Soos advocates for Indigenous mobile crisis unit

Mike Balsom

Steven Soos admits his rebel heart often gets him into trouble, but that was step one of the self-professed dreamer from Niagara Falls who was crushed to death in 1998 at the GM plant where he worked. The solemn service on May 2nd was a great summary of what a mobile crisis unit would need.

Soos, who self-identifies as Metis based on his grandfather’s background, has turned the issue of mental health, homelessness and addiction problem into a personal cause. As the Niagara Regional Native Centre (NRNC) outreach coordinator at the NRNC, he has used his personal experience to advocate for Indigenous mental health care.

On Nov. 4, 1998, Murray, a husband and father who was crushed to death in 1998 at the GM plant where he worked, was called to the plant to repair a piece of equipment. Murray was probably one of the most safety-minded employees at GM, Gates said, but it doesn’t matter. "That’s the way it goes," Gates said.

Murray was also a minor hockey coach, and at the time of his death, he was coaching his son Thomas and the under-11 team. His grandsons, James and Hunter, played in the same age group this winter, and recently came home Ontario Minor Hockey Team champs.

Imagine the pride Joel would have felt to have seen that," said Gates, "but that didn’t happen, because GM cares more about money than its workforce."

Just last week, GM was fined $325,000 after pleading guilty in its role in the death of Daniel Sevcik, who in October 2021, was working for GM for 47 years, fell from a milling machine at the Glendale plant. His wife Brenda Sevcik attended the 2022 Virgil ceremony, and said she recalls her son to work, took the student through the plant that day, remembering the news began spreading that GM had been retrained on it, and he didn’t know the switch had been bypassed.

At the ceremony this year, as every year, was Joel’s wife and high-school sweetheart Wendy Murray Nicholson, and over the years her son Thomas, daughter Pam and grandchildren have often attended as well.

Gates told the small crowd gathered that GM was found guilty and fined $250,000.

Wendy has two kids who are adults now. "People think that the fine goes to the family, but it doesn’t," Gates said. Not a cent of that went to Wendy, although she had two kids to raise, food to put on the table and bills to pay.

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The Niagara Regional Labour Council, said the call to "mourn the dead, fight for the living" could not be more urgent on this National Day of Mourning.

In 2023, Canada’s unions will have to know our workers will go home to their families at the end of the day. "We have to do better," Soos says. "We have to do better."
Simpson’s Pharmasaves have been sold to a large pharmaceutical company Sean Simpson calls “a good fit” for his team, with an opportunity for growth. (Penny Coles)

Simpson’s pharmacies sold to national company

Penny Coles
The Local

Simpson’s Pharmacy has been a family-owned and operated business in Niagara-on-the-Lake since 1977, the family held in high regard for not only the services the business offers but for their involvement in the community.

At the age of 47, Sean Simpson says he has been presented with an opportunity to have some flexibility and time to spend with his family, and has sold Simpson’s Pharmasave on Niagara Stone Road and Simpson’s Apothecary Pharmasave on King Street to SRx Health Solutions, which provides healthcare and pharmaceutical services across Canada.

SRx, Simpson told The Local, “is a good fit for us and our team, with the opportunity for us to grow.”

In a news release announcing the acquisition, SRx says its mission is to make healthcare simple, improve the wellness of Canadians, and ensure everyone has access to modern health services.

For more than 10 years, SRx says, it has been providing a full range of comprehensive healthcare services, including specialty pharmacies, health clinics, nursing support and more, “to address and fill major gaps in healthcare.”

As it has grown across the country, SRx says it has become one of the most accessible providers of comprehensive, integrated, and customized specialty health care services in Canada.

Brock Clancy, SRx CEO, says, “We immediately felt a strong alignment with Sean and his team, who put their full hearts into what they do.”

Clancy says SRx welcomes its new team members and is committed to making the transition “as seamless as possible for them and patients alike,” and to “upholding and delivering outstanding service to the community.”

The Simpson team that you have come to know and trust will remain intact with zero disruption to service.

Simpson will remain a part of the pharmacy team, taking on the title of pharmacy liaison.

“I am absolutely thrilled to be partnering with SRx to expand the services we are able to provide the local community,” says Simpson.

“Our family is both humbled and proud of the business that we have built here in Niagara-on-the-Lake over the past 46 years, and are extremely grateful for the outstanding support we have received from all of our loyal customers and patients. I am looking forward to being part of the SRx family and continuing the legacy of care, service, and community building that the Simpson’s Pharmasave name has become known for.”

The reality is, he told The Local, “this is a tremendous opportunity to have some financial security and to be able to spend time together with my family while continuing to work with the businesses we built.”

And, he adds, in looking for external support to help the business expand, he’s very happy with what he’s found.

Spring has sprung, and it’s crucial to take care of your eyes from the inside out. Incorporating healthy, nutrition-packed smoothies can be a great way to maintain your eye health. Try out this recipe for your next smoothie craving.

Spring Green Smoothie Recipe:

- 1 cup baby spinach leaves
- 1 frozen banana
- 1/2 small avocado
- 1/4 cup almond milk
- 1/2 tsp honey
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp of chia seeds

1. In a blender, combine all the ingredients.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Enjoy your spring green smoothie!

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark, Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team

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Carrie Gleason  
**The Local**

Is the town doing enough to address the affordable rental housing crisis in Niagara-on-the-Lake?

According to 27-year-old resident Scott Robinson, a delegate at the April 5 council meeting, it is not. He says the town is actively discouraging it by not promoting the new rules for making secondary suites in existing residential homes under Bill 23. The provincial legislation came into effect in November 2022, allowing up to three residential units on most land zoned for one house in residential areas. While new units constructed must be compliant with building code and municipal bylaws, they would be exempt from development charges and rezoning.

At the meeting, Robinson urged council to adopt a motion to “actively and enthusiastically encourage the construction of secondary suites and accessory dwelling units.” According to data supplied by Robinson, NOTL has lost three times fewer rental units than the provincial average, and young people, families, workers and seniors looking to downsize and ‘age in place’ are being prohibited from living in town due to lack of affordable rental units. The town, Robinson says, “is actively changing for worse” and “becoming older, richer and whiter.”

To support this claim, he cited the most recent census showing that since 1996, the population of those under 25 in NOTL has dropped by 30 per cent. He also added that the number of households making more than $120,000 per year has more than doubled in the past 10 years, and the town is almost three times less diverse than the provincial average.

The solution, he says, is for council to address the rental housing crisis in its upcoming strategic plan, actively encourage construction of secondary suits and accessory dwelling units, and have town staff create a promotional plan to encourage residents to construct additional residential units on their properties, including information about it on the town website. Council CAO Marnie Zalepa and council have requested a report from town staff on applications they have received so far under the new rules for building long-term rental suites.

When asked his thoughts on the outcome of the meeting, Robinson told The Local, “I do believe that this council supports adding rental housing, and I do believe that many of them ‘get’ the negative effects of our planning and zoning system, but I am not convinced that they are going to make it a priority. The exclusive anti-change NIMBY voice in town is very strong, and it would take a lot of political conviction to act against it. I really hope that this council will make addressing the rental housing crisis a priority — but I think it’s going to take more work.”

**Council not ready to permit school demolition**

Carrie Gleason  
**The Local**

Despite the town having received notice of intention to demolish the former Parliament Oak school building at 235 King Street, the future of the building remains uncertain. At an April 5 Niagara-on-the-Lake meeting, council amended the recommendations of the municipal heritage committee to request more information from the property owner about the building’s cultural heritage, value or interest.

On Feb. 10, a notice of intention to demolish the building was submitted on behalf of the property owner, Two Sisters Properties, which wants to tear down the entire school building with the exception of the 1915 Parliament Oak stone tree marker, the Castellani Statuary commemorating the Underground Railroad, the two bas-relief panels on the south side of the former school, and the large-format carved oak tree panel located on the east side of the building.

At an April 5 municipal heritage committee meeting, members responded to council’s request to advise on whether any additional information was required. At that meeting, specific artifacts from the former school were identified, such as a 1948 time capsule and the name of the school engraved over the entranceway. The committee also requested a commemoration plan for the interpretation of the history and heritage value of the property be prepared by a qualified member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, which would outline how the history of the site would be interpreted in the future.

They also called for a waste salvage plan.

At the town council meeting Tuesday night, Cameron provided additional background on the significance of the school building to Niagara-on-the-Lake’s heritage, including its importance in terms of education, post-war growth and youth, and about the original architect, Lionel Ashton Hesson. As well as listing additional artifacts of significance identified in the heritage impact assessment, the foundation asked council to request that the property developer acknowledge the site for its 67 years of use as a public school; salvage and rescue some of the building materials, including slate chalkboards, brick, and hardware; and acknowledge the architect and his work.

A motion was passed by council requesting more information from the property owner based on the recommendations of the municipal heritage committee and input from the Niagara Foundation. Cameron also urged council to designate the property under the Ontario Heritage Act, saying demolition was “premature.” Currently, the building is listed on the town’s register of properties of cultural heritage, value or interest.

On March 3, a revised application for development of a hotel on the site was submitted and deemed complete. Council has 90 days from that date to serve notice of intent to designate under the act.

It was a year ago when Scott Robinson first suggested the town should address secondary suites in neighbourhoods with large lots, such as this one in St. Davids, as a way to alleviate the rental housing crisis. Now he is asking council to take action. (Penny Coles)
Continued from page 1

are committed to honouring workers killed or injured at work, and fighting for the living with a call to all workers to participate in workplace health and safety by knowing their rights, using the available tools and defending occupational health and safety wins.

Workplace deaths are preventable, she said, yet “the latest figures show a worker somewhere in the world dies at least once every 10 seconds.”

In Canada about 1,000 worker deaths a year are recognized by governments and workers’ compensation boards, with the participation of workers in prevention through health and safety committees.

“Every worker should come home safely. As workplaces have changed over the recent years, we are supporting workers in their roles to create a culture of safety and prevention, and demanding employers and governments respect their duty to create safe workplaces.”

There was a second service in NOTL Friday morning, this one organized by Fire Chief Jay Plato who wanted to mark the day as a reminder of workplace-related risks not only from fighting fires, but also the illnesses that are known to be associated with fighting fires.

Plato told the small contingent of fire-fighting staff, volunteers and community members attending the ceremony, that “in addition to remembering and honouring workers who have died or suffered physical or mental injury or illness due to workplace accidents, hazards or harassment, today is also a day to collectively renew our commitment to improve health and safety in the workplace and prevent further injuries, illnesses and deaths.”

Work-related tragedies are not limited to one type of work or work, he said. “Employees of all fields, backgrounds and ages can fall victim to an incident that prevents them from working and living fully. These incidents can also affect their families, friends, colleagues and communities.”

 Municipalities such as NOTL, while small, “can be an example and demand that from snow removal to garbage collection, road maintenance to firefighting — each and every day, there is no shortage of potentially dangerous jobs being undertaken by numerous town staff. We all have ownership to keep ourselves and each other safe.”

In NOTL, he said, “we recognize and honour the life of former town employee and local hero of fire-fighting staff, volunteer and community member Jeleel Stewart.”

“Their deaths — and deaths in the work of all fields, backgrounds and ages — of workers in prevention, whether they are Canadian citizens or migrant workers, demand that we must never stop working toward our shared goal of eliminating workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses.”

Let this day, he added, “serve as another reminder that we must never stop working toward our shared goal of eliminating workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses.”
Anchor Niagara was created by Maria Mavridis on a promise to continue raising funds and awareness for community charities, foundations, and not-for-profits in Niagara.

Maria's parents taught her to give back to the community where she lives, in any way she can. She grew up watching her mother put together events that raised awareness and funds for the community. Prior to her mother's passing after a 10-year battle with breast cancer, Maria made a promise to her mother to continue this work in her memory.

By partnering with local businesses, Anchor Niagara has successfully raised over $170,000 for local charities and not-for-profits, and fulfilled more than 5,000 volunteer hours in 20 events in the past five years. At the same time, Anchor Niagara has been bringing business in the off-season to Niagara's hospitality industry.

As a mentor on the Niagara-on-the-Lake Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee, Maria is filled with pride when she sees the young members learn and grow with its guidance. For her, mentorship plays a big role in the planning and execution of a successful fundraiser.

With the support of local venues, including White Oaks Resort and Spa, Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery and Niagara Falls Convention Centre, Anchor Niagara was able to successfully organize bigger events in 2022. The Grammy award-winning Boyz II Men played in NOTL with funds supporting Hotel Dieu Shaver Foundation. The famous mom duo, Cat + Nat entertained guests at two sold-out shows benefiting Pink Pearl Foundation, and Anchor Niagara's annual Designer Purse Bingo event at White Oaks sells out every time.

The key to event success is that ticket sales cover venue, food and entertainment fees. The fundraising part is with the raffles, silent auction and on-site donations that guests make directly to the charity.

The annual Eat, Drink, Pink! Event returns Thursday, May 11 at Ravine. This year's event hosts a food station, candy bar, and silent auction. Multi-platinum artists 80 Empire will be spinning tunes and filling the dance floor. All proceeds will benefit Pink Pearl Foundation.

Pink Pearl Canada is a community-oriented charitable organization that provides support, facilitates connections and empowers self-identifying young women who are courageously overcoming the social and emotional challenges of being diagnosed with cancer across Canada. It was founded by NOTL local, and cancer survivor Elise Gasbarrino.

For tickets visit www.anchorniagara.com

**Eat, Drink, Pink!**

**Thursday May 11th 2023**

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As MPP Wayne Gates said at the National Day of Mourning service in Virgil, it isn’t getting any better.

He was referring to the number of workplace injuries and deaths, despite what seems increasingly more focus on workplace safety than ever.

The town, as Fire Chief Jay Plato said, has hired a dedicated workplace health and safety coordinator, and is likely not the only municipality to take that step. We hope companies of increasing numbers in every city, every town, every region are making change happen, by convincing the next generation of employers and employees that they have a duty to keep each other safe.

For any parent or grandparent of a young person starting near shorelines also has ripple effects which affect populations of fish, shellfish and other wildlife. Thankfully, these southern up north developments are typically in the form of large cottages polluting the shore, versus the aggressive and expansive urban sprawl we experience in southern Ontario.

For now, the glory days of being likely to see a moose in Muskoka’s cottage country are now reduced to very rare treat. It gives us pause to consider other iconic large mammal, the black bear, and bow it too is feeling the pinch of space where south meets north.

The black bear population on the Bruce Peninsula is slowly but surely destined to become genetically different from the black bears of Barrie and beyond. Southern Ontario-style development sprawl in Collingwood and Wasaga are making it difficult for the separated bear populations to migrate and share their genes successfully.

In most of our lifetimes, I am willing to bet that Toronto’s spread, like bacteria in a petri dish, will eventually physically connect to Barrie. A close look at imagery showcases how only a handful of large farm properties and woodlots stretching out across the province.

In the meantime, previously quiet hiking trails have been invaded with visitors in recent years to the point it has prompt paid parking and crowd lim- i t s on areas that were once con sidered remote or secluded.

There are two questions about the relationship between our southern and perceived northern world. How far and how quickly will the new ‘wild frontier’ shift north? And will our elected officials keep their eye on the ball to preserve the character and ecosystems of the land we call up north?

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In Screen of a Sexual Nature (Brinton 2006), seven disconnected episodes all take place on a summer’s day on Hampstead Heath. The action and interaction is all sexually motivated, and the stories are loosely strung together to create a thought provoking in- vestigation of relationships. Dame Edith Atkin and Hugh Bourne- ne give stellar performances.

Donald Combe is a retired En- glish teacher who loves to go to the movies. Until he manages to get into theater, he has grudgingly agreed to share his opinions, through ‘Short and sweet’ column, of Netflix se- ries and movies for The Local.

Where’s Ben?

Eiden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wonder- ing how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notlocal.com. We didn’t receive any answers to where Ben was last week — he was at the Niagara District Airport.

Larger fines might help reduce workplace accidents

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I would like to remark on one concern that appeared to have been brushed over at the recent special council meeting dealing with the latest requests from Solmar.

This is the question of who is going to maintain all of the preserved heritage features after the Rand property subdivision development has been sold off and the developer moves on. It is SORC’s position that because of the significant cultural value of the site that all the heritage features should be restored and preserved by the developer even though age and neglect has already taken its toll. If that is the case then those features are restored becomes extremely important.

To the question “Who will maintain the heritage features after the units are sold off?” that was posed by a councillor, the Solmar representative responded by saying that the condo corporation would take over the maintenance of the heritage features as well as all the other common areas. The councillor seemed to be satisfied with that answer and asked no further questions. Having been on a condo board in Toronto for 18 years and also having worked for a developer, I was not satisfied with that answer and alarm bells went off for me.

I would be thinking, “If these features are so important in terms of cultural heritage, then will the developer write into the condo docs that there be a continuing legal obligation on the condo board to maintain the heritage features to a certain standard? And shouldn’t the town want to be satisfied that there is?”

I say this because this is an example of how developers write their hands of key features that they use to sell their projects in the first place and then the condo board is stuck with the additional expense of trying to maintain them.

The greater the ratio of additional features to the number of properties that will be sharing the expense, the higher will be the expense per owner, until it is no longer economically viable.

(That would be one reason that Solmar is trying to squeeze so many units onto the site and will not support SORC’s plan, which is less dense.) Then what happens? Either the condo board has to find additional funds or they have to start using them to generate additional funds. To me it seems like a bit of a conundrum, and I don’t know how to solve it but I urge the town not to shrug it off, to address it now, because maintenance fees are a huge issue.

Naturally, the developer will use the restored heritage features to pitch their project, but developers usually underestimate their maintenance fees to buyers. By the time the new owners realize just how much it will actually cost to maintain those features the developer will be out of the picture. The quality of the condo board and the owners becomes crucially important.

In this case, all these heritage features will be openly accessible to the rest of the community, but only the new owners will be paying to maintain them. They will ask them selves, “Is that fundamentally fair?” In my experience that will become an issue.

Jackie Ronic
NOTL

Ted’s thoughts: on discrimination and hate

I saw this quote recently and although I don’t know who said it, it made me think of what I believe is happening today: “Why are we taught to be afraid of the ‘other’ and yet we rarely question those who are telling us that the ‘other’ is bad. We too often accept their word as gospel even when we might know better or feel what they are saying is not right.

Let’s look at what is happening in our society today, especially in the United States, but spreading to Canada and Niagara as well. Certain groups and certain people are spouting hate and division in order to elevate their point of view to the detriment of others.

Some of you reading this today believe all developers are bad, all politicians are corrupt, and you are willing to accept that certain races are inferior, that gay people are pedophiles and trans people are against God’s plan. In many cases you believe it without question.

We need to stop labelling all types and groups of people as if they are all the same. Individual people are the problem, not groups.

Here is where things go off the rails. A very charismatic person who has the gift of persuasion can usually talk one or two other weaker people into believing false and misleading statements about other people. In many cases it is because these easily led people are not happy with who or where they are. So making someone else a target or scapegoat makes them feel superior, and that they belong to something. So they are strong and blind.

As the movement grows they build up momentum with other people to the point today that even if you watch the political rhetoric in Canada it could be happening in our country, if it is not here already.

We need to stop, take a breath and do some research to find out if in fact what we are being told is the truth or is it simply misinformation or fear. By the way, F.E.A.R. is ‘False Evidence appearing Real’. Look at the evidence and stop lumping everyone in a group as the same.

There are good and bad politicians. There are good and bad developers. There are good and bad business owners. There are good and bad law enforcement officers. There are good and bad in just about every race, religion, gender and nationality, but we have to stop vilifying the group or we will go backward into the Dark Ages and we will begin to burn people alive simply because they belong to the group we are told to hate and fear.

I am wishing that our better selves will prevail over the others to decide to prevent us from repeating history because we didn’t learn from it.

Ted Mouradian is an author and professional speaker. He is a president of the 2% Factor Inc. and his videos can be seen on TikTok and Instagram. Ted can be reached at ted@the2percentfactor.com...
He reached out to Niagara Centre MP Vance Badawi, who is also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services.

“He said he just needs a proposal from one of Niagara's Indigenous-led organizations who would be willing to host this,” Soos says of his discussion with Badawi, also of Metis heritage.

Soos says the Indigenous community of Niagara works as a collective. Besides Shawna-noo, Soos has also spoken to Wendy Sturgeon of the Niagra Chapter of Native Women, Jackie Poulin of NPAAMB (Niagara Peninsula Aborigi- nal Area Management Board) and to the Friendship Centres of Ontario, who have all supported his quest.

Asked what his vision of a mobile crisis unit would be, Soos doesn’t hesitate.

“We want cars, and there are provincial grants that will help us buy the vehicles,” he explains. “We would have a talk therapy option, too. We will show that Indigenous people can lead their own futures on this. We’ve been doing wellness and recovery forever. Look at the tradition of healing lodges.”

Soos says he has been of-flered a meeting with provincial Minister of Indigenous Affairs Greg Rickford, thanks largely to the help of (Niagara West MPP) Sam Oosterhoff.

“We should be treating mental health, homelessness and addiction as public health matters with a public health response,” insists Soos, “and not as criminal or police matters. Ultimately, we want these calls rerouted away from police and to healthcare professionals, and this pilot project and Niagara’s resilient Indigenous community will show the province and the country this is possible.”

The graduate of Trent University with a double ma-jor in international development and philosophy does his homework. That allows him to make a financial case for the mobile unit as well.

“This will save a lot of money down the road in criminal justice,” he adds, “because you are giving people culturally appropriate service. The workers of the project will be loaded with Indigenous knowledge, therefore preventing further police escalation, criminalization and discrimination of our people. Think of the savings in police budgets when they have to re- spond to less.”

And there is much more that the tireless advocate has been continuing to fight for. He’s pushing for the addition of warning labels on all alcohol products, including wines sold at all Niagara area wineries.

“With this, he was hop-ing to meet Paul Calandra, Ontario’s Minister for Long Term Care, during the MP’s visit to Beamsville Tuesday. He shared with The Local a letter he submitted to Calan-dra in advance of the meet-ing, in which he outlined his ideas for a companionship service for seniors, an app to match the elderly with home care workers, and the need for more support workers in LTC homes.

He has ideas and opinions on the housing affordability crisis, as well.

“Young people are exiled from the housing market,” Soos laments. “I’ve seen seniors in Welland begging on the streets for food more than ever. Seniors and young people are facing similar is- sues. We’re the ones being punished the most in this af-fordability emergency!”

And he is certain that the emergency declaration can be used to convince the province to allow all of Niagara’s hos-pitals to be saved, and to get new shelters built to house the homeless 24 hours a day and to take in victims of domestic abuse.

Soos himself has spent time on the streets. The long-time sufferer from Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disor- der (ADHD) and anxiety says a difficult living situation at the beginning of the pandemic led to his own addiction problems. He ended up on the street and felt abandoned by his family and friends.

As his mental health and drug addiction spiralled out of control, he began his crusade for change in Niagara. He found an ally early on in Niagara Falls regional councillor Wayne Campbell, whose daughter Katey ended her own life 10 years ago after struggling with the same issues.

In conversation, Soos, who himself has thrown his hat into the ring unsuccess- fully five times for municipal councilors in Peterborough, Welland and Pelham, tells a mile a minute, jumping from topic to topic, from issue to issue, his voice rising in vol- ume. It’s easy to see why some politicians are put off by his approach.

But many are listening. Niagara-on-the-Lake region- al councillor Andrea Kaiser says Soos reached out to her personally after reading in The Local about Kaiser over- coming her own struggles with anxiety at one point in her life. Kaiser, who adds that she never hesitated to sup-port the motion to declare an emergency in Niagara, is impressed with Soos’ advoca-cy on the Indigenous mobile mental health unit.

“I think we need to be cre-a tive about solutions,” Kaiser says. “The mobile health unit is a great example of thinking outside the box. We can get so set in our ways in government. But with his passion, his laser focus, it seems he can affect change more particularly on this issue be- cause he doesn’t have to focus on everything else.”

Soos hasn’t totally given up on politics, though. He is now hoping to vie for a seat on Canada’s senate.

Since July 2016, the federal government has invited quali-fied Canadians to apply to be senators. An arms-length process is used to choose nominees and applicants based on a set of criteria.

Thorold city councillor Chris Peters, among others, supports Soos’ applica-tion for the position. He thinks having a young senator like Soos put in place to do good for the commu-nity would be an asset to the region.

“I think he has a lot to offer,” says Deloise. “He’s so well-rounded, articulate and intelligent. He just has to stay clean and focus on what he’s doing. His best intentions are for the community, his fellow Canadians who have passed away with mental health and addiction problems. The sen- ate needs some fresh blood.”

His quest for a senate seat is just one example of how he looks at every possibility. Another is how he has been sending tweets and messag-es to former Canadian resi-dent Elon Musk, asking the multi-billionaire for his mon-e tary support on the three issues.

And he’s not afraid to contact officials at all political levels in his quest to be heard. Besides taking his advocacy to all 12 Niagara municipalities and the region he has also reached out to various differ-ent ministers both federally and provincially, and prom-is es to continue doing so.

“I want the UN (United Nations)’s Secretary General to issue a statement to condemn discrimination of the mental-ill, the homeless and the ad-dicted around the globe,” he says. “And I’m going through the ambassador Bob Rae to do it. I’ll contact anybody.”

Soos says 10 to 15 people stop him on the street daily to applaud him for his efforts. He feels that his advocacy on mental health, homelessness and addiction is his destiny. Soos wants to take Niagara’s mental health, homelessness and addiction emergency, he says. “We may never end it completely, but I’m willing to go to war for my family and friends. The suffering needs to end in this region.”
Youth collective begins spring sessions this week

Penny Coles
The Local

After a successful eight-week session with more than 100 registered youth, the Niagara Youth Collective will begin its spring program Monday.

Caroline Polgrabia, founder of the program designed to offer a safe space for youth, says once the winter sessions finished, volunteers “had a good de-briefing discussion about what worked and what didn’t,” and also spent some time on new ideas, and how to make them work.

“The last session was about learning,” she says, and what they learned has gone into making some adjustments for the spring sessions.

One of the most important lessons, she says, was that they weren’t drawing as many Grades 9 to 12 youth as they had hoped. "While there were some high school students who would come to the sessions and were okay hanging out with the younger group, others would say ‘this isn’t my scene,’ says Polgrabia.

To accommodate the senior members, the youth collective team has come up with one evening just for them. To begin these sessions, they have chosen Mondays from 7 to 9 p.m. for Grades 9 to 12 only, with pizza on offer, and likely some euchre games, although participation in the games is optional, Polgrabia stresses.

All other weekdays offer drop-ins for all ages from 4 to 6 p.m. to hang out, with a variety of programs that are offered again optional.

Planning future sessions, Polgrabia says, "feels great this time round. It is so much less stressful, and we’re able to plan programming that reflects our volunteers,” who are both parents and community members.

For example, she says, Ben Higgins is back, offering a Raspberry PI microcontroller workshop, technology the kids seem to love. It will be limited to eight kids, but will be scheduled again if there is enough interest.

Yoga, cooking classes and chess nights are all back, as well as some special events.

Schedule
Here is the schedule for week 1, which begins Monday, May 1, as provided by the collective:

Monday — Senior Youth Night, Grades 9 to 12 only, from 7 to 9 p.m.
• Monday nights this spring session will be dedicated to senior youth to ensure they can enjoy access to the space exclusively with their own age group.
• This week, Monday, May 1, pizza and a game or two of euchre was expected.

Senior youth can come out Mondays, have some fun, and maybe even play a few card games. And they don’t have to worry if they don’t know how to play, there are veteran players ready to help.

Tuesday — All ages, drop-in from 4 to 6 p.m.
• All are welcome to come, network and enjoy the space. As usual, there will be snacks and there are some new spaces at the campus for them to explore and enjoy.
• Starting week 2 on Tuesday, May 7, a seven-week GO Girls program presented in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara will begin. Space is limited to 12 youth and pre-registration is required. The program runs every Tuesday. Watch for details and registration forms this coming week.

Wednesday — All ages, drop-in from 4 to 6 p.m.
• The first week is casual and about getting back into the groove. Favourite programs like Cooking with Bobbi return in week 2, and some new programs are planned for this session.
• Watch for details and registration forms this coming week.

Thursday — All ages, drop-in from 4 to 6 p.m.
• By popular demand, Rachel is back on Thursdays for an hour of relaxation, focus and fun. Yoga with Rachel runs from 5 to 6 p.m.
• Yoga mats will be supplied, or visitors can bring their own. Dress comfortably and bring your water bottle.
• New, a five-week Raspberry PI microcontroller workshop that introduces the next level of ‘What’s Inside’ with Ben Higgins. Registration is limited to eight youth. Pre-registration is required. First come/first serve. If interest is high, the collective will look at another session in the near future.

Friday — All ages, drop-in from 4 to 6 p.m.
• Chess Night is back with both Learn to Play and competition formats. All ages and skill levels are welcome.
• Help celebrate the first week back in action with a taco and burrito night for Cinco de Mayo.

The youth collective thanks the Garrison House for once again supplying the SnackPLUS tacos and Burritos.
The Azores, an archipelago composed of nine volcanic islands, are set in the mid-Atlantic, between America and Europe and have become a tourism hotspot in recent years. That is no surprise, as I found out on a visit there several years ago. The islands are part of Portugal and boast ideal weather, tranquil farmlands and spectacular flower-filled countryside. The exquisite baroque and colonial architecture of the islands’ churches, town halls and city squares are reminiscent of days gone by and I recall immediately feeling at home in the delightful laid-back surroundings.

Our leisurely-paced itinerary departs September 11 to 21 and will explore the four main islands—Terceira, Faial, Pico and São Miguel. We will see and feel all that these islands have to offer, including the beautiful seascapes, active volcanoes and everything in between; a nature lovers dream. We will stay three nights on each island with sightseeing of the many highlights, plus there will be free time to relax and enjoy as you wish; perhaps a walk around one of the historic city centres; take a stroll along the cobblestone streets, a ride on a streetcar, or browse the shops.

The history of the islands is filled with myths and legends and possibly some truths. All of it is interesting! Some say Portuguese explorers were the first humans to arrive on the Azores; however, researchers have discovered that 5-beta-stigmasterol is present in sediment samples from between 700 and 850 CE. This is found in the feces of livestock such as sheep and cattle, neither of which are native to the islands. There is also evidence of fires from this period being used to clear land for livestock. Researchers also discovered non-native ryegrass on the islands. Mice on the Azores suggest that these first arrived from Northern Europe, brought by Norwegian Vikings. Wherever the truth lies, the islands each have their own stories, their own unique beauty, their individual historic centres and their own charm.

I invite you to peruse our itinerary and see if you agree that this is one delightful fall adventure! Visit www.craigtravel.com/NOTL but reserve your space soon as space is becoming limited. Tour hosts, Lucy and Ross McLean look forward to sharing this fun adventure with you and I highly recommend it for those looking for a fun, kick-back getaway this September. Reserve with promo code ISLANDHOPPER and save $200 per person!

Call 1-800-387-8890 today to reserve your spot on our Magical Azores Islands journey, space is booking up fast!

Article by Robert Craig, Craig Travel President.
(NC) Life is richer when shared with people you care about and whose company you enjoy, whether it's attending a birthday party or going for a leisurely stroll together. Many of us living with chronic conditions – such as arthritis, diabetes or a lung condition like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) – may struggle with these moments because of worries about losing independence, the ability to participate in activities or feeling socially isolated as our condition progresses.

For when times feel tough, here are some reminders to help you get through:

Keep communication open
Speaking openly can lift a weight off your shoulders, even if it's uncomfortable at first. Be honest about your symptoms with trusted family, friends and health-care providers, especially if they are new or worsening. Beyond just discussing your symptoms, also talk about what fun things you and your network can do together now, and what you hope to do together in the future.

Revisit how you manage your condition
While there is no silver bullet when it comes to managing a chronic health condition, there may be things you and your health-care providers can do to make your life a bit easier. As your situation changes, re-evaluate what's working, what's not and make any adjustments based on your doctor's advice.

When it comes to managing a condition such as COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, a combination of physical activity, respiratory rehab programs, appropriate medications and avoiding irritants and allergens can all help maintain independence as well as reduce flare-ups and hospitalizations.

Reconnect with and grow your support system
Your doctor, family and close friends don’t have to be your only source of support. Seek out groups online or via your health-care team to find people you can relate with who have the same condition. Finding the right supports and management strategies, with help from your family, friends and health-care team, can make a major difference in your ability to maintain independence and continue enjoying activities you love.

You can find more information about COPD management at lunghealth.ca/copd.

www.newscanada.com

What is your body telling you about the health of your brain?

(NC) Scientists know that age is the biggest risk factor for developing brain diseases, like dementia, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s. Today, about six million people worldwide live with Parkinson’s, including 100,000 Canadians and that number is expected to double by the year 2040 due to an aging population.

Many people are aware of the common symptoms of Parkinson’s – tremors, loss of coordination, difficulty speaking and other movement issues. However, every experience is different and there are several lesser-known symptoms and indicators that may appear years or decades before an official diagnosis, such as smell loss, depression, anxiety, fatigue, difficulty focusing and acting out your dreams. The uniqueness of the Parkinson’s experience and the variety of symptoms can make it that much more difficult for people to receive a diagnosis. This lag not only delays when people start treatment, but it's estimated that as many as 80 per cent of cells producing dopamine, a brain chemical that fuels movement, mood and more may be damaged by the time of an official Parkinson’s diagnosis.

So, if you have symptoms, it is important to speak to a doctor. If diagnosed, a movement disorder specialist (a neurologist with additional training in Parkinson’s) can help provide care and develop an individualized treatment plan. Currently, there is no cure for brain diseases like Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease and there are no treatments to slow or stop the progression. However, researchers are working to better understand how these diseases develop, who gets them and why. Today, there are great strides being made. For example, The Michael Foundation’s landmark brain health study, the Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI), has launched in certain cities across Canada. The program aims to rewrite the future of Parkinson’s disease and brain health in general, by better understanding predictors of it. The goal is to help detect the disease earlier and, ultimately, understand it better to find a cure.

While the study is primarily interested in those recently diagnosed with Parkinson’s and not yet taking medication, there’s also an opportunity for those over age 60 without Parkinson’s disease who have lost their sense of smell or are acting out their dreams while asleep (REM sleep behaviour disorder). Those over age 60 without a known connection to Parkinson’s can become a control volunteer as well. Find more information or learn how to get involved at michaelfoundation.org/ppmi.

www.newscanada.com

Celebrate Seniors Golden Years Guide

3 ways to stay connected when your health isn’t at its best

### 3 ways to stay connected when your health isn’t at its best

When it comes to managing a condition such as COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, a combination of physical activity, respiratory rehab programs, appropriate medications and avoiding irritants and allergens can all help maintain independence as well as reduce flare-ups and hospitalizations.

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[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)
Fairy tales come alive at St. Davids Public School

Mike Balsom
The Local

St. Davids Public School invited parents and the community to the school for two performances of Into the Woods, James Lapine’s fairy tale musical with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, this Tuesday and Wednesday. St. Davids Grade 4 teacher Sharon Heidebrecht had been working with a cast of 30 Grade 4 to 8 students twice a week since February to prepare for this week’s performances. Two hundred Dragons sang in the choir to back up the actors on a stage set up as a fantastical forest, with Rapunzel’s castle walls made out of pizza boxes. Auditions were held in January, and by this week they were ready to take to the stage.

Paying the baker’s wife was like a dream come true for Avery Janzen, who has appeared in Linus Hand and Yellow Door Theatre productions in the past. “I have a lot of lines in this, about 65,” says Janzen, who will be attending Eden High School in September. “We’ve put a lot of work into it. I’ve never had a role this big. I love theatre.” The cast performed Tuesday afternoon to a gymnasium filled with the cast’s counterparts from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3, who enthusiastically responded to the portrayal of multiple princesses, princes and knights in shining armour in the weaving together of a number of familiar fairy tale characters. Performances Tuesday evening and Wednesday afternoon for the public were to follow.

Ella Parravicinno as the Witch (centre) on stage at St. Davids Public School. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Chloe Roland as the Big Bad Wolf and Alina Zhang as Little Red Riding Hood, Dylan Kroeker as Jack, of Beanstalk fame, and Charlie Rowaan as Rapunzel’s Prince in Into the Woods, May 3, 2023

3 tips for growing older with your pet

(NC) The idea of “growing old together” is a goal many of us aspire to. It doesn’t matter if that special someone walks on two legs or four – both of your needs will change as you enter your golden years together. Age gracefully along with your furry (or scaly!) family member with these tips:

1. Stay physically active and make your space more accessible for both of you. Reduced mobility is a common aspect of aging, and it applies to you as well as your pet. You may be used to your pet running circles around you or jumping up to your highest shelves, but as you two continue together, your pet’s mobility will decrease faster than yours. Stairs can be challenging for pets to climb, particularly as they age. Keep an eye on them and consult with your veterinarian if you have concerns about your pet’s mobility.

2. Watch what you (and your pet) eat. A good diet may be an obvious part of a healthy lifestyle, but it’s essential for both you and your pet. You may both want to try some changes to your meals as you age. Speak with your veterinarian to make sure you are providing healthy and high-quality food for your animals.

3. Use medication responsibly for your pet and yourself. Your pet can get sick just like you, and they may be prescribed an antimicrobial medication, such as an antibiotic, to help them get better. It’s essential that you both take medications exactly as prescribed by your veterinarian or doctor. Not following the directions for medication use can cause antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which means the medications that treat bacteria, fungi, parasites and viruses are less effective, or not effective at all. This could mean your pet’s or your short-term infection is harder to treat, and can contribute to the longer-term problem of AMR. www.newscanada.com
Flora’s Walk: fundraiser for perinatal mental health care

Sharon Burns
The Local

After years of fertility treatments, Toronto mom Flora Babakhani became pregnant when she was 44 years old. Tragically, on Jan. 14, 2022, two months after she gave birth to her daughter, Amber, Flora died by suicide due to undiagnosed postpartum psychosis.

“Our health system failed her terribly,” says Samantha Stanclik, who, with friend Meredith Durksen, is initiating a walk in St. Catharines to raise awareness of perinatal mental illness. The event is called Flora’s Walk.

“Perinatal is a word that I didn’t know the meaning of,” said Durksen. It refers to the time, usually a number of weeks, immediately before and after birth.

Durksen is a new mom with a nine-month old daughter. “I work in the mental health field for the Canadian Mental Health Association here in Niagara, and I am also a registered psychotherapist working through my master’s right now,” she said.

“The reason for organizing Flora’s Walk, for me,” said Stanclik, “is the lack of conversation around perinatal mental health and how difficult it can be to access the proper support, even when you are actively trying.”

Stanclik, a personal support worker at Niagara Health’s St. Catharines hospital site, works with women and babies, and is the mother of two girls, a two-year-old and a four-month-old.

“I thought I was well prepared for motherhood when, in reality, the transition was one of the hardest things I have experienced,” she said. “The immense pressure we put on ourselves and the guilt we place on ourselves as parents is overwhelming sometimes.”

She found herself struggling with breastfeeding and discovered accessing support, especially during a pandemic, difficult. “I’m not sure who cried more, me or my daughter, I’m experiencing my wife give birth to our daughter, I’m amazed at how surface the conversation is around becoming new parents. There is a biological and psychological metamorphosis that occurs and nobody stops to ask ‘how are you handling this?’”

Steve Stanclik has “seen, first-hand, how hard it can be to find the right kind of care.”

“Everyone is constantly checking on the baby, but nobody is checking on the mothers suffering from perinatal mental health problems. ‘Just asking how you’re feeling at an appointment for the baby isn’t enough to pull out the struggles one (mother) may be facing.”

“We need a national strategy, a deep conversation about what to expect, what to watch for and although ‘Healthy Babies Healthy Children’ has this conversation before you are discharged, which is wonderful, it needs to continue at each well-baby appointment too,” said Samantha.

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is funded by the province and delivered by local public health units.

The Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative (CPMHC) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 2021 by4nrs Jaime Charlebois and Patricia Tomasi, who each suffered from perinatal mental illnesses. The CPMHC executive directors met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his office on Parliament Hill to commemorate World Maternal Mental Health Day, and to talk about the need for a national mental health strategy.

According to the CPMHC website, a National Perinatal Mental Health Strategy should include universal screening and timely access to treatment. Their goal is that by 2032, federal, provincial and territorial governments will have passed and implemented appropriately-funded policies and legislation that are providing people timely access to perinatal mental health services, thereby substantially reducing perinatal mental illness in Canada.

People interested in attending Flora’s Walk can meet at 10:30 a.m., May 6, at Lakeside Park in St. Catharines. Opening remarks begin at 11 a.m. and the walk commences at 11:30 from Lakeside Park to Rennie Park, across the bridge to Jacey Park and back to Lakeside Park. Closing remarks and prize draws occur at 12:30 p.m.

“We hope Flora’s Walk will be a powerful event and that Flora shouldn’t happen to anyone else. We need to do better,” said Samantha.

Read more on Flora’s story at floraswalk.ca.

Flora’s Walk is raising money to put an end to tragic stories like that of Flora Babakhani, shown with her newborn daughter. (Photos supplied)
Solo art exhibit by Yaelly opening at Ironwood

Remy Gecelter, who goes by Yaelly for her artwork, first learned about Ironwood’s interest in showcasing art when she applied to have her work depicted on cider cans.

“My whole life I’ve done art. I started when I was eight years old,” said Gecelter.

After taking a break from her work, Gecelter, who goes by Yaelly for her artwork, was thrilled to have her work featured on Ironwood’s cider cans.

“We change our can art every year or two, depending on the number of new releases,” said Robyn Brown, marketing and events manager at Ironwood.

“We gather a database of artwork submitted by local artists, and choose pieces that will help to tell the story of each product. Last year we featured a beautiful, woodland-style piece by First Nations artist Brent Hardisty on our Heritage cider. “

“This year,” added Brown, “we commissioned a street art/graffiti-style piece from Chris Perez for our Original. It will be called the OG, alluding to the fact it was our first ever cider.”

Remy Gecelter, who goes by Yaelly, will be at an opening reception of her art exhibit.
Gecelter, who was born in South Africa and lives in Toronto, said, “my work is a reflection of the beautiful chaos that exists within each of us, and in this collection, I have channelled that chaos into a series of bright, bold and emotion-evoking pieces.” Using mixed media, she has created a textured and multidimensional canvas that mirrors the layers of human emotion. A variety of colours and materials, including transferred images, acrylic and spray paint, is used to create pieces with the sponge painting method and a knife palette to give the canvas a layered and textured look.

“I draw inspiration from the world around me, but ultimately, my work is a reflection of my own inner landscape,” said Gecelter. “Through my art, I am able to explore my own vulnerabilities and share them with the world, creating a space for vulnerability and authentic connection.”

The exhibit starts May 7 and runs until June 8. Gecelter, who will be there opening night, is hoping that visitors to her pop-up gallery will help to create a community canvas.

“I will be bringing a blank canvas and I will encourage everybody to add themselves to that canvas with paint,” she explained. “I think it would be really interesting to see what people put on that canvas.”

“My hope is that each piece in this collection will evoke a response in the viewer, sparking a conversation about the complexities of the human experience,” she continues. “‘Self-Titled’ is not just a collection of art, it is a representation of the beauty and power of vulnerability, and an invitation to embrace the chaos within us all.”

Exhibits in Ironwood’s gallery space “began as a way to showcase collections from our label artists,” said Brown, “but I quickly realized how many extremely talented local artists we have in the area, so I decided to expand beyond just our label artists. Since then, our gallery has been consistently booked, with exhibits changing every four to six weeks. We’ve had a lot of fun showcasing different styles of art and allowing the artists to have creative freedom with everything, from their layout to the pieces they select to their reception parties.”
**Designers Bag Bingo to raise money for student lunches**

Penny Coles  
The Local

Nancy Broerse is gearing up for a major fundraiser to help provide lunches to school children across Niagara.

As chair of special events and fundraising for Business and Professional Women of Niagara Falls, Broerse has a Designer Bag Bingo in the works to support the Community Crew Lunch Program, which provides about 4,000 lunches each week to children in 30 different schools throughout the region.

The program started at Edith Cavell Public School in 2015, to ensure every child will have access to quality food every day.

A Niagara-on-the-Lake resident, Broerse is a 25-year member of the inter-national women’s advocacy group that members call the BPW. The Niagara Falls branch is the oldest in the federation, she says, which was officially recognized in Canada in 1930.

The non-profit organization advocates for equality for women worldwide, in social, financial, education and employment issues, including with the United Nations, she explains.

In Canada, she adds, “we work on all levels of government for women’s equality,” going back as far as the fight for women to vote.

And although gender equality has come a long way, “it’s not come far enough. There is still lots to do,” says Broerse.

“We’re not getting there fast enough. We’re still not getting equal pay for equal work,” she says, noting the fight for women to be recognized in the decision-making process at home, in the workplace and in the community.

The group has contributed to many local causes, with a Tampon Tuesday, donations to Shaver Rehabilitation Hospital for equipment to help patients with ALS or strokes, and money to help the homeless and those suffering from mental illness. On a larger scale, the group has advocated against female circumcision and for abortion rights.

This upcoming fundraiser is timely, with an increasing need for healthy food for students across the region, says Broerse.

“There is a wait list of schools to be brought into this program. Who would have thought that we’d have this many children in need, but with the rising cost of food prices, families are struggling. There are mothers who can’t give their children breakfast or lunch, and are sending their kids to school with an empty lunch box. This is an all-around wonderful program,” she says, explaining the older students help by distributing food, and are learning about community service at an early age.

Different groups are working to eradicate hunger in Niagara schools and do it in different ways, she says, “but it’s never enough. We all just doing what we can to help.”

Broerse is making sure the Designer Bag Bingo fundraiser is a great event, with much more than bingo on offer for those who attend.

It will be held Friday, May 19 at Club Heidelberg in St. Catharines.

It starts at 4:30 p.m. with vendors selling crafts, artwork, jewelry, clothes and household items. There will be a silent auction, a raffle for prizes in lunch bags, four mystics, and a light supper at 6 p.m. leading up to bingo with popular entertainer Brad Baker from BB Blooms as MC.

There are great designer purses, and a grand prize game with a Kate Spade purse, two nights at the NOTL Hilton Garden Inn, and a private tour at Cha-teau des Charmes Winery.

Tickets are available on Eventbrite at eventbrite.ca/e/designer-bag-bingo-tickets-95287606827.

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**Let the bells of St. Mark’s ring out**

St. Mark’s Anglican Church on Byron Street is celebrating the coronation of King Charles III Sunday, May 7, with Bernadette Secco pealing out the 19 bells of St. Mark’s on its carillon-style keyboard. The bells will ring to coronation music and hymns of celebration from 11:30 a.m. to noon. Donald Combe of St. Mark’s is encouraging locals to sit in Simcoe Park or in the churchyard and enjoy the celebration. (Supplied)

**Celebrate the coronation with the Scottish Loft**

The Scottish Loft is issuing an invitation to help celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. On Saturday, the Queen Street store will be hosting a short walk from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Post Office to Simcoe Park, where there will be tea and a treat waiting. The first 60 guests will receive a goodie bag and/or a Paddington Bear. The event is May 6 at 2 p.m. Dressing up is optional, but encouraged. (Supplied)
**Uncertain Country new album by Great Lake Swimmers**

**Uncertain Country album cover**

*Mike Balsom - The Local*

Setting up permanent roots with his wife Tierney and their two daughters in the village of Queenston and east of Thunder Bay. He was the studio) was sparked by 15-track collection (11 songs, pressing his deep concern for the land on which we live, wonder and magnificence of the earth determining idle, fading in front of language and battery, years sitting long neglected.

"If we don't write and sing about those things, then we're not doing our job," Dekker says, "and that's important to me." He says he's had a lot of time to think about what he wants to say in his songs, and that he's been able to "reclaim his voice" during the COVID lockdowns. "I got to spend all of this time just thinking about what I want to say," he says. "And I've been able to really focus on that." He adds that he's been able to "filter" his thoughts and ideas into his songs, and that he's been able to "refine" his writing skills during this time. Dekker says he's also been able to "reconnect" with his family and friends during this time, and that he's been able to "recharge" his creative batteries.

"I'm really looking forward to sharing these new songs with our fans," Dekker says. "I think they're going to love them." He adds that he's been able to "rediscover" his passion for music during this time, and that he's been able to "rediscover" his love for writing and singing.

"I'm really excited to share these new songs with everyone," Dekker says. "I think they're going to love them." He adds that he's been able to "rediscover" his passion for music during this time, and that he's been able to "rediscover" his love for writing and singing.

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Jaden Patterson wearing ‘C’ for Junior B Athletics

Mike Balsom
The Local

Being named captain of the St. Catharines Junior B Athletics lacrosse team last week seems to have lit a spark under Jaden Patterson.

“The 19-year-old from Niagara-on-the-Lake scored the team’s first goal of the season six minutes into the first period and added two more for the hat trick in Friday night’s 8-7 home victory over the Cambridge Highlanders.

Patterson followed that opening game performance with two more goals and three assists in a 14-3 win on the road in London Sunday.

“We got the win, that’s the most important thing obviously,” he told The Local Friday night following the home opener. “More than the personal stats. I’m definitely looking forward to see him come out and put up loose balls and setting him up for a few games last year, is a clutch player “with a great goal scoring ability. He seems to score the most important goals at the most important times. All those Niagara-on-the-Lake guys all have an incredible IQ for the game.”

The Athletics won’t have another home game at Canada Games Park until May 19, when they host the Wallaceburg Red Devils. Their next four games will see them travelling to six Nations, Owen Sound, Point Edward and Cambridge over the next two weeks.

“That’s going to be huge for us,” Patterson predicted, “we’ll be able to get on the road trip, and get closer. I feel that will really translate to our game. I’m especially looking forward to next week’s game at Six Nations (Friday, May 5), that will be a big test for us.”

According to Tamas, last year’s Athletics exceeded expectations. They finished the season in fourth place in the Ontario Junior B Lacrosse League’s Western Conference (OJBLL). They went on to knock out Guelph 3-2 in the first round of the playoffs but were swept in three straight by Elora in the second round. With Patterson leading the charge he’s hoping for even more for 2023.

“I expect us to build on the progress we established last year,” says Tamas. “Between the Junior A and Junior B teams, I see us starting a two to three year window where we can win a lot of games and win some championships as well.”

Patterson, who will begin his third year as a kinesiology student at Brock in September, hopes to get an opportunity to prove himself with the Athletics at the Junior A level. It would be the next step toward his ultimate goal to catch on with the National Lacrosse League like Tamas and his assistant coaches Jeff Wittig, Sam Leclair and Alex Pace.

“I play the game for fun, for the love of it,” insisted Patterson, “but I play because I love to challenge myself to play at the highest level for as long as I can. Having those guys on the coaching staff is definitely motivating, too.”

And Tamas, for one, wouldn’t be surprised to see him get there.

“He has all the skills and all the tools to make it,” Tamas says. “If he keeps working at it, he’s going to continue to improve.”

Patterson has his roots in NOTL, where he was born in 1901 season they became the St. Catharines Spartans. With the Athletics name comes a rich lacrosse history and an Old Boys network that raises funds for the organization and comes out to games to cheer each successive generation on. And wearing the captain’s “C” comes with some big responsibilities.

“There’s definitely a little bit of pressure,” said Patterson. “But I think the pressure comes more from having to be a leader for the rest of the team. I’m more focused on being a part of the tradition, but I’m more focused on being a good role model for the younger players.”

Three of those younger players, fellow offensive players Jack Parker and Ethan Williams as well as transition man Liam Dietsch, are also from Niagara-on-the-Lake. “I’ve seen those guys my whole life,” Patterson said. “It’s cool to be able to play with them. I’m a bit older than them, and I’m looking forward to introducing them to junior lacrosse, guiding them through and giving them advice. Playing with them is a lot of fun.”

Parker, who was called up for a few games last year, scored the Athletics’ winning goal Friday night and added his own hat trick Sunday in London.

“He’s been a real pleasant surprise,” says Tamas. “The amount of progress we’ve seen out of him has been off the charts. We’ve been looking for left O (offence) guys to step up and contribute. He’s a real grind-er out there, and he has that same lacrosse IQ as Patterson.”

Dietsch was on Tamas’ radar as an offensive player at first, but he moved into the transition team because of his equally effective defensive skills. “He reads the play on defense and plays the passing lanes really well,” Tamas says of the 18-year-old Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School student. “He knows when to slide and when to hold. He’s been playing really well for us.”

And the coach says that Williams, who was also called up to the Athletics for a few games last year, is a clutch player “with a great goal scoring ability. He seems to score the most important goals at the most important times. All those Niagara-on-the-Lake guys all have an incredible IQ for the game.”

The Athletics won’t have another home game at Canada Games Park until May 19, when they host the Wallaceburg Red Devils. Their next four games will see them travelling to Six Nations, Owen Sound, Point Edward and Cambridge over the next two weeks.

“That’s going to be huge for us,” Patterson predicted, “we’ll be able to get on the road trip, and get closer. I feel that will really translate to our game. I’m especially looking forward to next week’s game at Six Nations (Friday, May 5), that will be a big test for us.”

According to Tamas, last year’s Athletics exceeded expectations. They finished the season in fourth place in the Ontario Junior B Lacrosse League’s Western Conference (OJBLL). They went on to knock out Guelph 3-2 in the first round of the playoffs but were swept in three straight by Elora in the second round. With Patterson leading the charge he’s hoping for even more for 2023.

“I expect us to build on the progress we established last year,” says Tamas. “Between the Junior A and Junior B teams, I see us starting a two to three year window where we can win a lot of games and win some championships as well.”

Patterson, who will begin his third year as a kinesiology student at Brock in September, hopes to get an opportunity to prove himself with the Athletics at the Junior A level. It would be the next step toward his ultimate goal to catch on with the National Lacrosse League, like Tamas and his assistant coaches Jeff Wittig, Sam Leclair and Alex Pace.

“I play the game for fun, for the love of it,” insisted Patterson, “but I play because I love to challenge myself to play at the highest level for as long as I can. Having those guys on the coaching staff is definitely motivating, too.”

And Tamas, for one, wouldn’t be surprised to see him get there.

“He has all the skills and all the tools to make it,” Tamas says. “If he keeps working at it, he’s going to continue to improve.”

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With his family at his bedside at Upper Canada Lodge, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Art Berg, aged 85 years. He leaves behind a loving family. Loving husband to Mary for 64 years Father of Luanne (Larry) Kulchar and Bradley Berg. Loving Grandfather to Maegen (Adam) Bergeron, Matthew (Megan) Kulchar and Daniel Kulchar. Great grandfather to Brianna and Weston Bergeron. Youngest son of Anna and George Berg (deceased). Predeceased by siblings Peler, George, Victor, Walter, Christine Dyck and Lydia Wills. Art is survived by older brothers Henry Berg of Virgil and John Berg of Vineland, sister-in-law Janice (Walter) Berg of Virgil, and many nieces and nephews.

Art was the owner of Midtown Sunoco Service Station in Virgil, Ontario for 26 years. He then did lawnmower repair in his garage until his stroke in 2006. Art and Mary enjoyed their cottage on Deer Lake in Northern Ontario for many years, then sold the cottage to buy a motor home and traveled across Canada and the United States before retiring to their home in St. Cloud, Florida. When age crept up on them, they moved to Pleasant Manor in Virgil.

Cremation has taken place.

Art will be remembered as a really nice guy, a good friend and as a Virgil volunteer fireman for 31 years.

Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

ACROSS:
1. Butter units
5. As natural
9. Sea state 5
14. Britskie
15. “... — slayeth the silly one” (Book of Job)
16. Crackshot Oakley
17. Speech of violent denunciation
18. Jaunty rhythm
20. Least happy
21. Linked
23. Egyptian sacred bird
24. Jaunty rhythm
25. ‘What’s coming down the pike
28. Corruption
30. Winter time in Halifax
33. Turned Simmons upside down to find a terrorist
34. Not very enthusiastic
35. Cost-of-living indicator
36. Hindrances
37. Al ... baseball'
38. Zachary Taylor was one
39. Cowper’s sweetheart
40. Not so many
41. Chessman
42. Shoot to a moderator
43. Foam at the mouth
44. Cowcatcher
45. Cool, sardonically
46. Scrabble piece
47. Signs up
51. Under close scrutiny
55. Idols
56. State with a pelican flag
58. Be relaxed
59. Fire, black or liberal, maybe
60. Federal anti-discrimination agency
61. Deathly pale
62. Synchronies
63. Compos mentis

DOWN:
1. Mount for electronic components
2. Experienced by migraine sufferers
3. Steppe
4. Play grounds
5. Scottish legend
6. Single things
7. Move medium
8. Chloroform
9. Came from behind
10. “Paper Moon” Oscar winner
11. Looze
12. “Out with it!”
13. Observe
18. “Black Widow” lead — Winger
22. The — Mattress, from the Parthenon
25. Do without
26. Customary
27. Crumb catcher
28. Put back to zero, for example
29. Impressionist
31. Extra interest
32. Possession of fearful symmetry” (Blake)
34. Hall, crier, car or house, perhaps
37. Give feedback
38. Fine, black or liberal, maybe
39. Polish
40. Put back to zero
41. Polish?
42. Off,
43. Lilt
44. “Polish off, or polish?”
45. Depend
46. Take up
47. Scat queen
48. Those opposed
49. Taking all the tricks
50. Un body promoting peaceful nuclear power
51. Put back to zero
52. In a bite white
54. Spike
55. Such as cinnabar
56. Louisiana
57. Let go
58. Tile
59. Ore.
60. Lace
61. Anon
62. Frisson
63. Wineries

GUN SHOW

GUN SHOW
Friday, May 5th
6 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Merritton Community Centre
7 Park Ave., St. Catharines
Details: Charity garage sale — % of sale going to Niagara Childrens Centre. Decor, small furnishing and loads of baby gear, clothes and toys. Treats for sale to benefit NCC’s “Let Kids Shine” Campaign.

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