pea, such as 2012's *With a Heart Intending Forward*, *All A Feeling* from 2014 or the 2016 EP *Full Bloom*.

There are, of course, some songs that are obviously aimed at the pre-tween demographic.

Eddie Morley is about a spider, whose web “shone like diamonds,” as the song’s protagonist notices while waiting for the bus. “Will you wait for me, while I learn all day,” sings Peterson wistfully, “you’ll catch flies, I’ll catch a song in my brain.”

On *My Bike is My Friend*, an ode to a two-wheeled companion with a rusty chain and a plain paint job, Peterson is joined on the song's coda by a number of local children who tell stories about their own bicycles.

During *Freshly Washed Potato*, she conjures up late Canadian legend Stompin' Tom Connors with a lyrical rather than a sonic reference to his classic *Bud the Spud*.

Crickets chirp through out *Melody*, named after her charming daughter, who sits "in the flowers, singing songs

to the earthworms, and they wiggle to the surface, just to hear that Melody."

Fowler takes a fully whimsical approach on *When My Mom Swallowed the Clock*, during which a timepiece, a car, the cat and some toys, are all ingested, much to the dismay, and, it must be said, the amusement, of her children.

Seeds is a perfect song for springtime. It's about going out and planting seeds, and the hopefulness and excitement that comes from waiting to see them sprout and grow into new life. Fowler has described it herself as a fun little ukulele song, and she hits the nail on the head with that description. One can picture Melody joining her mother digging in the garden wearing their pyjamas.

And *Combinations* celebrates making blanket forts

and reading books, rainy days wearing puddle boots, and eating strawberries and cream. For an added treat, check out the playful stop-motion video for this song on the Singing Hen YouTube channel.

The album ends with the beautiful lullaby *Love You So*, played softly on the piano with Fowler accompanying herself on background vocals.

It's a great way to end a great collection of songs that anybody will love, and will love to return to long after their own chickens have flown the coop.

At just under 24 minutes, *Singing Hen* the album is over in a flash. Another measure of a truly good children's album? The listener is left wanting more.

Singing Hen is available to stream now on Apple Music and Spotify.

[illegible]

Whitney Fowler's new *Singing Hen* album cover.

A welcome burst of positivity from NOTL's Danny Lamb

Mike Balsom
The Local

The second single from St. Davids native Danny Lamb's upcoming EP further the singer-songwriter's quest to make the world a better place for all.

Unique 2 Yourself is an anthemic blast of pure positivity, a reminder to follow your heart, to stay true to yourself and to be patient with the process that it takes to discover your true, best self. It follows in the footsteps of *Bigger Than Me*, another inspirational anthem released last November.

Credited to Danny Lamb and the Association, the song was written by Lamb and produced, mixed and mastered by Toronto-based guitarist Tal Vaisman. It's a big-sounding, inspirational message to believe in yourself, pursue your dreams and fall in love with the process of getting there.

"From the day that we're born, the world tells us who to be," Lamb says. "It can be tough, especially as you get older, to hold onto that childlike wonder and the optimism that lives inside of having big dreams, goals and ambitions."

The self-described "shameless idealist" has never let anyone tell him what he can't do. He was born with a spinal cord condition known as spina bifida occulta, and diagnosed with hydrocephalus, a brain condition, at three years old.

"I was raised to believe that anything is possible," he says. "Dad always told us 'attitude is everything' and 'dream, believe, achieve'. Those attitudes were embedded into the fabric of how we were raised in our house."

Most locals know his story by now. When he was about 18 years old, Lamb became an ambassador for Hydrocephalus Canada. While attending a global conference in Sweden, he developed the idea for a project called *A Song, A City*. That initiative took him and a friend from Dublin, Ireland, to Peterborough, England, then on to Glasgow and Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Brussels and finally, Izmir, Turkey, writing a song in each of the seven locations.

Since then, he has continued his advocacy work for spina bifida and hydrocephalus associations, hosting the PUSH (People United for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus) podcast as well as two PUSH world-wide livestreams.

And *A Song, A City* continues to work alongside people around the world, using the power of music to tell a story, build confi-



Danny Lamb has released another EP, or extended play recording, again with a message of positivity. (Photos supplied)

dence, communicate a message, and amplify voices through the power of music and art.

Now living in Niagara Falls, Lamb teaches music from his home to younger students, such as his former St. Davids neighbour Austin Dill. In January, Lamb helped arrange a combination trivia night/song launch event that raised funds for *A Song, A City* as well as for his 18-year-old friend's charity of choice, Cerebral Palsy Ontario.

On *Unique 2 Yourself*, a catchy electronic beat leads into Lamb's motivational lyrics.

"I started to forget, growing up doesn't mean you're done dreaming yet," he sings. "Cuz like wine gets better with age, can't be rushed, so stay inspired, in time, the world gets lighter."

He admits the wine reference came quite naturally to him during the writing process.

"Growing up in wine country, I worked a lot of

jobs around wine and tourism," says Lamb. "I learned a lot about the process of wine, and the time that it can take for wine to develop into its fullest potential. The song was inspired by the beauty, patience and journey that a single bottle of wine takes to be ready for the world to embrace."

The mid-tempo pop song builds and builds to its climax with a bright-sounding mix of keyboards and guitars. Lamb's lead vocals are accompanied by his

own voice multi-tracked in the background, encouraging you to sing along with him.

"Don't lose your love in the face of a pressure," he continues on the song, "to be like everyone else. Be unique to yourself. Just believe you're enough, and don't ever stop seeing a world full of possibilities."

It's catchy, it's positive and it's something we all need to be reminded of from time to time.

Lamb expects to release

the rest of his EP later this spring or in the summer. And he's hoping to follow that up with a collection of songs from many of the artists he's been working with around the world through PUSH.

For now, you can hear *Unique 2 Yourself* and *Better Than Me* on all streaming services.

As he sings in *Unique 2 Yourself*, "Just believe you're enough/ And don't ever stop/ Seeing a world full of possibilities."

Mute swans hang out in local pond



This pair of mute swans seem to be annual visitors to Four Mile Pond, says photographer David Gilchrist. They become a common sight in the spring and summer from the Niagara Shores walking path. An introduced species, mute swans, with their distinctive orange beak and black face, are a common sight in the Great Lakes region. This pair will most likely establish a nest somewhere in the marsh area at the far end of Four Mile Pond, and maybe this summer we will see some young, says Gilchrist.

Buzz on Pollinators: Wild bees, honeybees and wasps

Sandra Ozkur
Special to The Local

Nearly one-third of human food production and 75 per cent of flowering plants require insect pollination.

Native bees, bumblebees, and honeybees are super pollinators, but small flies and wasps are often confused with bees and blamed for unwanted stings. It's important to be able to tell them apart and understand their characteristics so you can attract the right kind of pollinators to your garden.

Bees often get a bad rap for stinging, when in fact it is probably a wasp (yellow jacket) that is to blame. At first glance bees and wasps look similar because of their black and yellow markings, but on taking a closer look, you will see they are very different. Observe their body shape and behaviour — bees have thick, bullet-shaped hairy bodies, whereas wasps (yellow jackets) have an elongated, hairless body with a very narrow waist and long thin legs. Bees are vegetarians and rarely sting unless threatened, whereas wasps are carnivores, are more aggressive, and if disturbed can attack multiple times, leaving painful stings.

Bees are quite docile, can only sting once, then die, and do so only if their hive is threatened. Bees drink nectar for carbohydrates and eat pollen for protein, whereas wasps eat insect meat for protein and drink nectar for carbohydrates.

Bees carry pollen pouches on their back legs and spend their time flitting from flower to flower, spreading pollen as they move. Wasps dart about and look for insect prey but spend less time in your flower patch, so are not great pollinators, but they will keep unwanted pests under control. Wasps are usually the uninvited guests at your picnic table, whereas bees prefer to dine amongst the flowers.

You may be surprised to learn that there are more than 800 native species of bees in Canada, and about 400 of those live here in Ontario. When we talk about bees, people tend to think of honeybees, but honeybees are not native to North America — they were brought here by European settlers. Native bees have always done the majority of pollination work, but their populations are diminishing due to lack of wild habitat where they can find food and reproduce.

As stewards of the planet, we can help preserve the bee populations by providing ample food sources through the planting of native plants, trees and flowers, which will provide the proper nutrition that is so important to the bees' survival. Educating yourself about some of the main species of backyard bees can help you make better choices

when choosing plants for your garden.

Bees are grouped into two categories, according to their foraging (eating) behaviours. Generalist bees can extract nectar and pollen from a large range of flowers, whereas specialist bees can only forage from certain flowers suited to their diet. Their mouth parts are designed to fit into these particular flowers and their reproductive cycle is often synchronized with the blooming times of their host plants.

Generalist bees gather pollen and nectar from any plant that is in bloom, the nectar is made into honey and the pollen is fed to their brood (larvae). Honeybees and bumblebees are both generalist bees, so have a better chance of survival.

Bees are also classified according to their social behaviour — some are loners and some like to live with their families. Most native bees prefer a solitary lifestyle, whereas bumblebees are social and live in small colonies underground. Honeybees, being the most social of all, build large hives that can contain thousands of family members.

If you want to attract bees to your yard, try to provide the necessary habitat that will support their entire lifecycle. When the necessities of life are at hand, they will be more inclined to take up residence in your yard. Solitary native bees build their nests in burrows underground, so leave some bare patches of dirt to dig into.

Refrain from having a super tidy garden — fallen leaves and twigs provide protection throughout the winter, so don't rake too early in spring or you may destroy their nests. Dry plant stems and decaying logs serve as wonderful homes for many wild bees and pollinating insects.

Once spring arrives, the fertilized female will emerge to gather the necessary nectar and pollen to feed her brood. This is why it is important to provide a variety of blooming plants at all times, from spring until fall.

Here is a list of a few of the most common species of bees that will be happy to visit your pollinator gardens:

Honeybees are generalist foragers, are very social and can search for food up to 5 kilometres away from home. Honeybees live in hives filled with wax honeycomb that is used to house brood cells as well as honey and pollen. Only the queen lays eggs and the rest of the bees are assigned specific jobs such as gathering nectar, making honey and comb, guarding the hive, tending to the queen or brood and cleaning or guarding the hive.

Honeybees have barbed stingers and die once they sting. Their lifespan ranges from five to seven weeks but they are able to hibernate

throughout winter as they cluster around the fertilized queen. The hive becomes active again in the spring when the flowers start to bloom.

Bumblebees are native bees and generalist foragers. They are social but make their nests underground to lay their eggs. They make small amounts of honey that is stored in little wax pots rather than in honeycomb. Bumblebees are large and fuzzy and have many cousins with distinct markings. Their buzz pollinating technique releases pollen from blossoms that other bees can't get access to. The pollen sticks to their hairs and they push it down into a pollen sack on their back legs. The plants are fertilized as they move from flower to flower.

Bumble bees are especially proficient at pollinating tubular flowers such as tomatoes and cucumbers, and are often used in greenhouses. They have smooth stingers, can sting multiple times but don't attack unless threatened.

Only the queen burrows away in winter, then lays her eggs in spring to begin a new colony which feeds on the stored honey and pollen.

Tiny native bees can often be mistaken for flies because they are small and may be brown, black or metallic green in colour. They may also be striped with red, orange, yellow or white, which makes them more difficult to identify. They are solitary bees that get together only to mate. The female will lay her eggs and provide enough food for the larvae to eat and then leaves them to fend for themselves.

Mason bees are solitary, extremely good pollinators, and did most of the pollinating before the honeybee was introduced to Canada. They do not make honey so only search for pollen which they quickly spread from plant to plant as they move along. They are very beautiful with bluish hairy bodies and a gentle personality. They make cocoons inside hollow plant stems where they lay their eggs.

They don't fly far from home, so having an abundance of native plants that bloom in spring will be helpful to supporting this species.

Sweat bees are solitary, ground-nesting bees. They are very tiny with beautiful iridescent green heads and a black and yellow banded abdomen. They do not sting and are often confused with flies because they like to land on your skin and lick the salt from sweat.

Squash and gourd bees are solitary ground-nesters that are extremely important for vegetable garden pollination. They look similar to a honeybee but are slightly larger, and have a long tongue suitable for extracting nectar from the deep flower of



Honeybee (Photos by Sandra Ozkur)



Bumblebee



Tiny native bee

gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers and zucchinis.

Carpenter bees are solitary bees, and are quite large. They look similar to bumblebees but have smooth, hairless bodies. They are often seen hovering around decks or wooden porches where they like to drill into the wood and lay their eggs in the sawdust. They can be quite destructive to decks and wooden siding but are not aggressive and rarely sting.

Leafcutter bees are solitary and cavity-nesters. These curious little bees cut small pieces from leaves and then roll them up to make tubes where they

place pollen and eggs. When the eggs hatch, the larvae eat the pollen provided for them. Leafcutter bees are very efficient pollinators because they carry the pollen underneath their hairy abdomen, which spreads easily.

Mining bees are ground dwellers and look very similar to honeybees. Their burrows are intricately connected cave systems and are packed with balls of pollen. The female lays an egg on each ball and when the larvae hatch, they feed on the pollen. Some people find them a menace because they may nest under your lawn, but they are harmless and dis-

appear when spring is over.

Wasps such as yellowjackets, paper wasps and hornets are social insects and often nest in trees, cavities, walls or eaves of buildings. Yellowjackets can also nest in the ground and are particularly prone to stinging if their nests are disturbed. They create nests made of paper with cells inside where they lay their eggs. They are often mistaken for honeybees, but do not have hairy bodies or pollen sacks on their hind legs.

Find out more by reading this amazing report: *Bees of Toronto: A Guide to their Remarkable World*.

LocalSPORTS

Minor hockey wraps up with a championship

Mike Balsom
The Local

It was a big weekend for three Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves Minor Hockey local league teams, all of whom qualified to vie for the Niagara District Hockey League titles. When the final buzzer sounded after some hard-fought games, only the Under-11 team coached by Gary Friesen took home a trophy.

U11 Local League team one takes NDHLB-Division title

The entire U11 Wolves team one dropped their sticks and threw their gloves in the air when their championship game in Port Colborne finished Sunday morning. They skated to their goalie, Declan MacNeil, piling on top of him in congratulations, before scattering across the ice in a skating celebration.

It was a fitting way to mark their thrilling last-minute come-from-behind 2-1 victory over the Pelham Panthers team three.

The Wolves were the team to beat in the playoff finals, after going undefeated in the round robin with three wins and two ties. That gave them first seed heading into the semi-final, where they faced off against the fourth-seed Stoney Creek Warriors in Welland Saturday morning.

"We played a great game," head coach Gary Friesen tells The Local. "Everyone worked really hard and they all had a positive attitude heading into the game. We played hard from start to finish."

Forbes Dick led the way with a breakout four-goal performance in the 9-2 victory that brought them into Sunday morning's final in Port Colborne against the Panthers, who had beaten Wainfleet in the other semi-final.

"Pelham came out really hard, and we hung in there with them," Friesen says. "They ended up getting a goal early in the second period. Every time we went for a rush they seemed to back-check just a little harder. But we did a great job of shutting down their best player."

The Wolves had a great chance near the end of the second period when Nathan Reid was hauled down on a breakaway. Awarded a penalty shot, Reid missed the net and the period ended with the Wolves down 1-0.

"We told him to forget about it," Friesen said. "There was a lot of game left to play."

MacNeil made some amazing saves in the final period to keep the Wolves in the mix. With less than a minute left, Friesen and the coaching staff (Domenic Trapasso, Jeremy Froese, Jamie Kallio and trainer Aryn Kassam) sent the goalie to the bench in favour of a sixth attacker.

With only 42 seconds remaining, Reid fed a pass to Noah Kassam who scored to tie the game up.

At that point, Friesen was just hoping to finish the third period tied to get a chance to win it in overtime. But 24 seconds later, Sam Kallio got the puck at the point and took a shot on the Pelham net.

"It deflected off a bunch of players," Friesen says. "I couldn't tell where it was, but then I saw the goalie lay down on the ice in defeat. It was an awesome finish."

It was retribution for the young Wolves team, who had lost their final game in the Al Boone Tournament in Niagara Falls by one goal back in December to the NOTL Wolves team three coached by Pete Flynn.

"That one stung," remembers Friesen. "It was really nice that the kids were able to pull this one out. Two tough losses would have been frustrating. This was one of the most exciting games I've ever been a part of."

U13 Local League team two wins silver medals in A-Division

Matt Unruh's U13 Wolves had to settle for second place after taking on a tough Port Colborne Sailors team in their home rink at the Vale Centre Sunday afternoon.

The Wolves went 4-1-1 in round robin play leading up to

their semi-final game Saturday morning against the Pelham Panthers team one, their sole loss in that round coming against the Sailors.

In the semi-final game, Malcolm Buffington scored in the first to give the Wolves a 1-0 lead. Pelham fought back in the second, forcing the tie on a two-man breakaway early in the second period.

But Buffington put his team back on top about four minutes later, and the Wolves took the 2-1 lead into the third period.

Five minutes into the third period, Nikola Necakov-Waller took a high shot that Pelham's goalie stopped with his glove hand. But he failed to squeeze the puck, and it fell behind him and trickled into the net. Henry Buffington made it 4-1 when he scored on a nifty backhand shot just outside of the Panthers' crease. Pelham scored their second goal with just over four minutes remaining, but the Wolves shut them down the rest of the way for the 4-2 win and a chance to play for the title Sunday afternoon.

Unruh knew they would be in tough against the Sailors Sunday. Port Colborne had finished in first place in the regular season and were known to play an aggressive style of hockey.

"They came out strong in the first period, going up 2-0," Unruh tells The Local. "But we had overcome deficits like that many times this year. Then, at 12:58 in the second, on the power play, Nikola Waller had a beautiful tip from a slap shot from the point by Ty Sherlock to make it 2-1. We were in it and were playing with energy."

The Sailors answered with two quick goals before Boyd Hopkins picked up a beautiful pass from Josh Kroeker and fired a slapshot from the point to make it 4-2. But again, Port Colborne responded with two more before the end of the second period.

"Our team was looking tired, and a bit discouraged," Unruh says, "but they dug deep



The U11 team celebrates a championship win with (top left) Gary Friesen (head coach), Declan MacNeil, Aryn Kassam (trainer), Conor Bailey, Sam Kallio, Domenic Trapasso (asst. coach), Lauren Froese, Jamie Kallio (asst. coach) and Jack Friesen. Kneeling from left are Michael Collins, Nathan Reid, Noah Kassam, Charles Abbott, William Trapasso, and Forbes Dick. Missing from the photo are Easton Van Berkel, Matthew Kroeker and Jeremy Froese (coach). (Supplied)

and came out early in the third with renewed determination. We got a power play opportunity, and Malcolm Buffington deked quickly through the defenders and let a beautiful shot go from the seam. Silas Unruh tipped it in to make it 6-3."

But the Wolves couldn't find an answer to the Sailors' aggressive defence and speed on the rush the rest of the way. Port Colborne scored four more in the third to take the 10-3 win and the trophy.

"Our players showed their respect even in defeat," a proud Unruh says, "and clapped their sticks on the ice to congratulate the champions. They were proud to go home with silver medals around their necks, knowing they gave it their all, and had a great season."

U18 Local League team two eliminated in C-Division semi-final

The U18 Wolves team, coached by James Cadeau and Phil Leboudec, were beaten 5-1 in their semi-final Saturday by the Niagara Falls Flyers blue team, missing out on a chance to play for the title.



U13 player Rory Dueck has the puck, and is followed by William Marinis. (Mike Balsom)

"We were a young team this year," Cadeau says. "We only had one 17-year-old, and we ran up against a team that was pretty much all 17-year-olds. At that age, it makes a big difference."

The Wolves were 2-3-0 in the round robin qualifying games, with their final loss against the same Flyers team 17 days earlier.

"They got up on us 2-0 by the end of the first," Cadeau says about Saturday's game, "and it was 4-0 by the end of the second. To our guys' credit, they stuck with them throughout the third period. Even when they made it 5-0, we came back and scored the final goal."

Cadeau says the team played above their expectations

all season.

"Some games the kids just went above and beyond," he says. "There were some really fun things to watch. Often they would come out ahead when we didn't expect it. It was a really fun team to coach."

Cadeau adds he is looking forward to continuing to coach most of the same Wolves players in the same division next year.

This week marks the true end of the season for all of the NOTL local league teams. Throughout the week the club championship games will be played and end-of-season awards will be distributed. Look to The Local for coverage of that in next week's paper.

Provincial stars



Ashleen Hale



Samantha Frydryk with coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczkowski



Ophelia Xie with coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczkowski

Competing at the 2023 Skate Ontario Provincial Championships in Stratford last weekend, NOTL Skating Club's Ashleen Hale won the gold medal for her STAR 9 O14 Women event, and took the silver medal in the Gold Women's event. Samantha Frydryk placed fourth in her STAR 9 O13 Women's event, narrowly missing the bronze medal by .07 in her first provincial competition. Ophelia Xie skated well and finished 17th in her STAR 6 Women's event.

LocalSPORTS

U18 Wolves rep team fights to the finish for silver

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves Under-18 rep team took the Fort Erie Meteors to three games to decide the Niagara District Hockey League title, coming home with silver medals.

There was lots of excitement over three close

games that either of the evenly-matched teams had a chance to win.

The series began last Thursday at the Fort Erie Leisureplex, where the Meteors skated to a 3-1 victory in front of a supportive home crowd, before heading back to Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena for game two Saturday evening.

There was magic in the cold arena air Saturday. The stands were packed with friends, family members and others who came out to see the final home game to be played by 12 of the Wolves who will age out of the town's minor hockey system following this upcoming weekend's Ontario Minor Hockey Association championships.

The Wolves needed a win Saturday to force a game three back in Fort Erie, and it seemed the energy of the crowd provided the magic in storybook, or maybe Disney movie, fashion.

The Meteors had a 2-1 lead and fought to hold onto it right into the dying minutes of the third period. It looked like they were going to take

the title home with them, but the Wolves tied it up with just 45 seconds left.

"The crowd went wild," said NOTL Minor Hockey president Peter Flynn, who was watching the game. "The Fort Erie fans were swearing, and our fans were just going crazy. It was such a great atmosphere."

But the frenzy wasn't over. As the clock continued to wind down and a tie after regulation looked to be in order, Griffin Dyck took a pass and skated in against a single defender to pop it in the net for the winning goal with nine seconds on the clock.

"That game will be a life-long memory for many of our players," said Jeff Dyck, Griffin's father and the team's trainer. "On a night where we honoured our graduating players, they won on a last second goal to extend the series to a third and deciding game. Playing in front of a full house of energetic fans made the victory all the more exciting."

Many of those same supporters made the trip back to Fort Erie Sunday night, though they were clearly outnumbered by Meteors fans in the crowd of more than 200 people.

The bigger ice surface at the Leisureplex made for a very different game, with the Meteors obviously holding a bit of an advantage playing at their home rink. They used the wider surface to their benefit, pushing the Wolves to the outside and forcing them away from their net for much of the game.

A turnover by the Wolves in the defensive zone early in the first period resulted in a pass to an undefended Owen Stoddard of the Meteors. Stoddard skated in on Wolves goalie Mateo Gruosso, who had no time to adjust. The Meteors were up 1-0.

The Wolves struggled to get shots on net in the first period, and then began to get into penalty trouble in the second. At one point they were out manned 5-3 for over

a minute, but their penalty kill kept the Meteors off the scoreboard.

A major assessed to Will Denham near the end of the second left the Wolves short-handed for the first 4:32 of the third, but again they were able to successfully fend off the Fort Erie attack. Then the Meteors started to get into their own penalty trouble as the play began to get a little rough.

With the Wolves on the power play, the Meteors were able to clear the puck out of their zone, catching NOTL by surprise. One of the Meteors skated away with it on a breakout, and his rebound was netted by a teammate for the 2-0 lead with 8:34 to play.

Fort Erie was then assessed another penalty, and during the two-man advantage Ethan Peters finally got the Wolves on the scoreboard with a top-right-shelf shot into the Fort Erie net.

With 1:25 left to play, head coach Tim Marotta and assistant Jim Denham pulled Gruosso and NOTL put constant pressure on the Fort Erie defensive zone, but could not score the tying goal, losing the game 2-1.

"The team's determination and inspired play in the third period was sparked by Marco Gruosso," Dyck said. "He had the team fired up on the bench. We were in it right to the final second."

Though they didn't win the league championship, they'll be after a bigger prize this weekend when they travel to Barrie for the provincial championships.

"The team set a goal to make the OMHA playoffs at our very first team meeting," Dyck remembered. "By working together as a team and focusing on the details of the game, they have proven they can play with the best teams in the province. They'll have their chance to win red hats (a prize given to provincial winners each year) and will bring a belief in themselves and each other to the tournament."



Connor Smythe goes down to take a shot to help goalie Mateo Gruosso. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



U18 Wolves goalie Mateo Gruosso makes a save.

LocalWORSHIP



Sunday, April 2nd
9:45 a.m.
Cornerstone Kids Sign In
(Nursery - Grade 8)
10:00 a.m.
Worship Gathering
Online & In-Person
Message:
Meghan Plett
Jesus on Truth-Telling
(Matthew 5:33-37)
www.ccchurch.ca

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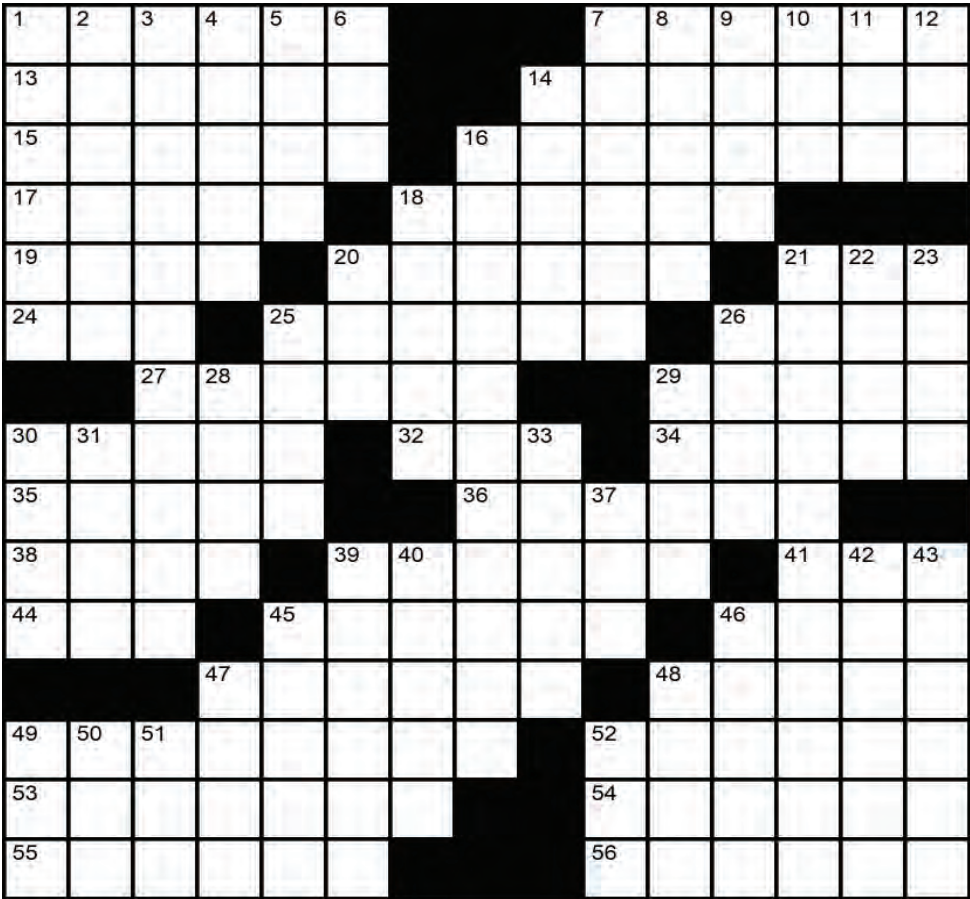
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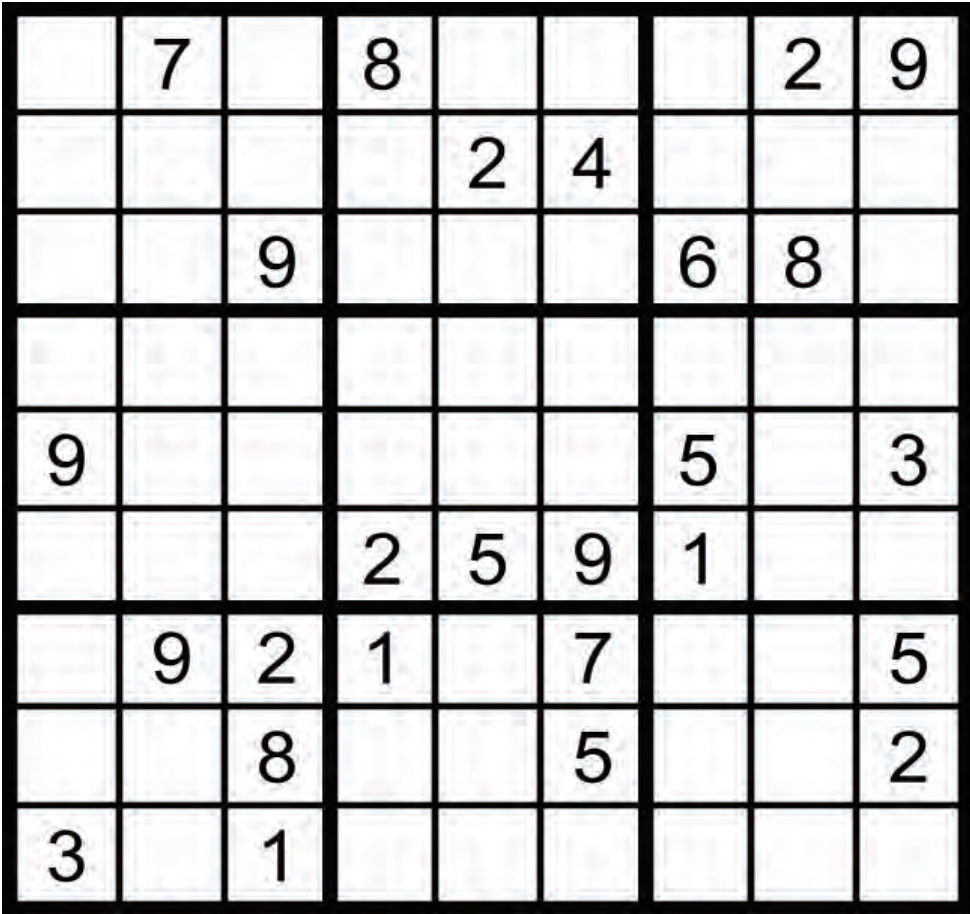


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- Across:**
1 Habitual practice
7 National park in Tennessee
13 Punctual
14 Self-destruction
15 In this place
16 University of California campus site
17 In broad daylight
18 Does puzzles like this one
19 Consults
20 Shaped
21 Dram
24 "The Last Ship" channel
25 Reimburse
26 King Cole's fiddlers, for example
27 Kind of couch
29 Fine-grained rock
30 Steam
32 Admiration
34 Buffalo Bill and Iron Eyes
35 President who wrote "Liberty, once lost, is lost forever"
36 Seasoned
38 Father
39 For the nonce
41 Vase
44 Social group
- 45 Experimental kind of pig, maybe
46 Your largest joint
47 "Hogan's Heroes" actor --- Klemperer
48 Sudden attacks
49 Notorious White House intern
52 Ventilate
53 Pistol parts
54 What Hepburn called Tracy
55 Agree
56 Became taut
- Down:**
1 Share the emceeing
2 Bumpy
3 Wise to urban ways
4 Bleachers' features
5 Leave out
6 Chess pieces, informally
7 Questionnaire
8 Raised drastically
9 Finishes off a cake
10 Small, in Dogpatch
11 "--- to a Nightingale" (Keats)
12 "I object!"
14 1965 civil rights march site
16 Get an advance
18 Bulgarian capital
20 Gangster's foe
21 ET radios nun about groups of workers
22 Smooth-talking
23 Lear's Pobble lost them
25 They don't go off
26 Norse thunder god
28 Domesticated
29 Surface gunk
30 Deepest part
31 "Nurse Jackie" lead --- Falco
33 Consumer, in a diner
37 "--- With Mussolini" (Zeffirelli movie)
39 Puckers
40 Where many participants get cold feet?
42 Lower
43 Wrote code within code
45 Aladdin's factotum
46 Member of a Myanmar ethnic group
47 Lean and muscular
48 Ready for harvest
49 Official go-betweens
50 "Little" '60s singer
51 "One --- or Another" (hit Blondie song)
52 Bermuda time, initially



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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from
March 23, 2023

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

Across: 1 Custom, 7 Shiloh, 13 On time, 14 Suicide, 15 Herein, 16 Berkeley, 17 Over, 18 Solves, 19 Sees, 20 Formed, 21 Tot, 24 TNT, 25 Defray, 26 Trio, 27 Studio, 29 Shale, 30 Be mad, 32 Ave, 34 Codys, 35 Adams, 36 Mature, 38 Sire, 39 Pro tem, 41 Urn, 44 Set, 45 Guinea, 46 Kneel, 47 Werner, 48 Raids, 49 Tensed.
Down: 1 Co-host, 2 Uneven, 3 Street-smart, 4 Tiers, 5 Omit, 6 Men, 7 Survey, 8 Hiked, 9 Ices, 10 L.I., 11 Ode, 12 Hey, 14 Selma, 16 Borrow money, 18 Sofia, 20 Fed, 21 Trade unions, 22 Oily, 23 Toes, 25 Duds, 26 Thor, 28 Tame, 29 Scum, 30 Bass, 31 Edie, 33 Eater, 37 Tea, 39 Purses, 40 Rinks, 42 Reduce, 43 Nested, 45 Genie, 46 Karen, 47 Wiry, 48 Ripe, 49 L Os, 50 Eva, 51 Way, 52 A S T.



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