Are residents happy in tourism town?

Survey says an emphatic yes

Penny Coles  
The Local

A survey on tourism and how Niagara-on-the-Lake residents feel about it was presented to council Monday night, with results that were so overwhelmingly positive councillors were told to keep doing what they’re doing.

Tim Jennings, executive director and CEO of the Shaw Festival, introduced leading research firm Abacus Data founder David Coletto to councillors, explaining Coletto’s research is “cited by the New York Times, the CBC, CTV, and CP24, to name a few.”

The survey was undertaken by a group of the town’s major tourism businesses, Jennings said, “including the Shaw Festival, Niagara’s Finest Hotels, and Peller and Arterra wines.”

They had become concerned about “a new, negative narrative that had begun to develop last year about the nature of, and our local residents’ relationship to, our longstanding and diverse tourism ecology.”

They believed, he added, “that any such negative view must be from a vocal minority, but felt we needed wider and recent data to be sure of that, and better understand the current moment.”

They also consider it an “immediate imperative to ensure our tourism ecology re-emerge and regenerate quickly and vibrantly from the pandemic,” he said, “so we jointly contracted Abacus to help us understand the true sentiments out there in the community, and to help us each make our own forward-looking business decisions, knowing the town’s tourism plan will, rightly, take time and require wide stakeholder input to be properly developed.”

The results, he said, “will speak for themselves, and Penny Coles  
The Local

The Virgil Stampede returns Saturday, planned to be a better-than-ever three-day event to celebrate the upcoming May long weekend.

This year, members of the Virgil Business Association, organizers of the event, are excited to be able to give back to their community with a crowd-pleasing event, after a two-year hiatus caused by the pandemic. It’s a tradition that goes back 56 years, when an annual family fireworks display for locals taking place in Virgil grew to become first a popular two-day celebration of the long weekend, and then eventually to three days, drawing families from across the region.

Most of the favourite events and entertainment will return. New this year, with the addition of the skatepark...
PC Gale’s top issues: health care, housing, jobs

Penny Coles
The Local

Currently serving his second term as regional councillor for Niagara Falls, Bob Gale is representing the Progressive Conservative party in the June 2 provincial election.

Gale says he has spent his life working for Niagara, first in public service as a police officer, then as an entrepreneur for 35 years, with businesses covering NOTL, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie, and most recently as a regional councillor.

He retired in 2014 as president but remains chairman of the board for Gale Gas Bars, which includes Gale Fuels and Bob’s Fast and Fresh Convenience.

With his wife Vera, the Niagara businessman now lives in St. Catharines, and owns several properties in Niagara Falls. His daughter Jessica, who lives in St. Davids, has taken over control of the company.

He was born in St. Catharines, grew up in Niagara Falls, and raised his three children in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Over the years he has been a baseball and hockey coach, a Big Brother, and spearheaded the Gale family’s involvement in many volunteer and philanthropic endeavours to benefit the community, including the Gale Centre in Niagara Falls.

He formed and funded the Bob Gale Recreation Fund, organized Ten Men in a Tent in 2009 and 2010 to benefit Project SHARE, and was president of the Boys and Girls Club, where he was made an honorary board member.

“I was in business for a long time, and sat on many high profile boards,” he said when he was chosen to represent the provincial Conservatives for the riding. “I have thick skin, and I understand that this will be a challenging election. The fact is that Niagara needs a strong Conservative voice in the provincial government to make sure that our unique needs are taken care of. I am ready to take that task head on.”

The next few years, as the economy recovers from the pandemic, will be tough, he said, and tourism is the industry hardest hit.

“We need a representative at Queen’s Park that has tourism experience, and I believe my tenure on the board of the Niagara Parks Commission, and what I was able to accomplish there speaks to my experience.”

As he approaches the upcoming election, he says health care, jobs, and housing are three of his top priorities.

“Our children and grand children can’t afford homes. It doesn’t look good for their future.”

“It takes too much time and too much red tape to get housing built, he added — the PC party is promising to cut red tape, planning for 150,000 housing starts across Ontario in the next year, and 1.5 million over the next decade, without touching any Greenbelt land.

“As for jobs, the province needs more skilled trade workers, Gale says. “Too many kids think they need to go to university. We can find bodies to fill jobs, but not skilled jobs. We have to convince kids, and offer incentives, to take skilled trade courses.” A PC government, he says, would offer grants for those kinds of courses.

One of the easy solutions in health care is to get the new Niagara Falls hospital built, and Gale says he is guaranteeing there will be a shovel in the ground this year. Tenders are out for it now, and he hopes to speed up the process to get it done. “I did for the Niagara Falls hospital emergency department in the early 2000s, he says. “My plan is to get this hospital going.”

The PC government is also spending $3.8 billion over 10 years on wellness programs, says Gale, which include addictions services, cognitive-behavioural therapy, and youth mental health, and is committing to a $5.000 retention bonus for nurses, and more support for first responders.

The Conservative government is also investing in nursing programs, increasing enrollment across the province for nurses and personal support workers, he says.

Gale did not take part in last week’s Cogeco debate of Niagara Falls riding candidates, saying he’s been told the best way to spend his time is going door-to-door, talking to people, which is what he’s been doing.

“It’s more important for me to meet the constituents. The biggest thing is to get out and meet people in the riding. I’ve heard from that everyone — everything else is secondary!”

Niagara Falls is a big riding to cover, he says. “From lake to lake. I’m canvassing everywhere. It’s so important to meet people.”

And what he is hearing, “is people want a voice in Toronto to represent them with the party in power. They feel neglected. We’re not getting the things that other areas might have,” he says. “They want to move on, to get the economy going. They want to move out of the pandemic, and every issue that is hampering the economy and health care. Let’s move on to the lifestyle we’ve enjoyed for many years,” says Gale.

“It’s time for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls to have their voices heard at the provincial table, so that we can get it done. Only Premier Ford and I will get a shovel in the ground at the South Niagara hospital, investing in roads and create new and better jobs, while we stay open. And whether it’s refunding licence plate sticker fees, or making the licence plate abhorrent, he says. “I firmly believe that that money is better in your pocket than in the government.”

The Niagara Falls riding has seven candidates running in the June 2 provincial election: Bob Gale (Progressive Conservative), Wayne Gates (NDP), Wes Kavanagh (Ontario Party), Christine Lewis-Napolitano (New Blue), Devon St. Denis-Richard (None of the Above Direct Democracy Party), Tommy Ward (Green Party), and Ashley Watts (Ontario Liberal Party).

People can vote in person on June 2 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. at the voting location assigned to them based on their current residential address.

Ontario residents can vote at any of the advance voting locations in their electoral district between May 19 and May 28.

For more information on voting, including mail-in ballots, visit https://www.delections.on.ca/voteinfo/.

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Wayne Gates talks affordability, gas gouging

Incumbent Wayne Gates talks affordability, gas gouging

Penny Coles
The Local
Wayne Gates has nine years as a provincial politician representing the Niagara Falls riding behind him, but his involvement in the community goes back much further.

He first won the riding in a by-election in 2014 after Liberal MPP Kim Kroner resigned, and was re-elected for the following two terms. Representing the NDP, which supported labour, was a natural choice, he says.

Before getting into politics, he had been a GM employee, and became the president of what was then the local Canadian Auto Workers 199, now Unifor, standing up for the rights of workers and advocating for decent, well-paying and safe jobs.

He has also served as the campaign chair for the United Way, as a member of the Yellow Shirt Board, as a Fort Erie hospital, as Project Share volunteer, and as a member of the Ontario Health Coalition.

Wayne and his wife Rita live in Niagara Falls and are proud parents of three daughters, and grandparentsof five grandchildren, all living in the Niagara Region.

Health care continues to be top of mind, as it has been for the NDP during the pandemic, and Gates is especially concerned about nurse shortages.

“The whole health system needs nurses,” he says, including long-term care homes.

“They’re under so much stress, they’re leaving in large numbers. They go to work every day, exhausted, and they see people dying, not allowed to have family members with them. It’s been so tough on them.”

And yet the Conservative government’s Bill 124 continues to limit the wages of provincial employees, including nurses, to an increase lower than the rate of inflation, while health care is in crisis, he says.

During COVID, the emergency department in Fort Erie was closed, and seniors were dying in long-term care, many of those deaths preventable if it weren’t for a shortage of staff and personal protective equipment.

Issues of affordability and housing are also concerns, says Gates.

“Gas prices are going through the roof. They were up over $2 this weekend. We have to stop it. Oil companies are gouging away, while their profits are going up,” he said, noting their 40 per cent profits during COVID. The NDP introduced a bill to regulate gas prices, but the Conservative government voted against it.

The cost of food is also increasing, while grocery chains like Loblaw, and the owners, the Weston’s, are already making billions of dollars, and have also made record profits during COVID, he says.

Housing and rental prices are being driven up by speculation, he noted. The NDP is committed to building affordable housing, 1.5 million units over the next decade, and to help with down payments for those buying their first home.

All of this “is hard on our kids and grandchildren. How are they going to live?”

Gates says he is protective of culture and heritage, and in the past has been successful in getting money to support the museum and the Shaw Festival, organizations which are so important to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He is opposed to the creation of the proposed Highway 413, which Doug Ford has promised to build if his party forms the government. The NDP is committed to cancelling Highway 413, which, says Gates, “might save commuters 20 minutes, if that,” and the Bradford Bypass, for environmental reasons. “They are paring over wetlands, and an unbelievable farmland. I have a lot of concern for what that might mean to our riding. We have to protect our Greenbelt.”

Gates says he’s not against development, but “we can’t let Ford develop over our community. We have farmland, wineries, grapes. We have so much that we need to protect, to make sure we can keep it.”

Over the last nine years, Gates says, “I have given every ounce of energy to this job.”

He has fought for support for the Shaw Festival, and when the Conservatives were saying no to GO, he fought to get it to Niagara. He worked to keep the Fort Erie race track open, to get the province to fund the operating costs of a new MRI machine, and to get the new Niagara Falls hospital built, “making sure we have local workers building it.”

As an MPP in opposition, “I work for the people, and I want the best for this riding. It doesn’t matter whether you’re a Liberal, an NDP, a PC or member of the Green Party. I can work for everybody.”

“Tell me what I haven’t done;” he adds, as a challenge. “I work hard. People respect me. And from the bottom of my heart, I love my riding, and I believe I’m being effective for my riding.”

When he goes door-to-door, “he says, “I hear people appreciate how hard I work, they respect my passion. I’m very humbled by their support.”

He is also very concerned for the younger generation, and the challenges they’ll face. “I’m doing this for them.”

Mike Balsom
The Local
Bob Gale’s decision to decline participation in YourTV’s Niagara Falls riding candidates debate last Friday left him a target for incumbent Wayne Gates and Liberal candidate Ashley Waters.

Gates took at Gale right off the top, expressing frustration at his Conservative counterpart’s absence.

YourTV heard from Gale’s office via email on May 9, when he told producer Jack Casters he was declining to participate as an MPP in opposition, and would instead run as a provincial politician representing the Niagara Falls riding.

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Gates promises that an NDP government would raise the ODS rate by 20 per cent. The Liberals, said Waters, had costed out their plan to include an immediate 10 per cent increase and then another 10 per cent in their second year in office.

Continued on page 4

Gates doesn’t matter whether you’re a Liberal, an NDP, a PC or member of the Green Party. I can work for everybody. “Tell me what I haven’t done;” he adds, as a challenge. “I work hard. People respect me. And from the bottom of my heart, I love my riding, and I believe I’m being effective for my riding.”

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The debate was collected from viewers prior to the taping date, and was redacted to one hour when PC candidate Bob Greene was unable to participate.

Continued on page 4
Ashley Waters gives Conservatrices C for COVID

Penny Coles  
**The Local**

As the Liberal Party candidate in the upcoming provincial election, Ashley Waters is taking what she calls the first step of her political journey. She is a science honours graduate who wants to see effective change, she says, and has been advocating throughout her career for a non-profit sector and the organizations with which she is affiliated.

They include Niagara Connects, a Niagara-wide network for collaboration, planning, learning, innovation and community action toward a stronger future for Niagara, and NEXTNiagara, of which she is a founding member. NEXTNiagara is an organization tasked with supporting the next generation of talented community leaders, and showcasing the vibrancy and prosperity of the Niagara Region.

The time to run for office seems right for her, she says. It was inspired by my passion for seeing Steven Del Duca. She thought it was time to make a run for the leadership of the Liberal Party after seeing Steven Del Duca calling for a new diverse team and making her a candidate for running for the first time.

She is frustrated by the current government leadership being “too reactive,” especially to the pandemic.

“there is no blueprint for dealing with an unprecedented public health crisis. However, the pandemic can’t be an excuse for a government to repeat the same mistakes over and over again,”

She gives the Conservative government a C grade for its handling of COVID.

Although the Ford Conservatrices have claimed that Ontario is open for business, she says, many businesses in the province were either closed or operated at partial capacity for over 400 days during the pandemic. She says it’s a long time to slow to expand testing capacity and vaccine clinics in hotspots, she says.

“Although they love to call nurses heroes, which they absolutely are, the Conservatives passed Bill 124 to cap their wage increase. Students experienced significant loss of learning over the last two years because of the Ford government’s failure to provide our schools with necessary PPE and increase ventilation. Who can forget cuts to public health units prior to the pandemic that left them ill-prepared to tackle public health emergencies? The list goes on and on. It’s time for us to bring an end to that list and vote them out on June 2, 2022.”

Steven Del Duca was calling for a new diverse team, and I am one of the 13 new candidates running for the first time. Steven has truly assembled a team of knowledge experts who represent Ontarians. I am proud to be amongst over 60 per cent female candidates of the Liberal party!

If elected, says Waters, would “collaborate with community members and knowledge experts to ensure we strengthen education, health care, create quality jobs, and increase affordability in the housing market, in order to make Niagara the most prosperous and inclusive we can be.”

She hears from constituents that they are concerned about affordability, housing prices, and mental health supports, she says, and is letting voters know that Steven Del Duca and the Liberal Party are addressing these issues in their platform.

For some of those who open their doors to her, a “Civics lesson is required,” when they see a Liberal candidate as an opportunity to get over their anti- Trudeau federal Liberal issues.

“I had my son and daughter with me,” she says, so they may have been a little more polite than they might have otherwise been. She told them “the Conservative government isn’t going to give you all you’re asking for either,” and although it was frustrating, she added, “it was also a good chance to have some open dialogue.”

Waters has worked for Scouts Canada as a non-profit manager the past 12 years, and was recently awarded the Business Incubator Office Space Award for 2022.

This fall she was a finalist for the Women in Business Awards, in the category of Excellence in Non-Profit, through a-buck-a-ride (on public transit).

Waters said. “It gives affordability to families and will save a lot of families a lot of money. We have a lot of incentives for electrical vehicles coming in, too.”

The loss of thousands of residents in the province’s long-term care (LTC) homes informs the discussion on how to adequately provide effective care for seniors.

Here, both Gates and Waters pride their government’s work in long-term care and retirement homes.

“If you’re in a long-term care private care hospital, you have a better chance of dying,” Gates continued. “If you’re in a publically-funded one by run by the region you have a better chance of living. Because it’s about care, not profit.”

“We plan to have seniors be able to stay at home and have home care support,” Waters said. “We don’t want for profit homes for our seniors, that’s why we will support them up to 80%.”

Waters and Gates didn’t differ markedly on climate action, Gates also mentioned the need for improved infrastructure as those issues arose through the discussion.

What was different between the two was their approach. Gates consistently pointed out examples of what he called “years of Conservative and Liberal neglect” in his closing statement, while in contrast, Waters spoke of the importance of the June 2 election.

“I need you go and vote,” she said in her closing. “Make sure your voice is heard. The only way we can be more disappointing is if we see those polling results and we see certain demographics that didn’t show up to the polls. If you are young, if you are old, if you are anywhere in between, cast your vote, because it does matter.”

Three other candidates for Niagara Falls — Christine Lewis-Napolitano of the New Blue Party, The Ontario Party’s Wesley Kavanagh, and Devon St. Denis-Richard of the None of the Above Party — were invited to send a two-minute video on lieu of attendance at the debate. None of them followed through on the invitation.

“The Niagara Falls riding debate, listed in the directory as ‘Your Vote on Your TV,’ can be seen on the channel YouTube, on May 21 at 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 24 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 28 at 12:30 p.m. It is also available to be seen any time online at yourtv.niagara.
Are you ready for your close up?

Julie Saggers is an internationally published Professional Photographer. She holds a Creative Arts Certificate from Dawson College in Photography from the formerly named Ryerson University.

In 2003, she created Bambinos Photography which specializes in pregnancy, newborn, baby, child, teen, family, pets, and more. That same year, Julie Saggers Fine Art Photography was created specializing in engagement, wedding, headshots, events, graduations, and fine art. Both with a love for capturing honest portraits and documenting the miracle of life and love.

With her husband Ryan being born and raised in Niagara, Julie knew that Niagara and its beauty would make for the perfect setting, backdrop, and location for the new studio.

“I feel incredibly lucky and fortunate to be a photographer. To say I am enthusiastic about photography would be an understatement, it truly is my raison d’etre. Photography is so much more than just taking pictures, it is a documentation of life, and our life is Art. I lost my grandparents at an early age but felt closer to them studying their faces and images in our Family Album growing up. Photographs can sharpen faded memories and help honour family history. Prints are everything and sometimes all that we have left, that is why I am just as enthusiastic about printing and proud to offer a full-service photography studio! I am here to help my clients every step of the way, including one-on-one viewing and ordering sessions at the studio! So many photographers these days just give out high resolution images, leaving busy clients/parents to figure out printing and framing on their own and so often life gets busy, and those images never get printed. As a mother I understand how busy life can be and as a photographer it is my job to help!”

Please come help Bambinos celebrate the official Grand opening of the new Studio in Niagara-on-the-Lake this Sunday, May 22nd between 12-3 at 1504 Niagara Stone Road, rain or shine. The red ribbon cutting ceremony will take place at 12:30 followed by cake and refreshments. The First 50 guests that stop by will receive a Goodie Bag with an heirloom locket and other treats for attending the Celebration!

There will also be a small art show highlighting the favourite fine art photographs she currently has available for purchase through her new online Gallery & Shop, with 10% of all sales going to Ukraine relief.

Photography is so much more than just taking pictures, it is a documentation of life, and our life is Art.

Julie Saggers
It’s been a couple of years since we’ve had the opportunity to enjoy a good steak dinner. There will be one in Virgil this weekend, and it’s not to be missed.

There may be some new-comers to town who wonder why it’s called a steak dinner, when there are no knives to be found, although a few small ponies will be on hand to take little ones for rides. Beginning in 1965, and at least until the mid-1990s, Virgil attracted an open horse show and barrel racing, with competitors coming from around the province.

The event soon became two days, then three, and eventually to include carnival rides and games, and all kinds of activities for all ages.

Organized by a group originally called the Virgil Businessman’s Association — although Mary Snider was one of its strongest members — it eventually became the Virgil Business Association, but it has never been about promoting businesses. While monthly meetings are an opportunity for a little bit of networking over lunch, the goal of the association from its earliest days has been to support the community. And never is that more evident than during its annual event. It’s a small group, becoming ever smaller, yet there are always enough dedicated volunteers, and their family members, who make sure it runs smoothly.

There are few children or families in NOTL who have not benefited from some of the VBA’s financial support, from the first arena to everything in the Virgil Sports Park, including the splash pad, playground equipment, and the very property of the park.

The VBA was also a large supporter of the new Crossroads inclusive playground, and when you go back over the years, there have been many other recreational facilities that benefited from the VBA’s resources. It has given back more than $1.2 million to the community, including the library, community centre, both arenas, the swimming pools, sports groups, the Christmas Parade, and Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2017.

Don’t notice this when she hosted the three courses, always starting with the appetizer or the instruction of each person’s brain.

The trio have also refused to participate in debates held by CTKB radio and both the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and the South Niagara Chambers of Commerce. PC candidates in Sudbury and Barrie ridings also skipped all candidates’ meetings last week.

It’s not the first time PC candidates have avoided such debate. During the 2015 election campaign, Conservative hopefuls in at least 25 districts did not see the same thing. That followed the federal election, when Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party of Canada candidates were openly advised against attending such debates.

In Oosterhoff’s case, one would think the high likelihood of him winning again in a riding that has traditionally, staunchly Conservative, cleared the way for him to show up to the YourTV studio Friday. When it comes right down to it, it should be a candidate’s prerogative to decline participation in these forums. But one is left down right what Davies, Gale and Sorrento’s motivations might be.

Nick Knowlton is a frequent contributor to this publication. He has not been afraid of the candidates might say something that would reduce their chances of winning. But that supports each candidate avoid having to justify their government’s record for the past four years, especially in light of holding office during a very difficult pandemic period?

It’s a strategy, too, that can be very effective. During the YourTV debates for Niagara Falls, Niagara Centre, St. Catharines, the NDP incumbents (Wayne Gates, Jeff Burch and Jennifer Orazietti) have been the Liberal challengers often galloped Gale, Davies and Sorrento, who of course weren’t there to defend themselves.

Whatever the reason for not attending, the three of them are clearly the ones that other than inferring that their efforts are better served by ringing their doorbells and shaking hands.

But voters who head to the polls on June 2 are the ones who will not get to see the candidates take on the issues that matter locally up against one another, and that is a crying shame.

Mike Balsom

The Local

Continued on page 7
Having lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake for over 70 years, I realize that since I was not born here, I am still an outsider (my inside joke). However, as a long-time resident I would like to make the following observation. In my view, during all my years here, the current town council is the best one we have ever had. Maybe there were better ones in the past, but they must have been before my time.

Although I am not saying they got it right all the time, this council has dealt fairly with issues of individuals, the farming community, the Queen Street business community, the wineries, the hotels and bed and breakfasts, the developers, etc., while seeming to always keep the best interests of the town as a whole in mind, when making any trade-off decisions.

Prior councils did not always do this, and in many instances could even be seen as doing the opposite. I recall many times in the past when councillors did not even think the concept of “conflict of interest” applied to them, and would vote on issues they should have excused themselves from due to a conflict.

In fact the current council showed that they understood how even the appearance of conflict of interest was important and they acted accordingly.

Our thanks to the current council members for their service, and let’s wish them well for the future.

As we approach the fall election of a new council, we hope that the best interests of the town itself remain a core value of this new council, and not revert to being one where this becomes the exception, rather than the rule.

S. Peter Harvey
NOTL

Can we share the old railway trail? 

More than 70 years ago the railway along Concession 1 was decommissioned.

Shortly afterwards, dirt bike riders created a trail where tracks were once laid. I began riding the trail myself in the late 60s along with countless other local kids who used this trail to move between farms and our local communities. It’s how we got to the public pool in the early 70’s, and for a slice of Alfondo’s pizza on King Street.

Years later, three-wheelers as well as snowmobiles arrived, and we all learned to share our trail and more farm kids used our pathway. Then came the four-wheel ATVs and once again we learned to share. Soon, Parn Gallip built her home next to Line 3 and we were joined by horses on our trail. We learned to slow down and minimize the noise from our dirt bikes, not to spook the horses, and once again we learned to share.

Recently we have been banned from the last leg of our trail from East and West Line to Old Town and suddenly our trail has been usurped by those not willing to share. We were here first. We were here before there was a corporation of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Today we feel the trail with my son and bump into other local kids who venture to Queenston and back safely off the travelled road, on a trail we’ve used for decades.

We can embrace and even encourage tourism growth. However, it does not mean we have to abandon our heritage or lower our standards in order to stay an economically healthy community.

As residents and taxpayers, for over 22 years, and visitors for another 20 before that, we have seen positive change – think the old gas station where the Shaw Cafe now sits, indeed an improvement.

Having a Tim Hortons and McDonald’s as non-conforming uses was a positive change. Limiting the non-conforming use, however, is something we can and should do in order to maintain the town’s character.

Town council: look at what you’ve done.

Jill Shinn

Local hostess was an ambassador for town

Marzena Parniak loved hosting guests at her bed and breakfast. She was the spark in this town’s history. Does Niagara-on-the-Lake’s mission statement do this? Does it prioritize economic issues?

It would appear that the town council is experiencing these emotions as it watches the slow decline of Niagara-on-the-Lake, a town once known primarily as a national historic treasure with many cultural opportunities. I am in agreement with Elsie Lailey (The Local, April 27) who simply expressed that this town was “so very sad” at what was happening to the town. Visitors used to enjoy shopping in town, going to art galleries (Angie Strauss/Irish Romance etc.), brows- ing antique stores and experiencing live theatre at the Shaw Festival.

Circumstances (the pandemic) and progress force change. However, it does not mean we have to abandon our heritage or lower our standards in order to stay an economically healthy community.

As residents and taxpayers, for over 22 years, and visitors for another 20 before that, we have seen positive change – think the old gas station where the Shaw Cafe now sits, indeed an improvement.

Having a Tim Hortons and McDonald’s as non-conforming uses, but not within the historic district, was a positive change. Limiting non-conforming use, however, is something we can and should do in order to maintain the town’s character.

There is lots of room on Railroad Street to allow the original dirt bike trail to become main unmolested, and still make room for a new walking and biking trail for the bicy- clers and walkers. There is the question of a predestined, legal non-conforming use, however, we are happy and willing to share. Question is, are you?

Rainer Hammler
St. Davids

B&B hostess was an ambassador for town

Marzena Parniak loved hosting guests at her bed and breakfast.

(photo submitted)

Reader expresses views of a successful town council

Local hostess was an ambassador for town

Reader expresses views of a successful town council

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Local hostess was an ambassador for town

Reader expresses views of a successful town council
Reserve butterflies by Friday for memorial service

Penny Coles  
The Local

Families who want to honour lost loved ones are being offered that opportunity this year at an event organized by Bonnie Bagnulo, executive director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service.

The pandemic has been a “bewildering time” for those who were unable to be with loved ones who were ill and dying, some in hospital, when visitors were limited, she says. It was also difficult for families who couldn’t have their losses recognized, who couldn’t have all their family and friends included in the ceremonies they would like to have held.

Loved ones who died during the COVID years deserve to be remembered, says Bagnulo, and their families deserve to be comforted, and have their grief witnessed.

She has organized a Community Celebration of Life and Butterfly Release, to be held June 18 at 1 p.m., for families to honor those they have lost.

Bagnulo says anyone who would like to remember a loved one, regardless of how long they’ve been gone, is welcome to participate in the memorial butterfly release. “We’d like to make it a special ceremony for all, for anyone who had a loss at any time in their life, to remember their loved one.”

The community centre will be set up inside with tables to allow for a small memorial or picture space for families to share and acknowledge their significant others.

“We hope to make memories on this day that our families can carry on into the future with new hope, acknowledging that their previous experience was less than conducive to the healing process of grief,” Lord Mayor Betty Disero says.

“Any family who has lost a loved one, regardless of how long they’ve been gone, is welcome to participate in the memorial butterfly release,” she says. “This is the perfect time of year for their release.”

The event may also be a fundraiser for palliative care, if there is money left over after covering costs, she says.

Butterflies must be ordered by May 20. There is a form to fill out to reserve butterflies, and return through email, scan, or regular mail. Payment can be made by cheque, and mailed to PO Box 130, 176 Wellington Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, L0S 1J0. E-transfers can also be sent.

Butterflies are $25 each. A cash payment can be made at the palliative care office from Tuesday to Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There are forms that can be filled out online on the palliative care website at www.notlpc.com, but please call by May 20 to reserve a butterfly.

For more information or to reserve a butterfly call 905-468-4433.

The Town is holding a Public Input Session to receive comments from the public on a revised development proposal for 200 John Street East and 588 Charlotte Street.

WHEN - Thursday, June 9, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
WHERE - Virtually via Microsoft Teams

SUBJECT LANDS
200 John Street East & 588 Charlotte Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake (see the location map).

Files - Official Plan Amendment (OPA-02-2020), Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA-11-2020) & Draft Plan of Subdivision (2018-20-01)

ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

In July 2020, the owner of the subject lands submitted applications for Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision (Applications) to facilitate the development of:

- 125 single-detached dwellings;
- 66 semi-detached dwellings; and
- blocks of land for parks, natural areas and future development all on a private road network

Following public consultation and receipt of agency comments, the owner submitted a revised proposal in March 2022 consisting of:

- 39 single-detached dwellings;
- 26 semi-detached dwellings;
- 107 townhouse dwellings; and
- blocks of land for parks, natural areas and future development all on a private road network

On April 6, 2022, the owner appealed the Applications to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

A copy of the Applications and supporting documents are on the Town’s website at https://www.notl.com/business-development/public-planning-notices/200-john-street-588-charlotte-street-rand-estate-opa or at the Community and Development Services Department at Town Hall.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

The purpose of the Public Input Session is to provide the public an opportunity to submit comments, orally or in writing, regarding the revised proposal.

This is not a statutory meeting under the Planning Act. This is not a Council meeting. No decisions will be made at the Public Input Session.

In advance of the Public Input Session, Staff will prepare an Information Report that provides a summary of the revised proposal and an overview of the applicable Provincial, Regional and local planning policies. This report will be available to the public after 4:30 p.m. on June 2, 2022 on the Town’s website at https://www.notl.com/council-government/mayor-council/meetings-agendas-minutes. At the Public Input Session, Staff will provide a PowerPoint presentation outlining the content of the Information Report.

If you wish to participate by making an oral presentation, you must register in advance with Ralph Walton, Town Clerk at clerks@notl.com or 905-468-3266. Please register as soon as possible and prior to 12 noon on June 9, 2022.

On the date of the Session, you will receive an email with instructions to connect on your computer, tablet or telephone.

Written comments may be submitted to the Town Clerk, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0 or via email at clerks@notl.com referencing the above file numbers.

If you wish to view the Public Input Session for information purposes, the meeting will be available at the following link: https://www.notl.com/council-government/mayor-council/meetings-agendas-minutes. Registration is not required.

Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.

The Applications will not be subject to debate or deliberation. Staff can answer questions of a technical and factual nature. Complex questions will be documented and responses will be provided by the Town’s consulting team at a later date.

Questions concerning this Notice can be directed to planning@notl.com.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, May 18, 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
Shaw continues with popular outdoor program

Mike Balsom
The Local

Though two years ago it may have been a decision made out of necessity, for 2023, Shaw Festival will host a number of outdoor shows for a number of other reasons.

Perhaps top of the list is demand. The vast outdoor program in 2020 and 2021 came about with the spectre of COVID-19 forcing restrictions on indoor gatherings or, in the case of 2020, prohibiting them altogether. But by all accounts, theatre-goers and music-lovers raved about the outdoor setting the past two years.

“Shaw (artistic direc- tor Tim Carroll) had been doing some outdoor activities through the Secret Theatre project before the pandemic,” says executive director and CEO Tim Jennings. “After 2020 and 2021, it became very clear that if you do something twice it becomes tradition. Our audi- ence really wanted it back, des- perately this year and is really excited about the continuation of these outdoor programs.”

The charming A Short History of Niagara is back by popular demand for a second run July 21 to August 14. Pop- peteurs Alexandra Montagnese and Mike Petersen brought to life Niagara’s story, from its pre-settler roots to the found- ing of the Shaw Festival itself, with sophisticated artistry by two masters of the art form, punctuated with sound design by Ryan Cowl.

Created in partnership with Parks Canada, A Short History of Niagara moves from the Shaw grounds on to Fort George, where it will be performed until Aug. 4. The next day it moves inside to the Market Room at the Court House for the rest of its run. The 30-minute presen- tation is a perfect, entertaining break for the day for parents and children alike.

From June 12 to July 24, Drew Plummer and Mike Nadajewski play the title char- acters in A Year with Frog and Toad - in Concert. The BMO Stage plays host to this one- hour musical revue based on the popular children’s books by Arnold Lobel about two friends who are very different.

Frog and Toad is directed by Johnathan Tan and also fea- tures Alexais Gordon, Graeme Kitagawa, James Daly and Jen- nifer Wright.

Molly Atkinson directs Fairground in the Shaw Festi- val Theatre gardens July 2 to Sept. 28. This family-friendly celebration of the arts and the human spirit features an hour-long assortment of song, mu- sic, dance and visual arts, with a few promised surprises.

Set amid the backdrop of the Festival Theatre’s lush grounds, this family-friendly celebration of the arts and the connectedness of the human spirit features an hour-long ar- ray of song, music, dance, visu- al arts and a few hidden talents. More than a dozen Shaw ensemble members collabo- rated to create the Fairground program, which uses the lush setting of the Shaw grounds to its fullest extent, the beautiful surroundings being another of the reasons for the return of outdoor programming.

“It’s one of the things that makes Shaw a destination the- atre,” Jennings says. “It’s one of the things that makes Shaw, Shaw. We’re on Parks Canada lands, we’re in the most beau- tiful part of Canada. It’s a great way to combine the art with that beauty.”

Though Shaw still has an indoor mask policy in effect, Jennings acknowledges that some of the company’s audi- ence members may still prefer to avoid indoor gatherings, masked or not. To that end, the 150 outdoor performances will give those visitors a chance to enjoy what Shaw has to offer.

From July 20 to Oct. 6, Shawground is another hour- long event, tying together a number of Shavian themes, readings and performances in a one-of-a-kind fair-like set- ting. Visitors will be greeted by troubadours, who will lead them through one number to the next, encompassing art, magic, music and big ideas.

Like Shawground and Fair- ground, 2022 – in concert is another collaboration between a number of members of the ensemble. Performed on the BMO Stage from Aug. 17 to Oct. 2, it runs the clock back 100 years for the music of the Shaw company and community members as well.

For dates, information and ticket prices, visit Shawfest. com.
Councillors hear from those with ‘axe to grind’

HOW HAPPY RESIDENTS ARE ABOUT THE FOLLOWING FACTORS RELATED TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>NOTL Region</th>
<th>Niagara Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Parks and Green Space</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Peace and Quiet</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Attractions, Amenities and Activities to Do</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Local Infrastructure</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Jobs and Economic Opportunities</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Very happy</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Happy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unhappy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Very unhappy</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Thinking about the quality of life in the community, would you say that you are very happy, happy, unhappy or very unhappy about each of the following?

Continued from page 1

happily, show that our res-
idents believe strongly in
the importance of tourism
to their lifestyle, economic
growth, and with housing
issues, “they’ve grown to expect, he
didn’t have all the amenities
near the majority. ”

When asked which issues
the town should prioritize,
improving parking was at
the top of the list, with 21 per
cent citing it a priority, and
next, at 15 per cent, was re-
ducing traffic congestion.
The overall message, the survey showed, is “don’t
change or limit what makes
NOTL a great place to live and visit.”

“You’re doing a great job
in creating a place people
want to live in,” he told coun-
cillors. “My advice is don’t
change what you’re doing.”

To explain why council-
ors receive complaints and
negative emails about tour-
ism, Colotto said, “the gen-
eral rule is you typically only
hear from people with an axe
to grind, or who have prob-
lems.”

While those people are
to be ignored, he added,“they may not be representa-
tive of the broader commu-
nity.”

The survey “overwhelm-
ingly concluded” if councillors are
hearing from residents who are unhappy with tour-
ism, “they’re not anywhere
near the majority.”

If all of a sudden things
were to change and people
didn’t have all the amenities
they’ve grown to expect, he
said, councillors “would be-
getting a lot more calls.”

The issues people did
say they have is dealing with
growth, and with housing
issues, “and these are issues
everywhere,” he said.

Councillors voted to send
the survey report to staff,
to be included during future
discussions of the tourism
strategy.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Annual Strengthening and Resurfacing Program
Various locations throughout the Niagara region
Commencing Spring 2022 – weekdays

Motorists and the general public are hereby advised that Niagara Region’s Annual Strengthening and Resurfacing Program has commenced. For updates on this project please visit niagararegion.ca/roads. This project is required to increase the lifespan of the road sections by improving the structural integrity.

The proposed work includes:
• Repairing cracks in the base course asphalt and replacing concrete
detours as identified will be required for paving operations during construction.

Emergency services will also have access if required.

Any inquiries concerning this project may be directed to Niagara Region Dispatch at 905-984-3690 or Melissa Tomascik, C.E.T., Project Manager Transportation Engineering, at 905-980-6000 ext. 3189.

Your co-operation and patience during this period of inconvenience is appreciated.

Bruce Zvaniga
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Niagara Region

thinking that the survey
showed, “there is little evidence
of attractions and amenities.
“There is little evidence that
many residents are unhappy
with those core attributes of
their community.”

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Bruce Zvaniga
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Niagara Region
**Weekend EVENTS**

**Great Day for gigantic garage sale**

**Penny Milligan**
**NOTL Rotary Club**

“They came, they saw, they bought!”

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club just completed its second ever Gigantic Garage Sale, and boy, was there a lot of selling and buying going on!

From the preview sale on Friday evening to the close of the sale on Sunday, organizer Carol Lipsett estimated that they had upwards of 2,000 people purchasing all kinds of goodies, generously donated by the NOTL community.

“People were lined all around Cornerstone Church on Saturday for many hours, waiting to get in and see the wonderful items we had for sale,” says Lipsett. “Everyone was well-behaved, and only a few incidents of squabbling over an item took place.”

The sale, organized by Lipsett, was made possible by a team of dedicated Rotarians who helped with the last massive sale the Rotarians held in the fall of 2020.

This sale featured everything from a squatty potty to Group of Seven prints, all donated by community members. The group estimates that they had in excess of 5,000 items to sell.

Thank you to Cornerstone Church in Virgil for donating their campus there, and Rotary’s legion of volunteers who helped gather, sort, price and sell the inventory.

The weather was the finishing touch, with warm temperatures and great pricing bringing out customers in droves.

The group held the sale for children’s charities, the proceeds to be split evenly between local and international causes. Items left from the sale will be donated to local charities.

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**Beautiful day for Spring Market**

The St. Davids Lioness had more than 40 vendors and food trucks at the St. Davids Lions Hall on York Road Saturday morning. Inside were Kim Typer, (left) with Norwex products, and Linda Fossey, with Unique Gifts from the Heart, while outside, Karen Vandervalk checks out a dress sold by Tracey Vendittelli with her Spoiled Homemakers products. Looking after a Sunflowers for Ukraine booth, to raise money for relief efforts, are Emma Trott, Joanne Brytwak and Taylor Renaud (sitting), with Lorraine Schoonings and Beverley Byl.

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**Annual plant sale**

The NOTL Horticultural Society held their annual plant sale indoors and outside the Centennial Arena Saturday. Maybeth Ross, a long-standing member and plant expert, helps shoppers (left), volunteers Barbara and Alan Large were onhand to sharpen tools, a much-appreciated service this time of year, and Wendy Cadman was in charge of selling ferns, as well as seeds for Sunflowers for Ukraine. For more information about that project visit https://sunflowersforukraine.ca. (Photos by Penny Coles)
As part of Police Week across ontario, the Niaga-
ra Regional Police Service (NRPS) invited members of the local media to experience a morning at their Training Unit in Welland. The local media included one of five such outlets to participate in Use of Force training.

Const. Phil Gavin, NRPS media officer, explained that this year's theme, chosen by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) for 2022, is "Your Police Services: Helping Build Safer Communities.

"This event fits right in with us in building safer com-
unities," Gavin told The Local. "The media is a major partner for us as how we get our message to the communi-
ity. Media plays a critical role for us. We rely on them to help share what we do, to help find missing children and to help solve crimes at times.

Gavin said the day was about strengthening the rela-
tionship between the police and the greater community.

The day began with each participant being fitted for a Kevlar vest and a nylon utili-
sation of the session was a bit challenging, with the holsters may have taken on increased use.

After welcoming com-
ments from Gavin and NRPS Chief Bryan MacCulloch, Ser-
geant Matt Whiteley introduced the five members of his train-
ing team and began to outline the day, including all the safety measures that were in place.

Whitby then led the floor to Constable Andrew Watson, who outlined the police Use of Force Model, developed by the Canadian Associ-
ation of Chiefs of Police and used by police forces across the county. Visualy repre-
sented by a wheel, it guides the decision-making process from the assessment of the situation through to the application of any necessary action beyond just officer purpose.

This is where it became clear that as much as the par-
ticipants were there to experi-
ence drawing a taser, shoot-
ing a gun and learning how to
strike by hand in defence, it was really all about deci-
sion-making. More precisely, it was about decision-making under extreme duress.

It was stressed in the classroom portion that in many situations an officer has only a split second to decide whether force is necessary, and exactly what form that force might take. The conse-
quences of a wrong decision, or even the correct decision, can be devastating.

To put a face on the im-
pact that a use-of-force inci-
dent could have on an officer, we were priviledged to hear an account of an incident from just a few short years ago that a first responder was there. Details can't be shared here, but it is sufficient to say that the memory of the event has clearly had a lasting impact on the officer in ques-
tion.

Following the classroom session, the group moved into an on-scene tactical scenario. Here, we were taken through the three-strike defence and the drawing and use of a baton, practising each of these several times against a heavy bag.

Const. Rich Vujasic then demonstrated the correct way to draw and deploy the taser, then asked for a participant to step up to give it a try. I volunteered, and Vuju-
sic swapped my training tas-
er with the real thing, loaded with two unarmored cartridges for safety's sake.

After being shuffled into position by the constable, I took aim at the target, shoot-
ed my "warning taser, taser, taser," and fired. The cradgede 
fothe bag and pulled out a big-
ner box and threw it again at my feet. "You're still too close, back up!" I shouted.

"You're too close, back up," Davidson said, reaching into the bag. "Here, you can have this.

He threw out a cell phone that obviously had been stolen from the store. It landed near my feet.

"You're agitated, sit, drop the bag," I said, still shining the flashlight and holding my ground. It was at this point I realized I was holding the flashlight in my right hand, my dominant one. Not a good idea, in case I had to draw a weapon, I switched hands.

"Here, you can have this too," it yelled Davidson. He reached into the bag and pulled out a big-
garage. Afterwards, I tried to blame that on the screen reso-
nation, but nevertheless I mis-
sed the level of aggression from the suspect. Though I tried to draw my weapon, I was, one more, shot.

The day's activities left me, and I am sure the other four participants, with a new re-
spect for exactly how tough it can be to make the right decisions under extremely stressful circumstances.

As Davidson said, one has to learn how to put aside emo-
tion and evaluate the situation at its face value. It looks much easier on television.

Gavin would like to roll out similar such opportuni-
ties for other community in-
fluencers who might benefit by visiting the unit to experi-
ence what the NRPS does.

"This isn't secret work that we did today," he insists. "It's all legislated training. Sharing some of the things that police officers do is important in taking that veil off of an understanding of the specific training that goes into deci-
sion-making."
Original Fine art paintings and photos will be on display at the Queenston Community Centre and Library, celebrating talented Niagara artists, with more than 150 works of art.

This is a new exhibition hosted by the Queenston Residents’ Association (QRA), and will be held this weekend, Friday to Sunday.

Curated by Queenston resident and artist, Yimlei Molly Yep, the 2022 QRA Art Show will include a variety of styles from talented local artists. Yimlei Molly Yep is past-president of Parkway Artists Guild and is now the Queenston Art Show chair and curator, following the steps of all those who have worked with dedication to make the Queenston Art Show memorable in the past.

Prior to the opening of Niagara Pumphouse as a community art centre, Alice Duc, who was an accomplished artist and on the board of QRA, had the vision to start an art show in Queenston. She encouraged the board to support Niagara artists by hosting the shows. Duc as chair, supported by Jane Calver, Helena Copeland and many Queenston volunteers, worked tirelessly to make Queenston Village known for its iconic art show. It was the most anticipated yearly event.

After decades, when Alice’s health was failing, Jane Calver stepped up and efficiently organized the show as Chair for three years. In 2018 before the pandemic, Helena Copeland chaired the Queenston Art Show as a tribute to Alice, after her passing.

Yimlei Molly Yep says, “I retired from teaching architectural drawing at Willowbank School of Restoration Art and now have more time for my art in ceramics and painting. I am pleased to organize the 39th art show, following the pandemic, to support Niagara artists, and to continue Queenston’s tradition. Come visit the Queenston Art Show on Victoria Day long weekend.”

Admission to the show is free for all visitors, daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 32 Queenston Street. The show will follow current health and safety measures. Visitors are encouraged to review the Niagara Region Health website for details.

For more details contact: queenstonartshow@outlook.com

Plaques unveiled, donors thanked for contributions

New plaques were unveiled and dedicated at the Charlotte Street entrance of the Heritage Trail Tuesday, recognizing individuals who contributed but were not included on the first plaque, and one for corporate sponsors. At the dedication were Gary Zalepa, Steve deBoer from Zoom, Kim and Tom Elliott from NOTL Realty, Al Bisback, Rick Meloen, Betty Disero, Charles Neufeld from Palatine Estate Winery, Norm Arsenault, Dan Salvatore from CN Rail, Helen Arsenault and Tony Chisholm. (Photo supplied)
Nyanyas’ annual spring luncheon returns

Penny Coles

The Niagara Nyanyas are excited to once again offer their spring luncheon, which was an annual fundraising tradition until pandemic restrictions cancelled it for two years. They will welcome two new representatives from the Stephen Lewis Foundation as their guest speakers, who will talk about how the foundation works with their partners in Sub-Saharan Africa, and share stories of the triumph and resilience of grandmothers and communities in the face of the AIDS pandemic and the COVID pandemic.

Terry Mactaggart, one of the founders of the Nyanyas (Swahili for grandmother), says COVID, and the lack of events and fundraisers, have made their efforts to keep up awareness of their grandmother campaign a challenge.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation launched the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign in 2006, in response to the crisis faced by African grandmothers who have been orphaned by AIDS. There are now more than 240 groups supporting African grandmothers.

June 4 is also Janet Carnochan Day, and each year the NOTL Museum commemorates this grand lady of the town with free admission to the museum. In 1895, Carnochan was the force behind the formation of the Niagara Historical Society. Her passion enabled the preservation of significant Niagara and Canadian historical records and artefacts, now in the care of the society. Without Janet, much local history would never have been documented, and the NOTL Museum may never have been built.

So put on those walking shoes in honour of Janet, and join NOTL Museum’s tour guides, rain or shine, for a stroll through history. There is no need to register, just meet at the gazebo at 11 a.m., Saturday and Sunday mornings, June through September.

For more information call the NOTL Museum, 905-468-3912, or check www.notlmuseum.ca

Judy Thornton leads one of the museum’s heritage district walking tours. (Photo supplied)
Bravo Niagara! presents pianist Jon Kimura Parker

Mike Balsom  The Local

Genial, charismatic, enthusiastic, dramatic. Those are all adjectives often tied to Van- couver-born pianist Jon Kimu- ra Parker, who appears at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre’s Recital Hall in a Bravo Niagara! Festival performance May 29.

“I can’t speak to charisma,” he laughs on the line from his summer home on Orcas Is- land, “but I can tell you I am wildly enthusiastic. I guess it’s sort of revealing that the three pianists that I admire the most were Arthur Rubinstein, Elton John and Oscar Peterson. They shared an incredible enthusi- asm for what they were doing.”

Parker tells a story of sitting just 20 feet away from Peterson at the Blue Note in New York. He remembers the Canadian master of the piano grunting with pleasure at playing with his bandmates.

And three years ago he was at an Elton John concert in Houston, where he was blown away by his energy and enthusiasm. Parker adds that Rubenstein, who continued to perform into his 90s, made you feel like he was inviting the lis- tener in.

Parker has had the chance to meet all three of his idols, and to tell them exactly how much he admires them.

From a classical pianist, perhaps it might be a bit hard to learn that Elton John would be amongst his favourites.

“It was thrilling for me that a pianist in the rock and pop music world was a superfan. Parker remembers about his early love for the flamboyant Birt. “I have perfect pitch, and I learn music fairly readily by ear. I started learning all of the popular Elton John songs. I was a quiet band kid (at the Alpha School in Burnaby, BC) and I made friends by playing his songs on the upright piano at lunchtime cafeterias.”

From there, he began to appreciate John as a performer. And he realized that he could make connections between the pop superstar and classical music.

“The last move the performance of Beethoven’s Moonlight Sona- tta,” explains the 62-year-old, “which is viscerally exciting, kind of a perpetual motion from beginning to end, and I make that connection. And I can make a link to Jimi Hendrix playing a guitar solo. That’s why I don’t like a classical recital to feel stuffy. I want people to feel that they can respond.”

The Bravo Niagara! Festival audience will be able to decide for themselves if they detect those connections, as Parker promises that the very same Moonlight Sonata will be part of his repertoire on May 29.

The show will open with a fiery piece (“Scherzo Op. 14”) from Clara Schuman, whom he calls a brilliant composer, and Brahms’ Handel Variations make up the first half of his program.

“The Brahms is the big se- rious work in this program,” he says. “It’s one I played in my 20s and didn’t play for a long time. It’s more difficult than fun to play, but I played it a lot during the pandemic, and realized I really wanted to play it again.”

The second half will begin with what he refers to as a Schubert sorbet before moving into a repertoire of 20th and 21st century music, showcasing a more contemporary ap- proach to playing the piano. “I am always a big fan of Chick Corea, and Alexandra Louie is my favourite Canadi- an composer and I’ve worked with her a lot,” says Parker. “I’m playing an Oscar Peterson piece (“Blues Etude”) that is very special to me, and Amer- ican composer John Adams is another one I’ve worked with in the past.”

He’ll finish with a crowd-pleasing take on Harold Arlen’s music from The Wizard of Oz.

“It’s a Fantasy by American composer, William Hirtz, who is just a genius at putting things together and making them work at the piano.”

In fact, Hirtz originally wrote the arrangement, which weaves together a number of the most recognizable musical themes from the classic film, as a piano duet. Parker asked Hirtz to rewrite the piece for solo piano, but when he did, he left all of the notes from the duet in the new version. Park- er calls it a handful, but also a modern classic.

Parker, who will turn 63 on Christmas Day, enjoys speaking to his audience often during his performances. He says it is an attempt to bring them closer to the music, to give them the feel that they are sitting in his living room listening to him play.

“One could imagine his own living room on Orcas Island, as well as the one at his home in Houston, where he is the chair of the piano department at Rice University, is often full of mu- sic. Parker’s wife is violinist/Vi- olist Alesya Friedmann, who is the associate concertmaster for that city’s River Oaks Chamber Orchestra and performs with the Houston Grand Opera. Friedmann is the daughter of the late violinist Martin Fried- mann and 101-year-old oboist Friedmann is the founder of a number of the piano department at Rice University. His sister Liz followed in their mother’s footsteps, becoming a piano teacher in Houston, while his brother Jamie heads the pi- ano department at the Univer- sity of Toronto.

Of Parker’s many CD re- leases, he points to the collec- tion of Mozart piano concertos that he worked on with Jamie and his conductor/pianist cousin Ian as his fondest re- cording memory.

“The process was so much fun,” Parker recalls. “We were just having a blast. And I smack the Star Trek theme into the re- cording. I did it very subtly, but if you listen to the first move- ment cadenza, right near the end, you’ll hear it. I was thrilled that I got away with it.”

Parker last played a Bravo Niagara! Festival show in 2017 at St. Mark’s Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake. He is looking forward to returning to the region and taking the PAC stage for the first time.

“I am so impressed by (festival founders) Alexis and Chris and their commitment to bringing the arts to Niagara,” he says. “The presence of an audience for the arts very much boils down to one or two people who are really committed to putting in the work. They are those two people, and no one should take that for granted.”

Tickets for the Sunday, May 29 recital are $50 for adults, $25 for students and youth, and are available through bravoniagara.org or firstontariopac.ca. The pro- gram begins at 3 p.m.
West49 holding tricks competition Saturday

Cody French will host the Virgil Stampede West49 event Saturday afternoon. In addition to skateboard demonstrations, there will be a best trick competition for all ages, with West49 promising amazing prizes, and a pizza party. (Photo supplied)

Virgin Stampede Parking Plan 2022

• Gate #1 Main Gate Entrance off Four Mile Creek Road. Handicap parking and drop-off only.
• Gate #2 Pedestrian entrance only. Dead end off Lorraine Street. Foot traffic only, no vehicles.
• Lot #1 Niagara-on-the-Lake town hall, 80 spots. Saturday, Sunday, Monday. 1593 Four Mile Creek Road. Two-minute walk to both Gates 1 & 2.
• Lot #2 Niagara Motors, Virgil 120 spots. Sunday and Monday only. 537 Niagara Stone Road, five to seven-minute walk to both Gates 1 & 2.
• Lot #3 Phil’s Independent Grocery Virgil, 100 spots. Monday only. 1551 Niagara Stone Road, five to seven-minute walk to both Gates 1 & 2.
• Lot #4 Meridian Credit Union, 80 spots. Sunday and Monday only. 1570 Niagara Stone Road, five to seven-minute walk to Gates 1 & 2.
• Lot #5 Cornerstone Community Church, 100 spots. Saturday, Sunday, Monday, 1570 Niagara Stone Road, five to seven-minute walk to Gates 1 & 2.

• Unfortunately, there is no parking available on the West49 grounds this year.
• All stampede parking is at your own risk. Please don’t leave valuables in your vehicle.
• All other business and residential parking are private property, and you run the risk of losing or damage your vehicle being towed.
• The Virgin Sports Park is at 1566 Four Mile Creek Road in Virgil. For more information visit virgilstampeade.ca.
On Sunday, June 12, Jayden and Kaitlyn will be hosting a Mountainview LemonAID stand in support of Family and Children’s Services Niagara to raise money to send less fortunate kids to camp this summer. We hope you will help them help other kids have summer smiles! Please use this QR code to donate to their campaign today! Look for team “Old Town Squeezers” Jayden & Kaitlyn.

- Mountainview LemonAID Day in support of FACS
- children helping children go to camp.
- On June 12, watch for a lemonade stand in your neighborhood and buy a cup to support the kids!

5 CRAZY BUT TRUE FACTS
1. Shakespeare’s parents and children were likely illiterate.
2. Canadians wanted to rename the Northwest Territories “Bob.”
3. An adult’s blood vessels could circle the equator four times if they were laid end to end.
4. If you tried a new variety of apple every day, it would take more than 20 years to try them all.
5. A humpback whale was found in the middle of the Amazon rainforest.

WORD SEARCH
WORD SEARCH

RIDDLE
Q. Where do sheep go on vacation?
A. Their favorite is probably the Athertonian®. Sometimes when they are feeling active, they go to beach. The Athertonian® is designed to support their muscles and joints, making their beach vacation more enjoyable. It has a soft, comfortable texture that helps to relieve pressure and promote relaxation, allowing them to relax and enjoy their time by the sea. Athertonian® is great for all sheep, young or old, and it is perfect for those who enjoy a little luxury in their holidays.

Interview with Jayden

0. What do you want to be when you grow up?
A. I want to be a veterinarian.
0. What is your favourite book?
A. It has to be Harry Potter. It is a fantastic story that captures your imagination and takes you on an adventure.
0. What do you do to help others?
A. When they are down or sad and have nobody to play with, I try to make them happy and bring a smile to their face.
0. What is a fun family tradition your family has?
A. We have a lot, but my favourite is probably the Athertonian®. Our family loves going to beach and spending time together. It is a great opportunity to bond and create memories.
0. How would you change the world if you could?
A. If I could make a difference, I would do my best to help others and make the world a better place.

Poet’s Corner: Leaving It Behind

By: Hailey Epp

Even when she knew they couldn’t stay there,
The young girl sat looking out the window,
Watching a storm roll in.
Time seemed to creep by slowly.
The silence in the empty house was deafening.
Knowing this would not be the same,
She walked around the hall,
ghost-like, silently dragging her feet along.
She went into the room that once shone with light.
It was hers.
Butterflies used to hang
Strolling slowly to the kitchen,
Looking out in the yard,
past the big, empty deck.
Rain snacking hard against the glass sliding door,
She sees the hill in the back
by the hedge.
This was where she first learned how to ride a bike.
Where her parents promised not to let go,
But they still did.
Where she got scared
But eventually triumphed.
Flipping through all the precious memories like a picture book.
The girl’s last moments were filled with hurt
now that it was coming to an end.
Not only that but wondering
for what lies ahead.

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Not only that but wondering
for what lies ahead.
Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Despite the privilege of having a powerful and spacious desktop computer, I churn and moan like a human who ate too much at the buffet. Instead of food, the iMac is full to the brim with hundreds of gigabytes of data. The culprit? Facebook videos, me, force-feeding the machine endless rounds of nature videos and photos. I made another road trip away this weekend with my good friends with. I was able to document some amazing nature photography moments that I will share with you in this section, please contact: classified@notllocal.com

How do these three string together and capitalize on the power play, unlike the Toronto Maple Leafs this weekend? The GoPro is filming me as I scampers over logs or push my canoe further into the swamp. Once I find that perfect hole in a dead ash tree, I see an eastern screech owl staring out of it from its place of safety and shelter. I pull out the Canon and zoom in from afar, getting the owl’s cute but historical haunting stare into vision. Once I’m satisfied with the encounter, I walk or paddle a little further upstream to a clearing. It is here that I will launch the drone skyward to give viewers an idea of the owl’s preferred ecosystem and a context of how far into the woods I am. This combination of camera strings together either a photo or video product that reads as a story. These stories are given room to grow faster and human-animal conflicts are given room to grow faster than the rodents I filmed this weekend. One blessing of today’s technological leaps is that most smartphones are equipped with camera quality that can capture a special moment in time. Many photos and videos in nature photography can be taken from the device in your pocket. The photo in this article is my favourite one from the weekend in Norfolk County along Lake Erie. Instead of seeing an ancient tree stump in the stagnant water, I see a rugged mountain to ants and frogs, reflecting perfectly off of the freshwater abyss in the forest. A stump that looks like a mountain makes for an amazing nature photography moment, which later leads to an educational moment. Taken this weekend in Norfolk County, ON. (Owen Bjorgan)
Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund - https://downiewenjack.ca/
Start Me Up Niagara - https://www.startmeupniagara.ca/site/donate
https://www.ontarioparks.com/donate

Home, 5917 Main St., Niagara Falls, Ontario. Donations in memory of you know and will continue to honour you every day by living up to the core that she continues to be well cared for. Dad, we will miss you more than his mother. Colin devoted his time and energy into his mom and ensuring modelling and teaching of tolerance, inclusivity, cultural understanding, and of his interests, hobbies and joys and share them with his children. Here, Provincial Park was a cherished place where Colin could experience many golfing, fishing, and camping. Colin was a die-hard Toronto Maple Leafs experiences he had while on the road. He also loved riding his motorcycle, Africa and Europe. His gift of storytelling often included funny and unique enjoyed traveling including a memorable backpacking trip through North Tessa and Storm were two of the loves of his life. As a young man, Colin Beatles. Colin loved the outdoors, nature, animals and people. His dogs, of English football, red Leicester cheese, marzipan, gardening, and The books was apparent and he was able to fulfill his dream of owning his own bookstore. Colin’s English heritage was always evident through his love of English football, red Leicester cheese, marzipan, gardening, and The Beatles. Colin loved the outdoors, nature, animals and people. His dogs, Tessa and Storm were two of the loves of his life. As a young man, Colin enjoyed traveling including a memorable backpacking trip through North Africa and Europe. His gift of storytelling often included funny and unique experiences he had while on the road. He also loved riding his motorcycle, golfing, fishing, and camping. Colin was a die-hard Toronto Maple Leafs fan, which highlighted his hopeful and dedicated nature. Turkey Point Provincial Park was a cherished place where Colin could experience many of his interests, hobbies and joys and share them with his children. Here, a part of him will always remain. Colin’s compassion and desire to help and support those in need was demonstrated through his work, passions, actions and everyday conversations. His children are forever grateful for his modelling and teaching of tolerance, inclusivity, cultural understanding, and respect for all living things. In his final years, it was clear how much he loved his mother. Colin devoted his time and energy into his mom and ensuring that she continues to be well cared for. Dad, we will miss you more than you know and will continue to honour you every day by living up to the core values you instilled in us. You will be with us every day. Love you dad, so much. Arrangements have been entrusted to MORSE & SON FUNERAL HOME, 5917 Main St., Niagara Falls, Ontario. Donations in memory of Colin may be made to any of the following organizations; Ontario Parks - https://www.ontarioparks.com/donate

Start Me Up Niagara - https://www.startmeupniagara.ca/site/donate
Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund - https://downiewenjack.ca/
Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morseandson.com

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 18

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

Sudoku solution from May 11, 2022

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

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

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The Tribe, Sherlock, and Bjorgan families would like to thank everyone who has reached out, given condolences, cooked meals and offered support both financially and emotionally. Words cannot begin to express our gratitude.

Those who knew Shane, are invited to drop in on Sunday, May 29, from 1-7, for a family friendly celebration of life, at Red Roof Retreat, 1594 Concession 6, rain or shine. Bring your memories and stories and help us celebrate the man, the myth, the legend.

BAKER, JEAN MARGARET—OCTOBER 27, 1935 - MAY 7, 2022
It is with deep sadness that we mourn the loss of Jean Margaret Baker. Loving wife of the late Peter Baker (2020). Dear mother of Adrian, Helen Kelly (Gervais) and Richard (Mary-Anne). Proud Grandma of Lisa and Diana. Predeceased by her sister Joan Marshall.
Jean was born in Leicester, England and grew up during the war years. She came to Canada in 1957 and was a primary school teacher, but she also had a very successful career in real estate. Jean was a passionate world traveler, visiting many parts of the globe. She took great joy and satisfaction in gardening, but was also passionate about music, being an accomplished pianist. Jean’s children fondly remember summer fun times as a family at the cottage. Jean will be deeply missed by family and friends.

Visitation for Jean will be held at MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, NOTL on Tuesday, May 24, 2022 from 2 to 5 pm. Friends are invited to a graveside service that will be held at St. Mark’s Anglican Church Cemetery on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 11 am. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Heart & Stroke Foundation. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com.
Disc golf is a great activity for kids, families, and seniors, and will be offered free at the community centre, thanks to the NOTL Rotary Club.

Disc golf is coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake sooner rather than later. The NOTL Rotary Club is anxious to introduce the popular sport at the community centre, member Paul Lalonde told councillors Monday night, hoping to gain their approval to move forward.

He explained that pre-pandemic, when club members had completed the Rotary Rocks project at Queen's Royal Park, they offered to sponsor another project for the town, and disc golf was suggested. “But then COVID hit, and it was put on the back burner.”

Parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte recently presented an overview of the community centre property, including a community concept garden, and an area for disc golf was included. Turcotte assured councillors the space needed for disc golf would not interfere with the concept garden. It’s a sport quickly growing in popularity, Lalonde said, and a focus group showed it to be the main request for those between the ages of 18 and 38. “I’ve tried it a few times with the family, and it’s a fun thing to do.” It’s typically played on a course with nine holes, or baskets, and players complete a hole by throwing a disc, much like a frisbee – “pretty much the same weight, just throws a little differently,” Lalonde says – from a tee pad toward the basket. The next throw is from where the previous disc landed, until the basket is reached. The Rotary Club is donating $15,000 for the baskets, tee pads and discs. The plan is for the discs to be kept at the desk inside the community centre, to be signed out and used by anybody who wants to play, explained Lalonde. And it would be free. “It’s easy, low maintenance, it’s great for everyone from kids to seniors, and there’s no noise involved,” he told councillors.

The town would be responsible for cutting the grass, which it’s already doing. “I feel like it’s a win-win for everybody.” Councillors agreed, with the exception of Coun. Sandra O’Connor, who said she wanted to wait for a complete plan for the community centre property before agreeing to space for disc golf. That approval will need to be ratified at the next council meeting, after which the work will go out for tender, with the goal of completing the project as soon as possible.

Hopefully locals will be playing disc golf by summer, says Lalonde.