

# The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



Chef and  
councillor  
have fun in  
the kitchen

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The trusted voice of our community.

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## Pruning for better wine

Humberto Saturnino (front) from Mexico prunes Chardonnay vines at a Chateau Des Charmes Estate Winery vineyard on York Road. (Fred Mercnik)

## Craftsman plans for future

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Bill German is a man at a crossroads, and looking at the direction he is about to take as the fulfillment of a goal he set for himself 40 years ago.

He and his wife Tracy now find themselves with an uncertain future, possibly out of their control, and have decided to see that as a positive sign it's time to concentrate on what they have always wanted to do. They are making their

plans knowing their Queenston Road property, tucked away behind some trees almost under the Garden City Skyway, may not be theirs for much longer, as the Ministry of Transportation makes plans for twinning the bridge, a project that could mean appropriation of the Germans' property.

They live in a historic home they bought in 1979 from an antique dealer, for whom Bill had worked. The house was built in 1872, originally owned by a blacksmith,

who also had a barn and workshop on the property, and a corral on what is now the front lawn.

Guarding the southwest side of the house is a twisted and gnarled mulberry tree, as old as the house itself, planted to shade the kitchen from the afternoon sun as dinners were prepared, says Bill.

Three generations of blacksmiths owned the property, the last one changing tires on cars as well as shoeing horses, eventually turning the

site into a gas station, he says.

When he bought the property — it's just a short distance from the Niagara Stone Road intersection and almost across the street from the former Private Eyes strip club, shuttered in October 2018, and recently sold — there was a retail space at the back of the house which had been used for antique sales. They were the kind of antiques that came from a

Continued on page 3



Bill German carves a sunburst medallion for a Robert Adams-inspired mantel in a stone Georgian home on York Road. (Photo supplied)

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# Dowd to continue as CAO until December

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Council has agreed Holly Dowd will continue as the Town's CAO until the end of the year.

Councillors held a closed-door session before the start of Monday's meeting to discuss her employment. Typically, after an in camera meeting council will vote to rise without a report, meaning there is no decision which requires a vote as a result of the private session. Or if a decision needs to be made, a brief report will be read and a vote taken.

In this case, the first vote

was to rise with no report. A poll vote was taken at the request of Lord Mayor Betty Disero, and was defeated, meaning those who voted against it wanted a decision made.

The motion then presented to council was that Dowd's employment be extended to the end of this year, and that was approved.

Dowd had been in her seat in the council chamber during the private meeting, but left before the session ended, and the regular council meeting continued without her returning.

The atmosphere following

the in camera session seemed strained, with some council members and staff absent from the chamber when the meeting resumed, so a brief break was called.

During the break, Disero said Dowd, who is a Town employee of about 37 years, was not under contract.

Dowd was appointed interim CAO in December, 2016, but the previous council had extended her employment with a permanent position since then. The decision Monday had the "positive" result of ensuring Dowd's employment continues until the end of December, Disero said.

# SORE wins first court challenge

The group advocating against a six-storey hotel on John Street has been granted party status in a court challenge to stop heritage designation of four Niagara-on-the-Lake properties.

A judge's decision was released after lawyers for both sides, SORE (Save our Randwood Estate), and Two Sisters Resort and Solmar, owned by Benny Marotta, met in court last Wednesday.

SORE was asking for party status in the case, and the prop-

erty owner was disputing the right of SORE to be involved.

Last June, the previous NOTL council agreed to initiate the heritage designation process for four properties, three on John Street and one on Charlotte Street. Two of the properties, including the historic Randwood Estate, are involved in the hotel development project, and the other two are expected to be the site of a residential development, although there is no application before the Town for those properties.

The property owner had initially agreed to designation and started the process of cataloguing heritage assets, but when the process seemed to have stalled, council decided the Town would take control and move forward with designation. That decision is under appeal by Two Sisters and Solmar.

Still to be heard is a case before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal over the hotel planning application filed by the property owner against the Town.

# Town to tackle phragmites

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

After listening to the leading expert on phragmites control, Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors have decided to take action.

When Janice Gilbert spoke to council last week her advice was to put a management plan in place which would identify phragmites locations, prioritize the areas to be attacked, and decide on a method — every site requires a different approach, she said, and most will have to be revisited year after year.

She spoke of success in other urban and rural areas, sometimes with volunteer "phraggers" dedicating hours to help eradicate the plant, supported by their municipalities.

Brett Ruck, the Town's environmental supervisor, told council he has been trying to slow the growth of the aggressive weed, which is affecting storm water management ponds, and drains and ditches used for irrigation by farmers.

"It needs constant attention. Our methodology doesn't seem to work," he said. "It's clear to the agricultural community and committee it shouldn't be their responsibility. This plant is bigger than Niagara-on-the-Lake."

It's also a growing problem on private property, but "land owners are going to need some assistance," he said, "or they may find themselves getting

into trouble."

One suggestion was to add phragmites to the municipal noxious weed list, which would give the Town some authority to oversee its eradication on private property.

Gilbert talked about methods that work in certain locations, such as drowning the plant by cutting off its stalk under water, but the water has to be a certain depth for that to be effective. Once it's cut, it needs to be taken to a location where it can be isolated — covered with a tarp or sprayed, she said, so it doesn't spread.

Also important is cleaning equipment used to cut it or transport it — there should be a protocol in place to prevent further spread of the seed, she told councillors.

She also spoke of the use of herbicides, the best of which is

not approved for use in Canada, but may be soon.

Phragmites looks to some like a decorative grass, but experts consider it Canada's worst invasive plant.

It's an aggressive weed which can grow to 15 feet high and spread 10 feet a year. The non-native species, also known as common reed, releases toxins from its deep roots, destroying everything growing nearby. Wildlife is also being affected, Gilbert said.

On a motion from Coun. John Wiens Monday, council approved appointing a working group of three councillors, plus a member of the irrigation committee and the agricultural committee, with support staff to develop a strategy and plan for "a phragmites-free" Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He said he hopes to have a plan in place by July.



NOTL storm water management ponds are becoming hidden from view by phragmites. (Penny Coles)

## Niagara-on-the-lake Hearing Show

Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> – 10am to 4pm  
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# Couple hopes to open gallery for annual show

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craftsman's bench, qualifies Bill, not a furniture factory.

For about the first six years after they purchased the property, he continued to operate the retail space, with plans to restore it and turn it into a gallery for the exquisitely crafted, detailed furniture he makes, in what he describes as Niagara Peninsula Germanic Chipendale style.

His philosophy, he says, is if he is going to make something from a tree that lived for 100 years, what he does with it matters — he wants to create something people will appreciate and use for the next 100 years.

Once established on Queenston Road, he quickly found himself taking on custom work, which included milling the wood he worked with his hands and century-old tools in a workshop heated with an antique wood stove, and that part of the business became his focus. One order after another, he carved a reputation which grew across the country for his elegant, meticulously-detailed craftsmanship, leaving him little or no time for his plans to restore their century home or for the furniture — each piece a work of art — he planned to display and sell in the retail space, which over the years became a storage space instead.

In 1993, when Si Wai Lai took charge of renovating the Prince of Wales Hotel for her brother, Jimmy Lai, she soon learned of Bill's magical ability to turn wood into art.

The astute businesswoman arrived at his workshop one day, says Bill, wanting 65 king-sized beds for the upscale rooms she was creating for the renovated Queen Street hotel. And she wanted them in a hurry.

A deal was struck — he crafted 60 beds of maple and five of mahogany. He continued to create custom pieces for her — including desks, bar stools, lamp tables, and the majestic columns at the front of the hotel — work that kept him busy for several years.

He jokes that when he saw one of his four-poster beds in a completed room, he noticed the \$900 room rate on the back of the door, and thought to himself, "This must be a month's rent."

One of the most important projects for the local craftsman was the work he did in Addison Hall at St. Mark's Church, including beautiful bookshelves to store a collection of 1,500 volumes, which were brought to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1792 by Robert Addison, the English clergyman commissioned to come to Niagara who became the first minister of St. Mark's. Bill worked with the late local

artist Campbell Scott, who designed the project.

Now, the scaffolding up on their historic house for some necessary exterior work, he and Tracy hope to make it the showcase it should be, finally acting on dreams to transform the storage space into a gallery to display the wood-working pieces he will craft.

He and Tracy have known since March 2011 their property could one day be expropriated for the twinning of the skyway, with a second bridge planned to be constructed north of the existing bridge to provide an eight-lane canal crossing, but they still want the house, whatever its future, to be the best it can be.

Bill recalls the property they now own was the site of expropriation for the current skyway — in 1959, he says, a strip of 35 feet was taken from the back section.

About three years ago, a Ministry of Transportation representative told NOTL council there were about 70 properties that would be required to allow the twinning construction to proceed, hopefully to be settled without expropriation being necessary for the project that was then anticipated to be finished by 2025. The German property was one of them, but it's not just a few feet — it's now required in its entirety, if the work goes ahead.

The preliminary design work and environmental assessment study were completed in 2017, but although there has been some conversation with the Ministry of Transportation about putting a price on the property, "it's still a long way away. We're nowhere near there yet," says Bill. The project has not yet been budgeted, with a price tag expected to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and with a new and different political landscape, the money might not be available any time soon, he says.

Just two months after they first learned in 2011 about the skyway project and the impact it could have on their life and their livelihood, the couple suffered the tragic loss of their son. The fate of their property at that point took second place to their grief.

The looming possibility of expropriation, which the Germans have lived with for eight years now, Bill thinks of as "life interrupted," he says, "a very minor setback compared to the loss of our son."

They remain pragmatic about their future, making plans without knowing what twist it might take.

In the meantime, with no idea of what will happen or when, he remains passionate about the craft he has pursued for the last four decades, "now realizing how short life is," he



Bill German makes the initial dissection of a 135-year-old black walnut, felled to make room for development. He made three ceremonial chairs and two tables from the beautiful wood he milled. (Photo supplied)

says.

They've looked around and made some enquiries about where they could relocate, and although they believe the expansion of the skyway is a necessary project, they're waiting to see if it will ever become a reality, and making the most of the intervening years.

They're also happy to see they have some new neighbours across the street, cleaning up the corner and making "a change for the better."

They hope to stay in NOTL, says Tracy — it's been their home for so long they can't imagine going anywhere else — but they're not sure they'll be able to find a property with the right zoning and enough space for Bill, now "a young 60," to carry on practising his skills.

Instead, they are concentrating on their dreams of opening a gallery and preparing for what they hope will be the first of Bill's annual shows.



St. Mark's Church, Addison Library, woodworking by Bill German, design by the late local artist Campbell Scott. (Cosmo Condina)

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# LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: YOKA

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With fashion in her blood, Dutch heritage, and experience in importing and merchandising, Carla Kloosterhuis is delighted to now have her own boutique, featuring international brands as well as Canadian designs, right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"I am excited to bring something new to this town, which I believe will complement some of the wonderful boutiques already here," she says.

In 2012, Kloosterhuis

decided to live her dream by making the beautiful town of Niagara-on-the-Lake her home, while maintaining a shop in Toronto. She has spent years on the road offering her wardrobe styling services to clients from Toronto to Niagara.

In the fall of 2018, Kloosterhuis decided it was time to give her styling business a home, and launched YOKA by Appointment — which after an overwhelming response, is now open Tuesday to Sat-

urday — in an elegant space tucked in behind the Mary Street building across from Nassau Street.

"I was truly humbled by the following I now know YOKA has," she says.

YOKA is like a gallery of YOKA Toronto's collections, and Kloosterhuis brings fresh stock from her over 30 brands in every week.

She buys many brands directly from Paris and Amsterdam, together with her Dutch sister store in the

Netherlands, offering one-of-a-kind pieces you will not see anywhere else. The dress casual looks at YOKA have helped many women to merge work and play into a simple, functional wardrobe, she says.

YOKA has been a go-to shop for several Toronto celebrity stylists, and Kloosterhuis has dressed countless performers, artists, and TV and radio personalities.

YOKA launched as a cart in Oakville Place in 2001, featuring imported one-of-a-kind knits and jewelry from the Netherlands, where Kloosterhuis spent her teenage years, running a boutique with her mother in the '90s. She quickly expanded into a full-size boutique on Queen Street East in the Beach, Toronto.

YOKA continues to maintain a Dutch look and feel, with several brands originating from the Netherlands. Brands from around the globe have been added to the mix, as well as several independent brands designed and made in Canada. Kloosterhuis recently rebranded the family business in the Netherlands, making her dream of glo-



376 Mary Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake

balizing YOKA a reality.

There will be a grand opening soon, as well as by-appointment styling services, private shopping parties, and trunk shows to feature all the amazing brands YOKA carries.

YOKA is now open

Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can follow YOKA on social media @yokafashions @yokaniagara or email Kloosterhuis at yokafashions@gmail.com.



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# Buses signal return of tourists on Queen Street

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

If the start of tourist season in Niagara-on-the-Lake can be determined by the arrival of tour buses, it began Saturday.

The bus parking lot at Fort George, operated by the Chamber of Commerce, opened and began collecting \$50 from bus drivers, double the fee of last year, as approved by council in January.

In a little more than an hour Saturday morning, four tour buses had pulled in, two from Toronto — one carrying tourists visiting Canada from China — one from Quebec and one from New York, bringing a total of 143 tourists to town in that short time. Two local shuttles with cheerful drivers, happy to begin the season of driving the loop be-

tween the parking lot and the Court House, were waiting to deliver visitors to Queen Street, although some set off on a walk toward the waiting merchants and restaurants.

The next arrival was a bus from a Niagara Falls hotel, with four more people who wanted to visit Queen Street.

NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Janice Thomson stopped by to check out the numbers, and the bus drivers' reaction to the price increase. She had asked council to delay it until 2020 to give the chamber time to notify tour operators, who typically plan their trips a year in advance, but council wanted the increased revenue in the 2019 budget.

However they were stymied when Parks Canada, owner of the lot, decided it was time to start charging

the Town for the lease of the parking lot — \$25 a bus.

While the drivers seemed surprised with the increase, all paid to unload their passengers.

The Niagara Falls driver, a regular at the parking lot, said her passengers want to come to NOTL — if the town is removed from bus tour destinations over parking prices, "people won't take the tour."

If the fee has increased to \$50, she said, "that's the price you have to pay, otherwise you lose customers."

Thomson said the chamber had received a few calls about the price increase, but most communication would go through the Town.

"What we saw today is that the tour operators might not have communicated the increase to the bus drivers,"

She said the chamber is asking for feedback, and will pres-

ent it to council in September.

The tour operators will have to make a decision about whether to continue to stop in NOTL next season, after determining the impact of the fee hike, she said. If they don't, it will also impact the wineries, where most buses also plan to stop.

"There has to be a cut-off point for them. And the Town

could show some respect by giving them sufficient notice. They haven't done that this time," said Thomson.

"We're relying on the good will between the destination and the tour operator. We're not going to see people stop coming this year, but it's a risk, and not a necessary risk."

It could have been avoided with advance planning

and notification, she said.

"At this point all indications for tourism is that it's going to be a strong year. We're hoping the motor coach tours follow that trend."

Last year, during the month of April, more than 10,400 visitors stayed an average of 70 minutes. "That's the comparison we'll be looking at," she said.

## Official plan delayed again

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

After campaigning on a platform of having a draft official plan, now years in the making, approved as soon as possible, Niagara-on-the-Lake town council is facing another delay with no set deadline.

The last time the plan was updated was in 1994, and town staff began making revisions five years ago. A draft was made available for comment in December 2018.

This council was determined to provide several opportunities for public input, and was so successful, town staff is dealing with more than 700 pages of comments to be incorporated in the revised document.

April 29 was the day council was expected to have the final draft before them to approve, but that likely won't happen, "because of all the great input" from the public, said

Coun. Clare Cameron, asking for the next "reasonable" date.

Incorporating all those comments will take time, said town planning director Craig Larmour, but he could not estimate how much time.

In February, two open houses were held in the community centre, with several residents and experts in various fields, such as wineries and agriculture, making oral submissions asking for changes. There have also been many written comments, said Larmour.

The Region, however, which will examine the document to ensure it matches regional and provincial planning policies, has not yet commented — it is in the process of reviewing regional growth projections, which when finished will affect NOTL's municipal official plan, Larmour explained.

If the Town rushes to get

the OP finished and sent to the Region, Larmour said, it would likely not be approved.

Coun. Gary Burroughs also stressed the importance of having a date set, after all the hard work of staff and the public to get the document this far, asking for pressure to be put on the Region and any other agencies that haven't responded to a request for their comments.

Larmour said he would continue to provide monthly updates on the progress of the OP, adding he would likely have a better idea of a date for completion by May.

"I will provide a timeline as soon as I can," he told council.

There was also some discussion about whether council should approve extra expenses to get the work finished, but it was agreed to concentrate on getting to the final approval stage, without the formality of increasing the budget.

## Learn about local wine, wineries

**Staff**  
The Local

Dig Our Roots, a three-day celebration of the Niagara-on-the-Lake appellation is held annually in April, when local wineries open their doors to offer unique experiences to locals and visitors.

It showcases their wines, winemakers and terroir, and is a good learning experience for locals who like to enhance

their knowledge of the wineries and vineyards that are their neighbours.

The event runs this Friday, Saturday and Sunday, beginning with a winemakers dinner in the ballroom of the Pillar and Post. It includes a meal prepared by local chefs, paired with a selection of VQA wines, with winemakers on hand to share their knowledge, philosophy and practises, including how the

unique terroir of their vineyards results in surprisingly diverse wines.

Tickets are \$201 and are available online, along with the menu.

Dig our Roots special events are held at individual wineries throughout the weekend.

For more information and ticket prices visit <http://wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com/event/digourroots/>.

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 Andrea Bobby Poirier Sales Representative



# EDITORIAL

## How do we stop littering?

After what seemed like an endless winter, the snow has melted — hopefully for the last time — revealing the detritus that has been deposited on our roads, ditches, creeks and open spaces, until recently out of sight, out of mind.

Across the country, in major cities and small communities, volunteers are organizing annual spring cleanups to collect the accumulation of trash that has collected in one long season.

Some are community initiatives with residents cleaning up their neighbourhoods; some are service club efforts, such as through the adopt-a-road programs popular in many areas; and some are municipally driven.

In addition to the valuable and much-appreciated service these volunteers provide for all of us who are sick of the litter, they also offer a chance

to socialize, get to know our neighbours, explore our communities, enjoy the fresh air, and pretty up our space for all to see.

Volunteers are to be commended for their efforts. But why are these cleanups even necessary?

Have the litterers among us not been taught responsibility? Kindergarten kids learn to pick up litter and recycle. They are shown how to be good citizens, looking after their neighbourhoods and the broader environment. Yet some adults seem to prefer opening a vehicle window and tossing out their garbage, or throwing it off the back of a pickup truck, likely never giving a thought for the person who will clean up after them — or if they do, not caring. Keeping their planet clean? They apparently don't care about keeping their own

backyard clean.

How do we stop this nonsense? How do we put an end to such irresponsible, yet apparently common behaviour?

First, we set an example for others — our family members and friends — and if we see them litter, we let them know it's not acceptable to us or the rest of society.

Then, if we pick up litter when we see it, we not only keep our neighbourhood clean but may actually deter someone from messing it up. If we show pride in our community, maybe others will too.

Changing societal behaviour is never quick or easy, but it is possible. One person at a time, until there is no need for spring cleanups and we can organize events instead that celebrate our beautiful communities.

Penny Coles

## Newark hoping for Easter treats



Hilary Bellis  
Newark Neighbours

Spring is here and the flowers are starting to show their heads.

Everyone is starting to get excited about the coming warmer temperatures.

With that being said, we are now welcoming back our off-shore worker friends who have already started

visiting us, bringing their sunshine with them. In order to accommodate their schedules we will now be open Sundays 9:30 till 2, closed any major holiday weekends until the end of September.

It is the time of year also for spring cleaning, so remember what Marie Kondo, the Japanese organizer and author says: "Donate what doesn't spark joy for you. It may for someone else."

Newark can now use seasonal items for the spring temperatures: lighter weight blankets, coats, boots and

shoes.

Our houseware department could use soup pots, crock pots and any small kitchen appliances in clean and working order. For our pantry we could use apple or cranberry juice, granola bars, strawberry jam, canned chili and canned salmon.

Special thanks this week to all the members and volunteers who came out to our annual general meeting last Friday April at the arena. We had a great meeting, sharing

Continued on page 7

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

## LOCAL FINDS



### Inscription a mystery to some by Donald Combe, special to The Local

Arguably the most significant memorial in the cemetery at St. Mark's is this elegant memorial to the founder of the parish, Robert Addison, who was born in Heversham, England in 1754 and died in Niagara in 1829. The memorial is affixed to the north transept above Addison's grave. The monument also memorializes his two sons-in-law and one grandson, but alas neither of Addison's daughters nor his wife are mentioned. The mason, a Mr. W. Evans of Hamilton, was the most skilled of the early monument-makers and most of the text is easily read, however there are some difficulties in transcribing this stone. Evans was showing off when he designed this stone, which he considered important, so he used some Latin, and several fonts and sizes. Perhaps he got too fancy, as many people are unable to read the entire inscription. The monument was originally located at the east end of the church and only moved here after the erection of the transepts in 1839.

## LETTERS

### Get used to wildlife — it was here first

Thank goodness we have people like Lesley Sampson in our midst to quell the fears of the city folk.

People need to understand the wildlife was here long before any of us took over their land. Coyotes have been running through neighbourhoods for years and it is something most of the locals simply accept. We also have deer that come through the neighbourhoods, particularly during the winter, in the hopes of finding some tasty food, i.e., rose bushes, shrubs, etc. And let's not forget the red fox, wild turkeys, raccoons, opossums, rabbits, hawks, turkey vultures — the list goes on and on.

All of the aforementioned are prevalent in the ravine by Butler's Burial Ground and are often seen roaming the nearby

neighbourhoods. I've lost track of how many times I've seen the foxes scurrying through the ravine area and the numerous occasions where we (the dog and myself) have met up with a coyote or two (in both the neighbourhood and ravine). There has never been a problem with either.

Those who are afraid of going out at night should be aware that the coyotes and foxes do not only roam at night (the ravine areas in particular), although that is the more common time for them.

I also love to have my bird feeders in the backyard and must accept the fact that I need to deal with the fallout from that — particularly raccoons. But then again, they are hilarious to observe at times and they usu-

ally do their thing in darkness and then move on. Not too sure about those crazy opossums, but I have been surprised more than once to find one having a lovely sleep in a well-shaded arbor or other corner of the yard.

Perhaps Niagara-on-the-Lake tourism and real estate associates should warn the city folk this is a rural area (at least for now) and, as such, comes with many charming features in the way of wildlife. Either accept it for what it is or don't move here.

It boggles my mind that this is such an issue but we rarely hear of anyone complaining about the man-made pollution in this town. And don't even get me going on the increase of fast food garbage thrown on roadsides and our lovely ravine.

Marlene Penner

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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# Escarpment once home to rattlers, bears and wolves



**Owen Bjorgan**  
Special to The Local

Recently in The Local, I dispensed a friendly challenge to locals to look at Niagara-on-the-Lake's forests and creeks from a new perspective this spring.

Now imagine what animals may have lived there 20, or 200 years ago. Are you standing on a spot where you could imagine bumping into any of the following?

There was once a rather formidable rattlesnake that inhabited the rocky labyrinths of the Niagara Escarpment's slopes. The timber rattlesnake, a species that can attain lengths of 1.8 metres, would stick out like a sore thumb on a white tile floor in your home.

The same snake on the forest floor around here basically disappears.

This stealthy predator was once an impressive member of the species list in Niagara — we had our own big, bulky venomous snake that was perfectly at home in the logs and layers of the escarpment area. The last confirmed sighting was in the Niagara Gorge in the 1940s. I have a recurring dream where I end up spotting another one down there. Today, they are still populous in the hills of Appalachia.

I've spoken with many people in town about their encounters with coyotes, (coywolves), and sometimes wolves. The wolf's beautiful and sad howl, heard echoing through the forested valleys of north-central Ontario, once passed through NOTL decades ago.

It is difficult to determine exactly when wolves left the

Niagara Peninsula altogether, but what we know is the eastern wolf once lived here, while grey wolves were in the north of the province. This was the situation prior to European settlement.

Once Niagara and surrounding areas were cleared of habitat for farming and enjoyed a growing population, this not only must have made life more difficult for wolves, but the disturbed conditions also invited in western coyotes.

So now you've got a coyote breeding with a wolf, while the pure wolves are likely already gone. To come full circle for the wolves, if you think you've seen one in NOTL, you're probably looking at a coywolf. This is an animal that will likely carry wolf, or even domestic dog genes in them. This animal is a living genetic result of changing times and landscapes for people and wildlife alike. The pure wolves

are in deeper habitats no longer found in southern Ontario.

Do you feel like it's almost a right of passage to have a good bear story if you grew up in Ontario? I've got a solid four or so. I wonder who the last true resident of NOTL (or perhaps then, Newark) was with a bear story from around here. Black bears used to roam the woods and wetlands of this town, eating the plentiful berries, grasses, and shoots of the rich deciduous forest floor.

Plain and simple, hunting and habitat loss have driven this animal into northern Ontario, where we hope to glimpse one of those magnificent animals at least once in our lives.

Occasionally, a black bear plays hopscotch through the scattered chunks of forest north of Toronto, and he or she stumbles into the city's outer suburbs for a little visit. It usually makes the news, and sometimes doesn't end well for the bear. It's a sign that the black bears once

browsed soil on which the city is now expanding.

Some may comment it is nice to go for a walk in Niagara's deepest woods without the worry of that animal being present. Now all we can do is carry an appreciation for what the situation once was.

I like to look at the 200-plus-year-old oak trees we have in town, and imagine once upon a time, one of these animals would have walked (or slithered) by the base of it.

*bwhikes@gmail.com*



Old-growth forest such as on the escarpment near Queenston may have trees that have seen black bears, rattlesnakes, or wolves. This weekend, the woods were briefly enveloped in fog. (Owen Bjorgan)

## Thanks to community for generosity

Continued from page 6

all our achievements from the last year, and everyone went away looking forward to tackling another year ahead. Thank you to Starbucks for providing the coffee.

We would also like to

thank Reif Estate Winery for running a month-long food drive which gathered a large amount of food at a time of year when our shelves run low. It was well-received with many thanks.

Marion, our food bank manager, is now preparing

for our Easter food basket program next week. Please note that our thrift store will be closed Thursday, April 18 and re-opening Tuesday April 23, so we may distribute these dinner packages to our clients and allow our volunteers to celebrate the Easter holiday.

If you would like to donate any Easter treats for our dinner packages please bring them in by Wednesday, April 17. We do have some children who would be thrilled to receive such treats.

It is you the community who makes all this happen and we at Newark Neighbours always are overwhelmed with the kind and generous support we receive from you everyday — thank you.

Please bring all donations to 310 John Street East (just off Riverbend Inn driveway). Our hours are Monday to Friday and Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and closed Saturdays.

For more information call 905-468-3519 or visit [www.newarkneighbours.ca](http://www.newarkneighbours.ca)



Newark Neighbours volunteer Maria Townley adds some treats to an Easter basket. (Photo supplied)

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# Councillor goes to work on chef's turf

## Cooking duo creates food 'formerly known as a burger'

**Lauren O'Malley**  
The Local

*Feature writer Lauren O'Malley thought it would be fun to put a professional chef and a home chef together in a kitchen with a recipe to work on, and see what happened. Chef Tony de Luca agreed, as did Coun. Clare Cameron. We hope you agree it was fun for all — so much so we may do it again.*

A great many chefs in Niagara would be within six degrees or fewer of Chef Tony de Luca. The Italian transplant has owned, managed, consulted with, and worked in myriad restaurants in the region, has written cookbooks, and teaches in the culinary program at Niagara College. He also lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Councillor and deputy lord mayor Clare Cameron is a confident home chef, but has found she can get into cooking ruts. "We were kind of on a typical roster, a bit by rote," says the mother of two young children. "Chilis, curries, a lot of barbecuing in the summer." She explains the busy family recently signed up for a delivery service that provides recipes and ingredients for home-made meals, "and that has introduced us to a variety of new foods. The first step is mise en place, which is something I'm now transferring to everything I do in the kitchen: I prepare and measure all of the ingredients before I start making anything," says the calm and organized Cameron.

"I'm very impressed," says de Luca. "The very nature of mise en place is to create organization and make the process flow smoothly."

In the summers, de Luca works at the restaurant in the Fitzpatrick Family Vineyards in scenic Peachland, B.C. He has found the demand for vegetarian, vegan, and raw food growing, so he has decided to test a recipe for a vegetarian burger with Cameron.

Unfortunately for de Luca, Cameron is not a fan of the alt-burger. "I'm not a picky eater," she says, "but one thing I really don't like is veggie burgers." She goes on to say if she had to choose a last meal for herself, it would be roast beef with Yorkshire pudding.

"I feel defeated already," says de Luca theatrically.

"We can only go up from here," says Cameron, as both of them laugh comfortably.

Suited in chef whites and working on de Luca's turf in a Niagara College food lab, Cameron exudes confidence and curiosity. The banter is playful and candid, and moves easily between politics and cuisine.

With a broad grin the deputy mayor says, "This is exciting."

"I don't think I voted for you, because I've never heard of you," says de Luca, laughing. Cameron takes this in stride as she dices onions with sterling knife skills gleaned from her father. "He was an Anglican minister, and would hold huge fundraising dinners, cooking the whole thing with help from his parishioners," she explains. Her grandmother taught her father how to cook, says Cameron, and also how to appreciate food. "Making food, socializing around food, and having real food. Making food from scratch. Dad set the bar really high," she says.

Fast friends, they discuss terminology and texture. De Luca asks, "Is it a burger if there's no meat in it?" Cameron suggests calling it a "stack," de Luca refers to a "symphony," and also to "the food formerly known as a burger." In terms of texture, de Luca is focused on the crunch and char of the outer edges of the patty, while Cameron mentions the "springiness and pull" of a hamburger.

This is the morning after a marathon council meeting, chaired by Cameron, and now she's considering the inclusion of lemon zest in the recipe with the same depth of concern as she would any bylaw. All ingredients are discussed and considered by both parties, with de Luca showing surprise and respect for Cameron's creativity.

At one point the non-chef suggests sprinkling crushed hazelnuts on the top of the plated patty, imitates a diner looking at the meal and says with dramatic surprise, "Wow, nuts — I didn't expect that."

As the pair works on the recipe, testing and amending it, other teachers from the college's culinary program wander through the large and fully-appointed kitchen and lab. One stops in amazement seeing de Luca making a veggie burger and says in shock, "Tony's never made a vegetarian meal in his life." De Luca retorts, "What do you mean? I fully enjoyed that vegetable you brought back from Newfoundland. What was it called? 'Gin?'" The two men guffaw, and discuss the distilled seaweed they recently shared.

As groovy "chill lounge" music plays, Cameron describes the quinoa de Luca has precooked as being "very relaxed."

The main ingredients — caramelized onions, garlic oil, quinoa, romano beans, sweet potato, and seasoning — have been prepared and assembled, and de Luca says, "We have to commit: Let's make a burger." Binding agents are discussed, and a small toss in seasoned

flour is accomplished. The patty goes into the pan, managed by Cameron.

De Luca whips up an avocado mayonnaise — which they have decided to use as a kind of drizzle, overriding Cameron's suggestion of a lemon tahini version — while explaining he specifically likes to teach first year courses because the students are green and open-minded. Cameron is a perfect example of that, asking many questions about the culinary courses, and wondering if she can stay for de Luca's upcoming class. She asks, "Can I come every week now?" De Luca has a suggestion. "Why don't you teach my class today, and I'll go and try the new beer on tap at the teaching brewery?"

"For quality control, right," asks Cameron.

The first patty is appreciated for its flavour, but rejected for its soggy texture. The chef adds panko breadcrumbs as a binding agent to a second patty, and prepares the vehicle that will hold the burger. Cameron mocks the grocery-store, white-bread bun: "I've seen the bread available here — what's with these?" De Luca insists, "They called to me while I was in the supermarket." He uses a salamander to toast the bun, burning one half of it only to be further teased by a playful Cameron.

The politician wonders if she could come to the college kitchen and de-stress after a long council meeting. The pair talks politics and amalgamation, debating the effects — de Luca, playing devil's advocate, supporting amalgamation. "I don't want to get all serious," says Cameron. "I don't want to get all serious either," says de Luca.

"But it is so important to be vocal. So much of democracy depends on people speaking up," finishes the deputy lord mayor.

The burger and bun make it on to a platter, and Cameron asks about plating. De Luca, having seen many trends come and go during his culinary career, discusses negative space and composition. He mentions the out-of-date stacking that used to be de rigeur, and Cameron jokes, "We don't do that anymore, and no more parsley garnish either."

Creating a slim rectangle on the plate with the sandwich and its much discussed "accoutrements" of guacamole, roasted tomatoes, and thinly-sliced red onion, de Luca explains that presentation is a lot more linear now — "a linear, or a half-moon presentation is the trend."

The diplomatic Cameron



Chef Tony de Luca and Coun. Clare Cameron collaborate on an avocado mayonnaise. (Lauren O'Malley)



Tony de Luca is momentarily humbled by his accidental burning of a bun. (Lauren O'Malley)



It's time to taste the composition "formerly known as a burger." (Lauren O'Malley)

tucks garnish pieces closer together, saying, "Make them be friends."

With a flourish, de Luca presents the "sweet potato composition formally known as a burger." With a stern face Cameron says, "We have formed a committee and a sub-committee to determine

the formal name of this vegetable sandwich formerly known as a burger."

While presented attractively, crushed hazelnuts and all, the recipe is unanimously deemed a flop. De Luca will keep working on the recipe, and, something of a convert, Cameron asks, "Will you

keep me posted?"

De Luca is grateful for the preliminary run-through of his recipe. "This has been good for me to take a snapshot of what I was thinking."

"This was really fun — thank you for your time." She hangs her head sadly and says, "Now we have to leave."



# Polar Bear Walk fundraiser for WWF

**Lauren O'Malley**  
The Local

The symbolism of holding a Polar Bear Walk in mid-April, with any remnant of snow melted and spring flowers poking up merrily through the soil, is not lost on Rose Campbell or her son Connor.

"The polar bear is symbolic, because they're the most obvious group affected by climate change," says Rose. "Polar bears are having to walk further and further for food, so symbolically we are walking with them." She says polar bear numbers aren't threatened, but their health is: they are underweight, from being unable to travel on ice masses to find food.

The mother and son are passionate about the environment — and about the World Wildlife Fund, having been supporters for many years. So when Connor's 25th birthday came up in February, they decided his celebration would be a fundraising event for the WWF, and chose a Polar Bear Walk.

"We talk a lot about climate change and global warming," says Rose. "We're at a tipping point regarding the environ-

ment, and it's really important that everyone focus their attention on this. That's why we're doing this."

The mother of two continues, "We're watching a documentary series and it says we need to start now, and we have a 20-year window to make dramatic changes. If we don't start now, the future of the human race and all other species is at risk. There are small things everyone can do: avoid takeout, compost, recycle, eat less meat. It all adds up, and if everyone does it, it will make a significant difference."

She explains the family's passion for their charity of choice. "The World Wildlife Fund [also known as the World Wide Fund For Nature] implements clean energies into communities. They also fight climate change in other ways."

The WWF sent a kit with everything needed for the event, along with a prize of an animal adoption certificate.

Other prizes were offered from various sources (often clients of Rose's design and marketing business), including Creekside Estate Winery and Bamboo Natural Foods.

The Campbells chose the

woodland paths behind Niagara College as the walk location for a number of reasons. It's one of their favourite hiking spots. It's also connected to a passion of Connor's: he is a graduate of Niagara College's environmental field and lab technician program, and worked on-site at the greenhouse.

Niagara College, in turn, has enthusiastically embraced the Campbells' initiative, and offered their own add-ons. The walk is taking place on the same day as the school's Spring BioBlitz, an event that also celebrates the environment. So Amber Schmucker, the college's sustainability program and outreach coordinator, decided to offer all participants of the walk the same perks as BioBlitz participants, including scientists who can help identify flora and fauna, free wine tastings at the teaching winery, and even the free lunch.

"It's a mutually-beneficial relationship," she says.

"The BioBlitz is meant to be fun and inspiring, celebrating Earth Month, leading up to Earth Day," Schmucker continues. "If we don't know what we have, we can't manage the effects of climate change on it."

The Polar Bear Walk meets at 10 a.m. at the road entrance to the college's greenhouse; the walk will begin at 10:15 a.m. The fourth annual BioBlitz runs from 6 a.m. until 4 p.m., meaning participating in both is easily done.

Donations are recommended but not necessary for participation in the fundraising walk. The Campbells have already raised more than 90 per cent of their goal of \$2,100.

Donations can also be made by non-participants. The link for donations is found via the Facebook event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/332355204089742/>.

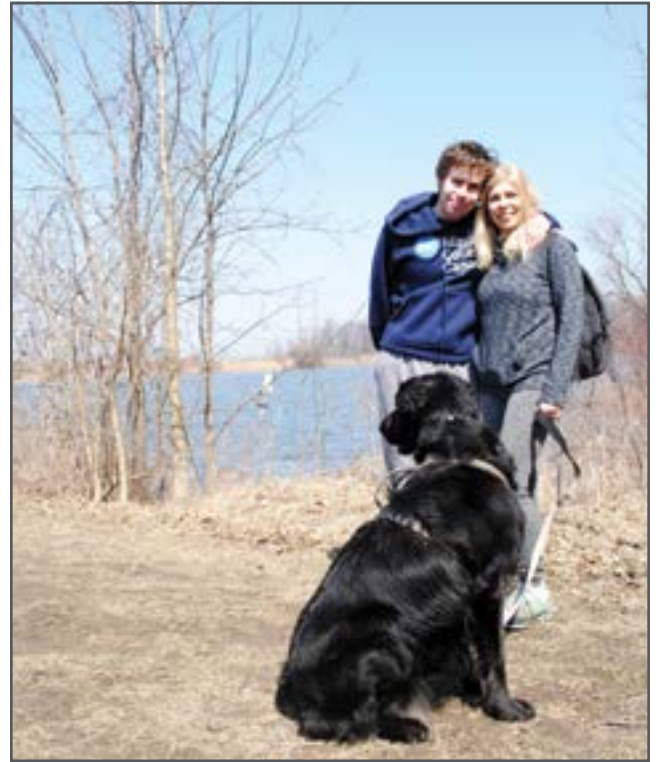
If you're planning to participate in one or both events and would like to benefit from the free lunch and other offers, registration for the BioBlitz is required. It's free, and can be done through [eventbrite.ca](http://eventbrite.ca) (search NC BioBlitz).

Lunch is vegetarian pasta and fruit.

"We want to make sure people's bellies are full and they're fuelled for the day," says Schmucker.

"And we realize the most conscious environmental choice is to cut meat out of your diet."

She goes on to say, "There



Connor Campbell and his mother Rose Campbell in the Niagara College wetlands. While they brought their beloved Cleo on this particular day, they ask that you please not bring your pets to their Polar Bear Walk. (Lauren O'Malley)

are lots of super-fun things to see and do during the BioBlitz, something for everyone. There should be migratory songbirds; different ducks and waterfowl in the wetlands; painted turtles; some different species of salamanders, including red-backed and yellow-spotted. A couple of muskrats come back every year.

We should have some iconic Canada geese here to make an appearance."

With both events, all are welcome, but it is requested that pets remain at home, as dogs will scare away the species the participants are there to observe. A reusable water bottle is also recommended.



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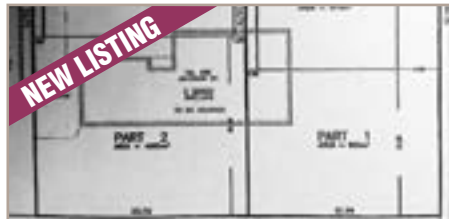
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# Queenston cleanup deemed a success

**Lauren O'Malley**  
The Local

Established residents and newer ones, young and old, and students from Willowbank: the village's spectrum was represented at the third annual Queenston Earth Day cleanup.

Organizer and Queenston resident Adrian Schoot Uiterkamp deems the event a great success. "The most important part is cleaning up the earth, and discouraging littering," he says, adding, "it's a

social event too."

Doubling the number of participants over previous years, 29 hale and hardy folks joined the brigade and collected a total of nearly 30 bags of garbage.

Prompted by Schoot Uiterkamp as arranged, employees of the Niagara Parks Commission picked up the bags from five different spots in a timely manner.

Some of the "treasures" that were collected included five intact wine glasses ("Sadly they were not accompanied by a full bottle of wine," jokes

Schoot Uiterkamp); "our second small pet urn in a row; rusty chairs; the door of a personal safe with the pins removed; a small bag of cannabis, which resulted in a finders, keepers situation; part of a rusty metal hitch on the river's edge, and a lot of plastic, actually."

Schoot Uiterkamp says takeout coffee cups and plastic water bottles were "a decent amount" of the litter, and likes to remind people those cups are neither recyclable nor compostable, as they are lined with plastic.



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Lissa Schoot Uiterkamp (top), Talyor Kulp, and Kristen Nagel find an assortment of garbage along the Niagara River Parkway during the cleanup organized by Queenston neighbours Saturday to pick up litter around the village. Willowbank students Evan Karl and Sarah Bulman (right) tackled the escarpment bank. (Photos by Fred Mercnik)





# Willowbank set to welcome community to open house

**Lauren O'Malley**  
The Local

The community can have a peek behind the scenes at Willowbank Sunday.

The student-run open house at the school of restoration arts will see its four buildings wide open to the public: the iconic estate that towers over the village of Queenston, as well as the newer barn

about woodworking, heritage window restoration, blacksmithing, stained glass work, and stone carving," says Bulman, adding there will also be a marketplace with books, tools, student projects and works, prints, and postcards. The funds from the sales in the marketplace will go back into the school, she says.

"There will be an

dents of Willowbank and the residents of Queenston due to historical issues that hadn't been resolved," observes the new Queenston resident, who says he used to be "afraid residents saw me as a rascal invading their village."

"My project partner and I decided to look back, and ask residents what they thought was important about Willowbank," says Karl. "We put a questionnaire in the local post office, and told residents we were planning a community event. We also mailed a postcard invitation, and some students went door-to-door to reinforce the invitation."

They held the event in the Bright Parlour at the Willowbank estate house, on a weeknight. "I remember that at six o'clock there weren't a lot of people there — maybe four or five," recalls Karl. "The weather was bad, so we weren't sure if people would make it out. But by 6:15 we were up to about 20 people, which seemed like a really good turnout. It meant a lot to us that so many people braved the elements to help us with this project."

Three questions were asked of the groups of residents seated around four tables, a Willowbank student at each one, taking notes and moderating. "We were mainly focussed on discussion. It was a really positive interaction," says Karl. The residents were happy to be invited



Sarah Bulman, organizer of Sunday's open house, and Evan Karl, who initiated a discussion with Queenston residents about Willowbank for a school project, welcome community members to share their pride of the school. (Lauren O'Malley)

**"I'm very excited about the open house, as are most of the students."**

*Sarah Bulman*

and dry stone wall structure on the same property, and the former Laura Secord school, its second campus, down below.

"I'm very excited about the open house, as are most of the students," says Sarah Bulman, the event organizer. "It's a great opportunity for students to show off their work from the last year, as well as to show off our really cool campus." The second-year student invites people to see the renovations and changes to the estate building, which were done to meet electrical and accessibility codes.

"I'm very pleased with how many students signed up to provide demonstrations

exhibition of hand-drawn architectural drawings of buildings in the community — you might see your own house," says Bulman. She and other students will be "floating around" to discuss projects, she added.

This event follows another student-driven initiative in the community.

Evan Karl, also a second-year student at Willowbank, was assigned a project for a conservation management plan, which included identifying what is important about a place, and what could and couldn't be proposed going forward, he says.

"We were assigned Willowbank."

"There is a history of tension between the stu-

to the school, and the students were grateful to the residents for coming in open-minded and willing to interact.

Karl is happy to report that since then, Willowbank students and staff have been invited to Pancake Tuesday at the church, and to the Queen-

ston community cleanup. "Now people are optimistic, and we have started to see it bear fruit," he says. "The enigma and mystery of the relationship are gone, and have been replaced by optimism."

Karl, Bulman, and the rest of the students and staff hope to welcome

not just their Queenston neighbours, but people from all over to enjoy their work and share their pride.

"If the day is nice, bring picnics and we'll supply blankets," suggests Bulman. The event runs April 14 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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# Bunnies prepare to hop

## Kinsmen will open event with traditional Easter egg hunt

**Lauren O'Malley**  
The Local

It's almost time for the kids of Niagara-on-the-Lake to get hopping!

The annual Niagara Nursery Bunny Trail will take over the community centre property again with arts and crafts, kids' games, touch-a-truck vehicles, and the perennially popular chocolate egg hunt.

About five years ago, the NOTL Kinsmen Club gladly merged its Easter egg hunt with the Bunny Trail event, says Kinsmen president Bob Forbes, "so people wouldn't have to drive all over town" to attend both events.

Forbes says the two groups share the cost of the candy, and the Kinsmen source it, collect it, scatter it, and clean up after it.

"We usually order between 4,000 and 5,500 eggs," says Forbes, emphasizing this year they were happy to find a Canadian manufacturer, who could also commit to providing a nut-free product.

Members of the club arrive on-site at around 9:30 to check for puddles and

debris, and to create a grid to separate egg-hunters into age categories, "so the little kids aren't being run over by the bigger ones," says Forbes.

Kids are grouped into two to three years old, four to six years old, and seven and up.

"We set it all up, and it takes the kids about 10 minutes to destroy it," he says. "It's a lot of fun to watch the little kids find the eggs. Sometimes you see them find one and just sit down and try to unwrap it and eat it on the spot."

"The hunt starts at 10 a.m. sharp," warns Forbes. "If you're not there at 10 a.m. sharp, you miss out." He also points out that parking can be challenging, and while some of the club members keep a few chocolates on hand for kids who get there late, Forbes recommends planning to get to the event early.

Forbes and Candice Penny, the nursery school's executive director, both also suggest coming on bicycles, on foot, or carpooling to make things easier for everybody.

Penny describes "a

wonderful event we put on for families and the community."

Parents and volunteers work hard to put the fun-filled festivities together: "We have always had passionate parents and community members," she says.

"It's such a fun event — I'm looking forward to seeing the community come out."

Various community institutions will be involved, including the Niagara Pump House Art Centre, and the local public library. The Pump House will have an art activity, and the library plans to have some reading pursuits.

According to Penny, the touch-a-truck participants will include "an ice cleaner, a grape harvester, and half a dozen vehicles kids can explore." The fee for unlimited access to all activities is \$5 per child.

There will also be face painting, and a fundraising bake sale.

A spokesperson for the Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre board says, "We are very excited as this is the 21st year we are celebrating

Easter weekend with fun activities for the families that come out year after year." They go on to say over 1,500 people are expected to attend.

"It's always a great family event and we are so grateful to all the volun-

teers and Niagara Nursery families who help with this event. Their support is critical to the success and we could not do it without them."

Penny says Crystal the Bunny will make an appearance, and there will

be a photo booth with opportunities to get a print right away, as well as photos taken on people's devices. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Any questions can be directed to niagaranursery@gmail.com.



Graham Staz and Francine Baskin proudly show off their finished Easter eggs. (Photo supplied)



Francine Baskin, Elliot Epp, Amelia Templaars and Mieka Jantz work on their Bunny Trail craft. (Photo supplied)

## LOCAL CELEBRATIONS



*Sidney & Vanessa*

Nancy Bailey  
is proud to announce  
the marriage of  
her daughter,

*Vanessa Brazeau*  
on

*March 30, 2019.*

She was married  
in the town of  
Diksmuide, Belgium  
where her husband

*Sidney Albrecht*

grew up. The happy  
couple currently live in  
Berlin, Germany.



## Parks Canada removing 80 hazardous trees

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

If you are out for a walk and come across trees being cut down on Parks Canada property this month, it's because they present a safety issue.

A recent inspection of trails and parking areas at the Commons, Butler's Barracks and Fort George National Historic Sites identified about 80 hazardous trees. The weakened branches and trunks of these trees pose a risk to public safety and will be removed, says parks communication officer Rae Kingdon.

Parks staff have used a risk assessment approach to identify trees which should be removed first, with approximately 20 to 25 scheduled for removal in April, she says — many are ash that have succumbed to emerald ash borer.

The remaining hazardous trees will be removed at a later date, she said — work

is expected to continue throughout the summer.

The Commons, Butler's Barracks, and Fort George sites will remain open to visitors during these operations. Work areas will be cordoned off and temporarily closed for visitor use. Visitors are advised to exercise caution and respect all closures.

All Parks Canada projects are subject to environmental assessments to ensure appropriate ecological protection measures are in place, says Kingdon.

"No species-at-risk trees are affected and all tree removals will occur outside of the bird nesting season in order to protect migratory birds and wildlife."

Parks Canada is committed to preserving both the natural and cultural heritage of its special places, while ensuring safe, high-quality experiences for visitors, she says, and has a revegetation plan in place.

"Every tree removed will

be replaced by a native tree species this spring. Plantings will be designed to integrate the natural environment and cultural heritage of this site."

While no final decision has been made, there are several species of trees that would be appropriate for replanting, such as native oak, she says.

"Where possible, locally sourced trees will be used. Traditionally this area was oak savannah, a type of vegetation community that would have historically been found here."

The new trees will likely be about two to two-and-a-half metres (six to eight feet) in height, she says.

In February, Parks staff held an information session in Niagara-on-the-Lake to raise awareness about species at risk on federal property, and also identified some trees to be removed, but this current project is not linked to that, says Kingdon.

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# IT'S HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME!

## Prime your knowledge for your next painting project

Submitted by  
Creek Road Paints

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It's always what's on the inside that matters, and this means your primers too.

Benjamin Moore creates premium quality primers, specific to your environment, substrate, and circumstance — ready to remedy any situation, with the correct concentration on product.

Prep is not just a word, but a process, and one that is often overlooked with exterior projects. The dreaded steps of sanding and priming are often what people want to eliminate. Following proper priming procedure will automatically eliminate the chances for blistering and peeling to occur. Using our Fresh Start Exterior Wood Primer — a fast-dry alkyd — it promotes the proper treatment for new or previously painted wood, and helps to suppress the bleeding that can occur with cedar and

redwood, when a light stain colour is applied.

How can you tell if it's oil or latex? Before picking the right products, you want to know what was there before. Apply some methyl hydrate, a solvent Creek Road Paints carries, to a rag, try and remove the paint in question. If you have to work really hard to remove anything, it's oil — and if the paint comes off with ease, it's latex. You have now set the proper stage to start your project.

The most important element to consider for any

exterior project is weather. Both friend and foe, the proper temperature and conditions will promote the most effective results. Being mindful not to paint in direct sunlight, as this increases the drying time of the product, while decreasing your working, or open time. As well don't paint below 10 degrees, to ensure your product performs as promised.

For Moore tips on your next exterior project, visit the design staff of Creek Road Paints, Benjamin Moore.



## Privacy never looked so good

Submitted by  
Darrell Boer and  
Jolanda Broekema  
Regal Florist &  
Garden Centre

### A metal privacy screen

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property.

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# IT'S HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME!

## The right stone for your garden design

Submitted by  
**Kelsey Penner**  
Penner Home Hardware  
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Did you know stone is a great alternative to mulching in gardens? There are many benefits to using decorative stone in your yard.

Your garden will be able to tolerate any harsh weather, as well, intense sun and strong winds will no longer be a concern.

Stone Gardens are perfect for people with busy lives, who can't keep up with a regular garden. Having a stone garden means less weeds, brightens up your yard, and saves time.

Decorative stone is also the perfect addition around your pool area, making your yard the perfect summer oasis.

We carry many different



decorative stones to suit any garden needs. Some of those include white marble, black and red granite, silica pebbles, river rock, and more.

Along with our large stone selection, we also carry several types of gravel.

Gravel is great for driveways, underneath patio stones and around tile beds. Here are some uses for and facts about the gravel we carry.

### 1/2" and 3/4" clear stone:

This stone is used mostly around tile beds, and topping up driveways. Clear stone is quarried material, that is crushed to certain sizes and screened, meaning all the fines

are removed, making it the best product for drainage. This product is sold by the yard.

### 1/2" and 3/4" traffic binder:

This is a binding stone, mostly used for the base of driveways. It is also a good product to put underneath patio stone screening to pack the area down. This product is sold by the yard.

We offer convenient delivery for those who need it. We encourage our customers to come in and take a look at our selection of decorative stones and gravel, and talk to our knowledgeable staff to ensure you get the right stone to suit your needs.

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**A-1 Flooring**

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*"From start to finish our experience was great. The Sales team, installers and follow-up care made us feel as if we mattered. We will definitely*



*ly deal with A-1 Flooring St. Catharines for future flooring projects."*

Ken C.

*"Professional service from the very beginning to the end. Roni had wonderful suggestions using her design background for our kitchen redesign and flooring needs."*

Terri M.

*"Special thanks to Dale and Shane M. for their amazing help. Our new bathroom is beyond our expectations!"*

*Thank you A-1 Flooring, we will be back."*

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*"A1 Flooring did an A1 job... went from old carpet to gorgeous hardwood flooring."*

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While in high school, current co-owner Kerry Emberson started working at The Barbecue & Fireplace Centre part-time. Kerry continued on full-time until purchasing the business with John Marrone in 1987. Since that time, the business continued to grow: barbecue servicing, tune ups, establishing the largest and most complete replacement parts inventory and gas fireplaces.

In 2006, they outgrew the original store and built a new store at its current location, which allowed them to expand into electric fireplaces,

pizza ovens and an impressive inventory of accessories. In 2013, John Marrone retired and former employee Dave Collins came on board as co-owner. "It's taken a lot of hard work to build the business and we've always realized the value of a satisfied customer" says Kerry. "We've also had terrific employees over the years who have contributed to the success of the business." Quality products, personalized and dependable service paired with competitive pricing are the reasons he points to for the longevity of the business.

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# IT'S HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME!

## Hardwood maintenance tips

Submitted by  
Imperial Hardwood

In order to keep your new wood floors looking great, always follow these tips:

- Wipe up all spills immediately.
- Only use vacuum cleaners that have a setting for hard surfaces. Turn off the beater bars/brushes on the vacuum cleaner when present.
- Do not wet-mop a wood floor. Standing water will result in cracks, splits, cupping, warping, degradation of the finish, and leave a discoloring residue. Use approved cleaners made specifically for hardwood floors. We recommend the BONA line of cleaners.
- Never use Murphy's Oil Soap on your hardwood floor.
- Do not use steam cleaners on wood floors.
- Water in a vapor form will penetrate the wood fibres and cause irreversible damage to the wood flooring and the finish.
- Use breathable throw rugs both inside and outside doorways to prevent grit, salt, chemicals, sand, moisture and other debris from being tracked onto the wood floors.
- For wood flooring installed in the kitchen, place a breathable area rug in front of the kitchen sink and stove.
- Rugs should be shaken out, cleaned, and thoroughly dried when they get wet.
- Check with the finish manufacturer for when rugs can be placed on the newly finished floor. In general, they should not be placed on a newly finished floor for a minimum of seven days after the final coat of finish has been applied.
- Take special precautions with non-skid pads that are frequently placed under area rugs. Some of these pads may imprint their pattern onto the finish and/or the wood floor. (Natural fibres may not transfer as much as some synthetic pads.)
- Be aware that area rugs cover the wood floor, protecting it from UV/sun exposure, which results in color differences in the wood floor.
- Put fabric-faced glides under the legs of furniture to prevent scuffing and scratching. Periodically check these floor protectors for embedded soil and replace as necessary.
- Avoid walking on your floor with cleats, sports shoes, and high heels. A 125-pound woman in high heels has an impact of 2,000 pounds per square inch. An exposed heel can exert up to 8,000 pounds per square inch. This kind of impact will dent any floor surface.
- Keep pet claws trimmed and in good repair.
- When moving heavy furniture, do not slide it on wood flooring. It is best to pick up the furniture completely to avoid scratching the floors.
- When moving appliances (refrigerators, stoves, etc.), use safety glides. On newly finished floors, wait a minimum of three days before replacing appliances.
- Use an appropriate humidifier throughout the winter/dry months and/or a dehumidifier in the summer/humid months to keep wood movement and shrinkage to a minimum. It is important to maintain a consistent environment throughout the year to minimize floor movement.
- When the floor loses its luster, it's time for a recoat.



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# IT'S HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME!

## Curb appeal, added value, and a great reason to throw a backyard bbq- we can help!

Submitted by  
**Andrea New of  
NewScape Contracting**

It's that time of year to head outside and give your outdoor space the attention it deserves. A new fence, deck, or beautifully designed garden will not only transform the look of your home, but will also add tremendous value.

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Does the front of your house need some TLC? Maybe a new front porch, or a professionally designed garden? Whatever your taste, and whatever your budget, NewScape has got you covered! It's amazing what a new fresh designed garden bed can do to the look and value of



your home!

Did the recent wind storms leave your fence damaged or barely standing? Maybe a new pool needs to be fenced in, or perhaps it's just time to replace those old weathered boards. NewScape Contracting specializes in creating custom fences that will function for exactly what you need, while making your property look fabulous!

Greg New, owner and operator of NewScape Con-

tracting has over 20 years of expert experience in this industry. He and his team are known for their high level of skill and professionalism. From small residential projects to large scale commercial jobs, Greg and his crew promise to deliver reliable, friendly, and expert service!

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### Watch for more HOME IMPROVEMENT ADVICE in our April 18 issue

If you would like to have your  
business featured in the  
upcoming issues, please contact:

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NOTL Businesses call Karen  
905-641-5335 or  
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# IT'S HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME!

## Expert advice, extensive selection make for best choices in fireplaces

**Submitted by  
Stella's Fireplace**

Stella's Regional Fireplace Specialists has been serving the Niagara Region for over 41 years, making the business the oldest in the industry.

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Staff photo supplied by Stella's Fireplace

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# ‘So many reasons to love it’

## Young firefighter encourages others to consider applying for the volunteer position

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Maddie Skubel is one of just six female volunteers in the Niagara-on-the-Lake fire department.

At 22, she’s not the youngest volunteer, but she is the youngest female, she believes.

Although she was a little intimidated when she first began her training, she quickly realized there was no need to be. Her gender was never an issue — the other firefighters were welcoming from the start, and never treated her any differently than other volunteers, she says.

The certified paramedic, working as a health care technician, decided to apply to become a firefighter thinking it would be a good way to put her training to work in another setting.

She learned about the paramedic component of being a firefighter as part of her course, and realized it would be “a really good experience,” she says. “Firefighters go to medical calls, and my para-

medic training would help in those situations.”

She also has a cousin in the department who encouraged her to give it a try, and Skubel says she’s glad she did.

She began her training more than a year ago, but around the time she was finished, she had shoulder surgery. A St. Davids resident, she is a member of that station, but couldn’t go on any calls for a couple of months.

“Right from the first time I walked into the station, the guys welcomed me. They were so nice — they helped me when I needed help, and answered all my questions.”

During her training and the time she has been with the station, she has learned many skills that can be used in everyday life — skills she would never have imagined mastering, such as the use of so many tools, she says.

As a female, she was a little worried about the strength requirements when she signed up, but she found out soon enough she needn’t have been — she learned technique can

make up for strength.

The hands-on training made her realize she could do whatever she has to do — and if she can’t, “you’re never alone. There is always someone to help you if you need help. You’re part of a team, and that gives you confidence.”

She was also anxious about the prospect of entering a burning building — recruits travel to a burn tower in Grimsby, where they fight a controlled fire.

“It’s pretty stressful, but you get through it and you realize you will always be under stress in this job,” says Skubel.

“But you learn to think critically under stress. It’s not like you’re getting thrown in; you receive a lot of training to prepare for all you’ll have to do. They never make you do something you don’t know how to do.”

Recruits receive 160 hours of training to ensure they are well-equipped for the job by the time they join their hall, and all firefighters continue to train weekly with their de-

partment.

While the camaraderie of the station makes for a comfortable work environment, Skubel says she also likes the diversity of the backgrounds of the other firefighters.

“They come from so many walks of life. They’re not just firefighters, they bring so much more to the job. Everyone has their individual skills and knowledge to contribute. That’s really cool to see.”

Skubel signed up as a volunteer recruit thinking her full-time career would be working as a paramedic, while giving back to her community as a part-time firefighter.

But she is enjoying the experience so much, she has changed her mind.

“I would like to become a full-time firefighter. I love that every call is different, and it’s such a great work environment. I love it. Every time I go to the station I have a great time. I also love the challenge.”

What would Skubel say to someone considering filling out an application?

“Go for it.”

She has found her short time with the station “life-changing,” she says.

“It’s really given me a different perspective. It’s made me realize how many people I don’t know, even in St. Davids, my community. People

I didn’t know before, I’ve discovered are my neighbours.”

The firefighters’ association, the fundraising and social events they organize, all come along with the job, and provide more opportunities to meet people in the community, says Skubel.

She would love to see more females in the department, but anyone who is thinking of giving it a try, should, she says.

“There are so many reasons why I love it.”

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can find

more information and an application at [www.notl.com](http://www.notl.com).

The deadline to submit an application is April 30. Information sessions will be held Wednesday, April 17, at 7 p.m. at the Glendale station on Townline Road, and Thursday, April 25, at 7 p.m. at the Old Town station on Anderson Lane. The information sessions are for interested potential volunteers and their families to learn about the application process and the time required in the role of a firefighter.



Maddie Skubel loves being a volunteer firefighter — she’s decided she wants to make a full-time career of it. (Photo supplied)

## Officers’ Dinner could become an annual event



The Officers’ Dinner held Friday at Navy Hall, organized by The Friends of Fort George, turned out to be a terrific event, says Tony Chisholm, president of the Friends. It was great to see so many locals together, he says, and the food and entertainment were terrific — everyone had a great time and most said they’d like to see this as an annual event they would love to attend next year. Organizers Scott Finlay and Peter Martin (right) toast the successful event. (Tony Chisholm)



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A St. Davids book sale was recently organized by a few caring students who wanted to do something for their community, with more children jumping in to help along the way. The students involved were Aaima, Owen C., Kayla E., Avery S., Gwynn, Camille, Ryan D., and Dylan K. They collected books from teachers and student families and took turns running the sale during nutrition break. The proceeds from the book sale, watched over by Georgina and Owen C., are going to the humane society and Sick Kids Hospital.



St. Davids Kindergarten students have fun while learning reading readiness. There are words on the table, and the students, armed with fly swatters, are playing a sight word game. One person calls out the word and they race to be the first to swat the fly. (All photos are supplied.)



Pablo and Eislin are holding plastic bags they brought in to be collected by the St. Davids Eco Club and recycled. Students have been challenged to bring in as many stretchy plastic bags as possible. The bags will be dropped off at Walmart to be sent off to be recycled into composite decking and furniture. The Eco Club has also been collecting batteries this year so they can be properly recycled. Two hundred schools participated and St. Davids was one of only 20 schools that met its goal of 1.36 kilograms per person.

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After the St. Davids Kindergarten students' trip to the sugar bush, one of the children noticed sap leaking from the broken branch of one of the school's maple trees. The children were excited, and teacher Lindsay Parravicino decided they would hang buckets to collect sap and see how much they could collect by the end of the day. They had a great debate about whether or not the buckets would be filled, Parravicino said, and students were eager to make signs instructing older students to leave the buckets alone so that they could check. By the end of the day, the large bucket was three-quarters full.



# End of the steamship era in Niagara



The Chippewa, at the dock in Niagara (Photo courtesy of the Niagara Historical Society & Museum)

## Tony Chisholm Special to The Local

The turn of the 20th century was a period of staggering growth around the docks in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Shipping was highly competitive and tended toward acquisitions and monopolies.

Coal was everywhere. In a port town you knew better than to hang out your washing when a ship was in town, especially when the wind came from the direction of the docks.

The Niagara Navigation Company purchased the wharf in 1899 for \$14,000. By 1916, the property was deeded to the Canada Steamship Lines (CSL).

The ships belonging to CSL played an important part in the lives of the people of the town during the 1920s and '30s. In those days the townspeople would go to the docks to see the boats "go out" or "come in" (never depart or arrive).

Five round-trip tickets between Niagara and Toronto cost \$5.

The Cayuga had a crew of 75. On board she had a lunch counter, dining room and a dance floor with a live orchestra for the night trips to Toronto. The Chippewa ran for 42 years and retired in 1936. The Cayuga ran during the 1940s and 1950s, carrying more than 15 million passengers in total, and retired after 48 years in 1957.

The Cayuga remained the last operating steamer, with daily service between Toronto and Niagara through the Second World War. In the late 1940s, CSL refitted the steamer with a diesel

engine and upgraded its fire-safety systems. But after the Noronic tragedy in September 1949, when another CSL passenger ship burned in Toronto harbour with 119 fatalities, CSL wanted to get out of the passenger trade altogether. The Noronic fire is still listed as one of the worst tragedies in Toronto's history.

Commercial fishing continued up to the 1950s — there had been commercial fishing as early as 1790 and into the 1800s, catching whitefish for export. With the arrival of steamships and trains to Niagara in the late 1800s the industry grew as fish could be quickly shipped in large quantities to Toronto, Buffalo, and New York City.

At its peak the industry supported up to 22 local families. With the arrival of the lamprey eel and the alewife fish as well as increasing pollution from factories along the river, the fishing industry declined significantly.

In 1953, not wanting to see the long tradition of day excursions across the lake end, a group of steamboat enthusiasts raised enough funds to purchase the Cayuga from CSL and put her back into regular service. Within three years, the poorly-funded venture was struggling with debt and the ship was retired again in September 1957, eventually reduced to scrap in 1961. Years later, the Cayuga II (400 passengers) ran a daily summer service between Niagara and Toronto but it was not profitable. With her went the last traces of regular steamer excursions between Toronto

and Niagara, once a tradition for countless Torontonians to escape the summer heat.

After 1950, the harbour and dock area went through several changes. One tenant in the early 50s was the St. Catharines Boat Club, which had mostly outboard motor boats in the dock area.

There was a bit of a boat ramp off Melville Street and the Ball family kept their commercial fishing boats there. Ted and Goring Ball were third generation fishermen. The only industry on the docks was Shepherd Boat Works located on a piece of riverfront property sold to them in 1947 by CSL.

A severe ice jam in 1955 clogged the river, destroying the steamship dock at Queenston and contributing to the financial problems of CSL.

In 1957, Maid of the Mist Steamboat Co. bought the dock and built the NOTL marina. On Jan. 13, 1961, there was a spectacular fire in a 100-year-old warehouse on the property that stored baskets manufactured here for area farmers.

In 1966, the marina was leased to the Gillinghams, and in 1971 they bought the property and changed the name to Gillingham Yacht Basin. The NOTL Sailing Club had been around since 1964. George Hinterhoe-

ller was the driving force behind the club and was its first commodore.

By 1977, the Gillinghams wanted to sell the marina and in December 1978 the sailing club decided to purchase the property.

Today that portion of the historic dock area, and its wonderful heritage, is owned and maintained by the sailing club.

What have we lost from this era? Perhaps slow, enjoyable travel, the chance to make new friends, and the opportunity to travel across the lake on these magnificent ships — with no traffic jams.

Tony Chisholm moved to NOTL in 2003 and re-

tired from his publishing job a few years later. With a love of history, he soon got involved with War of 1812 bicentennial events and was chair of the committee that brought the tall ships to town in July 2017. He is a tour guide for the NOTL Historical Society and Museum and last year did several tours of the Dock Area for residents. He is currently president of the Friends of Fort George and is on the Town's Heritage Trail Committee.

*Acknowledgements: "Sailing out of Niagara... since 1833" by Isabelle Ridgway and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club and the Niagara on the Lake Historical Society and Museum.*



The Cayuga (Photo courtesy of the Niagara Historical Society & Museum)



# LOCAL SPORTS

## NOTL teen drafted to OHL's London Knights

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

It was a whirlwind weekend for the Giampa family of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

On Friday, Arc Giampa drove to Toronto for daughter Madison's first game at the Ontario Women's Hockey Association provincials. He rushed home later that night to be in front of the computer the next morning with his wife Bonnie. Their 15-year-old son Matteo, a St. Michael Catholic Elementary School grad and current Holy Cross honour student, was expected to be chosen in the 2019 Ontario Hockey League draft.

As the morning progressed, Matteo watched as Connor Fedorkow, his teammate on the Niagara North Stars AAA team, was chosen by the London Knights in the third round, 53rd overall. "I was super happy for him," said Matteo. "He worked hard and he totally deserved it."

Prior to the draft, Matteo had been approached by 19 of the 20 teams in the OHL, the lone holdout being Flint. Two of those teams, Mississauga and London, invited him to their facilities

for a personal visit. At both, he spent a day meeting the players and coaches, and watching their games that same day.

Once his teammate had been chosen, Matteo began to seriously consider where he might end up.

In the seventh round, when he finally heard his name called, he breathed a huge sigh of relief. At number 142 overall, Matteo was drafted by that very same London Knights team. Though he would have liked to have been drafted higher, he was thrilled to be going to the Knights.

"It's pretty exciting to be drafted by the same team as Connor," said Matteo. "We've played together for about five years now."

As it began to sink in at the family home, he said, "my mom was a mess. She was bawling her eyes out. And my dad got a bit emotional, too."

Arc says his son "has always aspired to play in the OHL. It's amazing to see him achieve his dream."

The whirlwind continued, as it was back to Toronto for the OWSA tournament, where Madison's team was knocked out in

overtime Saturday.

Then Sunday, the entire family drove up to London to take in the Knights' 7-0 thrashing of the Guelph Storm in Game 2 of their Western Conference semi-final. Matteo and the other draft picks were invited to the game, and had their moment in the spotlight at centre ice as they were introduced to the fans.

"It was a great feeling to be at the game, to feel the atmosphere, and sit in the stands with the fans," he enthused.

Matteo feels he's been drafted by a great organization. "Some great players have come through London — Mitch Marner, Max Domi — and it gives me the opportunity to be coached by a legend in head coach Dale Hunter. To call myself a London Knight is a true honour."

With 35 points scored in 32 games this season, Matteo knows he showed scouts from across the league what he can bring to an OHL team.

Though the Knights concentrated on size with their first two picks (six foot, one inch, 190-pound forward Stuart Rolofs from

Kanata, and six foot, two-inch, 209-pound defence-man Logan Mailloux of Toronto), Giampa should fit in well with their current style of play.

At five feet, 10 inches tall and 146 pounds, he brings a speed and finesse style of play, something the Knights are currently known for.

Matteo knows, though, when the Knights' training camp rolls around this August, he will have to compete for a spot on their roster. "Both Coach Hunter and his brother, general manager Mark, told me my skills are there. I just have to work on my strength."

To that end, he plans to concentrate in the off-season on five-day-a-week sessions with a personal trainer, mostly working with weights to build muscle and strength. This will be his second summer without playing lacrosse, a decision he made last year to get ready to be noticed for the OHL draft.

Matteo won't turn 16 until Sept. 3 this year. When asked about moving away from his family at such a young age, he points to a connection he already has with the city.

"My grandparents live there, so I've been to London many times. I know the city, and I really like it there. I don't know if I'll get to live with them when I make the team. It all depends on what the team and the coaches want."

Like many boys his age,

Matteo has always dreamed of a career in the National Hockey League. Looking ahead, he can't wait to show the Knights what he can do in training camp this summer. Whether he ends up in the NHL or not, he's thrilled to be entering this next step of his career in hockey.



Matteo Giampa, now playing AAA hockey with the Niagara North Stars, will head to London for a summer training camp, hoping to earn a spot on the Knights' roster. (Photo supplied)

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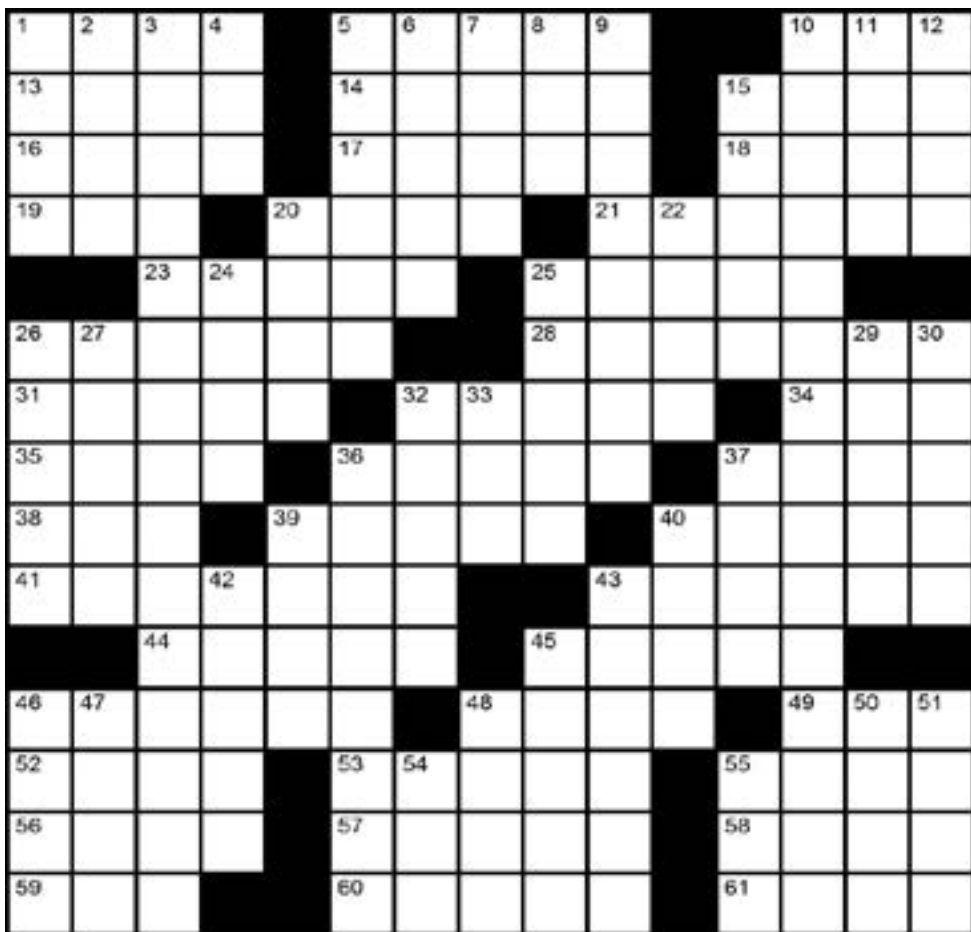
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32 "I miss my ---, my --- miss misses me"  
34 "Halt! --- fire!"  
35 Burden  
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37 Former Georgia senator Sam ---  
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12 Fail to win  
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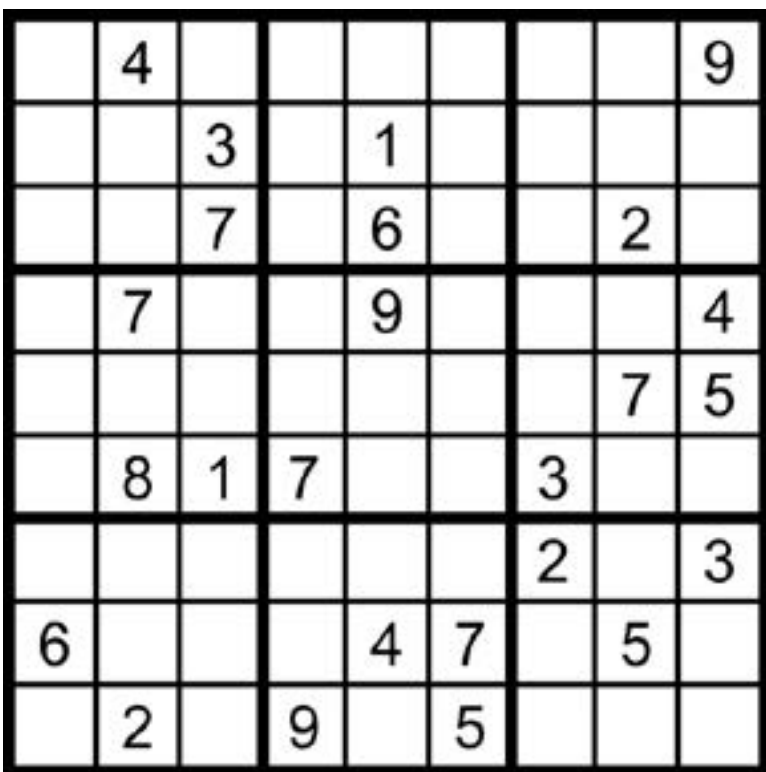
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### 2019 LEXUS RX 350 AWD

Navigation Package, Blind Spot Monitoring, Heated & Cooled Leather Seats, Sunroof, Bluetooth, 3,911 km. Pre-Owned Demo.

**\$52,500**

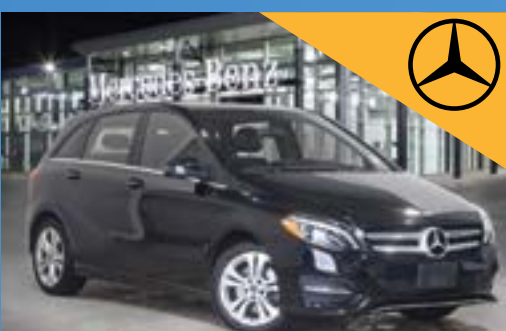
#D-39K275

+HST & LIC

Vehicle located at:

**PERFORMANCE LEXUS**

262 Lake Street, St. Catharines



### 2018 MERCEDES B250 4MATIC

Avantgarde Edition, Dark Ash Wood Trim, COMAND Online Navigation w/MB Apps, Panoramic Sunroof, 15,048 km. Pre-Owned Demo

**\$30,258**

#D-30EC458

+HST & LIC

Vehicle located at:

**PERFORMANCE MERCEDES-BENZ**

371 Ontario Street, St. Catharines

[performance.ca/luxury-vehicles.htm](http://performance.ca/luxury-vehicles.htm)