



'Heaven has gained a superhero'
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notllocal.com APRIL 26, 2023 Volume 5 • Issue 17



Go Fish

Crossroads Public School's Grades 1 to 3 offered an entertaining presentation that involved most students in some capacity and delighted audience members. A few of the main characters included Daisha Necakof-Waller as an octopus, Kayla Thwaites as an angel fish, Taylor Jonah as a zebra fish, Holly Neuhof as a tiger shark, and Elliott Chard as a tuna fish. (Supplied)

Police investigation concludes, Integrity Commissioner may begin his inquiry

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara Regional Police have finished investigating an incident that occurred between a Niagara-on-the-Lake councillor and a local developer, and will not be laying charges.

Detectives with the criminal investigations branch have concluded their investigation, Const. Philip Gavin told The Local, "and do not have reasonable grounds to lay charges under the criminal code."

"The matter is being deferred back to town staff as well as the Integrity Commissioner for further review," he said.

Neither police nor the town name developer Ben-

ny Marotta as the person the town refers to as "the third party" or Coun. Gary Burroughs as the council member in the investigation, which was looking into what occurred when Marotta handed over an envelope with \$10,000 in cash to Burroughs after inviting the councillor to meet with him at his Two Sisters Winery restaurant.

CAO Marnie Cluckie told The Local recently that the town's Integrity Commissioner, Ted McDermott, could not investigate while it was a police matter, but that she reached out to him last week once the police said the investigation was concluded.

"I advised the Integrity Commissioner that the po-

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Large crowd applause draws ire of deputy lord mayor

Demolition permits denied for proposed subdivision site

Mike Balsom
The Local

To the roar of applause from an audience that numbered between 400 and 500 onlookers, Niagara-on-the-Lake's town council voted 4-3 and 7-0 to reject heritage permit applications related to the Rand Estate at a special council meeting Monday night.

The vote effectively put a halt on any plans Benny Marotta's Solmar and Two Sisters Resorts have for demolition or relocation of any of the structures on the properties at 200 John Street East and 588 Charlotte Street. That includes the Calvin Rand summer house, the main stables and barn and the carriage house, some of which Denise Horne, the town's heritage

planner, recommended that council approve for demolition with conditions.

By 4:30 p.m., at least 60 people had already gathered inside the Anderson Lane community centre, hoping to secure a good seat for the 5 p.m. start time. When auditorium doors opened at 4:40 p.m., it was clear town staff seriously underestimated the expected attendance. The portable wall had been pulled almost fully closed to divide the auditorium in half, and fewer than 100 chairs had been set up.

As residents continued to

roll in, staff opened the portable wall and distributed more than 200 more chairs, but still it was standing room only by the time the meeting began.

To the surprise of those in attendance, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa opened the proceedings by declaring a non-pecuniary conflict of interest as defined by the town's code of conduct.

"It's due to the proximity of my primary residences to the subject properties," he told council. "So, in an abundance of caution, after consultation with the town's integrity commissioner and my own inde-

pendent legal counsel, I am declaring this conflict of interest."

Before walking out of the meeting, Zalepa handed the chair to Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens.

Wiens' first order of business was to remind those attending that according to the town's bylaws, as chair, he had the right to expel or exclude anyone who displayed improper conduct.

"This is a large room with a lot of people," said Wiens. "This isn't a sporting event, where somebody can cheer for the side they want to win or

lose. The chamber is supposed to be a solemn place where order and democracy takes place. If the meeting gets out of hand we will take a break and move out to an anteroom until our bylaw officers bring the room back to order."

Wiens would end up making good on his warning later during the four-hour session.

Horne was first to speak, outlining the estate's historical significance as well as the importance of the Dunnington-Grubb-designed gardens lo-

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No word on when or if Integrity Commissioner inquiry to start

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lice investigation involving a third party's interaction with a member of town council is now complete," she said, and the police informed the town "there were no criminal wrongdoings."

Asked if the Integrity Commissioner had started his investigation, Cluckie told The Local Monday he had not, but she had no information about whether there would definitely be an investigation or when it might start.

The matter under scrutiny began March 4, when Marotta and Burroughs met at the winery restaurant. They spoke mostly of family, Burroughs said, and during that meeting, Marotta handed over an envelope, telling him not to open it in the restaurant. Burroughs said when he got home, he and his wife Sarah opened it, and from then on, attempted to return the money it contained.

A statement emailed to The Local on April 20 from St. Catharines law firm Sullivan Mahoney said that "builder and philanthropist Benny Marotta



Coun. Gary Burroughs told The Local he is focusing on the work he was elected to do.

has been cleared by Niagara police of any wrongdoing after he gave a local councillor a donation to cover campaign expenses from the October municipal election." On March 4, the statement continues,

"Marotta made the contribution to Councillor Gary Burroughs, instructing him to use the amount allowed for municipal campaigns to clear up any outstanding election debts, then donate whatever was left over to his church. Burroughs accepted the contribution but changed his mind later and returned it to the Town's CAO."

Burroughs told The Local he did not know what

was in the envelope when it was given to him. If Marotta had said then it was a campaign donation, "I would never have taken it. I would have said my campaign is over. I'd already sent some money back to a donor because I didn't need it."

Burroughs said it wasn't until the next day when he tried to return the money that Marotta said it was for his campaign, and when

Burroughs told him it was too late, and that he didn't need it, Marotta said to give it to the church, which Burroughs declined.

The councillor says at no time was any favour asked of him.

Marotta said the same to The Local, that he had not asked for any favours.

Marotta's statement says he hopes Burroughs is also cleared "after council asked the town's Integrity Commissioner to review the councillor's conduct in the matter."

Marotta went on to explain some of the controversy over his proposed developments. He "raised concern over a small group of residents opposed to growth in NOTL who have tried to divide the community," his statement from the law office says.

"Me and my family are committed to helping Niagara-on-the-Lake become a vibrant, growing community that not only preserves its character and heritage but enhances it for future generations," he added. "This is a jewel in Ontario and we only want it to shine even brighter. Sadly, some people don't like others who have a vision."

With two ongoing and controversial issues regarding Marotta development proposals before councillors and the public, Burroughs said in his recent statement that he doesn't believe he has a conflict of interest resulting from the matter between him and Marotta, and he will continue to take part in discussions and votes.

"The NRP investigation is now complete," he told The Local Tuesday. "At this time, I will continue to focus on the important work at council and doing the job I was elected to do."

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Crowd applauds denial of demolition permits

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cated at 176 and 200 John Street East, both parts of the estate.

"These are rare and unique designed landscapes by pioneering landscape architects Howard and Lorrie Dunnington-Grubb," said Horne. "They were known to design landscapes as a series of outdoor rooms and nodes, each distinct with its own character."

Horne added that the Rand Estate represents a cultural heritage landscape with a high level of integrity, a measure of how well a property's heritage attributes continue to represent its heritage value. Horne recommended preservation of the landscape and most of the built heritage on site as the overall approach.

At the same time, Horne recommended that council approve demolition of the summer house and the main residence, including the stable and barn, as a last resort due to the substantial alterations of the buildings over time, which have diminished their relationship to their earliest state.

Of the 28 items in the Solmar application, Horne's heritage report recommended that council refuse 15 of them. Those refusals included a number of applications for the removal of trees and shrubs as well as for the removal of the boundary wall and brick pillars at the 200 John Street East entrance, and a proposal to construct a roadway through what is known as the panhandle into the planned 171-home subdivision.

There were eight items in the application that Horne's report recommended for approval under some conditions, including the demolition of the summer house and the main residence, the stable and barn.

Sarah Premi, a lawyer from St. Catharines firm Sullivan Mahoney representing Solmar, was next to the podium.

Referencing the citizen organization Save Our Rand Estate (SORE), Premi claimed that despite the animosity between the two groups since 2018, there actually is a lot of common ground.

It was clear from her presentation, as well as from her colleague David Reilly's, that one of the major differences between Solmar and SORE is Solmar's insistence on adapting the existing panhandle as the entrance into the subdivision. To complete the work would require removing a number of trees and destroying much of the Dunnington-Grubb pool garden, which Reilly said would be commemorated, though didn't fully explain how.

Reilly stressed often how many of the original features of the estate would be reconstructed, including an axial walkway which would be built in a different area than it originally sat.



Couns. Sandra O'Connor, Nick Ruller and Maria Mavridis, the town's director of community and development services Kirsten McCauley, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa before he left the meeting, Victoria Steele acting as town clerk, and Couns. Wendy Cheropita, Gary Burroughs, Erwin Wiens and Tim Balasiuk. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

He also pointed out the developer's intention to make these features open to public access in a way that would honour the site's heritage.

Premi concluded by saying that the Solmar group supports all of the recommendations made by Horne in her staff report, with the road into the subdivision the only point of contention.

Wiens questioned Reilly about who would be responsible for the upkeep of some of the structures that would stay on site, and expressed some concern that a condo corporation could remove some of those features some time in the distant future if they saw fit.

Kate Lyons, a representative from Goodmans LLP, then began the SORE presentation, during which she refuted Premi's assertion that the two sides were closer than they thought.

"In the SORE concept," Lyons pointed out, "access is proposed not by obliterating all of the designed heritage landscape and the panhandle, but between 144 and 176 John Street East where it can be consolidated with access to the hotel, which we assume Mr. Marotta will one day be returning to."

"Solmar's representatives say the access road proposed by SORE is not feasible because it's on a property owned by a different owner," she continued. "We know that it's proposed by them to use 144 and 176 John for a wetland relocation and stormwater management pond. When it's convenient for Mr. Marotta's purposes, all four properties on the Rand Estate are available for his use."

That assertion drew loud cheers from the audience, and a warning and reprimand from Wiens to the crowd.

Heritage architect Michael McClelland spoke on SORE's behalf about the importance of the Rand Estate to the town's history, and former owner Calvin Rand's involvement in the development of the Shaw Festival.

"It's not just bricks and mortar," said McClelland, "it's the whole cultural importance of this estate to your town and to the province generally. Calvin Rand founded the Niagara Institute for International Studies there, and he intended to give these buildings over."

Landscape architect Brendan Stewart then spoke with more detail on the pool gardens, before turning the mic back to Lyons to wrap up the SORE presentation.

"They're asking for permits today, but you will find out later what the mitigation looks like and which trees will be saved," said Lyons. "The only way those two things can be heard together is if you deny the heritage permits sought by the company. Your decision will then be appealed to the OLT (Ontario Land Tribunal) and joined with the planning act applications. They will have all the expert testimony."

She suggested that if council accepted Horne's recommendations item by item, Marotta would appeal the town's refusals related to his heritage application. And she warned that if they accepted Horne's recommendations in full, Solmar would "probably demolish the Rand house, the barn and stable complex and the pool garden tomorrow."

That again drew more applause from the spectators, again prompting an admonishment from Wiens to the crowd.

Wiens and other councillors had questions about the added cost that would be involved for the heritage applications to be heard at next year's OLT hearings. Lyons insisted that the costs would be minimal.

The meeting moved on to the public delegation portion, with former NOTL resident Alan Wojcik as the first speaker, focusing on the property's uniqueness in the country. After a short break, he was followed by Nancy Macri, who didn't have a presentation, but used her podium time to question Wiens about the heavy-handedness of his warnings.

Macri's challenge to the deputy lord mayor once again drew applause, and Wiens again admonished the crowd, pointing to one person in particular and asking town staff to remove him. NOTL Fire Chief Jay Plato and a colleague then walked down the aisle to speak to the resident while council took another short break. When they returned, a good portion of the crowd had left, but the gentleman who had been asked to leave was still there.

Next up was Ted Baker of Ricardo Street, Lyle Hall rep-

resenting the Niagara Foundation, Bruce Gitelman and conservation activist Gracia Jane, via video conferencing, all spoke out against the Solmar application.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor put forth a motion that council consider all 25 points of part one and all five points of part two of Solmar's heritage permit applications as two separate votes.

On the first vote, refusing each part of the application related to 588 Charlotte Street, including demolition of some of the buildings, Couns. Tim Balasiuk, Gary Burroughs, Maria Mavridis and O'Connor overruled Wiens, Wendy Cheropita and Nick Ruller 4-3 (Coun. Adriana Vizzari was absent from the meeting).

The second motion to deny the removal and widening of the boundary wall

opening and the pillars at 588 Charlotte Street and to remove healthy trees along the boundary wall was passed unanimously.

Both decisions were met with applause from the crowd.

Following adjournment,

Lyons expressed her satisfaction about the outcome to The Local.

"This matter was going to go to OLT anyway," said Lyons. "Without some kind of access, they can't really develop a site. They would have appealed that anyway?"



Although a large crowd arrived early for the meeting, there were still people left standing at the special council meeting, which was held in the community centre to accommodate a crowd.



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Art exhibit open at Q Lounge

Local Staff

At Q Lounge, 124 on Queen last week Tanya Peterson, her husband Jordan Morrison, and fellow NOTL artist Ron Clavier opened an exhibit of sixteen canvases lining the sides of the corridor leading from the hotel's Queen Street entrance toward the lounge and bar.

Alana Hurov, director of marketing at 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa, told the small group of guests at the opening that from the moment she saw that corridor, she envisioned it filled with beautiful art, and she was delighted to have the three local artists involved in the exhibit.

Peterson's paintings, Morrison's photography and abstract water images

of Clavier's works greet visitors to the hotel and lounge, with the exhibit curated by Peterson.

During their introduction at the opening, Clavier spoke of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a theatrical and musical centre, as well as the wine-making and culinary culture, and said he would like to see the town also become a visual arts centre, with town support.



Tanya Peterson curated the corridor of art at the Queen Street hotel. (Mike Balsom)



Artists Jordan Morrison, Ron Clavier and Tanya Peterson at the opening of an art exhibit at the Q Lounge at 124 on Queen. (Penny Coles)

Walk your dog for a good cause



Heritage Trail committee members are planning a Paws on the Trail four-kilometre dog walk on Saturday, May 20, to collect donations for trail restoration. Last year's successful event (pictured above) was a Fun Run/Walk and Dog Walk, but this year the event is all about dogs, and includes dog-themed activities, such as dog massages, a dog kissing booth, dog photographer and dog communicator. Check-in is at Memorial Park at 9 a.m. The cost is \$45 for up to two dogs. May 20 is also Dog Rescue Day, and there will be a dog rescue organization onsite. Registration is limited. For more information or to register visit heritagetrail.ca/get-involved.php.

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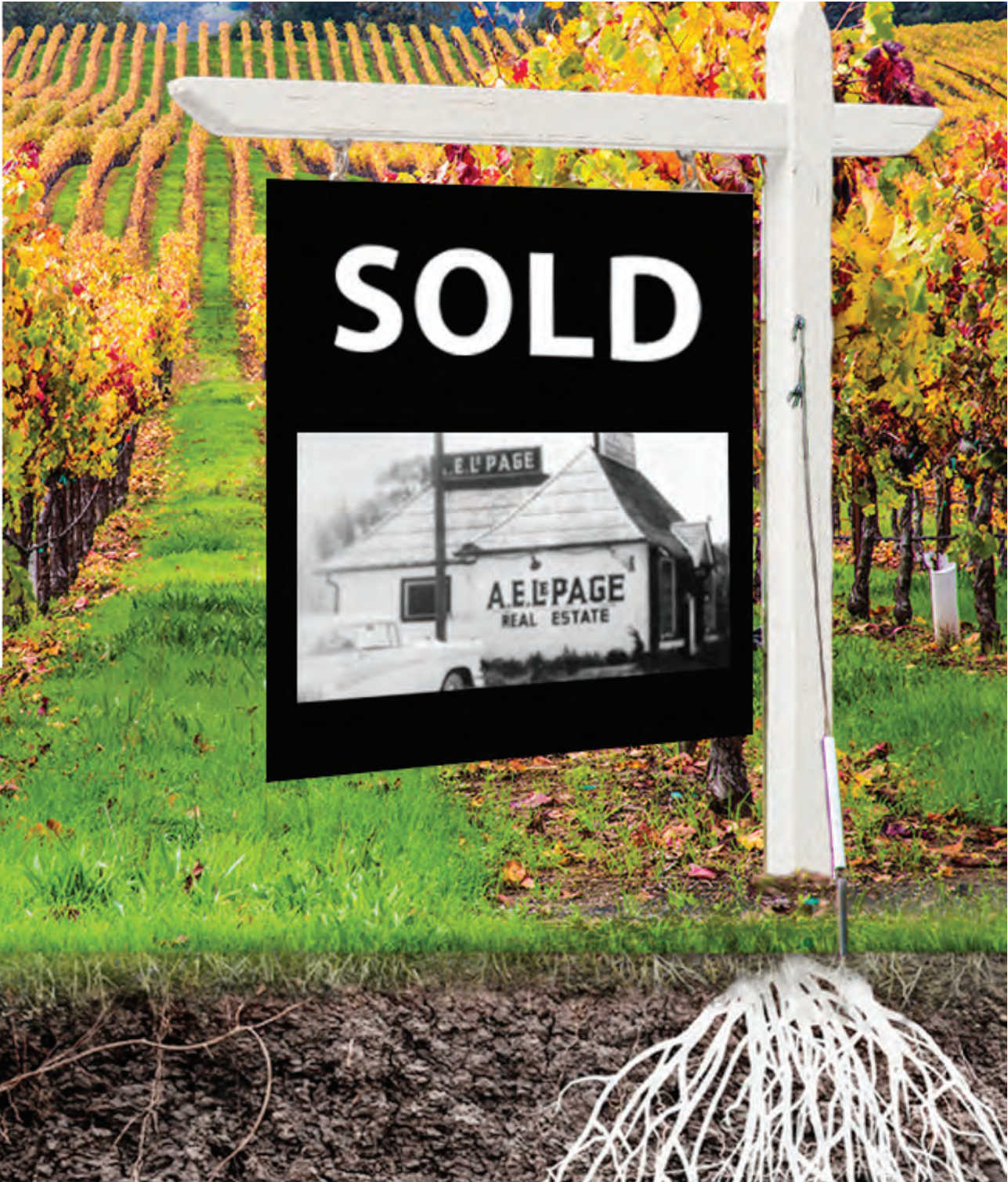
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Please don't turn your back on Jeleel

Jane Andres
The Local

I heard his booming voice before I saw him.

It was in 2007 at a Sunday night church service for Caribbean farmworkers.

His deep voice caught my attention, rising above the congregation's enthusiastic singing, and I saw him, arms raised to the heavens, eyes closed.

I recognized him as 33-year-old Jeleel Stewart, with whom I'd had a delightful conversation a few weeks prior. He had been looking over a map of Jamaica in the bunkhouse kitchen with me, telling me about his family and his church back home.

It was his first year working in Canada, digging up and potting trees and shrubs and preparing them for shipping at Mori Nurseries.

Leno Mori, Stewart's employer at the time, says in the documentary *Migrant Justice*, "It's been an exceptionally good thing for us to have those people work here. The Jamaicans are tremendous workers. They'll take a shovel and do heavy work, hard work, and they're terrific. Without them there'd be very few farms operating . . . Getting all that labour here is virtually impossible, there's no question about it."

Stewart was brimming with enthusiasm about his job and the opportunity to work in Canada. His co-workers spoke very highly of him, calling him a natural leader. He was quick to lend a helping hand with others who struggled to keep up. At the end of the week he'd cook big pots of soup to share with coworkers who appreciated his home-style cooking.

Before returning to Jamaica in November, he invited my friend Jodie Godwin and I to visit his family at his home.

The following February we took him up on his offer while travelling across Jamaica. We enjoyed an unforgettable evening of family singing and incredible hospitality in his modest home. We could see why he was deeply respected, not just by his children but by his neighbours as well. He had such an animated way of communicating, laughing and bursting into song. The family may not have had much material wealth but his gift of undivided attention, love and care created deep bonds with all who knew him.

In March 2008, Stewart returned for his second year at Mori Nurseries. He joined our family for Easter, leading us in a game of dominoes and teaching Grandpa how to smack those tiles down just like a Jamaican!

In May, only two months after his return, his left hand was crushed by a forklift in

a workplace accident. He underwent a three-hour surgery while the surgeon attempted to reattach severed nerves and tendons.

It was a painful time, mentally as well as physically. Having only arrived a few weeks prior, he had no money for groceries for himself or to send home to his family. He was unable to prepare meals with one hand. The isolation, boredom and anxiety of being alone for nine to 10 hours a day was unbearable. These were the days before smart phones and he could not afford phone cards to communicate with his family back home.

Members of the community helped him with meals. We raised funds to pack a barrel of food to ship to his family in Jamaica to help them get through the winter.

After three months, Stewart returned home, where he continued physiotherapy and was partially compensated by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) for two years.

Despite the intense physiotherapy, he was unable to regain the use of his hand and fingers. The injury left him with permanent damage and chronic pain.

In 2010 he received a letter from WSIB. They stated that he could conceivably find work at a gas bar in Niagara because he still had one working hand — this despite the fact that he lives in Jamaica and would not be able to pass a medical exam for work approval with one functioning hand. The controversial policy that guided their decision is known as "deeming." In WSIB's deeming process, they can reduce or eliminate benefits based on the idea that workers could be receiving wages from a job that they do not have.

Astounded at the WSIB decision, Godwin and I reassured him that we would get him through until the issue was resolved, thinking it would be two to three weeks at the most.

Instead it became a 16-year nightmare.

The relentless pain and inability to care for his family led to serious depression in the following years. Ten years ago he left us a phone message that he was ready to end his life. His wife Suzan lived in constant fear, worried about the future of the family and losing the love of her life.

They had to make impossible choices between sending the children to school or feeding the family. Despite our financial support, the three oldest children, Kemar, Cheyenne and Jamie, were unable to finish high school due to the costs of tuition, supplies and transportation.

He developed diabetes a few years ago. Unable to

afford proper nutrition, his health began a precipitous decline.

Trying to navigate the WSIB system has proved to be impossible for all involved.

It added a whole other level of ongoing trauma for Stewart and his family who must live with the consequences of unfair Canadian policies. Communication is extremely difficult. Trying to feed a family and pay rent takes priority over cell phone data, and even then the service can be unreliable.

Who is responsible for this mess?

Will Braun, editor of *Canadian Mennonite* magazine, stated, "The Canadian system that welcomed his (Stewart's) hard work — as well as his payments into Employment Insurance — will not take responsibility for the consequences of an injury he sustained while contributing to our economy on our soil."

FARMS (Foreign Agriculture Resource Management) is the private sector employer-run agency responsible for administering the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, authorized by the federal government.

The program has divested itself of any responsibility for injured workers.

Ken Forth, head of FARMS, says that if a worker is injured, it's the responsibility of the Jamaican liaison (or the consulate of their home country) to talk with the WSIB.

Regarding Jeleel Stewart's injuries, Leno Mori defers, "It's a matter of government policy and WSIB as to how they do these things."

He says he did everything according to the letter of the law. But who designed the law that excludes farmworkers from accessing much needed help after suffering injuries or illnesses related to the workplace?

This is not a bad apple, good apple scenario. Policies designed by Canadians to profit Canadians are woven into the very fabric of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

Does it matter how long it takes someone to die to count as a workplace-related death?

Does a slow death due to malnutrition and poverty caused by a workplace accident count?

Leaders in the industry and the community have only added to the trauma and pain by claiming that injured migrant workers have the same rights as Canadians. These rights, however, are inaccessible for those who face medical deportation.

Statistics back up the reality that the goal of the liaison is to deport the injured worker as expeditiously as possible and



Jeleel Stewart after he was injured and before he returned home to Jamaica. (Jane Andres)

provide a replacement. Despite their claims, they are not advocates.

Due to inaction on the part of the liaison service, countless injured farmworkers have also fallen prey to a legal system that lacks understanding of their unique challenges of trying to navigate complicated procedures from another country.

If workers are valued, then agricultural lobby groups and employers must step up to do the right thing. They have the power to end the WSIB's unjust policy of deeming.

Time is running out for Jeleel Stewart and his family. At only 49 years old, his heart is failing and he has been in the hospital more than he has been with his family in the past three months.

WSIB must act now to provide proper compensa-

tion to him and his family.

Friday, April 28 is the National Day of Mourning to honour all workers who were injured or killed on the job. Show your support by

attending the event at the Centennial Arena in Virgil at 9:15 a.m., and write to MPP Wayne Gates at wgates-co@ndp.on.ca. Ask for justice for Jeleel Stewart.



Jeleel Stewart in hospital today, in a photo taken by his wife last week.



Big Brothers Big Sisters 2023 AGM Notice

The Annual General Meeting of Members of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Niagara will be held on Tuesday May 16, 2023 at 5:30pm via zoom to agree to the amalgamation of BBBS of South Central Niagara with BBBS of North and West Niagara to become Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara.

This meeting will also include:

1. The auditor's report and the financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2022.
2. The appointment of auditors.
3. Any other business that may arise.

All Members interested in attending the meeting should RSVP to admin.niagara@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca to receive the package and zoom link.

For questions, proxy information and other business please reach out to Erin Graybiel, Executive Director at (905) 646-3230 ext. 223.

EDITORIAL

Some strange happenings in NOTL these days

It's been a crazy time in town recently, with two extremely controversial development proposals being discussed at the very time the developer behind those proposals and a highly respected town councillor have been in the limelight in a way that has shaken up this small community.

The police have concluded their investigation and have not laid charges, and the next investigation, that of the Integrity Commissioner, is expected to begin, although at the moment of writing this we don't know when or even if that will happen.

A meeting Monday evening to discuss demolition of heritage features on the site of the proposed Rand subdivision was also somewhat crazy. The impact of the subdivision on the surrounding neighbourhood and a town committed to heritage preservation, as well as the

difficulty of council in trying to balance the provincial legislative rights of the developer and the opposition of residents, was obvious by the number of people who attended the special council meeting at the community centre. It was held there to safely accommodate a large crowd. The public display to the successful refusal of demolition permits for heritage features may not have been welcome to the chair of the meeting, but it was definitely good news for the majority in attendance.

The vote to refuse demolition of specific features was close, in part because it was going against the recommendation of the town's heritage planner. As Coun. Sandra O'Connor, who made the motion for refusal, said, she didn't feel like the vote was "a big win." She said it was all about councillors doing what they believe to be right,

"but knowing what is right in this situation is difficult."

The tone of the meeting, and Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens' attempt to control it, has become as much a part of the narrative in the community as the outcome of the meeting, as has the absence of Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, who lives nearby the site of the proposed subdivision but not bordering it. A politician typically declares a conflict of interest when there could be some personal financial implication to the politician or a family member. Zalepa excused himself after making it clear he felt he had a "non-pecuniary" conflict, which means an interest in the matter that is "immediate and distinct from the public interest," and it could be interpreted that an elected official's private interest in the matter would influence their vote.

Zalepa left the room after

making that declaration and did not take part in any discussion or vote.

The deputy lord mayor took over, chastised the audience more than once for applauding, and at one point tried to have someone removed from the room. That person did not leave, but council did, to take a short break.

When they returned, the next speaker chastised Wiens for being heavy-handed with his response to the crowd. Interestingly, it seemed today that the part of the video showing that speaker has been removed.

The Local asked CAO Mar-nie Cluckie about it. "To my knowledge," she responded, "this section of the meeting was not edited out. However, I have asked staff to review to see what may have happened."

We hope to have an answer soon.

Monday's meeting was reminiscent of a similar situation back in 2018, when a municipal heritage committee meeting was moved to the community centre for safety reasons, and about 600 people showed up, most opposed to the Solmar/Two Sisters Resorts application for a six-storey hotel on the Randwood Estate property. That too was about preserving significant heritage features on the John Street lots. Members of SORE, which was originally formed to advocate for the Randwood Estate, and other interested residents, are waiting to see what the next step will be for that property.

Meanwhile, as this is being written Tuesday, council is preparing to discuss a municipal heritage report on another "boutique hotel" proposal by the same developer on the Parliament Oak School site.

Solmar/Two Sisters has asked for a demolition permit for the school itself, built in 1948 on an historic site. There will be conditions to protect heritage features on the property, but unless the majority of councillors go against the heritage committee recommendation, demolition is expected to be approved.

And of course, running through all these conversations and the minds of councillors is the developer's almost-certain appeal to the provincial planning board, an added expense to an already stretched budget, with no certainty of winning.

The first-time councillors who ran in this election and won could be forgiven for shaking their heads and asking themselves and each other why they ever thought this was a good time to choose to represent their community.

Penny Coles

Hidden Corners: Appalachia behind the scenes



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Over 13 months. That is the length of time it has been since I first hit 'record' in northern Georgia in the United States, to when I hit 'publish' Monday, for a full-length documentary.

Filming the documentary took only a week and a half, but the remainder of those many months was spent on editing the footage into a final product,

all while working full-time for the school board, running my private eco-tour business, writing for our local community paper, and trying to find time to watch the Toronto Maple Leafs in the playoffs!

In celebration of the publication, I wanted to share with you the creative yet gruelling behind-the-scenes details of making the fifth episode of my *Hidden Corners* nature documentary series. I will also tell you where you can watch it for free.

My computer acts like someone who spent too much time at the local sushi restaurant the moment I put all the new footage into it. It grumbles,

groans, stumbles, and sometimes even crashes with the hundreds of gigabytes of data uploaded. I then sift through the 300-plus files one-by-one, and immediately start categorizing them into folders.

First are the 'money-makers', the shots that absolutely must make the final cut. They are the skeletal structure of the entire documentary, and are what make the documentary special. I then make folders for other themes, including great shots, educational, stories, funny, and then, a special folder designed to house shots of really visually fascinating scenes meant to wow and intrigue your mind.

Some of the money-maker shots include wrestling salamanders with ferocious bites and body slams, something I can't even find other clips of on YouTube. How about seeing one of eastern North America's only wild elk herds after getting into a stranger's vehicle after a night at the bar? I also loved finding a natural waterslide in the wild, with no one around and subzero water temperatures to greet my body.

If this sounds crazy, it's because of a theme I coined

many years ago called Hidden Corners-level Madness, where magical and unscripted stories seem to unfold at 100 miles an hour whenever I travel to make these documentaries. It never fails on any of these expeditions.

Creating a captivating and meaningful story with these shots is the paramount goal. Media and storytelling is an excellent vector to bring nature to your screen and into your hearts. Video editing is one of the few things I genuinely enjoy doing on a computer.

I then edit the colour and lighting wherever appropriate.

I like these documentaries to be visually stunning, although as many of us know, the footage will never do justice to the real-life environment.

Then comes one of my favourite parts — inserting my music. Like wine and cheese, I feel like natural scenery and music have potential to be a match made in heaven. In all five published *Hidden Corners* episodes, the music is created and recorded entirely by myself, and sometimes partnering up with my musically talented buddies. *Hidden Corners: Appalachia* does something special with the music. I dug up

some unused old tracks I made back as early as high school, and combined them with modern tunes I have created within the past year.

Then comes another audio aspect, which I admittedly and wholly despise working with. This is where about half of my working hours on the documentary are spent, and where many swear words are said behind closed doors. Balancing volumes from four different types of cameras is the first challenge. Secondly, a gushing waterfall and the placid crickets

Continued on page 7



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In *Sam and Kate* (Netflix 2022), with Sissy Spacek and Dustin Hoffman, a mother and her daughter and a father and

his son play out this romantic comedy. It is a gentle, simple story and a gentle and simple film; exactly what we need in a world that is no longer either gentle, or simple.

Donald Combe is a retired

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

Where's Ben?



Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@nottllocal.com. Crispin Bottomley correctly identified last week's photo taken at the monument in the Clement Cemetery beside St. Davids Pool. "We played for hours running around inside the walls of the cemetery before and after swim team practice," he recalls, before the days of playground equipment in the park.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake
Local
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Local LETTERS Why does town even consider King St. proposal?

With the proposal to build an enormous hotel on King Street, the Marotta group once again has the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake up in arms, and it is not surprising.

What we are presented with here is a flagrant violation of the spirit and the laws of good planning. To suggest for a moment that a commercial building of this size and intensity has any place in a residential neighbourhood is sheer folly. It makes

a mockery of the procedures which need to be followed when a proposal is placed before the town.

It shows no bounds and makes no apologies for its rapacious destruction of green space and historic artifacts or for its predatory demands for rezoning and the countless variances and accommodations which would be required. It takes no notice of the community into which it intends to insert itself.

It is an insult to all who love this town. The time and effort required to go through the process of rejecting this preposterous monstrosity is a complete waste of taxpayers' money.

What if a developer were to propose rezoning to industrial and building a rendering plant or a foundry on this property? Would the town still be obliged to carefully review these absurd ideas as if they were for a moment desirable or feasible?

There is no precedent that we are aware of in Niagara-on-the-Lake for property with Institutional zoning, surrounded by residences, to be rezoned to commercial. The activities and traffic surrounding a hotel with bars, restaurants and event spaces will extinguish the peaceful enjoyment of home and garden in countless residences for blocks in every direction from "ground zero."

There is no benefit to the

town or its people, only to the owner. Local hotels are already importing offshore workers because there is insufficient staff to run them properly. Where would this one find the workers it would need to serve its guests?

"Boutique" is a complete misnomer — the word in French denotes a small shop. It has come to mean outrageously expensive and exclusive and definitely not small.

There is no way to attenuate

the destruction that this outrageous enterprise would bring to the precious life of this town. If this takes root here, there is no way to prevent its metastasizing to any other residential area in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It would be an unspeakably vile precedent. To this request there is only one possible response: an unequivocal NO.

Jim Reynolds and
Pat Hartman
NOTL

Local LETTERS Another look at the approved 2023 budget

Ughhh... the Niagara-on-the-Lake 2023 budget...

The town council's budget process took weeks to complete and ended with the town's published headline for our municipal property tax levy increase to be 8.25 per cent.

Apparently we're supposed

to applaud the fact that the tax increase wasn't double digits, as most expected. Bravo!

But wait...

After the euphoria ends and our second property tax bill arrives in July, it will be worthwhile to pick up a calculator and compare your 2023

bill with your 2022. It won't be 8.25 per cent higher, it will be a lot more.

In a bean-counting sleight-of-hand, we're going to see a \$1 million transit levy that was funded in 2022 by municipal parking revenues and gas tax rebates flip over to the regional

side of the bill. The town isn't handing over \$1 million to the region, they're going to keep it and spend it on other things.

Will the transit levy show as a new line item in the regional column? I don't know where or how, but residents are now going to pay that tran-

sit tax as a new levy from the region. Isn't that a tax increase and are we supposed to get mad at region for this?

Parking revenues are going to stay behind and get buried in the Town's now expanded operating budget to pay for new employees and their sala-

ries. That's not a very transparent process at all.

Ron Simkus

This was included in the weekly dock area update from Ron Simkus, and printed in The Local with his permission.

Local LETTERS Behaviour at special council meeting disturbing

I am writing to express my deep concern about the disrespectful and bullying behaviour exhibited by the acting chair, our Deputy Lord Major, during the recent community centre special council meeting.

Regardless of one's position

on the matter being discussed, it is never acceptable for those in positions of authority to use their power to intimidate and silence residents.

During the meeting, the acting chair repeatedly warned residents in a belligerent and authoritarian tone to refrain

from showing any emotion, even on an important matter. This kind of behaviour is disappointing and undermines the democratic process.

Additionally, the acting chair abruptly stood and ordered bylaw to remove a resident who allegedly applauded

a fellow resident expressing their views. This type of behaviour is unacceptable and shows a lack of respect for the opinions of others.

The acting chair's controlling and accusatory behaviour towards delegates was also concerning. It is import-

ant for those in positions of authority to lead by example and exhibit professionalism, respect, and civility when interacting with others, especially when dealing with sensitive or controversial issues.

It is my hope that the acting chair will undergo meeting

management training and sensitivity retraining to improve their behaviour and communication skills. We deserve a council that is willing to listen and engage in respectful dialogue with residents.

Allan Bisback
NOTL

Travelling 'one of healthiest activities'

Continued from page 6

in the meadow are an appreciable contrast of decibels. Talking to the camera while driving the jeep makes for tricky audio editing, too.

Just when you think you've got it right, it sounds totally off on a different set of speakers. Back to the editing studio,

again, and again, until I get it right.

Last but not least, at this point I have watched my documentary about 15 times. It is missing just one element to finally fill in the cracks and make the story flow as smoothly as the beautiful Chattooga River of South Carolina. It requires narration, which I write out

by hand and then record into a high-quality microphone. This is where my important and pertinent research of the landscape comes into play, and can be presented in a logical message for the final cut.

I like to look at my *Hidden Corners* creations as a band who puts out albums. Each album has a slightly different feel

or vibe to it, yet it will always have hallmark signs of who created it. All episodes share a classic nature documentary theme but with a highly curated blend of professionalism and blatant informality. I strive to create something that adults and kids can both get something out of, like *Shrek*!

There are passionate scenes

about protecting biodiversity, sneaky moments of adult humour, and pointed monologues about conservation and the scientific importance of those beautiful mountains. In this episode, I recognize the historical weight of this trip, as many people around the globe were not permitted to travel for nearly two years straight, and I ar-

gue that travelling is one of the healthiest activities our species can do for global societal health and awareness of wild areas.

It's me — unfiltered, unapologetic, and primed to inspire — just as the world's wilderness areas do for us. It is available for free on my YouTube channel, Owen's Hiking And Adventures. Enjoy!



The New River Gorge National Park in West Virginia is America's newest national park, with a globally significant forest. (Owen Bjorgan)



Owen Bjorgan says his Hidden Corner series, including the most recent, are meant to be entertaining for all ages.

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NOTL author book signing for his first mystery novel

Penny Coles
The Local

A Niagara-on-the-Lake author has had his first published book make the shortlist for the Crime Writers of Canada Awards of Excellence in Canadian crime writing.

T. Lawrence Davis, known locally as Terry Davis, has recently published *The Pale Horse*, a mystery that draws on the many years' experience he had working as a groom at thoroughbred race tracks, running his mother's thoroughbred horse farm, and a time as a breeder of thoroughbreds, until he could no longer see that being his future. "I finally realized horse farming was not the long-term career for me," he says.

He has travelled several educational and career paths since then, eventually retiring to Niagara-on-the-Lake, but he says writing has always been in his blood. He began his first novel more than 50 years ago, although that is not the one that would eventually be published. Despite spending a lot of time on it over the years, "when I finally sat down and finished it, I realized I could do better."

The Pale Horse was started in retirement, and took about two years to write and another year to refine, working with an editor at Friesen Press, a self-publishing company that offers levels of expertise of which Davis took advantage. He also relied on the help of several readers to produce the most polished book possible before releasing it to the public, he says.

While waiting for feedback from those who will read the book is nerve-wracking, he admits, making the shortlist for the best first crime novel has helped calm those nerves somewhat. "It certainly makes all the effort of writing it worthwhile, from the first draft through to when it was published," he told The Local.

Davis was also pleased to receive a positive review from *Kirkus*, an online review journal, which called *The Pale Horse* "a winner . . . an intense, gripping racetrack drama."

In addition to his time working with horses in various capacities, Davis obtained a bachelor of science in agriculture at the University of Guelph, but was not accepted to the veterinary medicine program as he had hoped. So instead he went back to work as a groom before returning to school, earning a bachelor of arts degree from McGill University in Montreal with a major in history and political science.

After five years of working in "all aspects of running the



Author Terry Davis

farm, from foaling mares and preparing yearlings for the horse sales in Toronto and Saratoga, to making hay and caring for the farm's 26 horses and small herd of beef cattle," Davis decided to pursue his true passion — writing — and applied to the journalism program at Sheridan College.

"I decided being a journalist offered more possibilities in terms of a pay cheque than creative writing," he says.

That was in 1984, and just days after being accepted at Sheridan, he was on the road, driving a panel van packed full of his belongings from Victoria, B.C., where he had been about to enter a creative writing program, to Oakville, in time to start classes at Sheridan.

"It worked out well for me. I still enjoy writing," he says.

Davis lists the jobs he has tackled in addition to his work with horses: news reporter, editor, photographer, darkroom specialist and layout artist for a weekly newspaper in Alberta; managing editor of magazines and association newsletters; jobs in communications; and manager of strategic communications with Parks Canada.

But the most recent years, which included retirement in Niagara-on-the-Lake to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren, and seeing his novel come to fruition and receive positive affirmation from the Crime Writers of Canada, may be the most rewarding. That, he says, "felt really good, to look at that list and see my name at the top of it."

Some very successful authors have been on that list, including his favourite, Louise Penny, whose books are set in the beautiful Eastern Townships of Quebec, a place Davis knows well from his horse-training days.

The whodunit is set in locations familiar to Davis, including Woodbine Race Track. As described on his website, the plot involves a

thoroughbred trainer brutally murdered in his Oakville apartment on the same day that one of the thoroughbreds he was training died at the track. The trainer's wife becomes the primary suspect.

As the case is being investigated by a detective and her husband, the vet at Woodbine, another murder is discovered similar to the first one, and the couple rush to solve the crime before the killer strikes again.

With *The Pale Horse* published, Davis says his next step will be to promote the novel, starting with a book signing. It will be at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library on May 3, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., which he describes as "sitting by the fireplace," greeting locals who are interested in his mystery/thriller novel.

Also in his future is a sequel to *The Pale Horse*, he says, although he has been distracted recently by also trying to write down his family memories, and those passed down through other family members.

The book will be available to purchase at the library, \$20 for a paperback and \$30 for a hardcover. It is also available in hardcover and paperback formats through Friesen Press, Amazon, book stores and ebook retailers. Davis says the easiest way to purchase it is to visit his website at tlawrence-davis.ca/bookstore.html.



The book cover of *The Pale Horse*.

Ottawa Art Gallery's *A Family Palette* at RiverBrink

Sharon Burns
The Local

RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston is the perfect setting to showcase its newest exhibit, *A Family Palette*, on loan from the Ottawa Art Gallery until Aug. 19.

"I am so pleased with the era that is evoked in this house, which is very similar to a lot of the work on display," said the show's curator, Rebecca Basciano from the Ottawa Art Gallery.

RiverBrink is the former home of fine art collector Sam Weir and is currently housing the work of three artists: Frances-Anne Johnston, her father and founding member of the Group of Seven Franz Johnston, and Frances-Anne's husband, Franklin Arbuckle.

However, working through a feminist lens, the focus is on Frances-Anne Johnston.

"As we know, women in history who worked in a patriarchal society get overlooked, and it takes someone to sort of recover their work," said Basciano. "I call it a purposeful feminist recovery project."

"Johnston is tied between two men in her life and was always known as the artist's daughter or the artist's wife, when she was an artist in her own right," explained Basciano. "People would always say, 'you're Franz' daughter, no wonder you can paint,' and her response would be 'as if painting could be inherited like blue eyes or dimples.'"

Johnston married artist

Franklin Arbuckle, a Canadian illustrator who painted over 100 covers for *Maclean's* magazine from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s.

"While he was busy building up this post-war Canadian consciousness," said Basciano, "he was travelling across the country to see the prairies and meeting many people." His art reflects the outside world of landscapes and cityscapes, including an untitled work of Queen Elizabeth's coronation procession in 1953, on display at RiverBrink.

"Then you have Frances-Anne and she is working from inside the home," said Basciano. "They have two children, she graduated art school and started painting right away, but she is working out of kitchens and bedrooms and looking after the house and the children."

"She doesn't ever depict people at all, however, just by draping a piece of fabric, or moving the position of the chairs, she evokes the idea of presence. You can tell it's a lived space."

On display are many of Johnston's favourite artifacts, such as a jug painted with black cherries, a violin, a hippo statue and an armoire. "Johnston painted these into her interior landscapes," said Basciano, "purposely showing you with her own objects, a self-portrait." Many of the paintings in this collection include these items multiple times.

Another interesting piece in the exhibit is by Johnston's husband, Arbuckle. He painted

a window panel which was once installed on a Canadian Pacific Railway train in a luxury Park Car, which had domes and panoramic views of the landscape. The grey squares show where the windows once were. Here, Arbuckle shows the flowers around Mount Assiniboine. The diagonal lines break the scene into winter, spring/summer, and autumn, offering movement and bringing nature into the abstract.

"It's a jewel," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, former board member at RiverBrink, referring to the museum. He, several board members, locals and out-of-towners were in attendance for the private curated tour by Basciano.

Brett Sherlock, international consultant for Christie's Canada, is a local and a regular at RiverBrink. "The permanent collection is fantastic. They have all the great Canadian painters here and their sculptures. All the Group of Seven is represented."

Allan Magnacca, RiverBrink president and acting-treasurer, said "we've waited several years to have it confirmed that we would be chosen to have this collection on display."

RiverBrink director and curator Debra Antoncic explained, the exhibition was several years in the research and planning before the Ottawa Art Gallery sent out a call for expressions of interest in late 2020. "I submitted a letter of intent indicating our interest in hosting. The grant was approved in 2021 and then we began to plan to



Curator Rebecca Basciano from the Ottawa Art Gallery. (Photos by Sharon Burns)



Franklin Arbuckle's painting is of a window panel which was once installed on a Canadian Pacific Railway train, with grey squares that show where the windows once were. Admiring the view are Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, Allan Magnacca, RiverBrink president, and local Brett Sherlock, International consultant for Christie's Canada and a fan of RiverBrink.

host the exhibition, including all the permissions for loans from other galleries and the logistics of shipping."

The application process also included an examination of the building to determine that it had the right conditions, including temperature control, to house a collection of this magnitude.

The exhibit is travelling only to one other site, Sarnia, near the end of the summer.

"We are a jewel in the community," said Magnacca. "We are outside of the Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and from the outside it looks like a home, and that's what it was. It was Sam Weir's home, and he's buried out

front. People don't recognize us as a place to come and visit."

Visiting RiverBrink for *A Family Palette* is an enriching experience, and an enjoyable illustration of Canadiana. The collection can be viewed at 116 Queenston Street in Queenston, Wednesdays through to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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Bill Auchterlonie: 'a superhero' to the end

Penny Coles
The Local

Bill Auchterlonie, known to his friends and family as a lovely human being and a wise man with a great sense of humour, died April 5 in the Niagara Falls Hospital after an ongoing struggle with his health.

His wife Heather Hall describes how much he loved and was loved by the family, and calls him "a giver in the true sense of the word."

His death, she says, "wasn't supposed to happen." He had recently passed the five-year mark as a survivor "of the worst kind of lung cancer," but he was dealing with other health issues, and had been in the hospital and then sent home after this latest illness, not related to his bout with cancer. He was then readmitted, quickly took a turn for the worse, and was gone. "I think his body just gave out," she says.

Auchterlonie lived an interesting life that included an eclectic and successful career that took him down several paths.

In Niagara, he became well-known for his long-time stint as a local radio host, beginning in 1986, with a voice that would be familiar to listeners — he was a man with a radio voice — and it was at CKTB in St. Catharines where he met Heather.

He had a great love of art, and had worked in the curatorial department of the Art Gallery of Ontario, where his job took him to Britain and Europe visiting art galleries, and where he



This is Bill Auchterlonie as friends and family will remember him, says his wife Heather. (Supplied)

most notably designed the installation of the Treasures of King Tut.

He was the chair of the Nikola Tesla Sculpture Project at Niagara Falls, on the board of Rodman Hall and Willowbank School of

Restoration Arts, and with a strong interest in Indigenous art, was the owner of the Inuksuk on the Lake Art Gallery on Victoria Street, which he had to close when he was fighting lung cancer.

He was also interested in politics, working on campaigns behind the scenes and taking a run at municipal council himself in 2014, believing it was time for a new wave of councillors. He was a little ahead of his time, with the majority of councillors re-elected that term. He was chair of the town's parking committee before it was disbanded, and was an outspoken critic of the expensive pay-and-display system purchased, with meters that often did not work, a problem that continues today.

Martin Mazza, who did get elected to council that year, refers to Auchterlonie as a person who is the ultimate in being "best friend material," always listening, asking questions, and giving advice while not sounding as if he is giving advice. "He would never say 'you should,'" says Mazza. "He would just talk casually and offer tidbits that you didn't even realize at the time were advice."

Mazza, owner of Italian Pizza and Subs, first met Auchterlonie when he came in for a piece of pizza almost 30 years ago. They quickly became friends, and he would often come

in to chat. It was at the time when he had a radio show, and Mazza recalls him using his sense of humour to help promote the pizzeria "in downtown Virgil," telling his listeners that Mazza was the guy "who delivers" (that was his political slogan), and about the Cadillac he drove on deliveries — Mazza was known for the old Toyotas he has driven over the years.

"He had a heart of gold. He'd do anything for anyone, but he never looked for accolades or even a 'thank you,'" says Mazza. "And when Rita came into my life, when we'd go out for coffee Bill would always invite her and make her feel part of our friendship."

He was also a smart man, Mazza adds, "very knowledgeable about a lot of things, but also people-smart. He had a real pulse for the community."

When Mazza and Auchterlonie were both running for council in 2014, "he helped me, to the point where he was sacrificing his own campaign. I still feel guilty about that. He plugged me every chance he got, and I think that hurt him."

Mazza says Auchterlonie was always very appreciative — of his family, his

friendships, and of life in general — and he was inspirational to others.

"He always made me wish I could be more like him. He was a super human being."

Auchterlonie, Mazza added, "didn't wear a cloak or anything, but Heaven has gained a superhero. I miss him already."

In recent years, Auchterlonie was likely best-known for his astrology columns.

While he had been interested in astrology from an early age, a visit to Stonehenge while he was with the Art Gallery of Ontario piqued that interest, and when combined with his radio voice and background, it wasn't surprising that in recent years he devoted his spare time to an Auchterlonie on Astrology podcast. He also had a column first in The Local and then The Lake Report, where he offered a look at what was going on in the stars.

Heather says even after all he accomplished during his diverse career paths, "I don't think he thought he was terribly successful, but he was. He was smart, smarter than most people, and although he hadn't been well for the last 10 years, and that took a lot of his energy, he didn't give in to it."

But more than his successes in life, he will be remembered for his sense of humour, says Heather. "That was his number one thing. I had a friend say to me, 'you must laugh 24/7.' It wasn't quite what happened at home, but people enjoyed it — he could always make people laugh. He saw the funny side of most things."

When Auchterlonie started his astrology column, he told The Local that while his health issues could be considered a run of bad luck, "I'd say I've had good luck. I've come out of it."

If his luck didn't carry on through his last bout of illness, it certainly did through his life, with the love of his family and respect of those who knew him best.

Friends who posted their condolences on Facebook described him as "a lovely human being," "a beautiful man," and "a truly remarkable man," one who had a larger-than-life impact on his family and his community.

As one family member said, "May you rest in peace in the stars you read."

He leaves behind his siblings, step-children and grandchildren who are heartbroken, says Heather. A celebration of his life is being planned for June.

COMMUNITY NOTICE

ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Every year, CN is required to clear its right-of-way of any vegetation that may pose a safety hazard. Vegetation on railway right-of-way, if left uncontrolled, can contribute to trackside fires, and impair proper inspection of track infrastructure. The spray program is not being done for aesthetic reasons.

For safe railway operations, CN will conduct its annual spray program on its rail lines in the province of Ontario. A certified professional will be applying herbicides on and around the railway tracks (primarily along the 16 - 24 feet graveled area/ballast). All product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met.

CN may use the following herbicides and active ingredients: Credit Xtreme (Nufarm), Esplanade (Bayer), Detail (BASF), Arsenal Powerline (BASF), Navius Flex (Bayer), Gateway (Corteva), Hasten NT (Norac), Round Up Weather Pro (Bayer), Glyphosate (540g/L),

Indaziflam (200 g/L), Saflufenacil (29.74%), Imazapyr isopropylamine (26.7%), Metsulfuron-methyl (12.6%), Aminocyclopyrachlor (39.5%), Paraffinic Oil (586 g/L), Alkoxylated alcohol non-ionic surfactants (242 g/L), Methyl and Ethyl oleate (esterified vegetable oil) 75.20%

CN only uses herbicides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the province within which they are applied.

The program is expected to take place from May to October 2023.

Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation to see the list of cities as well as the updated schedule.

For more information, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

CN.CA

Buzz on Pollinators: Attract butterflies to your garden

Sandra Ozkur
Special to The Local

Just imagine your backyard with butterflies lighting up your garden from morning until sundown. By integrating native plants and flowers you will be inviting a host of beautiful butterflies and moths to visit your garden adding splendour to your landscape and hours of entertainment.

Creating a pollinator garden with the right plants and flowers will quickly attract many species of these beneficial insects.

Creating a butterfly garden is much easier than you think — it is as simple as selecting the plants butterflies are most attracted to. Pay attention to the plants you are buying this spring. Many garden centres will label plants that are good for butterflies, bees and pollinators. It is best to choose native plant species which includes trees, shrubs and grasses in addition to native perennials. Some of the best flowers are black-eyed Susan, butterfly milkweed, coneflowers, bone-set, wild columbine, Joe Pye weed, cardinal flower, ironweed, or bee balm.

Shrubs and grasses also serve as host plants that provide food at the caterpillar stage. Butterflies enjoy the heat so plant your flowers in warm

sunny locations.

Canadian Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths and skippers) are adapted to plants which are native to Canada. It is important to have a good variety of blossoms to suit their individual needs. Native plants are often referred to as wild-flowers, and provide the necessary food at just the right time to coincide with the life cycle of the insect. Lepidoptera have different needs during each stage of life: the eggging stage, the caterpillar stage, the chrysalis/cocoon and then the adult stage, so make sure you have something blooming from spring until fall.

There are three categories of Lepidoptera and it is easy to identify them by the following traits:

Butterflies — fly during the day, have brightly coloured scaly wings, and rest with their wings closed. Their antennae have a club-shaped end, and they generally pupate in a chrysalis (a protective hard shell).

Moths — often have less colourful or hairy wings, are more active in the evening or night, and rest with their wings open. They pupate in soil, leaf litter, or under bark with little or no cocoon (protective shell made of silky threads). Their antennae are generally smooth and slender but may have featherlike branches.

Skippers — are smaller, may be hairy or smooth, and dart about in the daytime like butterflies do.

To start the reproductive cycle, butterflies lay eggs on a host plant that is suited to the insect's dietary needs. Once the egg hatches, the caterpillar feeds upon that plant until it is ready to form a cocoon. In this protective shelter, it will grow wings and transform into its adult stage as a mature butterfly or moth. Only adults feed on sugar from nectar, which they find in flowers. Their taste receptors are on the feet, and their tongue (proboscis), is rolled up until it lands on a flower. The strawlike tongue then unrolls and dips deep into the base of the flower to suck up the nectar. While searching for nectar, pollen from flowers sticks to their scaly or hairy bodies, thus pollinating the plants as they fly from one to another.

Some butterflies are plant-specific and are only adapted to certain shapes or varieties of flowers. For example, a monarch butterfly can only feed on a milkweed plant, and the spicebush swallowtail butterfly's host plant is the spicebush. When arranging your garden, be sure to group similar coloured plants together in clumps to make it easier for the insects to find them. Organize your garden with taller plants

at the back and shorter ones at the front for best viewing purposes.

Also place some large stones in your garden that will stay warm. This will provide a safe place for the butterflies to rest and bask in the sun. Be sure to leave some open soil spots so rain or sprinklers will create little puddles for the butterflies to drink from. Avoid being a super tidy gardener, for it is better to leave some fallen leaves and branches around to provide habitat for nesting and overwintering. Hibernating butterflies spend the winter in hollow trees or amongst dead, rolled, folded or webbed leaves or grass.

Once the butterflies arrive in your garden, taking photos and looking them up on the internet is a great way to educate yourself about the different types of butterflies. Their distinctive colours and patterns are a survival mechanism meant for camouflage or to deflect predators. Some caterpillars have stripes that simulate veins in a leaf or the stripes on a plant. Inchworms often look like twigs or twisted dead leaves. The wings of moths may mimic the pattern of the tree bark they are resting upon. The bright colours on the wings of butterflies are hidden when they are at rest and the wings are closed, but when they open



Creating a butterfly garden creates refuge for pollinators such as this common buckeye butterfly. (Sandra Ozkur)

their wings, the bright patterns and colours startle their attackers just long enough for them to escape. That is why you often see patterns that look like eyes on their wings. Even though they have this natural protection, they are still the choice food for birds, so large populations are necessary because only a few survive.

Besides natural predators, butterflies, moths and skippers are increasingly under threat from diminishing habitat, chemicals, pesticides, contaminated water and climate change. Creating a butterfly garden is a win-win situation — you provide refuge for these creatures and in turn you get to enjoy their beauty and pollina-

tion services.

Beautiful butterflies of Southern Ontario

Large: Canadian tiger swallowtail, black swallowtail, giant swallowtail, monarch, viceroy, admiral

Medium-sized: Cabbage white, orange sulphur, checkerspot, crescent, comma, question mark, buckeye, wood satyr, pearly-eye, ringlet, wood nymph, painted lady, mourning cloak

Small: skipper, copper, elfin, hairstreak, blue, azure, fritillary, northern crescent, painted lady

Tip of the week: Create your butterfly garden in an area protected from wind so your butterflies won't be blown away!

Good time for bird-watching along Niagara shores

David Gilchrist
The Local

This is an interesting time of year for bird-watching.

Most of the ducks that winter in the Lower Niagara River have headed north and the warmer weather brings others through the area as they migrate from southern areas.

The turkey vultures have been a common sight, hovering over the area performing aerial acrobatics. Mer-

gansers are pairing off after their mating rituals offshore. Kingfishers are actively flying along the waterfront, building their nests, chasing each other and diving for fish.

It was wonderful to spot a juvenile bald eagle sitting high in a tree overlooking the lake. In Four Mile Creek Pond more rare species of ducks can be seen such as blue-winged teal, black ducks and widgens, as they pass through the area.



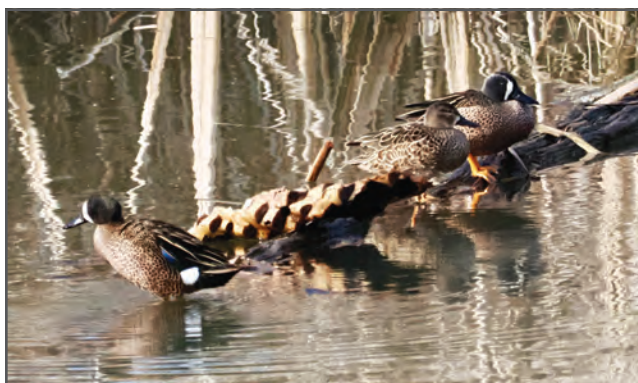
A turkey vulture in flight. (Photos by David Gilchrist)



A kingfisher stops along the waterfront.



Mergansers pair off as part of the mating ritual.



Blue-winged teal can be seen in Four Mile Pond.



This red-throated loon has been a winter visitor, staying into spring.



A juvenile bald eagle looking down from a tree branch.



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It seemed every student from Grades 1 to 3 had a role to play in *Go Fish*, if not onstage then singing from the risers or on tasks backstage. (Photos supplied)

Crossroads students share message of friendship

Sharon Burns
The Local

The gymnasium at Crossroads Public School was packed to the gills with parents, family and friends, hooked by *Go Fish: A Musical Play for Young Singers*. Actors and singers alike entertained the audience for nearly an hour last Thursday evening.

The Local spoke with Holly Neuhof, Grade 3, and her cousins Adrian Poapst, Grade 3, and Annabelle Poapst, Grade 1, about *Go Fish*, written by John Jacobson and John Higgins.

Holly, cast in the leading role as Tiger Shark, described the storyline of *Go Fish* as,

“basically, a shark, me, wants to be friends with the fish, but the fish are scared of the shark. Then this great white shark comes and tells everybody that ‘you’re all different and you all can be friends.’”

“It’s about more than that,” added Adrian, one of the clown fish — the play contains important messages about diversity and inclusion.

“I just play with ribbons,” piped up Adrian’s six-year-old sister, Annabelle.

“We had rehearsal every first break since January,” said Holly, who has also acted in other school plays, and in performances with Yellow Door Theatre, a performing arts group for youth and teen-

agers in Virgil. Holly memorized her lines with the help of her family and by looking at the script “a lot,” she said.

The play opened with sharks playing the card game *Go Fish*. Tiger Shark wanted to be friends with other creatures in the sea, but Hammerhead, played by Owen Thorimbert, told her “some things don’t mix, some things we can’t fix.”

Tiger Shark met an eclectic group of would-be friends: a zebra fish covered with spots because her extreme makeover didn’t come out quite right, an octopus with only seven arms, a starfish without a leading role, a blow fish with allergies who puffs and wheezes before every line, a tuna fish who can’t carry a tune in a bucket, and a clown fish who can’t tell a joke.

“Sharks don’t need friends,” explained Zebra Fish, played by Taylor Jonah.

But Tiger Shark wouldn’t give up and sought the advice of “the one who can shed some light in the dark, the one and only, Great White Shark.”

The stage was colourful and the action chaotic, especially when eight crabby crabs crab-walked across the stage, grumbling and complaining about everything from being bored to being hungry and tired.

There were delightful seahorses square dancing to a caller, played by Alice McGeachin. In the *Colours of the Sea Dance*, Annabelle and several other characters performed a ribbon dance, emulating the motions and currents of the ocean floor.

It seemed as though every student from Grades 1 to 3 was involved in this production in some way. If they weren’t on stage, they stood on the risers and lent their voices to the musical numbers.

The program listed many staff and students as part of the production team and crew, with tasks such as costumes, props, and the set, as

well as student crew and assistants.

Artwork of creatures of the sea were posted on the walls around the gym.

It is Great White Shark, played by Harrison Pohorly, who helped Tiger Shark to

see that she was already surrounded by friends who are beautiful in their uniqueness. “If we are all alike, how boring it would be. We all are as different as the fish in the sea,” he said.

Go Fish was a rousing

performance, thoroughly entertaining, with an important message which Holly explained. “Everyone has something that makes them different,” she said. “We are all different and we can all be friends.”



A group of ‘crabby crabs’ entertained with their crab-walk across the stage.



Tuna fish Elliott Chard, zebra fish Taylor Jonah and tiger shark Holly Neuhof learn they can be different and still be friends.



Frannie Baskin, Madelyn Bergen, Addy Reeve and Anni Kruitbosch played an eel in *Go Fish* at Crossroads Public School.

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Queenston Women's Chorus marks 20 years

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Queenston Women's Chorus celebrates its 20th anniversary this Saturday, April 29, with a spring choral concert at Trillium United Church in St. Catharines.

The concert will include spirituals, some Beatles tunes, songs from movies such as *The Greatest Showman* and *La La Land*, and some well-known numbers from popular Broadway musicals.

As a special treat, the 26-member choir will be joined by two past winners of their music scholarships. Both Alexandre Brillon and Emily Draper will be taking solos during the concert.

Brillon just completed his studies in musical theatre at Sheridan College. This summer he will be travelling to Newfoundland to perform in Terra Bruce's *Let's Dance: The Musical*, which celebrates the greatest pop songs of the early 1960s, including *It Never Rains in Southern California*, *I Know a Place* and *The Peppermint Twist*.

Draper's scholarships were earned at the 2019 and 2020 Niagara Musical Theatre & Voice Festival, where she

was named Most Outstanding Musical Theatre Performer by a group of adjudicators.

"I competed in the festival starting when I was 10," says the Fenwick resident, now 22 years old. "It's so exciting to get to sing with them this weekend, to be a part of this performance. I hope they're excited to see me as well."

Choir conductor Lisa Cosens Brillon is indeed thrilled to welcome both her son Alexandre and Emily back for the show. On Saturday, Draper will be singing *Somewhere That's Green* from *Little Shop of Horrors*.

"She's so great," Cosens Brillon says of Draper, who now works in St. Catharines as a hairstylist. "She sang in the past with Oh Canada Eh and with Garden City Productions, and she competed last month again at our festival."

"I was performing a lot before COVID," Draper says. "I did Oh Canada Eh's *Canadiana* show for its 25th anniversary, and I was in *Legally Blonde* for Garden City Productions. And in high school at Welland Centennial I was in *Bring It On*."

Draper calls herself a musical theatre geek, one who takes every chance she can get



Queenston Women's Chorus in its prime, with Lisa Cosens Brillon (front, centre) and accompanist Anthony Scaringi (front right). Post-pandemic the choir is rebuilding its membership. (Supplied)

to travel and see shows that she loves. During COVID, when performers were left out of work for months, she decided to take a bit of a U-turn and pursue a more stable career. But she holds out hope she will have a chance to get back on the stage more regularly.

"It's always in the back of my mind," Draper says, "it's really important to me. I really love to sing and perform, and that's why I continue to do festivals. I am sure I will audition again for something soon. I'm always drawn back to theatre because it's what I

love the most."

Cosens Brillon, who started the Queenston Women's Choir in 2003, says she actually considered calling it quits in 2021, when the pandemic made it impossible to perform in public and difficult to rehearse at their usual spot at St. David's Queenston United Church.

"I was hoping we could start rehearsing with masks on, socially distanced," she tells The Local, "but that didn't happen. So I put a pause on things. But I had so many emails from members who really missed singing, it gave me support, so I started it up again."

Singing with each other is about community, adds Cos-

ens Brillon. With membership including women of all ages and from all walks of life, it's a big part of their social activity.

"Singing has been shown to improve a person's sense of happiness and well-being," she says. "You sing with your body, with your soul. It really expresses something from your inner being."

She lost a few members who decided to retire after the pandemic interruption, so the choir is in a bit of a rebuilding phase.

"We had 36 members at our peak," she says. "It was hard to fit all of them on the stage at once."

Besides funding the music scholarships, proceeds from the choir's performances have

gone to support organizations such as Newark Neighbours, the Resource Association for Teens (RAFT), Wellspring Niagara and Nova House.

Part of this weekend's proceeds will go toward funding a commissioned work that the Queenston Women's Choir will be collaborating on with a similar women's choir in Uxbridge.

"They're also celebrating their 20th anniversary," she says. "This is something we've never done before, so it's really exciting. Commissioning a work is really expensive, too."

Tickets for the 7 p.m. show are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students, and will be available at the door.

St. Saviour's celebrating King Charles coronation

Local Staff

The weekend of May 6 and 7 will be a time of celebration at St. Saviour's Anglican Church in Queenston for the Coronation of King Charles III, says member Vicki Lowenberger.

On Saturday, May 6, St. Saviour's is holding a Coronation Tea in the church hall

at 1:30 p.m. The tea will include tea sandwiches, scones and clotted cream, as well as a variety of coronation sweets.

Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased in advance from Lowenberger at 905-262-4145.

On Sunday, May 7, in lieu of a regular service, St. Saviour's will be holding a Coronation Service featur-

ing much of the music and prayers from the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth, says Lowenberger.

There will be hymns from her coronation and anthems will be performed by the Newark Singers under the direction of organist Michael Tansley.

St. Saviour's is at the corner of Highlander and Princess Streets in Queenston.



The kitchen crew at a St. Saviour's tea last year were Anna Davies, Vicki Lowenberger, Maggie Davies and Susan Bennett. Missing from the photo are Marion Bottomley and Paula Paul. (Supplied)

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is thrilled to announce the appointment of
Joy Sanguedolce
to our Advertising Sales team servicing Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Hello Local readers,

My name is Joy Sanguedolce. As an avid news junkie and experienced marketer I'm thrilled to join the talented team at The Local in the role of Advertising Sales Manager for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Having spent over 15 years in marketing and advertising, I look forward to working with local businesses, community organizations and anyone with a story to tell or a product to sell. My professional passion is the pursuit of: customer satisfaction, compelling content, creativity and results.

My personal passions include gardening, baking, dog-walking, volunteerism and my new obsession... Pickleball! All pursuits I dramatically increased after moving to beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake with my family and our dog Charlotte.

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One Mile Creek pollinator garden cleaned up for Earth Day

Mike Balsom
The Local

Half an hour into a clean-up of the One Mile Creek pollinator garden to mark Earth Day, Nigel Young-Chin began to fill his second green garbage with plastic bags, wrappers, cardboard and other refuse.

Friday was the first day of an annual spring rejuvenation of the site at the cor-

ner of King and John Streets in the Old Town. Young-Chin was one of a handful of volunteer members of the Friends of One Mile Creek (FOMC) who came out on the sunny afternoon.

“We usually do this on Earth Day,” said Nigel’s wife, Klara Young-Chin, “but with the rain expected Saturday, we changed it to today at the last minute. Normally we would have had a

much bigger group coming out for this.”

Those who did show up got busy pulling out dead brush from last year to make room for new growth of riparian species this summer.

“We have to be careful while we’re doing this to not tread on the young plants that are starting to come up,” Klara told The Local, gingerly stepping into the garden. “And it’s still early, so a lot of

bugs are still wintering under the leaves, so we leave most of the leaves on the ground for now.”

In October 2020, with the support of the town, Parks Canada and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, the friends group planted 450 native shrubs and plants in the park area just across King Street from the Pillar and Post Inn. The planting was made possible

with a restoration project grant from the conservation authority and a donation from a nearby landowner.

About 50 volunteers participated in that planting, undertaken to replace some of the 214 trees along the creek lost to the emerald ash borer infestation.

One Mile Creek weaves through Old Town neighbourhoods before pooling in Lansdowne Pond at its

outlet to Lake Ontario. It’s a relatively small creek that drains a highly urbanized watershed area and flows through mostly private property.

According to the Friends of One Mile Creek website, trees intercept rainfall in their canopy, slowing down runoff and allowing water to infiltrate the root zone,

Continued on page 15



Kathy Goulding picks up garbage at the One Mile Creek garden. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Nigel Young-Chin fills a garbage bag with plastic and other garbage that collected in the pollinator garden.

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Native shrubs and plants replaced diseased trees

Continued from page 14

assisting in flood control and biodiversity. The strip of trees and shrubs that grows along the shoreline acts as a buffer between land and water, improves water quality and contributes to wildlife habitat.

As well, the pollinator plants in the area, Klara said, attract beneficial insects.

Pollinator gardens attract bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, bats, and even hummingbirds. These creatures transfer pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma, fertilizing the plant and later yielding fruit and seeds. It's a crucial process in the ecosystem.

And the 100-member-strong friends group has plans to extend the coverage of pollinator plants across John Street.

"We have a major benefactor," she revealed Friday, "who is helping us fund the project. We are going to plant wildflowers, native trees and native shrubs this summer along the Heritage Trail corridor between John and Paffard Streets. And we hope to continue that on the trail behind The Prom-



Klara Young-Chin, Kathy Goulding and Nigel Young-Chin were the three members of the Friends of One Mile Creek who showed up Friday for the cleanup.

enade. It will be a beautiful pollinator corridor."

The group, which also worked with the conservation authority to create a landowner's stewardship

guide for residents living along the One Mile Creek watershed, has presented its plan to the town's Heritage Trail committee and is awaiting final approval from

council for this next step.

That stewardship guide, available at friendsofthemilecreek.org, represents an important aspect of the group's mission.

"It's about proper education," says Klara. "That aspect is important. We're here to help residents along this path to do the right thing. If they plant the right species

that build their roots deep into the soil, that protects the edges of the creek from erosion and ensures a better flow of the water through town."

And over the 20 year existence of the FOMC they've certainly been there to help the wildlife that inhabits the creek where it winds through the area that borders the Butler Barracks.

"The garbage blows down King Street and gets caught in the brush," Nigel explained, "and we pull plastic out of the creek, which is a spot where ducks will often bring their young."

Looking around the site, he estimated that this year's cleanup would yield about two full garbage bags, about the same as in previous years. Then he paused and pointed up to a stand of mature trees bordering the east side of the creek.

"If you look closely you can see a huge nest up there," he told The Local. "There's a hawk that nests up there every year. She often looks down on us while we're doing our work."

Though the hawk wasn't peering down on the group last Friday, when she returns, she'll surely be thankful for their efforts.

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Tomorrow's Voices wins Impact Niagara award

Mike Balsom
The Local

Tomorrow's Voices, a non-profit, barrier-free children's choir led by executive director and founder Todd Green of St. Davids, was recognized last week by Chair Jim Bradley with a 2023 Niagara Impact Award.

Green and board chair Carly Snider accepted the award at the State of the Region event held at the Niagara Falls Convention Centre. They were chosen as the winner in the non-profit category, one of six categories in which a total of 140 nominations were put forth.

Tomorrow's Voices was selected as this year's recipient for their dedication and commitment to creating a space for children to explore music, build relationships and raise their voices together in song.

"I was surprised," said Green, a university professor who teaches at Brock's Goodman School of Business. "We only launched in 2017. The nominations came from the parents of the kids in the choir. I think that what they said about us really stood out to the committee who chose the winners."

In an email shared with



Todd Green, centre, holding the award, joined by Mendelt Hoekstra, who conducts the choir, standing by the excited youth choir members. (Supplied)

The Local, one of those parents, Kay Waboso, described Tomorrow's Voices as "a warm and open space where equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility is centred. Such a safe, nurturing and engaging space for children and youth."

Tomorrow's Voices began as an offshoot of sorts from Green's research work at Brock. While working on his paper "An Exploration of Socially Responsible Music Consumption," he met vocalist, songwriter and bass player Murray Foster of Great Big Sea. Foster suggested an idea to offer mu-

sic training as a team-building activity for corporate entities.

Out of that came Choir Nation, through which Green, Foster, and Momentum Choir director Mendelt Hoekstra brought choir sessions to organizations such as KPMG, Chubb, Indigo and Canada Goose.

Green soon realized that the benefits that adults were getting from singing together would easily translate to children, and Tomorrow's Voices was born.

More than just giving children a chance to sing, though, Green wanted to bring oppor-

tunities to those who might not have access to extra-curricular music activities.

"I contacted Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold, and we connected with Big Brothers Big Sisters, too," he explained. "Caseworkers started referring kids to us, and Brock's Marilyn I. Walker School agreed to host our rehearsals for free. At first we had four kids signed up, and within a week we had 28."

That commitment to offering opportunities to less advantaged children continues today. Some of the kids currently in-

cluded in Tomorrow's Voices are in foster care, and others have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

Since that 2017 beginning in St. Catharines, Green has brought the Tomorrow's Voices concept to Hamilton, Toronto, and just two years ago, Saskatoon. The organization became a registered charity in 2018.

Over the five years that the choir has operated, Green estimates that at least 150 kids aged seven to 18 years old have benefited from Tomorrow's Voices activities. Besides their weekly gatherings for rehearsals, they've also had the opportunity to perform on stage, backing up big names in Canadian music, including Serena Ryder, Chantal Kreviazuk, Dan Mangan, Royal Wood and Scott Helman.

After the awards ceremony, Green took the award to the choir's weekly rehearsal.

"The kids were so excited about it," he says. "Every single kid wanted a picture with the award, and with me. We had a bunch of group photos, too. Their excitement made winning the award even better. It made me feel like we're really doing a great thing with this."

Before Tomorrow's Voices takes a break for the summer

they will be rehearsing for a May 13 concert backing the Niagara Youth Orchestra, with some of the ticket proceeds from that event going to the choir. In the past, some of the funds raised have been put toward post-secondary awards and bursaries to the choir's graduating kids.

And for the fall season the choirs from all four cities are collaborating on a group project.

"The kids are learning *We're Going to Be Friends* by the White Stripes," says Green. "All four cities are learning it, and they will film it. Then we'll piece together a video of all of them performing. There are some other works in progress, too."

And they're sure to be seen singing the national anthem at the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines at the start of a few of the Niagara Ice Dogs games when their new season gets underway.

Green sees the Niagara Impact Award as a testament to the hard work and dedication of the organization's board of directors, music directors, volunteers and supporters.

"It certainly inspires us to continue our work and make an even greater impact for kids in Niagara, across the province and nationally."

The woman with the golden voice



Angela Seeger singing *Golden Eye*. (Photos by Rosie Gowsell)

Seeger...Angela Seeger. While the name may not be as iconic as the movie character James Bond's, her voice should be. Seeger performed to a sold-out house on Saturday night at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery singing the iconic songs of the James Bond films in a show called 60 years of Bond. The crowd was full of Bond fans, who were not only entertained by Seeger's chameleon-like ability to sound like many different performers, but also by interesting James Bond facts and Seeger's wit and humour. Close your eyes and you would swear you are in the room with singers like Shirley Bassey, Carley Simon, and Adele. But Seeger isn't just an imitator, she also brings her own take to songs originally performed by Duran Duran, Tom Jones, Paul McCartney and Sam Smith. The audience was invited to wear their most James Bond-like attire and they did not disappoint. The crowd was full of smartly dressed Bonds and Bond girls.



Seeger has an uncanny ability to draw her audiences into her performances with her banter and charm until they literally give her the shirt off their back. Here, Seeger is wearing a gold sequin jacket a woman in the audience gave her to wear while singing *Goldfinger*.



John Collymore and Mira Sirotic from Toronto were visiting NOTL. They were excited to dress up and see Angela.



Julie Moreau and Brian Empey, visiting NOTL while planning their wedding in town, caught Seeger's show.



Andrea DiCenso (in black) of Niagara Falls and Genevieve-Renee Bisson (in green) of Port Colborne tried their luck at the charity poker table.

Rangers Under-19 girls take silver in York Region tournament

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara Rangers shook off the rust of a long stretch with no games by capturing second place recently at the IEM Girls Basketball Invitational in Newmarket.

Coach Shawn Pylypiw tells The Local that a number of his team's scheduled games and tournaments in the past few weeks had been cancelled, so the girls were chomping at the bit to get back onto the court. They did so in convincing fashion, but also came up against a formidable foe in a team from Brampton.

Twenty teams from across the province competed in the junior age division, with the Rangers placed in A/AA division against teams from Brampton, Gloucester-Cumberland, Toronto and Scarborough.

They tipped off Saturday at noon against the Gloucester-Cumberland Basketball Association Wolverines, coming out strong to take a 22-4 lead in the first quarter. But the Rangers let their feet off the gas in the second, allowing the Wolverines to claw their way back into the game. A strong fourth quarter, with 12 points scored and some great hustle defensively by Melania Kotsanis sealed the opening game win, 48-32, for Niagara. Ava Froese led the Rangers with 16 points and Mikayla Wallace added 14.

There wasn't much time for the team to rest, as game two was scheduled for 3 p.m. And it was a much different story competition-wise.

The Rangers faced an aggressive attack by the IEM Spartans out of Brampton. They lost 62-33, with Pylypiw actually calling the game off when one of his players was hammered roughly to the ground by an opponent. It was a style of play the girls weren't ready for.

"They were violent and foul-mouthed," Pylypiw said of the Spartans. "They got into our girls' heads, and took us out of our game. They were even high-fiving each other when our girls went down with injuries. It really shook us up."

The Rangers didn't have much time to lick their wounds, though, as they were scheduled to be back on the court at 6 p.m. Saturday to face the Scarborough Blues, a team Pylypiw and the Rangers knew well. The Blues had defeated Niagara in the gold medal game at the 2022 Ontario Basketball Association finals.

"We really bounced back as a team," Pylypiw says. "We had a great all-around game, everyone worked hard, and we even had a chance to apply some new aspects to our system, and it worked well."

The Rangers came out on top 59-36, led by a 21-point performance from Froese, 16 from Wallace, and 10 points from Kyla Pylypiw.

On Sunday afternoon the Rangers put their 2-1 record on the line against the Toronto Lords with a chance to qualify for the gold medal game at 4:30 p.m. And they had to do it with only nine of their 13

players.

Another strong start saw Niagara up by 12 early in the game, but Toronto fought back in the second half to close the gap to a single point. The Rangers were able to hold on, even with some of their key players missing, for a close 37-33 victory.

For the championship game the shorthanded Rangers had to go up against IEM Brampton again. The Spartans had cruised to an undefeated record, winning by margins of 16, 29 and 46 points.

"They pressed us all game, even when up by 35 points against us," Pylypiw says, incredulously. "And their parents kept cheering every single basket they made like it was the biggest game of their career."

Again, the Spartans played a physical style of basketball, knocking the Rangers to the floor often and forcing a couple more players out of the game. Niagara ended up on the wrong side of an 87-35 score, but Pylypiw was proud of his squad for their hard work and the fact that they kept their cool while facing more rough play. Ava Froese was named the team's most valuable player for the tournament.

"Ending up with the trophy for silver was some consolation," Pylypiw says, "but that team was in a different class than everyone in our division. They probably should have been playing up in the next division."

At press time, Pylypiw was expecting the Rangers to be back in action this Thursday night against the Grimsby Grizzlies.



Rangers coach Shawn Pylypiw goes over strategy on the bench. (Photos supplied)



Rangers Kyla Pylypiw dribbles into the Toronto Lords zone while Mikayla Wallace follows up in support.



Karlyn Coveney (#10) and Ava Froese get ready to take the rebound off Kyla Pylypiw's shot from the free throw line against the IEM Spartans.

LocalSPORTS

NOTL's Kaleb Dietsch drafted by OHL's Ottawa 67's

Mike Balsom
The Local

Kaleb Dietsch was both nervous and excited watching the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) priority selection draft Friday night.

He was sitting in his family's Niagara-on-the-Lake living room watching the broadcast when his name popped up in the third round, 46th overall, chosen by the Ottawa 67's.

"I had no idea who was going to take me, or when," he tells The Local. "I think 17 of the teams contacted me before the draft, so I wasn't sure where I would end up."

His father Paul adds that Kaleb's first OHL interview was actually with Ottawa via Zoom a few months ago.

"They're a top organization," Paul says. "They shared a ton of information with Kaleb on that call. They share a facility (TD Place at Lansdowne Park) with the CFL team (the Redblacks), with high-end equipment. And they have an academy right on site where he would finish high school and be able to get on the ice every day. It was a really impressive, well-organized presentation."

The 16-year-old Grade 10 student at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School knows he still has to fight for a spot on the 67's, and he feels he's ready to compete.

"We don't know when the first tryout camp is,"

he says. "This weekend, though, they have an orientation camp for all the new draft picks. It's Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and I'm pretty sure there's a few on-ice sessions, a lot of touring around and information sessions."

"He's ready," Paul says. "He's been doing a lot of hard work to prepare for this. It will be a challenge for him, and he knows that even though he's been working really hard the last couple of years, he has to start working even harder. He has the right frame of mind."

Kaleb got his start in hockey playing in the NOTL Wolves minor system. Two years ago he moved on to the Southern Tier Admirals to compete at the AAA level and to grow his game.

"It was hard leaving behind the guys I had always played with," Kaleb admits, "but it was the right thing to do to take that step."

He did have a chance to play at Holy Cross with some of those friends last year, as well as with his older brother Liam, a Grade 12 student who split his time last season with the Niagara North Stars AAA Under-18 team and the Thorold Blackhawks of the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League.

Kaleb says he is ready for this next step and the hurdles he will have to jump to earn a roster spot.

"The game is a lot faster,

quicker, and more physical," says the self-described shut-down defenceman. "Everything's going to have to move at least a second faster than it did this year."

Both father and son credit Admirals coach Kevin Rosebrugh for Kaleb's development as a player the past couple of years.

"All of his coaches there have been a huge part of his success," says Paul. "Kevin's coaching style is aggressive, there's not a lot of love out there from him. It's about preparedness. At this next step, these coaches aren't going to be holding his hand, and he's ready for that."

Rosebrugh's approach seems to have worked. Six of Kaleb's Admirals teammates were also drafted, including two ahead of him: goaltender Isaac Gravelle of Fenwick at number 27 by Oshawa, and 15-year-old Ottawa-born defenceman Dryden Allen at number 32 by Flint.

"He's an all-around solid player," Rosebrugh says about Kaleb. "He's a big body who skates really well. He's got a good, active stick, he's strong with the puck and makes great decisions. I know Ottawa was really happy he was still available when they got him."

Rosebrugh compares Kaleb to a young Chris Pronger, and feels that he has a bright future in the game.

"He's gotta go and do his thing," says Rosebrugh about Kaleb's chance to make the 67's this summer. "He has to play his game and be aggressive. He's long and he moves well for a big kid. The summer will be important for him to get stronger and fill his body out."

Kaleb is expecting Ottawa head coach Dave Cameron's style to be much like Rosebrugh's. The 6'2" 176-pound draft pick will be working with his per-



Kaleb Dietsch is training, hoping to earn a spot with the Ottawa 67's. (Supplied)

sonal trainer over the next few months to be ready for camp.

"I'll be on the ice three or four times a week this summer," Kaleb adds. "I know I have to work on gaining a bit more weight. I'll have to eat a lot more and stay away from junk food."

Paul, who is co-owner of the Sandtrap Pub and Grill with his brother Matt, jokes that Kaleb can still enjoy a

lot of the pub's pizza and wings, but will have to double down on the veggies and maybe add a bit of broccoli to the toppings.

He adds that Matt is one of Kaleb's biggest supporters. And with his nephew potentially lacing up the skates for Ottawa come fall, Matt may have to help out in at least one important way.

"Between the two of

us we work our schedules out weekly," Paul explains. "Obviously hockey is mostly on weekends, when it's usually much busier. But he's super excited for Kaleb. And Matt's kids are much younger, so you know, there might be payback one day too."

The proud father admits that he and his wife Natasha are both excited and nervous about their son's next step in his hockey career.

"Being away from home, and adding in all this new stuff he'll have to focus on," Paul says, "it's going to be a challenge for him. Natasha is definitely a little more nervous than I am. He is our younger son. But both of us are really excited for him."

The family will be eagerly awaiting the results of the 67's camp later this summer. And they and the extended Sandtrap family will all be surely awaiting the release of the 2023-2024 OHL schedule, to see when they can all visit the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines to cheer on one of their own.

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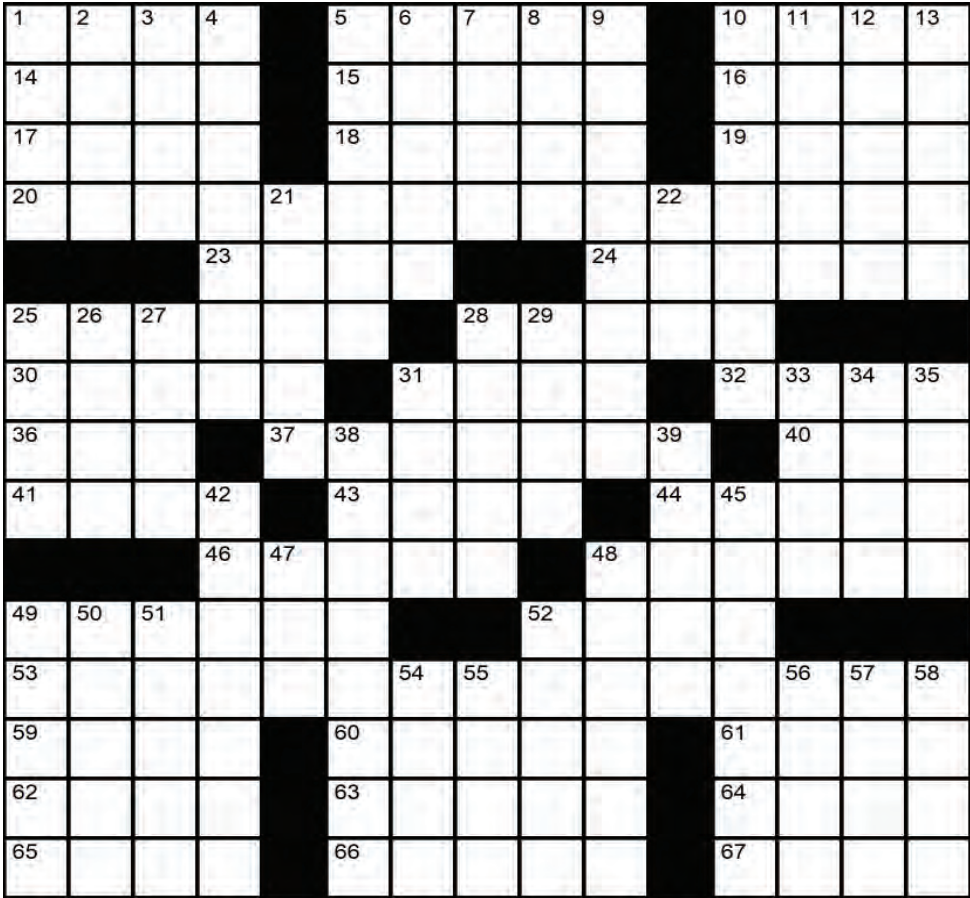
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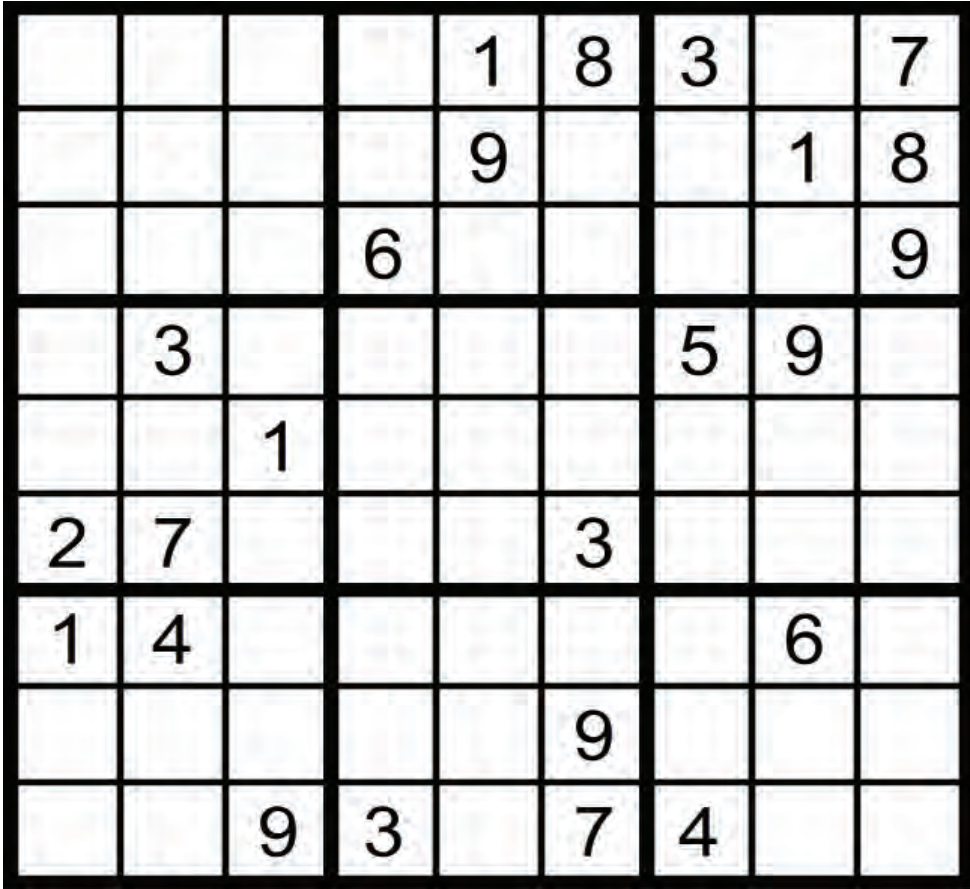


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- Across:
1 Unorthodox religion
5 Whip
10 Fashion and lifestyle magazine
14 "Houston, we've had a problem ..."
15 To pray, to Ovid
16 Israeli prime minister, 1969 - 1974
17 Test or boob?
18 Giver
19 "Terrible" leader
20 Chop Springsteen into pieces for many retailers
23 Fly ball trajectories
24 Hate
25 --- Smith, Empress of the Blues
28 Compel
30 Boiling mad
31 Harmless simpleton
32 Janes, who could be anyone
36 Comedian's date
37 Spreads into a battle line
40 Winter bug
41 Suddenly lose it
43 Filth
44 "--- Body?" (Dorothy L Sayers)
46 Pass into disuse
- 48 Topes
49 Don't take chances
52 Ipanema stroller?
53 Kind of field
59 Egyptian opera
60 In plain sight
61 Indifferent
62 Nicholas was the last
63 Lead character in "First Blood"
64 "The Rite of Spring" composer --- Stravinsky
65 Personal set of cards
66 Single-masted sailboat
67 "And Then There Were ---" (Agatha Christie)
- Down:
1 Budgetary reductions
2 "I refuse!"
3 Gray wolf
4 "--- is a foreign country ..." (L P Hartley, "The Go-Between")
5 Dress top
6 Smooths
7 Summoned the servants
8 Foam clog
9 Tendency of like to beget like
10 Gave off
11 Pre-lunch reception
12 All Cretans, according to
- Epimenides
13 Physicist --- Mach
21 Asked nosy questions
22 Middle of wine vat is a dry area
25 Major Leagues
26 The Emerald Isle
27 Narrative of heroic exploits
28 Fellini's "La --- Vita"
29 Castle
31 PCs' "brains"
33 Baum's Land ---
34 Otherwise
35 Goes to law
38 Maximilian and Charlemagne
39 Avowed
42 Poster
45 --- one: golfers' dreams
47 Astern
48 Circus center
49 Strand
50 Professor Henry's protégé
51 Portable chair
52 Star who wanted to be let alone
54 Elliptical
55 Reminder
56 Fast-food option
57 "The Heat ---" (Glenn Frey)
58 Crux



OBITUARY



COLES, JACK (JOHN GLEN) — Jack passed away at home on April 22, 2023. Born August 13, 1933 and raised in Welland, Ontario, Jack was the son of the late Delmar Coles and Viola May Doan.

Jack was predeceased by his wife, Marnie (2015) and daughter Sandra (2016). Survived by his caring daughter Julia Coles of St Catharines.

Also survived by his sister Adele Hopkins of Port Colborne, sisters-in-law Carole Allen (Peter) of Hamilton, Caroline Neate of Stittsville and many nieces and nephews.

He was also predeceased by his brothers Bill, Keith, Ken, Ron, Reginald, Karl, Larry and his sister Valerie Smith.

Jack was proud to have served 5 years in the Royal Canadian Navy. During that time, Jack was on an aircraft carrier, the Magnificent, and a destroyer escort, The Prestonian, as a leading seaman - sonar.

Jack was part of the original family-owned business of Coles The Mover and later was the owner/operator of Crown Moving and Storage. A Kiwanian for many years, Jack was also a Past President of the Welland Kiwanis Club and a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Welland branch. In retirement, he worked for several years at Twenty Valley Golf Course and was affectionately known as "Fairway Johnny".

Cremation has taken place. Family and friends will be received at H.L. Cudney Funeral Home, 241 West Main Street, Welland on Wednesday, April 26 from 2-4 pm and 6-8 pm.

Online condolences available at www.cudneyfuneralhome.com



GUN SHOW

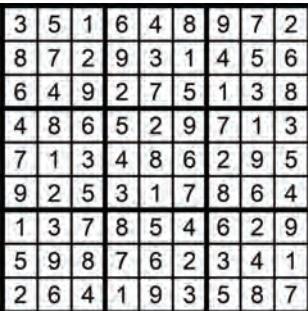
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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from April 19, 2023



Across: 1 Cuit, 5 Birch, 10 Elle, 14 Uh-oh, 15 Orare, 16 Meir, 17 Tube, 18 Donor, 19 Ivan, 20 Shopping centers, 23 Arcs, 24 Detest, 25 Bessie, 28 Drive, 30 Irate, 31 Coot, 32 Does, 36 Gig, 37 Deploys, 40 Flu, 41 Snap, 43 Muck, 44 Whose, 46 Lapse, 48 Boozes, 49 Be safe, 52 Gift, 53 Electromagnetic, 59 Aida, 60 Over, 61 So-so, 62 Czar, 63 Rambo, 64 Igor, 65 Hand, 66 Sloop, 67 None.

Down: 1 Cuts, 2 Uh-uh, 3 Lobo, 4 The past, 5 Bodice, 6 Irons, 7 Rang, 8 Croc, 9 Heredity, 10 Emitted, 11 Levee, 12 Liar, 13 Ernst, 21 Pried, 22 Nay, 25 Bigs, 26 Ehm, 27 Saga, 28 Emperors, 29 Rook, 31 C P Us, 33 Of Oz, 34 Else, 35 Sues, 38 Dices, 39 Sworn, 42 Placard, 45 Holes in, 47 Aft, 48 Big top, 49 Beach, 50 Eliza, 51 Sedan, 52 Garbo, 54 Oval, 55 Memo, 56 To go, 57 Is on, 58 Core.

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