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 Mervyn Ward told The Local. Hotels and B&Bs enjoyed very good occupancy 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 Machintyre, 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 Machintyre, 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 Machintyre. 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 will be even stronger.”
Some councillors concerned about tax increase

Continued from page 1

areas, the tax boost will include an additional 5.36 per cent 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.’”

Coun. Nick Ruller argued it is council’s responsibility to support a budget that delivers on the expectations, visitors, and the business community.

“If we are here, it is council’s responsibility to support a budget that delivers on the expectations, visitors, and the business community. We have to look good politically, essentially, by you reducing it,” said Coun. Sandra O’Connor.

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 Balauskis on the right. (Screenshot)

Some councillors concerned about tax increase

The town is also increasing its contribution to the capital reserve this year by $300,000, for a $2.42 million total. According to Freeborn, $350,000 will be left in the capital reserve after the town pays for its capital projects this year. This balance will fund any new project requests that arise or unexpected and emergency capital needs.

Niagara Health closing last of COVID clinics

Local Staff

Niagara Health COVID-19 assessment centre and COVID, cold and flu 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 527,000 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.

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 Balauskis on the right.
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 archaeology 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 as to what 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 become a role model for others in the town who may be interested in developing 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.

Christian Bosley, President and Broker of Record is pleased to welcome Cole Marchand to our Bosley Niagara Team. An accomplished Real Estate professional with 8 years experience in Global Real Estate Markets, Cole holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Real Estate and Post-Graduate Certification in Real Property Valuation.

Born and raised in Niagara Region, Cole is looking forward to blending his local market knowledge and his Real Estate expertise with Bosley Real Estate’s advanced marketing tools ensuring an exceptional client-focused experience.

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.

colemarchand@bosleyrealestate.com  C: 905 468 0550

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Bosley Real Estate Ltd., Brokerage
233 King Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake
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 anyone, 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
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, getting 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 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 Wannemaker, “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.”

Try out new menu and cocktails offered

Continued from page 4

The NOTL Local has an opportunity in PRINT ADVERTISING SALES for the right person who is passionate about assisting NOTL-based businesses to achieve their goals.

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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 at this weekend — 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 Feb-

ruary 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 meet-
ings, committee of the whole meetings and regularly-scheduled council meetings.

It was a lot to chew on at them at the start of a term, especially new councillors, and a robust 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 3.2 per cent, and although discus-
sions begun at a much higher number than that, the in-
crease was greatly reduced to 1.54 per cent, it was approved at less than three per cent.

This year, there was no way staff would allow them to set a budget at the end of the term without some form of feedback from council.

The majority would have set the budget to increase 2.5 per cent.

The Local was told to follow, one that would allow for an afternoon of educa-
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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 sort of event this past weekend to inspire me to put it into writing.

I decided to take out a handful of selected colleagues, friends and family for an afternoon of educa-
tional training to become familiar with the Niagara Escarpment, I have filmed dangerous ice storms and some 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 broth-
er Garrett in his wheelchair through the finish line.

If I am mathematically accurate, I have statistically evolved 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.

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 in-
side. That is what is happen-
ing to all of us as well.

donald combe
special to the local

In Last Flag Flying (Prime, 2017) a Vietnam vet must at-
tend to the internment of his son who was killed in the Ir-

Do you remember a time when you walked these trails? I do.

I enjoyed the swing set or the play area, or finding that small secret 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 fasci-

nating rock formation where I once stepped into the tree line at my St. Davids Public School

I have no cell phone...
Delirium: What we all need to know

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

A while ago, when I be-
came aware of the proposed high-density Tawny Ridge Development, I reached out to Gary Zalepa, Erwin Wiens and Adriana Vizzari asking them what their position was on the Tawny Ridge Amendment that will turn the neighbourhood into a high density development involving three-story high stacked townhouses and/or a four-storey, 70-foot-high apartment building. I only got one response, from Erwin Wiens who emailed the fol-
lowing:

At this point in the pro-
cess, it is prudent for me to listen and learn about the approach to be taken on any comments about it. As an elected representative it is important that I have all the facts before I make comments. I am watch-
ing the process unfold and will not comment on all parties involved.

Well, the facts are as fol-
lowing:

The fact is that the developer purchased this property with the intent of making money and the purpose of his zon-
ing amendment requests is to make more money. If council rejects the zoning amend-
ment requests the property zoned as is, at R1, the devel-
oper will still make a healthy profit. And the town will be the beneficiary of potential tax revenues and the like from this property's development. R1 is well within city limits.

The fact is that the zoning amendment requests will de-
terminate the market values of houses in the neighbourhood.

The fact is that people purchased and bought homes in this area because there were no three-
story stacked townhouses or a four-storey townhouse and 70-foot-high apartment building.

The fact is that St. Davids residents trust their elected representatives, city council and residents, and make de-
cisions that benefit them in a positive way.

The fact is that the zoning amendments will signif-
cantly detract from the historic nature of the neighbourhood, the charm, family like-

tractiveness of St. Davids.

The fact is that the existing development in the area density falls short of what is needed in St. Davids. The pool is broken, there are no soccer fields, no basketball courts, no community, cru-


city. There are bare patches, a broken sidewalk will be like improvements; but we think there understand there are priorities in the town's overall strategy of housing that for now we will not allocate funds where they are more directly needed.

The fact is that traffic will be increased during construction due to a high-density development, threatening the safety of the children in the 70-foot-high apartment complex (or as a result of that). The town will have to deal with this issue.

The fact is that the rezoning of this development will not meet the regions overall strategy of housing for various income groups. The science and studies show that delirium occurs only with acute period of illness or an isolated visit to an emergency department visit.

Though this is often true, a delirium can last for 12 months after the initial diagnosis, with reduced attention and decision-making abilities; delirium and memory problems persisting the most often. Its impact can be devastating; studies show that delirium is an independent contributor to health outcomes in older persons, including poor physical and thinking abilities (in some cases dementia), future hospital admission to a hospital and death.

Delirium is a brain dis-
order involving confusion, a decline in ability to pay attention, and less aware-
ness of the environment. It usually develops over a short period of time and fluctuates during the course of a day. By definition, these distur-


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bances are all known as delirium.
Retailers hoping bus traffic will return

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 visitor centre helps out with that, as well as our ambassador program,” said Ward. “The ambassadors are a group of volunteers who provide information to tourists in the Heritage District from May to October.”

Continued from page 1

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 over-night 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.

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

"The Bunny Trail is a petting zoo, said Nicole Vanderperk, executive director, about 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)

"It is the 46th year for the egg hunt," said 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 opening 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 delay 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.

Bunny Trail, egg hunt return April 8

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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 opening 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 delay 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.
The Local
March 29, 2023

**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 non-binary 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 remember 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 trans 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.

“Silver Spire Church is a great opportunity to build community and show allyship, for the Niagara community to come together and rally in support of Two-Spirited, 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 America,” said Turner. “This event is also an important opportunity to celebrate the strength, resilience, achievements, and dedication of trans folk in our community.”

“Who are we?”, 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 the Transgender community is that you need to quickly present and live 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 in 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 presented 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 acrylics have become her medium of choice.

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

Kimberley Laspa and her paintings are the subject of an exhibit at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre for the month of April. (Maria Klassen)
Big names in Canadian jazz coming to Hare Wine Co.

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

Mike Balsam
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 on Monday, April 3, with the all-star septet The Canadian Jazz Collective. The group is fronted by saxophonist Kirk MacDonald, guitarist Lorrie Lockey 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. "She's 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 Grygor, the CJC has actually had to work around her schedule. But she was able to make the trip last year to the Black Forest. "It truly is an all-star band," says MacDonald. "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 Bog 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 Kenney Wheeler.

The series shifts to a Sunday night on April 30 to celebrate International Jazz Day. Fittingly, the surefire future international jazz sensation Caity Grygor 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 You Are Pronouncing Caity Grygor, and just this month for her debut EP 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 Able, You Two, a collection of Jerome Kern songs performed with pianist Mark Lamacher, will be released in July.

The Twilight Jazz and Blues Series continues on May 15 with the Denielle Bassed Trio, and concludes Monday, June 5, with a night of blues from the Bentley Collective, featuring composer, singer and guitar player Brooke Bentley Blackburn. Tickets for all TD Niagara Jazz Festival events can be purchased through niagarajazzfestival.com.
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
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 finding 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.”
Mike Balsam
The Local

A good childrens 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 childrens music universe for the classics, like Sharon, Lois and Bram with their Skinnamarink, 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 childrens 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 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 choice.

“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, singing voice. The name humbly fits 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 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 preteen 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 Peter- son 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 Tom Connors with a lyrical rather than a sonic reference to his classic Bad the Spud. Crickets chirp throughout 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.
A welcome burst of positivity from NOTL’s Danny Lamb

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 anemic 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.

“For 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 confidence, 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, 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 Bigger 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.”

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

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*

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

Native bees, bumblebees, and honeybees are super pollinators. Species of both pollinating insects are often confused with bees and blamed for unwanted sting incidents. It is important to be able to tell them apart and understand their characteristics so you can attract the right kind of guests 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 stripings, but on taking a closer look, you will see they are very different. Observe their body shape and colour — bees have thick, bulb-shaped hairy bodies, whereas wasps (yellow jackets) have a elongated, slender 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 select 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 go. 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 unwelcome guests at your picnic table, whereas bees prefer to dine on honey in your beehive. Honeybees, but honeybees are solitary, whereas bees prefer to dine on nectar and pollen from a large 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 honeybees 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 — native bees and bumblebees are social and will thrive in a garden with 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. A queen and worker bees and the rest of the bees are assigned specific jobs such as gathering nectar, making honey and pollen, and tending the hive, tending to the queen or brood or cleaning or guarding the hive. Honeybees have barred 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 up a large amount 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 into a pollen sack on their back legs. The plants are fertilized as they move from flower to flower.

Bumblebees 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 females will lay her eggs and provide enough food for the larva to eat and then leave 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 green bodies and a slender body shape — some are native and some are imported. Mason bees are small, slender insects, and are often confused with flies because they are small and may be brown, black or metallic green in colour.

**Leafcutter bees** are solitary and have smooth stingers. They are very efficient pollinators because they carry the pollen underneath their hairy abdomen, which is used to feed their larvae.

**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 feeders and wooden poles 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 of leaves and then mill 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 is used to feed their larvae.

**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 do not appear when spring is over. **Wasps** such as yellowjacket- ers, 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 bees, but 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.**
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 senior championship. The U11 Wolves lost their final game in the Al Boore Tournament in Niagara Falls by one goal back in December to the NOTL Wolves team three periods by coach Gary Friesen.

The U13 Wolves team, coached by James Cadeau and Phil Leboeuf, were beaten 5-1 in their semi-final game against the Niagara Falls Flyers blue team, missing out on a chance to play for the title.

The Wolves had a great chance near the end of the second period when Nathaniel Reid was handed down on a breakaway. Awarded a penalty shot, Reid missed the net and the period ended with the Wolves down 1-0. "You need 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 (Dominic Trapasso, Jeremy Froese, Jamie Kallio and trainer Amyn Kasim) sent the goalie to the bench in favour of a sixth attacker. With only 42 seconds remaining, Reid fed a pass to Noah Kasam 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 four minutes remaining, 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.

"Our team was looking to make their thrilling last-minute comeback game in Port Colborne finished and came out early in the third with renewed determination. We got a power play opportunity, and Malcolm Brushington deked quickly through the defenders and let a beautiful shot go from the seam. Silas Unruh tipped it in to make it 5-2," Cadeau says. "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." "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 real fun team to coach." Cadeau adds he is looking forward to continuing to coach most of the 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 local 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.

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.

Provincial stars

Ashleen Hale
Samantha Frydryk with coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczowski
Ophelia Xie with coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczowski
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 three games to decide the Niagara District Hockey League title.

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, fashion.

“The Meteors had a 2-1 lead and fought to hold onto 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 lifelong 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.

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 third 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 killers knocked the puck off the scoreboard.

As the clock continued to wind down, they were out manned 5-3 for over a minute, but their penalty killers knocked the puck 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 defend 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 breakaway, 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 Marriott 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.

“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 defend the Fort Erie attack. Then the Meteors started to get into their own penalty trouble as the play began to get a little rough.”

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.”
CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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 Reimburse
21 Dram
24 "The Last Ship" channel
25 In this place
26 "King Cole's Fiddlers", for example
27 Kind of couch
29 Fine-grained rock
30 Seasoned
31 Vase
32 Admiration
33 President who wrote "Liberty, once lost, is lost forever"
34 Seasoned
35 Seasoned
38 Father
39 For the nonce
41 Vase
44 Social group
45 Experimental kind of pig, maybe
46 Your largest joint
47 "Hogans' Heroes" actor — Klumpp
48 Sudden attacks
49 Notorious White House intern
50 Seasoned
51 Seasoned
52 Seasoned
53 Seasoned
54 Seasoned
55 Seasoned
56 Seasoned

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!"
13 "Object"
14 1965 civil rights march site
15 Overt
16 Berate
17 Overt
18 Solves
19 Sees
20 Formed
21 Tot
22 TNT
23 Defray
24 Trio
25 Studio
26 Awe
27 Shale
28 Be mad
29 Awe
30 Awe
31 Awe
32 Awe
33 Awe
34 Awe
35 Awe
36 Awe
37 Awe
38 Awe
39 Awe
40 Awe
41 Awe
42 Awe
43 Awe
44 Awe
45 Awe
46 Awe
47 Awe
48 Awe
49 Awe
50 Awe
51 Awe
52 Awe

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from March 23, 2023

Across:
1 2 4 6 8
2 9
3

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

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March 29, 2023

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