NOTL marks Day of Mourning for fallen workers

Penny Coles
The Local

Every year, on April 28, a small crowd gathers at the monument in front of the Centennial Arena in Virgil to recognize the annual National Day of Mourning, which remembers those who were injured, suffered illness or died because of workplace incidents.

These solemn services take place across Niagara, Canada, and around the world, in 100 different countries. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, we remember husband and father Joel Murray, who was crushed to death in 1998 at the GM plant where he worked.

Last Thursday, those gathered outside the arena included his wife Wendy Murray Nicholson and her family. In attendance were her son Tom, who was 12 when he lost his dad, and daughter Pam, then 14. This year, they were joined by Brenda Sevcik and her daughter Breanna — daughter Kaitlyn was not able to attend. They lost a husband and father just six months ago. Dan Sevcik had worked for GM for 47 years, but was killed tragically in a workplace accident, one that MPP Wayne Gates says was not unlike the tragic circumstances of Joel’s death. Sevcik was an experienced skilled tradesman, considered one of the best, when he lost his life, Gates says.

On Nov. 4 1998, Joel, then 39, went to work at the auto parts plant, as he had for 15 years, and didn’t return home. He had been directed to repair equipment in an area where he hadn’t worked for a while, and without his knowledge, protective switches had been disabled. GM was convicted on a workplace safety charge, and fined $325,000.

“No one should go to work and not know if they are coming home after. No worker owes their life to their job,” says Gates, who was president of the CAW Local 199 at the time. When he got the call that morning from GM, he rushed to the plant, and walked beside the gurney as Murray was taken to an ambulance.

That day, Wendy Murray did not come home, he didn’t get to coach his son’s hockey game that night, or hear about his daughter’s day.

Pam Murray-Evans recalls it was Take Your Kids to Work Day, an initiative for Grade 9 students to learn about the workplace. She was in her first year at Niagara District Secondary School, and because her dad went to work early, she went with a friend to her....
Waterfront suggestion: jet boats, paddle sports, cafe

Continued from page 1

out on for two years, at a time when border checks are taking longer, with the app information for each person to be processed. “I know we can’t do much about it, but clearly COVID will be with us for sometime. It is frustrating. It’s difficult both ways, but particularly entering Canada.”

His boat tours from the American side of the gorge have already started, and he’s anticipating boats leaving from the Queenston dock this weekend. The start of the season has been delayed by about two weeks, but not because of ice in the Niagara River, which is typically the determining factor of his opening date. Overall, “it’s been a crappy spring,” he says, and rebuilding a retaining wall that has been there since the sand-dredging days has taken longer than expected.

Those who pay attention to Niagara-on-the-Lake council meetings know that the Melville Street dock, and the jet boat operation licence agreement, have been a hot topic, but all behind closed doors. Jet boats have been noticeably absent from the Old Town waterfront for three years, and little information has been made public about the future of the dock.

Last week Coun. Gary Burroughs tried to ask some questions about the town’s agreement with the jet boat operation in the public portion of the council meeting. He was given some brief answers before being shut down, told the town’s lawyer said the matter should be discussed in a closed session. Burroughs asked if there had been any amendments to the licence agreement during the last two years, and was told there had not. He also asked if any legal actions had been taken on the licence agreement by either side, and was told “no legal proceedings have been commenced;” and also that the town has “not at this time” issued a notice of default. To some other questions he hoped would be answered, such as why not, he was reminded they would be dealt with in a closed session.

Kinney says his lawyer and the town’s lawyer are trying to come to an agreement over his 2021 fees, which he said have not been paid — but quickly added that he did not use the dock at all last year. “I’ve asked repeatedly for a sit-down about this, after paying what I did in 2019 and 2020, but that didn’t get me anywhere.” He met his financial obligation to the town in full in 2019, he told The Local, although that was the year of flooding in the dock area. The high water levels drove his operation completely to Queenston, and he asked for but was denied any reconsideration of his charges for the year.

In 2021, the provincial stage of reopening allowed him to operate his boats from the Queenston dock with just 12 passengers each tour on boats designed to hold 54 people, while all the fixed charges for insurance, staffing, marketing and other costs continued, he says. Government regulations dictate maintenance is required according to the number of hours the boats are operated, and he was running more boats to accommodate fewer people, driving up those costs as well.

“Unfortunately, when it comes to jet boats, there is no such thing as cutting back. You have to be fully engaged in what you’re doing.”

He was able to take advantage of some of the government subsidies, including for wages, he says, but there were no subsidies for the rebuilding of engines or jet drivers that was required, “so we’ve just rolled with the punches. We’ve had no choice but to operate a full program out of the Queenston dock.”

Over the years, the town has basically directed him to move his operation out of the Melville Street corridor, he says, “so we moved the business to Queenston Lewiston.”

Kinney has a vision for the municipal waterfront property, but says he has yet to sit down with the town to discuss it. He’d like to have a small cafe on the paddle sport industry is a very positive use,” says Kinney.

To the question of how the town will pay for those amenities, and a suggestion that some feel the jet boat licensing fee obligation for the Melville Street dock could be part of that, he says that to compensate for COVID closures and restrictions, the town helped other businesses, including supporting outdoor patios for restaurants. That has taken money away from the town in parking revenue, and while he applauds those decisions, he says there has been no reconsideration to help him.

The town spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on consultants to tell us what to do with the waterfront, and we’ve done nothing with it,” says Kinney.

He is trying to have discussions with the town’s senior staff to see what he can bring to the table, he added, with a goal of “seeing more experiences in the area for residents and tourists.”

Jet boats are in the water, with tours expected to begin this weekend.
Change occurs when ‘something bad happens’

Continued from page 1

parent’s job at a pharmacy, although she recalls she had friends who were going to GM.

“I remember that day clearly. I think of it often,” she says. “I think of it every day.”

Pam and her husband Ben Froese have four children who never knew either of their grandparents. Ben’s father Jamie, a well-known and respected farmer, was killed in a vehicle accident in 2002.

Their children are five, seven, eight and 10, and the couple talk to them about their grandparents often, showing them photos as well, so they will know them. Pam says they also talk about how their grandparents died. “We think it’s good to be honest with them, and important that they understand.”

As hard as it is for Ben and Pam to have lost their fathers so tragically, she says, “it really makes you appreciate life. It is a lesson to live life every day; to make every day count, and to try to make a difference.”

Brenda Sevcik told Wendy that she recalls her husband Dan talking about having some students at the Ontario Street plant that day in 1998 — he had taken a friend’s son to work with him — and although she didn’t know the Murray family, the day of Joel’s death will always be one she remembers. When the devastating news began spreading through the plant, Dan took the student home.

That her husband, when decades of experience in the plant could be killed in a workplace tragedy, makes Brenda very concerned for young employees. “They need to learn to ask for help if they’re unsure, and to be sure they get training for what they’re asked to do,” she says.

“Kids are anxious to get a job and want to do it well. Any job they get, they should have the proper safety training.”

John Pula, now retired from GM, was the elected health and safety representative in the plant from 1994 until he retired in 2009. He was at the Virgil service last week, and also voiced his concern for young workers. While new employees rely on their supervisors for safety training, many supervisors don’t have enough training themselves, he says, yet “they’re responsible for the safety of everyone below them.”

Unifor’s Local 199 Edward Steers, the current GM health and safety representative, also attended last week’s service. “I remember that day. It can be very difficult to enact change until something bad happens.”

Coun. Gary Burroughs makes a point of attending the annual gathering every year. “It’s a memorial every year. The importance of the annual gathering in Virgil is to remember that there are still workplace tragedies, and still work to be done.”

He remains concerned for young people who may be going to work for the first time, at places where there is such a hurry to get work done that the proper safety training is not a priority.

“I have grandchildren at an age that they’re ready to go to work, and this is a worry. We need to be sure we’re doing all we need to do to keep them safe.”

He told the crowd that if anyone knows of an unsafe situation, “if we’re not doing something right that has anything to do with safety, tell us, and we’ll do something about it.”

Brenda had spent some time Thursday morning, before the Virgil Day of Mourning service, at the GM plant, talking to people, and trying to raise awareness for workplace safety. “It’s something we have to focus on, especially with all the new workers in the plant. But some good things are happening there, happening every day.”

Gates could not attend this year’s service. He hated to miss it, he says, but it was the day the Conservative government was releasing its budget and was expected to adjourn until after the upcoming provincial elections.

Representing him in Virgil was his assistant Shannon Mitchell, who attended with her son Owen.

She took a moment to remember Joel and his family, and said, for Gates and the Murray family, “the pain of this loss is still fresh.”

Gates continues to fight for workers across the province, and in the legislature later that day, he introduced the Justice for Victims of Occupational Disease Act, a bill he wrote for victims of workplace diseases, including cancer, who are still fighting the WSIB for benefits. They and their families deserve fair compensation, and that isn’t always the case, he told The Local.

He continues to be outraged that when companies are fined following workplace accidents, as GM was, the families are not the beneficia-

Wendy and her family didn’t see a dime of that mon-

They never even received an apology.”

Shannon Mitchell, representing MPP Wayne Gates, with her son Owen, John Pulia, retired GM elected health and safety representative, Wendy Murray Nicholson, Tom Murray, Brenda Sevcik and her daughter Breanna, and Edward Steers, the current GM health and safety representative, attended the National Day of Mourning service in Virgil last Thursday. (Photos by Penny Cotes)

Coun. Gary Burroughs says workplace tragedies continue, and there is still work to be done to prevent them.

Wendy Murray Nicholson lays a wreath at the Virgil monument, with Lou Ann Binning, president of the Niagara Regional Labour Council, looking on.
COVID delays Shaw preview openings

The much-anticipated musical *Damn Yankees* previews were delayed, but opened Saturday. (Pictured: Shane Carty. Photo by Peter Andrew Lusztyk)
Removing food sources is the best solution

Penny Coles
The Local

It worked in Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Garrison Village in 2019, and it has been effective in several other municipalities, those who tuned in to the town’s virtual coyote information session heard — if we simply stop providing meal sources, they’ll stop roaming our streets and terrorizing our residents and their pets.

Food left outside for feral cats, garbage bags coyotes can tear open, bird seed from feeders, brush piles that rabbits call home, and even food put out for the coyotes themselves are causing them to rove around the Old Town, often in daylight, frightening people who no longer feel safe walking through their neighbourhood, especially if they have small dogs.

For those who have a coyote approach them, Lesley Sampson of Coyote Watch Canada repeated the simple tricks she shared in 2019 to scare them off. Carry a garbage bag full of air and pop it, take an umbrella and snap it open, shout, wave your arms, and act aggressively and assertively, while picking up your dog. Look the coyote in the eye, and back away — whatever you do, don’t turn and run. Throw things, but not at the coyote. Whistles and horns might work, but don’t always, she said — and keep dogs on a short leash.

Providing insight as to who these animals are, Sampson explained that creating a safe and harmonious community for all, through best practices for co-existence, starts with the community.

“Everyone needs to be engaged, working together to establish safe, healthy and respectful boundaries for people and their beloved pets, and wildlife as well. There’s an ‘ebb and flow’ to the presence of coyotes, she said. “It goes good for a while, and then it happens again.” In 2019, when the community rallied together, removed bird feeders and stopped feeding cats outdoors, the coyotes moved out of the area. It can happen and does happen, but everyone needs to work together.”

Coyotes are great at foraging and hunting, and don’t need human handouts, which are harmful for them, Sampson said. Leave them to find their own food, and they can eat as many as 2,000 rodents a year.

Although there have been many coyote sightings and experiences shared on social media, while it might be well-meaning, Sampson said, it’s not always accurate, and it’s not a good place to turn to for information.

Sampson has seen the video of the woman and dog, and the coyote approaching them in the John and Gate Street area, and said the woman did everything right, acting aggressively with her dog’s leash, and it worked — the coyote fled, “especially with the man chasing it.”

In response to questions about when a coyote is acting too aggressively, when more action needs to be taken, Sampson said it’s difficult to know whether it’s one or two “bad actors,” and which ones are the aggressive animals.

Relocation isn’t an option, with coyote families established in a home range territory, she said. “If you remove coyotes from the landscape, other coyotes will move in.”

There are more reliable sources for information than social media, including the town’s own website — it has done a good job of using its website to communicate with residents, she said.

The information session was organized in response to the growing number of human-coyote encounters and conflicts, with the intention of providing guidelines for best practices, said town CAO Marnie Cluckie, and was held in collaboration with several partners, including Coyote Watch, the Lincoln County Humane Society, the Niagara Regional Police, and representatives from the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry.

The provincial ministry does not provide animal control, the audience of about 240 people heard, but gives advice and information on how to prevent conflicts, how to find a licensed trapper, and actions municipalities can take to address conflict situations.

David Denyes, a provincial wildlife representative, explained under current provincial rules, in certain circumstances, such as preventing damage to your property, you can capture, harass or kill a coyote — however, if you capture it, you can only move it within a kilometre.

Cluckie acknowledged that coyote issue is a difficult situation, and that the town recognizes there have been some frightening situations.

“There is understandable fear, frustration and angst in the community,” and a variety of perspectives on how to handle the situation, some thinking it’s being taken to the extreme, others thinking the town should take more extreme measures, she said.

Other communities have followed the approaches discussed at the meeting, and successfully managed the canid-human conflict situation, she said, “so bear with us.”

Residents were asked to continue filling out sighting forms online, including the time of sighting.

An in-person coyote encounter demonstration will be on Wednesday, May 11, from 6 to 7 p.m. at the field behind the community centre.

Registration will be required and limited.

Dave Gilchrist captured this photo of a coyote in the Old Town.
Day of Mourning a reminder of work to be done

With what seems like an ever-increasing focus on workplace safety, tragedies continue to devastate families, and every year, more Canadian workers are injured or died from what we call workplace accidents.

However, these accidents are preventable. They occur as a result of workplace conditions; lack of adequate training or instructions; poor information; and cutting corners to save time or money.

They are not always the fault of the employer, but often they are.

At last Thursday’s National Day of Mourning to remember those killed or injured from workplace incidents, or from illness due to workplace conditions, the point was made that after two years of shutdowns, there are many young people beginning new jobs. They are not the only workers who are vulnerable, but they are in a position of wanting to perform well, looking to impress new employers, and they may not even know enough to realize they are being asked to do something dangerous.

Those gathered in Virgil, and many in the community, know the devastating circumstances of Joel Murdev's death. We’ve heard little of what happened to Dan Sevcik, who died at work of what happened to David Ray’s death. We’ve heard little of what happened to Dan Sevcik, who died at work. They are not the only workers who are vulnerable, but they are in a position of wanting to perform well, looking to impress new employers, and they may not even know enough to realize they are being asked to do something dangerous.

However, these accidents are preventable. They occur as a result of workplace conditions; lack of adequate training or instructions; poor information; and cutting corners to save time or money.

They are not always the fault of the employer, but often they are.

At last Thursday’s National Day of Mourning to remember those killed or injured from workplace incidents, or from illness due to workplace conditions, the point was made that after two years of shutdowns, there are many young people beginning new jobs. They are not the only workers who are vulnerable, but they are in a position of wanting to perform well, looking to impress new employers, and they may not even know enough to realize they are being asked to do something dangerous.

Those gathered in Virgil, and many in the community, know the devastating circumstances of Joel Murdev's death. We’ve heard little of what happened to Dan Sevcik, who died at work of what happened to David Ray’s death. We’ve heard little of what happened to Dan Sevcik, who died at work.
The real heroes of this world are rarely noticed. They do not wave to adoring crowds from the back of an open convertible. They are simply the people that get up every day and do what needs to be done to keep our little world turning.

Kudos to your paper for the article re: our postmistress Barb Pearson (The Local, April 20). My wife and I will long remember her assistance when we moved to St. Davids. Infinitely patient and kind, she guided us, newcomers, through the maze of paperwork involved in a change of address, etc. In retrospect, I believe that a lot of newcomers’ first exposure to the local scene may often be in a post office. At any rate, my wife and I were truly impressed by this cheery, kind lady. She is our hero. May her retirement be blessed.

Joost Vandelinde
St. Davids

Environmental columnist tells story in photos

Instead of his regular column, this week environmentalist Owen Bjorgan is sharing some spring-related photos he has taken while working on his next Hidden Corners nature documentary series. “This was a keep-busy project during COVID times, and the documentary plans to highlight the unsung ecological wonders of Canada’s ‘south coast’ in a fun and creative way,” says Bjorgan. “I want to educate the public about why these fragile and surprising-ly remote areas are worth protecting. The documentary should be released for a public viewing in early 2023.”

He has filmed four of the documentary series so far: Hidden Corners Niagara, Florida, East Andes Ecuador, and Tropical North Queensland. His Hidden Corners nature documentaries are available for viewing on his Youtube Channel, Owen’s Hiking And Adventures. The photos he is sharing are of a white-tailed deer making a run for it in Wainfleet; a wood frog, whose body contains freeze-resistant proteins, held in his hand; farmland adjacent to Lake Erie’s foggy, calm waters at sunrise near Rondeau Provincial Park; what he describes as “surprisingly enormous sand bluffs” plummeting directly into Lake Erie, past Long Point; a sandy, idyllic-looking backroad in Norfolk County cutting through old-growth Carolinian Forests; and his canoe, named Old Baldy, which accompanies him on many of his adventures, nestled against the banks of Big Creek.

Marilyn Rickard
NOTL

What’s up with Call Before You Dig

Here’s an odd problem which could become really dangerous. On Friday, April 30, I called Ontario One Call, call before you dig 1-800-400-2255, as advertised by Ontario Hydro. The answering machine tells you to go to their website and watch a video showing you how to do a diagram of where you want to dig on your property. I completed that only to find that my Apple iPad was not compatible with their system, and it kept rejecting me. We want to dig for a driveway and pathway around May 15. I went to the library and managed to do it on their computer. When I returned home I received an email saying I had done it incorrectly. I tried phoning them again. The answering machine said there would be a two-hour wait. I tried again the next day, first thing in the morning, and was told there would be a seven-hour wait. I tried going through the contractor line and the wait was 27 hours! I hung up. I would imagine everyone would give up after that and decide to dig anyway. Does anyone who works at Ontario One Call have any idea what is happening to their service?

Marilyn Rickard
NOTL

Environmental columnist tells story in photos

Instead of his regular column, this week environmentalist Owen Bjorgan is sharing some spring-related photos he has taken while working on his next Hidden Corners nature documentary series. “This was a keep-busy project during COVID times, and the documentary plans to highlight the unsung ecological wonders of Canada’s ‘south coast’ in a fun and creative way,” says Bjorgan. “I want to educate the public about why these fragile and surprising-ly remote areas are worth protecting. The documentary should be released for a public viewing in early 2023.”

He has filmed four of the documentary series so far: Hidden Corners Niagara, Florida, East Andes Ecuador, and Tropical North Queensland. His Hidden Corners nature documentaries are available for viewing on his Youtube Channel, Owen’s Hiking And Adventures. The photos he is sharing are of a white-tailed deer making a run for it in Wainfleet; a wood frog, whose body contains freeze-resistant proteins, held in his hand; farmland adjacent to Lake Erie’s foggy, calm waters at sunrise near Rondeau Provincial Park; what he describes as “surprisingly enormous sand bluffs” plummeting directly into Lake Erie, past Long Point; a sandy, idyllic-looking backroad in Norfolk County cutting through old-growth Carolinian Forests; and his canoe, named Old Baldy, which accompanies him on many of his adventures, nestled against the banks of Big Creek.

Marilyn Rickard
NOTL

What’s up with Call Before You Dig

Here’s an odd problem which could become really dangerous. On Friday, April 30, I called Ontario One Call, call before you dig 1-800-400-2255, as advertised by Ontario Hydro. The answering machine tells you to go to their website and watch a video showing you how to do a diagram of where you want to dig on your property. I completed that only to find that my Apple iPad was not compatible with their system, and it kept rejecting me. We want to dig for a driveway and pathway around May 15. I went to the library and managed to do it on their computer. When I returned home I received an email saying I had done it incorrectly. I tried phoning them again. The answering machine said there would be a two-hour wait. I tried again the next day, first thing in the morning, and was told there would be a seven-hour wait. I tried going through the contractor line and the wait was 27 hours! I hung up. I would imagine everyone would give up after that and decide to dig anyway. Does anyone who works at Ontario One Call have any idea what is happening to their service?

Marilyn Rickard
NOTL
United Way Period Promise helps women, girls in need

Mike Balsom
The Local

Since 2018, United Way of Niagara has been shipping away at the problem of poverty in the region, and from now until May 27, is asking for our help.

The organization kicked off its Period Promise campaign last week, with the goal of collecting 400,000 feminine hygiene products over 30 days to distribute to women and girls in need.

United Way Niagara CEO Frances Hallworth says she wasn’t fully aware of the need for period products until 2018, when she noticed that other United Way chapters had begun to hold collections.

“We then talked to some of the agencies that we fund,” she tells The Local, “and we found that absolutely, there is a huge need. One in seven people in Niagara is living in poverty. Think about how difficult it must be to make decisions on the basic necessities.”

According to the Borgen Project, a not-for-profit organization addressing poverty and hunger, period poverty refers to the struggle many low-income women and girls face while trying to afford menstrual products, and encompasses the increased economic vulnerability females face because of the high prices of those supplies.

Today the Niagara chapter is one of many across the country attempting to effect change on this front.

Hallworth says a quarter of Niagara females struggle to purchase period products. And with the current highest inflation rate this country has seen in three decades, the problem has become even worse.

According to a United Way press release, lack of access to menstrual products often translates to isolation, mental distress, sick days and missed opportunities. The document quotes a girl named Casey, who was forced to stay home from school when she would get her period. That resulted in lower marks on tests due to her high number of absences, making her feel isolated and negatively affecting her mental health.

The problem seems to inordinately affect younger women. According to the United Way, one in three people under 25 who menstruate struggle to afford appropriate menstrual products. The isolation felt by girls like Casey can also lead to health risks and further barriers.

“Nobody should have to decide between putting food on the table or purchasing menstrual products,” Hallworth says. “But when people are forced to choose between basic necessities, the effects can be detrimental for them and their dependents.”

To that end, the organization also conducts policy work in an effort to ensure that menstrual products are available in an equitable way for everyone.

For the past four years they have been urging companies to sign on to promise to make products available for free at their workplaces. The City of St. Catharines was one of the first to make that promise, and 18 Niagara businesses had signed on.

Some other inroads have also been made in recent years. In 2015, the federal government announced that there would no longer be GST charged on them. In October, 2021, Stephen Lecce, Ontario’s Minister of Education, revealed a three-year deal with Shoppers Drug Mart that would see six million sanitary pads distributed to school boards across the province annually.

Just last week, the Niagara Catholic District School Board outlined plans to install 70 dispensers (57 machines for sanitary pads and tampons, and 13 sanitary napkin dispensers) to address period poverty in their schools. One will be installed in each Catholic elementary school, alternative school, and continuing education school, while there will be two in each high school. Their press release states that only 13 of the dispensers are being provided by the provincial government, while the board will pay for the remaining 57.

“I think the schools coming on board is a great start,” Hallworth says. “I think people signing up across Canada on the Period Promise policy is another great step. When you see really large employers signing up, like General Motors, it becomes more of a norm, and the expectation will start to be there that these products need to be supplied.”

Another aspect of the campaign, says Hallworth, is education.

“We want people to learn more about period poverty,” Hallworth stresses, “as well as health and gender equity. Periods are a fact of life. Period products are a right, not a luxury.”

In 2021, United Way Niagara distributed over 380,000 individual period products through 18 community partners.

Hallworth feels this year’s goal of 400,000 can be reached through financial contributions as well as physical donations of the products themselves.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, Sympolos Pharmacy and Apothecary and the Body Shop store at the Outlet Collection at Niagara are acting as ‘shop and drop’ locations. Shoppers at those stores can add a few period products to their purchase and leave them behind as a donation to the campaign.

Current United Way Niagara board member and former campaign chair Sean Simpson has supported the cause since 2018, with the launch that year of Tampon Tuesdays.

“We know there are a number of women who are having difficulties making ends meet these days,” Simpson says. “It’s great that these necessary, everyday items can be made available for them, and that other people can support them by purchasing a package and leaving it with us.”

Hallworth also encourages people to host their own collection event with friends, family, work colleagues and neighbours. And financial donations can be made via the campaign website. A donation of $120 will supply period products for one person for a full year.

Once the collection is completed at the end of this month, the United Way distributes the products through the various partner agencies whom they fund.

They who know to give them to,” she explains. “They have the clients coming onto their premises. And they don’t necessarily have to be agencies we fund. Other agencies can just let us know they have clients in need.”

The campaign wraps up on May 27 with a Community Drive-thru Collection from noon to 7 p.m. in the parking lot of the Seneca Mall in Welland. Financial donations can be made and information can be found at periodpromise Niagara.ca.

Jane Oleksiew of Simpson’s Apothecary encourages customers to purchase some extra feminine hygiene products this month to donate to United Way Niagara’s Period Promise campaign. The goal is to distribute 400,000 period products across the region this year. (Mike Balsom)
Residents recited poetry and played music at the first annual open mic event at Creekside Seniors Estate, including Steve Leavitt (top left), Anne Howe (bottom left), organizer Cyndie Leavitt (bottom centre), Joe and Julie Vandelinde (top right), and Peter Pepperman (bottom right). (Photos supplied)

Bookies’ Open Mic Poetry Slam a success

Coffee house-style event at Creekside

Brenda Sharp
Special to The Local

Members of the book club at Creekside Senior Estates, known as the Creekside Bookies, have presented their first ever Coffee House and Open Mic Poetry Slam.

Their community centre was transformed into a coffee house, with residents performing their favourite poems or songs for the rest of the community. A song by Dylan, different genres of poetry, as well as some original pieces were enjoyed by everyone.

Organized by Creekside librarian Cyndie Leavitt, the night was such a success that everyone has requested that it be repeated again, however it was decided that it will become a yearly event held during April, which is National Poetry Month.
Niagara-on-the-Lake launched its new website Tuesday morning, with a number of special features.

It uses new meeting management software, online payment options, live chat, and interactive construction project pages.

In March, 2021, council approved using a provincial modernization grant to fund the new website, and hired Upansup Studios to design it. The website will continue to use www.notl.com.

The live chat feature allows customer experience representatives to assist website users live and online. The website launch is accompanied by an online survey, providing users with an opportunity to give feedback on their online experience.

On Tuesday morning, CAO Marnie Cluckie said “the town is very excited to launch our new website to modernize and enhance the town’s online services and improve the overall customer experience.”

She also noted that the transition is still underway, and that some items such as agendas, meeting minutes, calendars, and LiveStreams, were still to be uploaded.

Another provincial grant, this one for $107,300, will be spent on five digital information boards to be used at town recreational facilities.

Three permanent boards will be used at the community centre and the arenas, with two portable units floating between additional entrances at the community centre, and at the Court House, when special events are held.

The software is intended to quickly and easily help residents find what room their scheduled programming is in, and to allow for the programming of maps to local restaurants, hotels, cafes, and shops.

In-Person Coyote Encounter Demonstration

In-person demonstration session led by Coyote Watch Canada and Lincoln County Humane Society, with support from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022
Time: 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Location: Back field of the Community Centre (14 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake)

Learn how to properly react and respond to a coyote encounter.

Registration is required and limited. Visit notl.com/coyotes to register.

NOTICE OF PASSING TEMPORARY USE BY-LAWS 4316EF-22 & 500XV-22
TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF RESTAURANT AND BAR PATIOS

The Council for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake passed Temporary Use By-laws 4316EF-22 and 500XV-22 on April 25, 2022 under Section 34 and Section 39 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended.

By-law 4316EF-22 and By-law 500XV-22 permit the extension of restaurant and bar patios onto public and private lands, subject to the Town’s Temporary Patio Program requirements, without application of any provisions of Zoning By-law 4316-09, as amended (urban areas) and Zoning By-law 500A-74, as amended (rural/agricultural areas). The Temporary Use By-laws expire on February 28, 2023. A copy of the By-laws is available on the Town website, www.notl.org/content/public-notices-under-planning-act or at Town Hall.

The Temporary Use By-laws apply to all lands within the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. By-law 4316EF-22 applies to all lands within the urban area boundaries (Old Town, Virgil, St. Davids, Queenston and Glendale) and By-law 500XV-22 applies to all lands in the rural/agricultural areas of the Town.

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 345/20 under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (related to Provincial COVID-19 measures) in effect when Temporary Use By-laws 4316EF-22 and 500XV-22 were passed by Town Council, there are no rights to appeal these By-laws.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, May 4, 2022
Ralph Walton - Town Clerk (clerks@notl.com) or 905-468-3266
Town Hall, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0
Jackson-Triggs planning a sell-out season

Mike Balsom
The Local

After a two-year absence, the cream of Canada’s musical crop is returning to the Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate Amphitheatre this summer.

The Sam Roberts Band, a perennial favourite, kicks off the Summer Concert Series with performances on June 24 and 25. The rest of the 15-show lineup runs the gamut from indie rock to folk singer-songwriter and from country to world music.

Estate manager Sreejith Sasikuma says artists were champing at the bit to have a chance to walk the amphitheatre stage.

“They were excited,” he tells The Local. “They were anticipating when they would be able to come back. Sam Roberts was truly over the moon. He’s been coming to us for 14 years. There was some competition to get talent, though. Everyone is opening their venues at the same moment. We had hoped to book William Prince (Juno award-winner for Contemporary Roots Album), but he wasn’t available.”

Montreal native Roberts was an obvious choice to begin the series in light of his popularity here in Niagara and beyond. He’ll most definitely be playing tracks from his Juno-nominated 2021 album All of Us, as well as popular hits going back to his 2003 debut We Were Born in a Flame.

Rural Alberta Advantage hits the stage on July 8, while former Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Torquil Campbell has a bit of a homecoming the next day with his Montreal-based ensemble Stars.

“Come on Eileen!” he marvels. “It was one of the most amazing things I’ve ever seen. That guy knows every lyric to Come on Eileen! I’ve listened to that song 7,000 times and I can’t discern a single lyric. Ron knows them all.”

Stars has a new album, From Capellton Hill, coming May 27. “It harkens back to sort of the early 2000s Montreal sound,” says Campbell of the album. “The sound is big, with lots of strings and brass, stuff that we moved away from for a while. This one feels more organic and, dare I say, folkly.”

He’s looking forward to a busy year with the band, playing the festival circuit, then moving into the U.S. in September, hitting the East Coast in December, and heading off to Europe for the new year. The NOTL stop, though, will be a special one.

“It’s just beautiful in those vineyards,” Campbell says of the amphitheatre. “There’s the natural slope of the hill, and the sound is really good. I love that it starts light and gets really dark. And they treat us really well. It’s very civilized, it makes you feel that you’ve earned something.”

Afie Jurvanen, better known by his stage name Mike Balsom

Continued on page 15

ARTS & CULTURE

Broken Social Scene, from 2018, has been a favourite at the Jackson-Triggs Amphitheatre. (Photo supplied)
How to sleep through the night

(NC) Most adults need seven to eight hours of sleep to be their best. But many of us don’t get enough. That can cause irritability, depression, high blood pressure and slow reaction time. Here are a few things you can do at any age for a restorative night’s rest.

1. Set a routine
Try going to bed and waking up at about the same time every single day. You’ll get into a rhythm so waking and sleeping feel natural. If you like a lazy weekend morning, try slow-start activities like reading or listening to music with a cozy cup of tea or coffee.

2. No napping
As tempting as it might be, taking a nap in the afternoon means you might not be as tired when bedtime comes around, which will make it harder to fall asleep.

3. Stop with the screens
Turn off the tv and put down your phone about two hours before your bedtime. The light from your devices is thought to interfere with your body’s natural rhythms.

4. Check your health
Try talking to your health care provider to see if you have a condition like sleep apnea or if you grind your teeth at night. In these instances, a simple machine or night guard can boost your quality of sleep immensely.

5. Mind when you eat.
Having a heavy meal within an hour or two of lying in bed can cause heartburn or stomach discomfort and make you have to pee. But don’t starve yourself either: a hungry, grumbling stomach can also keep you up at night.

6. Use stress-management techniques.
It can be as simple as writing down your tasks for tomorrow or doing a short meditation before going to sleep. Whatever you do, try to keep your worries out of the bedroom so you can drift off peacefully.

7. Check your genetic profile.
According to a recent study by The DNA Company, 35 per cent of people have a gene that leads to interrupted sleep patterns. They suggest that variations in our genes affect our sleep in other ways too, such as making some of us feel stress for longer periods than others. By getting your genetic profile, you can learn how your genes affect your sleep so you can find the most effective tips for you.

Find more information about getting a report on your genes at thedna-company.com.

www.newscanada.com

Easy lifestyle habits for better brain health

(NC) When it comes to keeping your brain healthy, it’s not just about doing puzzles or brain teasers like crosswords and sudoku. While it may be fun to try the latest apps or pass the time with a puzzle, there are many healthy habits that are easy to add in your everyday routine that will keep your brain healthy.

In fact, studies show that most of the habits you do to keep your body healthy are good for your brain too and can help reduce your risk of developing dementia.

Here are a few examples of healthy habits that can help reduce your risk:
• Get enough sleep — that’s about seven to nine hours for healthy adults
• Challenge your brain — learn how to play a new musical instrument or study a new language
• Be physically active — 30 minutes a day is all it takes
• Connect with other people — organize a virtual coffee date
• Reduce or manage stress — try an online meditation class
• Eat a well-balanced diet — set a goal of one new healthy recipe each week
• Avoid smoking and reduce alcohol consumption
• Protect your head to avoid brain injuries — wear a helmet when cycling, skiing or skating

There are many simple ways you can help keep your brain healthy — practice a variety of them to keep your whole self in shape.

Find more information about dementia at canada.ca/dementia

www.newscanada.com
Celebrate Seniors
Golden Years Guide

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Boutique-Style

SENIORS APARTMENTS

Our Apartments Feature:

- 700 - 1000+ SQ FT APARTMENTS

- 48 WELL APPOINTED 1&2 BEDROOMS

- FULL KITCHENS

- 5 APPLIANCES

- INDIVIDUAL LAUNDRY

Get in touch with us today!

905-935-1800

584 ONTARIO STREET
ST. CATHARINES

TO LEARN MORE VISIT
WWW.RENNIEAPARTMENTS.COM

The Rennie
Seniors Apartments by Signature
Tips on managing a virtual health appointment

(NG) Many physicians and other healthcare practitioners are providing care through phone or video calls. While this took off because of the pandemic, virtual appointments seem here to stay. They’re a great way to help keep everyone safe while still addressing many of your healthcare needs.

To make sure you get the most out of your time with your doctor, follow these tips:

**Before your appointment**
- Choose a private and quiet location with minimal background noise.
- If it’s a video appointment, make sure there is ample light so your doctor can see you clearly. If you need to show them a part of your body, wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Have on hand any devices your doctor may have recommended, such as a thermometer, bathroom scale or blood pressure monitor.
- Gather any information you may need, including your current medication list and pharmacy name, location and phone number. Also take note of any healthcare data such as recent blood pressure readings or glucose levels.
- Write down a list of questions and concerns. Have a paper and pen to take notes.

**During your appointment**
- Keep in mind the call from your healthcare provider may come in as a blocked number.
- Give yourself extra time, as the call may come in a bit before or after your scheduled time.
- Let your doctor know if someone else is with you and introduce them.
- Keep an open mind. Although the appointment might feel different, try to treat it like a regular visit. Ask questions. Schedule follow-up appointments if needed.

**Technology tips**
- Choose whether you’ll use a smartphone, tablet or computer. Ensure that your device is charged and that you have access to a reliable connection.
- Video calls work best with high-speed internet. If possible, consider using a wired connection.
- When booking or confirming your video appointment, ask which app or program your provider will use and download it before your session.

Find more health tips and information at kidney.ca.

---

**ANNUAL HIGH TEA & FASHION SHOW**

**THURSDAY MAY 19TH**

2:00 TO 4:00PM

RSVP today and join us for this popular event featuring HARDT Design clothing.

- High Tea
- Fashion Show
- Trunk Sale Shopping in The Lounge
- Suite Tours Available

INTERESTED IN MODELLING LET US KNOW AND JOIN US FOR SOME FUN

RSVP TODAY 905 935 1800

(LIMITED SEATS)
Favourite Chantal Kreviazuk, closes out summer series

Balsam, performs two shows on July 21 and 22. He's followed by Burlington singer-songwriter and environmental activist Sarah Harmer on July 23. The month concludes with, somewhat appropriately, performances by indie-pop bands July Talk on Friday, July 29, and all female rock band The Weekends on Saturday, July 30.

The next month revs up Aug. 4 to 6 with three nights of music. Popular Toronto 10-plus-member cover band Dwayne Gretzky opens the weekend with their mix of classic rock and pop hits. Folk-blues artist Matt Andersen takes the stage Aug. 5, while folk artist Dan Mangan and his band will close out the weekend.

The final weekend comes in mid-August. Country music takes the focus on Aug. 11 when the Reklaws visit the amphitheatre. And on Aug. 12 Juno winner Alex Cuba brings his mix of Latin and world music to the NOTL site for the first time.

“He shows what Jackson Triggs is all about,” Sasikumar says of the resident of Smithers, B.C. “We welcome all artists, and want to represent talent in all genres. We always strive for a big mix in the lineup that hits the preferences and likes of a multitude of people.”

Another perennial favourite, Chantal Kreviazuk, closes out the series on Aug. 13.

“Jackson-Triggs has been associated with music since it opened,” Sasikumar asserts. “It’s important to us that we continue on that platform and that we support and bring in Canadian music to our site. There is nothing like our amphitheatre in Canada. Every night is a grand slam event."

Crews are busy spiffing up the site for the return of concert-goers after a two-year absence. Currently the amphitheatre roof has been removed for maintenance, and new floorboards have been installed on the stage. Tickets for the Summer Concert Series went on sale for the winery’s wine club members Monday, while the general public was able to purchase tickets as of Wednesday morning via jacksontriggswinery.com.

“Ninety-six per cent of our wine club tickets sold in a day,” says Sasikumar. “I have no doubt that the entire season will end up selling out quickly.”

Estate manager Sreejith Sasikumar says crews are getting the amphitheatre ready for the return of concert-goers, including new floorboards, and maintenance on the roof. (Mike Balsom)
Caspian terns, fast and difficult to photograph, fly foraging runs over Four Mile Pond.

David Gilchrist Special to The Local

An interesting spring-time visitor to the Niagara Shores is the Caspian tern (Hydroprogne caspia). Described as “widespread but typically uncommon,” it’s great that they show up in our neighbourhood for a period of time. In the Great Lakes region they live for an estimated average of 12 years, but one was banded in Michigan in 1986 and was found again in 2018 — 32 years old.

My observations are that they seem to live out on Lake Ontario but do foraging runs over Four Mile Pond. They are fast fliers and difficult to photograph. I attempted to grab a photo as they flew over the pond and dove for fish living there. There happens to be a lot of carp, but other species of fish probably live there too. The terns hover over the pond, spotting a fish in the shallow water and diving quickly. If they are successful they fly back out into the lake, before returning for more. If not successful they will continue to circle the pond and make repeated dives until they get their prize.

Definitely another rewarding sight at Niagara Shores Park in the spring.
Music Niagara concert fundraising for Ukraine

Mika Balsom

When Music Niagara Festival founder and artistic director Atis Bankas announced a Toronto concert to support the Canada-Ukraine Foundation back in March, Irene McEvoy of St. Catharines was inspired. The daughter of Ukrainian parents who emigrated to Canada after the Second World War couldn’t make it to the March 11 program in Toronto. So she contacted Bankas and offered to help him organize a local fundraiser to support the cause.

Two months later, her efforts are coming to fruition next Thursday, May 12 when Music Niagara will host a free, in-person event at Club Roma in St. Catharines. Bankas and McEvoy are working together to organize the event.

“Shelt the secured the wine, the food, everything for free,” Lade tells The Local. “It helped us out so much. Irene and Atis have been working together on this. She’s very, very passionate about it.”

“When I told her I would love to do a show in Niagara, she jumped on it.” Bankas adds. “She basically initiated it. It’s really incredible what she has been able to accomplish.”

McEvoy, a regular supporter of Music Niagara, set a goal that other than a few minor administration costs, all funds raised next week would go to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. She says when she approached businesses for food and drink donations, with dogged determination, she said “no” to every one of them who asked for their costs to be covered.

“There will not be any thing that we will have to pay for,” says McEvoy on the phone from her Port Dallhou se home. “Club Roma has donated their facility. Kacsa Venyards is donating the wine. Savoia Hors D’Oeuvres is donating the appetizers, and Regal Florists is donating the flowers for decorations. And we should hear this week about a brewery we’ve asked to come on board.”

Originally, the show was scheduled to be a return to St. Mark’s Anglican Church, home of many memorable Music Niagara concerts prior to the pandemic. At the last minute, that fell through when the diocese nixed the serving of any food or drinks due to COVID. McEvoy was instrumental in booking the date at the Vansickle Road home of the St. Catharines Italian community.

With the minute changes, McEvoy, Bankas and partners have worked to concentrate on booking the musicians for the evening, all of whom have agreed to play free of charge. More than just a fundraiser, the concert will be a celebration of Ukraine, and of freedom in general.

“The first half of the program will feature music from composers who were themselves refugees,” explains Bankas. “Bartok, Rachmaninoff and Kurt Weill. The second half will feature Ukrainian music and musicians.”

McEvoy did have some input on the line-up, too. At last year’s Music Niagara Brahms Oktoberfest event at Blackburn Brewhouse in Niagara Falls, she met Ukrainian-born soprano Inga Filipova, who performed that day.

“When we started talking about artists I asked him if he could book Inga,” says McEvoy. “She has such a beautiful voice. In fact, we wanted to have this concert earlier but she was too emotionally distraught with the situation, as she still has family there. She finally feels up to doing it now.”

McEvoy says she also helped Bankas line up the two Ukrainian acts on the bill: Korinya Ukrainian folk group and Silver Bells, a Bandura Trio. As well, she has invited Patricia Latslysho, president of the Ukrainian Women’s Organization of Canada, to introduce Silver Bells.

Bankas points out that the bandura, a stringed instrument that looks a bit like a cross between a zither and a lute, is especially symbolic for this program.

“In the times of the Russian Czar, the bandura was looked at as very nationalistic to Ukraine, and it was forbidden to be played. They did that to other cultures, too. In Lithuania, the language was forbidden to be read. It’s very symbolic to have this trio here.”

Also performing on May 12 will be perennial Music Niagara favoures Quartetto Gelato, 15-year-old violinist Gloria Verhovsky (a student of Bankas’), pianist Victoria Kogan-Korchinsky, soprano Mira Solovianenko (a Ukrainian native) and Bankas himself on violin.

The concert will also give Music Niagara an opportunity to announce their upcoming 2022 season. Bankas says a number of performers will be familiar to Niagara audiences from previous Music Niagara events. In addition to familiar faces, the British acapella group The Gesualdo Six and Juno award-winner Susan Aglukark, who is known for blending Inuit folk music with pop and country on songs like the 1995 number one Canadian country hit ‘Qanik, will be part of the 2022 lineup.

And, as in previous years, when composers such as Brahms and Brahms were celebrated on their birthdays, this summer will focus on Franz Schubert in honour of the 225th anniversary of his birth. The tireless McEvoy answered an email from The Local at 6 a.m. Tuesday. When it was suggested that she is a morning person, she demurred, informing The Local that her excitement for organizing this event with such great people as Bankas, Lade and Quartetto Gelato’s Colin Meier, makes it hard for her to sleep.

One benefit of all of her work on this project is that she’s been too busy to follow the news from the Ukraine as deeply as she did when the invasion began on Feb. 24.

“When the war started I was heartbroken by the destruction of the country and the loss of lives,” she laments. “It was important for me to do something more than just raising money and attending a rally. I envisioned this concert to enjoy Ukrainian culture through music.”

Bankas says the Toronto program, which was held on Ukraine Independence Day, was attended by about 400 people and raised $14,000. But McEvoy has set her sights higher, partially because some donors, including Rankin Construction with a $5,000 gift, have chipped in.

With the proceeds from the tickets, the wine and a raffle with 20 bottles of local Niagara wines as the prize, McEvoy is confident the local event has the potential to raise as much as $30,000 to hand over to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation.

Tickets are $60 and are available at musicniagara.org. The evening begins with a reception at 5:30, and performances starting at 7 p.m.
Well-liked farmworker celebrates with family, friends

Lincoln Thomas just celebrated the best birthday of his life, in style, with family and friends to make it a special day for him.

When he turned 65 in April, for the first time ever he had his eldest son and daughter with him on his birthday, along with about 50 fellow farmworkers and neighbours.

Like many other migrant workers, when he comes to Niagara-on-the-Lake for eight months of the year, as he has for the last 38 years, he leaves his family at home and misses out on many family occasions and celebrations.

With a spring birthday, the day has gone unmarked for him for almost four decades.

When he first started working here, someone called him a ‘prento’ which means a newbie, or inexperienced worker, and the name stuck. (Photos supplied)

Lincoln’s nickname, Prento, has endured for 38 years. When he first started working here, he says he was surprised too made the choice to leave two young children to come to work in Niagara, he also appreciated the hard work his father did for his family, and wants to do the same for his family.

He has two kids, and now he’s doing the same thing for them. They’re too young to understand or appreciate it now, but as they get older they will understand why their daddy has to leave, she says.

“It’s hard work and long hours, but I appreciate and respect what they do for us. This is a good opportunity for them to come and work. These men are grateful to have the experience, and to know they have a job to come to.”

Phillip and his father meet up as often as they can, but being on different farms makes that difficult, she says.

She was leaving to return to Jamaica Saturday, but she says she has taken lots of videos of both of them, to show family when she gets home.

“I don’t know that I could make the same sacrifice,” she says, “but I’m a product of what my father did. He lived his life here. He has not really lived a life at home.”

When Lincoln talks of the special day he spent with his family and friends, his gratitude is obvious — his previous birthdays have gone by unmarked, so this celebration was really meaningful. He was still feeling good about the party Janelle arranged for him, held outdoors at the home of the Epps, a week later, “the first in my life to have one of my boys and one of my girls with me.”

Although he is retirement age, “I’d like to stay here another two or three years. As long as I have the energy, I’d like to keep working.”

It is hard work, and he misses his family when he’s not with them, but this has become his life — farming in NOTL eight months of the year, and when he goes home, working on his own small farm, where he grows vegetables, and has coconut and banana trees. “It’s not much, but it’s enough to feed a family.”

He says working in Niagara-on-the-Lake has made it a family tradition.

Lincoln Thomas (centre) was able to celebrate his April birthday with his son Phillip and his daughter Janelle — for the first time.

Lincoln Thomas just celebrated the best birthday of his life, in style, with family and friends to make it a special day for him.

When he turned 65 in April, for the first time ever he had his eldest son and daughter with him on his birthday, along with about 50 fellow farmworkers and neighbours.

Like many other migrant workers, when he comes to Niagara-on-the-Lake for eight months of the year, as he has for the last 38 years, he leaves his family at home and misses out on many family occasions and celebrations.

With a spring birthday, the day has gone unmarked for him for almost four decades.

When he first started working here, someone called him a ‘prento’ which means a newbie, or inexperienced worker, and the name stuck. (Photos supplied)

Lincoln’s nickname, Prento, has endured for 38 years. When he first started working here, he says he was surprised too made the choice to leave two young children to come to work in Niagara, he also appreciated the hard work his father did for his family, and wants to do the same for his family.

He has two kids, and now he’s doing the same thing for them. They’re too young to understand or appreciate it now, but as they get older they will understand why their daddy has to leave, she says.

“It’s hard work and long hours, but I appreciate and respect what they do for us. This is a good opportunity for them to come and work. These men are grateful to have the experience, and to know they have a job to come to.”

Phillip and his father meet up as often as they can, but being on different farms makes that difficult, she says.

She was leaving to return to Jamaica Saturday, but she says she has taken lots of videos of both of them, to show family when she gets home.

“I don’t know that I could make the same sacrifice,” she says, “but I’m a product of what my father did. He lived his life here. He has not really lived a life at home.”

When Lincoln talks of the special day he spent with his family and friends, his gratitude is obvious — his previous birthdays have gone by unmarked, so this celebration was really meaningful. He was still feeling good about the party Janelle arranged for him, held outdoors at the home of the Epps, a week later, “the first in my life to have one of my boys and one of my girls with me.”

Although he is retirement age, “I’d like to stay here another two or three years. As long as I have the energy, I’d like to keep working.”

It is hard work, and he misses his family when he’s not with them, but this has become his life — farming in NOTL eight months of the year, and when he goes home, working on his own small farm, where he grows vegetables, and has coconut and banana trees. “It’s not much, but it’s enough to feed a family.”

He says working in Niagara-on-the-Lake has made it a family tradition.

Lincoln Thomas (centre) was able to celebrate his April birthday with his son Phillip and his daughter Janelle — for the first time.
Canadian citizenship should be reward, daughter says

possible for him to send his kids to school, and while he’s sorry to see his son follow in his footsteps, “he’s happy to be here, happy to be able to help his family the way I did, and I’m happy to have him here. Jobs here are secure, and we can make a much better living.”

Linda says when she first met Lincoln at the LCBO, he would chat about his family at home, and when Janelle arrived and said she wanted to arrange a party for her father but wasn’t sure where she would hold it, Linda offered their property. She ordered some balloons, and on the day of the party, a Sunday afternoon, Janelle arrived with more balloons and other decorations, and a lot of food. It worked well that Lincoln and his fellow farmworkers had the afternoon off, “and it turned out to be a great party,” she says. “There was a DJ, a band and sound system, and it was a beautiful afternoon. It was amazing.” Everyone took turns talking about Lincoln, including some of the farmworkers, and there was Jamaican music and dancing. “It was just like a wedding, really awesome. It was great to be able to hear them and watch them having so much fun. Lincoln deserves it — he’s such nice man. It was good to spend that time with him and celebrate with him.”

She says the men are all such hard workers, and when she passes by in her car she likes to honk and wave at them, and to let them know “how much we appreciate what they do.” Janelle says if there is one thing she could change to help her father, it would be for him to receive permanent status in Canada. He will receive a Canadian pension, which he has paid into for all the years he has worked here. But because he has not worked in his own country, he won’t be entitled to the health care benefits others receive, nor will he receive those benefits from Canada. She’d like to see him able to travel back and forth freely as a Canadian citizen, maybe stay in Canada for part of the year, and be entitled to Canadian health care. “I’d like to at least see him given the choice. He should have citizenship for this country. This is where he lives. He goes home for just four months. For eight months he is providing something valuable to this country and its economy. Citizenship would be a reward for what he has done for Canada.”

She says her father has never seen Niagara Falls, has never travelled as far as Toronto or visited the CN Tower — he comes here to work. She would like to see him able to spend some time here, in what has become his home for so much of the year, when he retires and be able to take a drive to Niagara Falls if he wants to, or to the CN Tower.”

Continued from page 18

Jessica and Ed Ball, with Ellowyn and Evaiyah, made cleaning up the waterfront at Queen’s Royal Park a family adventure Sunday

Karoline, Wells, and Sage Suroka helped Tim Balla with his waterfront cleanup. (Photos Submitted)

Tim Baia (front, centre) had a great turnout for his waterfront cleanup from Navy Hall to North Shores Park this weekend, an annual event that had been cancelled for two years.

OPEN TO SERVE YOU SAFELY

BARREL HEAD

PIZZA IS BACK!

DINE IN OR TAKE OUT • ICEWINE COCKTAILS • JOIN US AT PILLITTERI WINERY

CALL FOR TAKE OUT (905) 468-1439 - 1696 NIAGARA STONE RD, NIAGARA ON THE LAKE

FOLLOW US @BARREL.HEAD

ANY TWO $50
ANY TWO PIZZAS INCLUDES A BOTTLE OF TEAM CANADA RED OR WHITE

$10 TAKE HOME PIZZA KIT
CREATE YOUR OWN PIZZA: HOUSE DOUGH, HOUSE RED SAUCE OR HOUSE OLIVE OIL, MOZZARELLA

$99 FAMILY MEAL
INCLUDES A BOTTLE OF TEAM CANADA RED OR WHITE

FOUR PIZZAS, TWO SALADS

OPEN THURSDAY - SUNDAY
NOON - 8PM

FULL MENU AT PILLOTERI.COM/BARRELHEAD

LOCALS GET 15% OFF "TINE IN ONLY"

THE NOTL Local May 4, 2022 19
Mike Balsam
The Local

Fred Martin was just 17 years old when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy to serve on H.M.C.S. Portage during the Second World War. Now 96 years old, the Niagara Falls resident was a guest of honour at the Royal Canadian Naval Association (RCNA) memorial service to recognize the 77th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The longest military campaign of the war began on Sept. 3, 1939 with the sinking of the British passenger ship the SS Athenia by a German U-boat just west of Ireland. The attack killed 118 of the 1,400 passengers on board, including four Canadians.

The peak of the naval battle occurred between mid-1940 and late 1943. By the time it ended with the defeat of the Nazis in May, 1945, 26 Canadi- an warships had been lost. As well, 32 Niagara-based ships and 152 Canadian sailors fell during the skirmish.

The moving ceremony to honour the lost ships, officers and civilians was held last Sun- day at Navy Hall. At the last minute Navy League cadets hurried to move chairs back inside the facility to escape the rain as it began to fall shortly after the ceremony started.

The change in surround- ings meant participants and guests were not able to expe- rience the visual impact of the usual casting of carnations on the river in honour of the Canadian and Allied Armed Forces and Merchant Mariners. But the ceremony inside, espe- cially with Martin attending, was no less poignant.

Martin served as Able Sea- man-Torpedo on the 225-foot- long 1,300 tonne (fully loaded) minelayer near the end of the war. “We were all 17 or 18, just kids,” Martin said Sunday. “Every- body joined the navy, that’s just the way it was. We weren’t trying to be heroes. As it hap- pened, we were injured later in the Navy, in Bermuda, when a depth charge exploded on the surface. It wrenched my hearing. That was the only cost to me in the Navy.”

Martin admits that even at his late entry into the war, with so many lives already lost, he didn’t fully understand the situation into which he was going.

“We knew that some peo- ple from Niagara Falls had died,” he said. “In 1939 I was only 12 years old. Even four years later he didn’t compre- hend the danger involved.

Martin, who celebrates his birthday this week, says he tries to get to the memorial service every year, but almost skipped this year, even after he was invited to attend a grandson’s track meet. The last minute cancellation of that event allowed him to show up Sunday, though he didn’t have time to don his Navy uniform.

Following the war, Martin subsequently re-enlisted to go to the Pacific. He was dis- charged from H.M.C.S. Star in February, 1946 and returned home to Niagara Falls to con- tinue what became a 43-year career on the railroad.

24-year-old Master at Arms Jacob Edwards of St. Catharines was pleased to have Martin attend Sunday’s ser- vice.

“It’s great to have veterans coming out,” Edwards said. “It’s very important to honour those that have fought for our freedoms. My great-grandfa- ther was in the Merchant Navy, and that’s why of my heart. To know that these other still out there today is pretty cool.”

Prayer service during Sun- day’s memorial was delivered by Major Dr. Reverend Harold Rotaat, a chaplain for the Cana- dian Armed Forces for the past 11 years. Rotaat is current- ly serving as a professor at Wil- frid Laurier University’s Con- cordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, and for a military reserve unit.

The author of At Peace with War: A Chaplain’s Meditations from Afghanistan, was filling in for the usual Padre who was unable to attend.

“I’m truly honoured to be here today,” he told The Lo- cal. “I was in Afghanistan for two tours, including a long 10-month tour. I spent most of my time on the front lines with the main base of supporters. As a minister, you want to be with the soldiers right where the battle is,” he explained.

Rotaat recalled being shot at, being blown off of his feet, donning medical gloves for first aid treatments, helping to carry bodies, and seeing mass graves during that conflict.

“As a chaplain, all of that is a real blessing,” he explained, “because you earn your credi- bility amongst the soldiers. For me, spiritually, being able to be around these soldiers to build their faith, and to share their faith, makes me feel blessed. They provide for my physical safety, and I provide for their spiritual safety.”

RCNA Niagara president Chuck Johnston was happy for the ceremony’s return to Navy Hall about five years ago after a stretch during which it was held in Port Dalhousie. There was no ceremony during the two years of the pandemic.

“This is the proper place,” Johnston explained. “This hall was used for building ships years ago, and it was used during the War of 1812. I just wish we could have been out- side today.”

Remembering the Battle of the Atlantic in particular is important for Johnston as it was so crucial to the Allied ef- fort to topple the Nazi regime. Without successful passage of Canadian ships across the ocean the Allied forces would have been continuously short of soldiers and supplies.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero attended the memorial ser- vice, representing all three levels of government. She ac- knowledge the many lives lost during the battle and the courage of the many individ- uals who played a part in the victory who lived in the heart of Niagara.

“Every day we live a free and peaceful life,” she said. “We must remind ourselves of those who did not have that privilege, and of those who fought for us. Thank you to those brave soldiers who fought for us to give us the life we are able to live today.”

She was followed by Com- mander Leeane Crowe, who was the first female Com- manding Officer of a Canadian Forces diving unit. The 38-year veteran of the Royal Canadi- an Navy (RCN) outlined the contributions made to the Al- lied effort during the Second World War.

“The Second World War would have been lost without Cana- dian contribution,” she told the gathered crowd. “The Battle of the Atlantic was es- sentially a struggle between the Allies and the German forces for control of the Atlantic. The outcome of the war was de- pendent on the success of our Merchant ships reaching the United Kingdom.”

Canadian forces escorted a staggering 25,000 merchant ship voyages during the war, helping to deliver 165 million tonnes of cargo to sustain the effort.

“Many of the ships were lost,” Crowe said. “The worst hardships at sea.”

Deeply moving high- lights of the memorial service included Shipmate Gene- vieve-Renee Bisson singing a hymn, piper Peter McKenzie playing Amazing Grace, and Steve Finkelstein playing The Last Post and Reveille on his trumpet.

Later, Shipmate Jeff Seburn read off the names of the war- ships sunk during the battle, while fellow Shipmate Harvey Villard rang the ships bell in commemoration. As well, Navy League cadets and Shipmates George Williams and Cam Scott cast the rations of the river on out of sight of the crowd.

Crowe closed the events place, her speech by explaining the complexities faced by today’s Armed Forces in Canada, while staunchly standing be- hind our country’s role in con- flict situations.

“Our sailors still epitomize the core values established by those who served before, and enthusiastically embrace the call to duty,” said Crowe. “They currently serve globally, and protect Canadian interests closer to home. They remain ready to help, ready to lead, and ready to fight.”

Lord Mayor Betty Disero helps veteran Fred Martin with his pin. (Photos by Mike Balsam)

Shipmate Harvey Villard ringing the ships’ bell, twice for every one of the 26 Canadian warships lost during the Battle of the Atlantic.

Master Piper Peter Mackerlie plays Amazing Grace.

Shipmate Genevieve-Renee Bisson with her 10-month-old son Lincoln.
Announcements

Submissions have been rolling in for the art contest (see below for details). Check out the June 1 issue to see if you are the winner!

Did you know that May 4 is the unofficial Star Wars day (to celebrate the Star Wars franchise)?

MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU!

The first week of May is Be Kind to Animals Week. Be sure to celebrate this by giving the animals around you some extra love!

If you enjoy theatre, just over the border there is a wonderful theatre company just for youth! From their website, "Theatre of Youth Company, Inc. (TOY) stimulates the imagination, nurtures the creative spirit and enhances the education of young people by engaging them in relevant, child-centered, and profession-

ially-produced live theatre programs. TOY believes meaningful childhood experiences in the theatre develop confidence in creative thinking skills, cultivate empathy and establish a lifelong connection to the arts."

Currently Disney’s Beauty and the Beast is running at TOY through May 22. Check out https://theatreofyouth.org for more information.

Interview with Skielor

Jenna sent this photo of the flowers blooming at Simcoe Park.

What is your favourite thing about Niagara-on-the-Lake?
A. I love going to the Old Town and playing games online with my friends. At home I help with the dogs (we have three).
B. We have family game nights. It’s a nice night where we play games and have fun with family. My favourite game to play with them is Mario Kart.
C. What’s that certain thing that makes you special?
A. Animals really like me. We went to the Buffalo Zoo and all the animals would walk or swim up to me. The seal was following me. The mouse would not be discouraged. He set off one day in the early morning. On the way, he met a frog named Magic Frog. When the mouse told her where he was going, she decided to help him, she named him Jumping Mouse and gave him the power to jump really high. Later on in his journey, Jumping Mouse meets others who need help, and he gives so much of him-
Friesen anticipates busy, successful season ahead

Mike Balsom
The Local

The past two weekends of stock car racing were full of emotion as well as success for Niagara-on-the-Lake native Stewart Friesen.

When it was over, he counted four races, two wins, a second- and a sixth-place finish, and chances to honour two people who have meant a lot to him.

Friesen took the checkered flag on Sunday, April 24 at the 40-lap Montgomery County Open Jack Johnson Memorial Sunoco Modified feature at Fonda Speedway. The track is just a short 12-minute drive from the home he shares with his wife Jessica and son Parker in Sprakers, New York.

Friesen took home $12,000 for the win, but just as importantly, he honoured a person he has greatly admired throughout his entire career.

Jumper Jack Johnson, as he was known, made Fonda Speedway his home. The big-block modified driver won the Super DIRTcar Series four times and is one of the most successful dirt drivers in U.S. history. Johnson passed away in early April at 76 years old.

“Jack was a mentor and a friend,” Friesen says on the line while driving to pick up Parker from his kindergarten class. “I’ve raced with his son Ronnie at Fonda, too, for years. It’s really cool that we were able to win that race.”

One might say Friesen has been following in his mentor’s footsteps in making Fonda his home. Since 2015, he’s been the modified driver to beat there, earning five track championships in the last seven years.

From Fonda, it was about a seven-hour trip to Delmar for the Dirt Track at the 40-lap Montgomery County Open at Utica-Rome Speedway, giving him another chance to honour a mentor, this time a family member.

Friesen’s usual number 44 modified was redone in throwback style as number 52 in tribute to his uncle Alex Friesen, who died in 1996 in a snowmobile accident in the Adirondacks.

Alex had an enormous impact on stock car racing, and was credited with reviving the sport in the Northeast. His career began at 21 years old, helping promote races for the family’s racetrack in Ransomville.

In 1989, Alex bought Lancaster Speedway. He went on to purchase a number of racetracks in New York and Pennsylvania, including Utica-Rome, where Stewart’s father Jamie continues to tend to the track on a weekly basis.

When he raced, the younger Friesen brother drove a number 68 car in the Sportsman division.

“It was a tribute to Alex and everything he did behind the wheel and as a promoter,” says his nephew. “It was great to see a lot of old friends and to show our love for Niagara-on-the-Lake native Stewart Friesen.”

Friesen and his Walkmar-Friesen team following his victory in the Diamond State 50 at Delaware International last Wednesday. (Photos supplied)
Dearest John:

Your life was a blessing,
Your memory a treasure,
You are loved beyond words,
And missed beyond measure!

We know you and Tallinn are keeping each other company. Much love Pat, Lisa & Andriy, Steve & Kaite, and Ella & Henry.

---

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

IN MEMORY OF

JOHN FRYER
MAY 20, 1946 – MAY 3, 2019

To place an Obituary or In Memoriam in our Classifieds, please contact Julia at: julia@notllocal.com or 905.934.1040
Deadline is Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

Sudoku solution from April 27, 2022

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sell your unwanted items or advertise your garage sale in our CLASSIFIEDS

To place your classified ad, contact Karen: classifieds@notllocal.com
Deadline: Mondays at 3 p.m.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER
Looking forward to wife, son joining racing tour

As of press time, Friesen was heading into Sweden- boro, New Jersey for the King of the Blocks at Bridge- port Motorsports Park, the opening event in the 2022 Super DIRTcar Series championship. This Friday Friesen will be in Darlington, South Car-olina for the next stop in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series. He’s currently holding down the third spot in the season point series.

“We’ve had a really good start,” he says of his Hal- mar-Friesen Racing truck team. “We’ve been making some points, and I feel like a win is right around the corner. We’ve been making good stage points, and we’ve had a lot of top five finishes.”

The team unveiled an- other throwback design for the Darlington Dead On Tools 200 Friday.

“We decided to hold an auction with proceeds going to Aim Autism (a Markham, Ontario-based children’s charity),” Friesen says. “We’re actually doing another Jack Johnson throwback at our winners’ request. We raised $4,000 for the charity.”

Short of changing the number on his Toyota truck, he’ll stick with his usual 52 but it will be lettered just like Johnson’s 1992 Syracuse Super Derby dirt modified. The orange and yellow paint scheme with a checkered flag accent will be a marked difference from his blue and red. Friesen has a busy two months ahead of him, as well.

“We’re heading into an eight-week stretch where we race every week with the truck,” Friesen explains. “It’s something we’ve never done in the truck series. We’re looking forward to it. Our team is the stron- gest it’s ever been over the past three years of building this up.”

As he nears the school parking lot to pick up his young son, one could almost see Friesen’s face light up with love and pride over the phone. He says Parker is having a great year at school.

“He’s looking forward to the summer, and travel- ing to all the races,” Friesen laughs. “He loves it. It’s a big social game for him, he’s made a lot of friends at the tracks. After June he and Jess will be doing the whole truck schedule on the road with us.”

Continued from page 22

Stewart Friesen hoists the $12,000 cheque he earned in his first-place finish at Fonda Speedway in the Jack Johnson Tribute Race. (Photo supplied)

FREE HOME EVALUATION

CALL OR TEXT GREG DIRECT

GREG OFFERS:
• Strategic Advertising
• Stunning Photography
• Professional Videos
• Expertly Designed Print Collateral
• Greg Lives Local
• Dedicated Property Page on the WALL STREET JOURNAL website

24 May 4, 2022
THE NOTL Local
notlocal.com