



**Reporter
Mike Balsom
gets lesson
in policing
page 12**

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Let the bowls begin

After an absence of two years, the official opening parade of the NOTL Lawn Bowling Club returned Saturday, led by piper Alick Feller of the Niagara Police Pipe Band. Forty-nine members participated, says club president Paul McHoul, with Lord Mayor Betty Disero for the ceremonial first bowl of the season. (Photos by Norfield Design)

Are residents happy in tourism town? Three days of fun at Virgil Stampede

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

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**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

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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 Gales 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



PC candidate Bob Gale, out knocking on doors in NOTL, chats with resident Jayne Serluca. Canvassing with him is Morgan Mattern. (Photo supplied)

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 a strong Conservative 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 grandchildren 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't find bodies to fill jobs, let alone 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, "like 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 enrolment 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 that from everyone — everything else is secondary."

Niagara Falls is a big riding to cover, he says, "from lake to lake. I'm canvassing everyone. 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 on from 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, invest in roads and create new and better jobs, while we stay open. And whether it's refunding licence plate sticker fees, or slashing the gas tax, I firmly believe that that money is better in your pocket than in the government's."

The Niagara Falls riding has seven candidates running in the June 2 provincial election: Bob Gale (Progressive Conservatives), Wayne Gates (NDP), Wesley 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 Waters (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.elections.on.ca/waystovote>

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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 Kraiton 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 Brigade to save the Fort Erie hospital, as Project Share volunteer, and a member of the Ontario Health Coalition.

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

Health care continues to be top priority, 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’ll be up over \$2 this weekend. We have to stop it. Oil companies are

gouging us, 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 Loblaws, and the owners, the Westons, 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 grandkids. 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

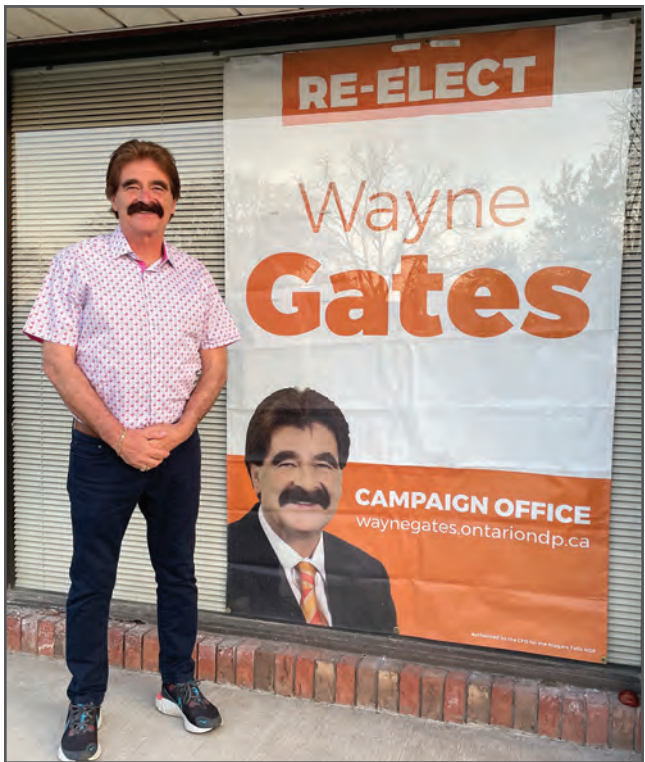
forms the government. The NDP is committed to cancelling Highway 413, which, says Gates, “might save commuters 20 minutes, if that,” and the Bradford Bypass, for environmental reasons. “They are paving over wetlands, and unbelievable farmland. I have a lot of concern for what that might mean to our riding. 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



Wayne Gates outside his Village Green Plaza office in Virgil. (Photo supplied)

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 appreciate 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.”

Gates attacks PCs on education, long-term care

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 aim 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 Custers that he was declining participation in the live-to-tape proceedings. As the Green Party’s Tommy Ward had also declined on May 2, Gale’s absence prompted Custers to pare down the usual 90-minute broadcast to one hour with only two candidates in the studio.

“Niagara needs an MPP who doesn’t just sit at Queen’s Park and do whatever the Premier tells him what to do,” said Gates in his opening statement to viewers. “And we certainly

don’t need an MPP who can’t be bothered to show up and defend his government’s record.”

Waters, a political neophyte and non-profit manager with Scouts Canada, took fewer, if any direct shots at Gale and his party, instead putting the focus on the Liberal platform and her standing as one of their many female candidates in the upcoming election.

Affordability, health care and education took the spotlight during the proceedings. It was clear throughout the debate that there were many similarities between Gates’ New Democrats and Waters’ Liberals.

On the education front, Waters promised a Liberal government would cap class sizes at 20 students and provide more mental health support in schools. Gates then outlined a long list of grievances and accusations against Doug Ford’s education policies the last four years, before also promising lower class sizes and hiring more support for children with



NDP candidate Wayne Gates and Liberal Ashley Waters debated for YourTV, reduced to an hour when PC candidate Bob Gale and Green Party candidate Tommy Ward chose not to participate. (Jack Custers)

special needs.

But on this topic as well as others, Gates also attacked Liberal leader Steven Del Duca, who was elected as MPP of Vaughan in a 2012 by-election and served under Premiers Dalton McGuinty and then Kathleen Wynne until he lost his seat in 2018 to Conservative

Michael Tibollo.

“The reality is that Del Duca’s Liberals had 15 years to fix education,” Gates said. “They brought in Bill 115 and the unions had to take them to court. And the unions won in court.”

Most of the questions for the debate were collected from viewers prior to the taping date,

but some came from community stakeholders. Project Share’s Pam Sharp asked the candidates if they would promise to raise the amount of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) payments to reduce the number of Niagara residents relying on food banks to meet their basic needs.

Gates promised that an NDP government would raise the ODSP rates 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.

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#1

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Ashley Waters gives Conservatives 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's a political science honours graduate who wants to effect positive change, she says, and has been advocating throughout her career in the 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. "I was inspired to put my name forward after seeing Steven Del Duca on *The Agenda* with Steve Paikin. When I heard the leader of the Liberal Party offer an invitation for parity at Queen's Park, I thought if not now, then when, and if not me, then who?"

At that time, Waters says her mother had been diagnosed and was courageously

battling breast cancer. It was during the pandemic, and she was her mother's primary care-giver, able to see some of the problems with the health care system first-hand. "We had to advocate for ourselves in the health system during the process, and fortunately, my mom is with us today."

She was frustrated by the current government leadership "being so 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 Conservatives 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. The province was also slow to expand testing capacity and vaccine clinics in hotspots, she adds.

"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 him 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 that represent Ontarians. I am proud to be amongst over 60 per cent female candidates of the Liberal party."

If elected, says Waters, "I would collaborate with community members and knowledge experts to ensure we strengthen education, healthcare, 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 vent about their anti-Trudeau federal



Campaigning over the weekend in NOTL were Niagara Falls riding Liberal Party president Brian Johns, candidate Ashley Waters and supporters Ashley Gillis, Tina Vaillancourt, Alec Wilson, Zarina Craig and Julie Tanos. (Photo supplied)

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 Link Media, Niagara top 40 under 40 Business Achievement Award for 2022.

This fall she was a finalist for the Women in Business Awards, in the category of Excellence in Non-Profit, through

the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

"I have roots in Niagara's tourism industry," she says. "I previously served as an opening team member for the Niagara Falls Convention Centre in sales and marketing, and worked as an Entertainment Coordinator at the Fallsview Casino Resort."

She and her husband are active volunteers in the community. She spearheaded fundraising efforts for young women affected by cancer through her work at Pink Pearl Canada, and "kickstarted the Niagara Falls Titans Soccer Club's U8/9 girls' travel team," which her daughter Sasha plays on, and which she continues to help coach.

"As a mom, a volunteer, and

lifelong Niagara resident with a reputation for delivering tangible progress, I can't wait to help write the next chapter in our community's brilliant history. With our constituents' help, I am committed to making education, healthcare, affordable housing, quality jobs, and mental health top priorities at Queen's Park."

As she goes door to door, she says, she hears from people who are happy to see someone from a younger demographic step forward to run, bringing fresh perspectives.

"My vision and mission has been steadfast for Niagara to be a vibrant and inclusive community that is empowered to create, connect, and collaborate through engagement."

Waters urges people of all ages: get out and vote

Continued from page 3

"That's really important to make sure people have economic dignity," Waters said. "And we'll make sure we get rid of the HST on any food costs that are under \$20 so a busy mom like me can pick up a rotisserie chicken at the supermarket, and won't have to pay that extra cost."

Affordability also arose in discussions about the price of housing and gasoline in particular.

Waters promised an end

to blind bidding and the reinstitution of stiffer rent control standards as part of the Liberal platform on housing affordability. Gates also mentioned rent controls, more directly attacking Ford's government for dismantling them. He also focused on increasing the supply of homes and promised to "stop the greedy speculators who are buying up all the homes and then getting into blind bidding, which should be taken out of the home-buying process altogether."

Gates said gouging at the

gas pumps has to stop, describing having seen people lined up to buy gasoline at \$1.81 per litre on his way to the McLeod Road studio.

"It happens from the refineries, all the way to the pumps," he said. "And nobody can deny that. The gas industry makes billions of dollars, and they made 40 per cent more profit during COVID. That's wrong. We brought in a bill that would regulate gas prices, but the Conservative government voted against the bill."

"Part of our platform is

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 informed the discussion on how to adequately provide effective care for seniors.

Here, both Gates and Waters promised to remove private ownership of LTC homes.

"During COVID, right here in Niagara, we had outbreaks at Oakwood and Lundy Manor," Gates said. "Oakwood was the worst, 100 per cent of the residents and staff got COVID, and 40 per cent of the residents died. The government didn't protect them. We have to take the privatization out of long-term care and retirement homes."

"If you're in a long-term care private hospital, you have a better chance of dying," Gates continued. "If you're in a publicly-funded one 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 a big part of our platform as well. We'll top seniors up so they re-

ceive \$1,000 more a month to pay for home care. And we'll give incentives to keep nurses here in Ontario and working in long-term care."

Minerva Ward, president and CEO of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, submitted a video question, asking what each candidate promised to do to ensure local businesses have access to a workforce with the skills and talents necessary for the expected future growth in Niagara.

Waters promised the Liberals would work with colleges to ensure they have the right programs in place to develop skilled workers and keep them in the region. Gates pointed out Niagara College's brewing and winemaking programs as examples that develop skilled workers for Niagara's economy.

Gates shifted then, going on to talk about protecting NOTL, through regulations that safeguard farmers, wineries, green space and heritage.

"If we do all of that," he said, "young families will come to Niagara-on-the-Lake. It's one of the best places to live in Ontario, one of the prettiest places in Ontario. We have to work together with the Chamber and the councils to protect that heritage."

Waters and Gates didn't differ markedly on climate change, the importance and drawbacks of lockdowns or the need for improved infra-

structure as those issues arose through the discussion.

What was different between the two was their approach. Gates continuously 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 to go and vote," she said in her closing. "Make sure your voice is heard. The only thing that would 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 in 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 YourTV, can be seen on the channel Saturday, 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.tv/niaagara.



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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,

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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'être. Photography is so much more than just

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

Julie Saggers

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. Photo-

graphs 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!"

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EDITORIAL

See you at the stampede this weekend

It's been a couple of years since we've had the opportunity to enjoy a good stampede.

There will be one in Virgil this weekend, and it's not to be missed.

There may be some newcomers to town who wonder why it's called a stampede, when there are no horses to be found, although a few small ponies will be onhand 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 expanded 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 support for the community. And never is that more evident than during its annual event. It's a small group, becoming 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 something the VBA has financially supported, from the first arena to everything in the Virgil Sports Park today, 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 have benefited from the funds it raises from its annual stampedes. 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,

Red Roof Retreat, the Niagara Historical Society, and more.

The Virgil Stampede is all about the community, celebrating it and giving back to it.

Let's hope for good weather this weekend, and a great turnout for a really fun event. See you there!

Full disclosure, The Local is a proud member of the VBA.

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara Conservative candidates skip debates

There is something inexplicable, incongruous even, about a politician turning down a free chance to say his or her piece in a televised debate or a newspaper article.

Besides contributing to The NOTL Local, readers may know that I am also a long-time volunteer at Cogeco YourTV, Niagara's cable television station. Since first hosting live coverage of the 1991 municipal election, I have moderated candidate forums and anchored live coverage of almost every federal, provincial and municipal election on the station.

Never has a candidate from one of the three major parties refused to participate in one of our debates. Last week, three of Niagara's Progressive Conservative candidates in the June 2 provincial election made that decision. Only incumbent Niagara West PC candidate Sam Oosterhoff, whose seat at Queen's Park is generally considered safe, opted to visit the Niagara Falls studio.

None of the Green Party candidates participated in the

debates, either, though that has happened in the past. Candidates from other parties, including New Blue, Libertarian and Communist parties, were not invited, in accordance with the national TV debate policy.

Working with producer Jack Custers at YourTV, we began planning for our debates about a month ago. On May 9, Niagara Falls candidate Bob Gale declined Custers' invitation via email, with no explanation given. When Custers contacted Gale's office to perhaps suggest an alternative date, he was told that the PC candidate was "prioritizing meeting directly with his constituents in Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Falls".

St. Catharines riding candidate Sal Sorrento originally accepted the invitation to participate in last week's proceedings. On May 10, Sorrento's office sent Custers the same message that was relayed to the St. Catharines Standard, pulling out of the televised debate.

"Sal is focused on knocking on doors and speaking with

constituents directly about the issues that matter to their community", the email stated.

That was not only an about-face from Sorrento's previous acceptance of the invitation, but also in stark contrast to an interview I did with him on The Source program on April 11, when he told me off-camera he was very much looking forward to the opportunity to talk issues with the other candidates.

Fred Davies, the Conservative challenger in Niagara Centre, also accepted the invitation from YourTV about two weeks ago. Like Sorrento, though, he changed his mind and expressed his regrets in an email on that very same date, May 10.

Couple that timing with the fact that the party's leader, Doug Ford, avoided speaking to the media following a 90-minute Northern Leaders' debate on Monday, May 9, and it's hard not to see that Davies, Gale and Sorrento were following either the example or the instruction of their party's brass.

The trio have also refused to participate in debates held

by CKTB radio and both the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and the South Niagara Chambers of Commerce. PC candidates in Sudbury and Barrie area ridings also skipped all-candidates meetings last week.

It's not the first time PC candidates have avoided such gatherings. During the 2018 campaign, Conservative hopefuls in at least 25 ridings did the same thing. That followed the 2015 federal election, when Stephen Harper's Conservative Party of Canada candidates were openly advised against attending debates.

In Oosterhoff's case, one would think the high likelihood of him winning again in a riding that has been 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 to wonder what Davies, Gale's and Sorrento's motivation might be.

Is the party itself afraid the candidates might say something that would reduce their chances to win the riding? Are they helping 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 backfire. During the YourTV debates for Niagara Falls, Niagara Centre and St. Catharines,

the NDP incumbents (Wayne Gates, Jeff Burch and Jennie Stevens respectively) and the Liberal challengers often bashed Gale, Davies and Sorrento, who of course weren't there to defend themselves.

Whatever the reason for not attending, the three of them are remaining tight-lipped about it other than inferring that their efforts are better served by ringing 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



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

If I Were You (Prime, 2012) is a compelling story of deceit and infidelity, but with a twist, for the wronged wife becomes the best friend of her husband's mistress.

Although this is beyond absurd, the quality of the acting makes it all believable. Both the wife and mistress are caught up acting in a college production of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which has been cleverly embedded into the film. Worth seeing.

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake
Local
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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Local VOICES

Sharing a mother's love for NOTL

Magdalena Bator
Special to The Local

I wanted to take a moment of your time to tell you about a very incredible person, my mom, Marzena Parniak (June 15, 1965 to May 15, 2022)..

My mom moved to beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2017 with my dad from Mississauga, and purchased Darlington House Bed and Breakfast on John St. E. just across from the Commons, where my parents would begin hosting guests from every corner of the world.

She would realize her life's dream; she was dynamic, full of zest, exceptionally genuine, and her guests never failed to notice this when she hosted the

hundreds of people who walked through the doors at Darlington House.

She had a European flair, Polish to be exact, and it enveloped the home and presented in every aspect of her hosting. Let's start with her breakfasts. Oh, her breakfasts! They were the star of Darlington House, three courses, always starting with an appetizer such as baked pears with goat cheese, her super vitamin-packed smoothies or incredibly smooth parfaits. Then came the main course. The eggs were always cooked by my dad, but my mom just excelled at presentation. She was an artist with her meals! Eggs Benedict, colourful open-faced sandwiches, diagonally sliced sausages

with freshly-baked potatoes, and always a little greenery, beautifully plated, sprinkled with goat cheese or feta and finished off with fresh herbs or edible flowers she grew in her garden.

She always said when you present yourself and your meals elegantly, even if they taste ordinary, they always leave an impression. Lastly came the dessert. Mmmmm, that dessert. She made incredible Polish sweet dishes: 'nalesniki' (crepes) filled with white cheese and fruit with just a few drops of maple syrup, or her famous 'placki z jablkami' (pancakes with apples), and of course her famous flourless pancakes made from eggs and banana. These were all hits. Stars of the morning! She would always tell me how her guests must like her food, because the plates were always empty!

Breakfasts were only one part of the Darlington House show — she loved to decorate. Her home was adorned with detail in each little way. She loved change — she would change up her plate settings daily, using delicate tea cups and saucers (usually mismatched for each person) because she liked that little bit of

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Reader expresses views of a successful town council

Having lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake for 30-some 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 can 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

Local LETTERS

Changes can be positive, but some not so welcome

Shock, denial, anger and depression — yes, I feel I am experiencing these emotions as I watch 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 she was "so very sad" at what was happening to the town. Visitors used to enjoy shopping in town, going to art galleries (Angie Strauss/Trisha Romance etc.), browsing 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 neighbours, but not within the historic district, was a positive change. Limiting bus traffic in the town, but offering transportation alternatives was a positive change. We can embrace and even encourage tourism growth without sacrificing the nature of the town and its his-

toric significance.

On the other hand, some changes have not been as welcome or enhancing. We have witnessed the changing face of retail. Once we had a variety of clothing and shoe stores, along with jewelry, soap, candle and a few tchotchke shops. There were one or two ice cream and coffee places and several fine restaurants. You could even go to the Oban Inn after a dinner and/or show and listen to live piano music.

Now, however, we have an abundance of ice cream, coffee and goodie shops and numerous choices for hand-to-mouth picnics. The result for locals has been sticky benches, discarded coffee cups and napkins, pet feces and thoughtless tourists. Shopkeepers even need to put signs up telling shoppers not to bring food or pets into their stores.

Having served for over 15 years on various town boards in Upstate New York (assessment review, building zoning and zoning variance as well as Master Plan) I can attest to the fact that there are many tools which can be used to support and encourage healthy economic growth. However, all of this depends on the town's mission statement and a stewardship definition which carefully protects the quality of life for the town's residents as well as preserves the town's history. Does Ni-

agara-on-the-Lake's mission statement do this? Does it prioritize economic issues?

It would appear that the economy and money have become a lead factor in decision-making, as the latest word is the mayor and councillors want to widen the sidewalks, allow more outdoor cafes, remove on-street parking, move the flowers to the street parking areas, narrow the street and create a mini-midway (our own Clifton Hill?).

What was once a town awarded for its beauty and culture will now be one noted for its "fun" and new Dairy Queen. It begs the question of the fiduciary responsibility for town government to use our tax dollars wisely.

Healthy, positive economic development can become a welcome addition to the community, both residential and tourist. However, to accomplish this and reverse this dismal decline will depend upon having and electing leaders who possess a sense of duty to perform as stewards for this town and its heritage. Leaders who can support a mission statement and code that will indeed encourage welcomed economic growth.

And for those interested in running for office - we need more than a change of "tone".

Something to ponder.

R.G. McClellan
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 70s, and for a slice of Alfredo'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, Pam Gallop built her stables near Line 3 and

we were joined by horses on our trail. We learned to slow down and minimize the noise from our dirt bikes, to not 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.

To this day I still ride 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.

East Welland has a 20-ki-

lometre trail to Port Colbourne that is used by horses, bicycles and walkers, as well as the original separate trail used by dirt bikes. They also learned to share. Town pedestrians have the Niagara River Parkway trail and the Bob Howse multi-use trail as well as sidewalks throughout Old Town.

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

Rainer Hummel
St. Davids

B&B hostess was an ambassador for town

Continued from page 6

excitement.

The towels were always folded with care in an appealing way to the eye, and the bed spread was precisely placed so that it ran perfectly parallel with the mattress. She wanted to make her guests feel important. She loved adding little surprises as well; delicate chocolates from Old Town, a small bouquet of flowers from local florists. She loved hosting. She was designed for hosting. She was the spark in

our guests' stay.

I write this primarily because I wanted to let the residents of this town know that she loved Niagara-on-the-Lake. We are enveloped in a beauty like no other here in this little town of ours. She loved the little streets lined with uniqueness and heritage. She loved the colourful doors and ornaments that adorned our residents' homes. She loved the abundance of flowers, full green shrubs (she loved circular shaped ones especially) and old majestic trees that protected us.

She loved the peaceful walking paths hidden throughout the land and the luxury stroll she would take walking down our bright Queen Street.

She took hundreds of pictures of this town (and her breakfasts of course) and was proud to post on her Darlington House Facebook page — please take a look. She was at home here. She was happy.

She will be missed by all her guests, her faithful friends and many people she met along her way on this earth. But for my

family, for her three grandchildren, my brother and his girlfriend, myself and my husband, her siblings and parents in Poland, her family in Canada, her close and loyal friends, and for my dad, her husband, her loss is a devastating one that leaves a hole so deep we'll need all her energy and spirit to help us through.

She will live on through us here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, watching us from heaven as we continue her vision and her work.

Kocham Cie Mama.



Marzena Parniak loved hosting guests at her bed and breakfast. (Photo submitted)

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Reserve butterflies by Friday for memorial service

Penny Coles
The Local

Families who want to honour lost loved ones are being offered that opportunity at an event organized by Bonnie Bagnulo, executive director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service. The pandemic has been a “horrendous 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 honour 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 will read the names

of loved ones who died during the pandemic. The butterflies that will be released outside are indigenous to our area, born of a Butterfly Hatchery in Alberta, and are very helpful to our wildlife and ecosystem, says Bagnulo. “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.



NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

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 starting at 6 pm.
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 (26T-18-20-01)

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-notice/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 pm 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.

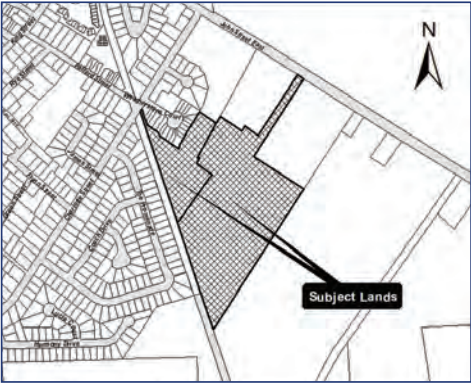
If you wish to view the Public Input Session for information purposes, the meeting will be available at the following link: <https://www.notl.com/council-government/mayor-council/meetings-agendas-minutes>. Registration is not required.

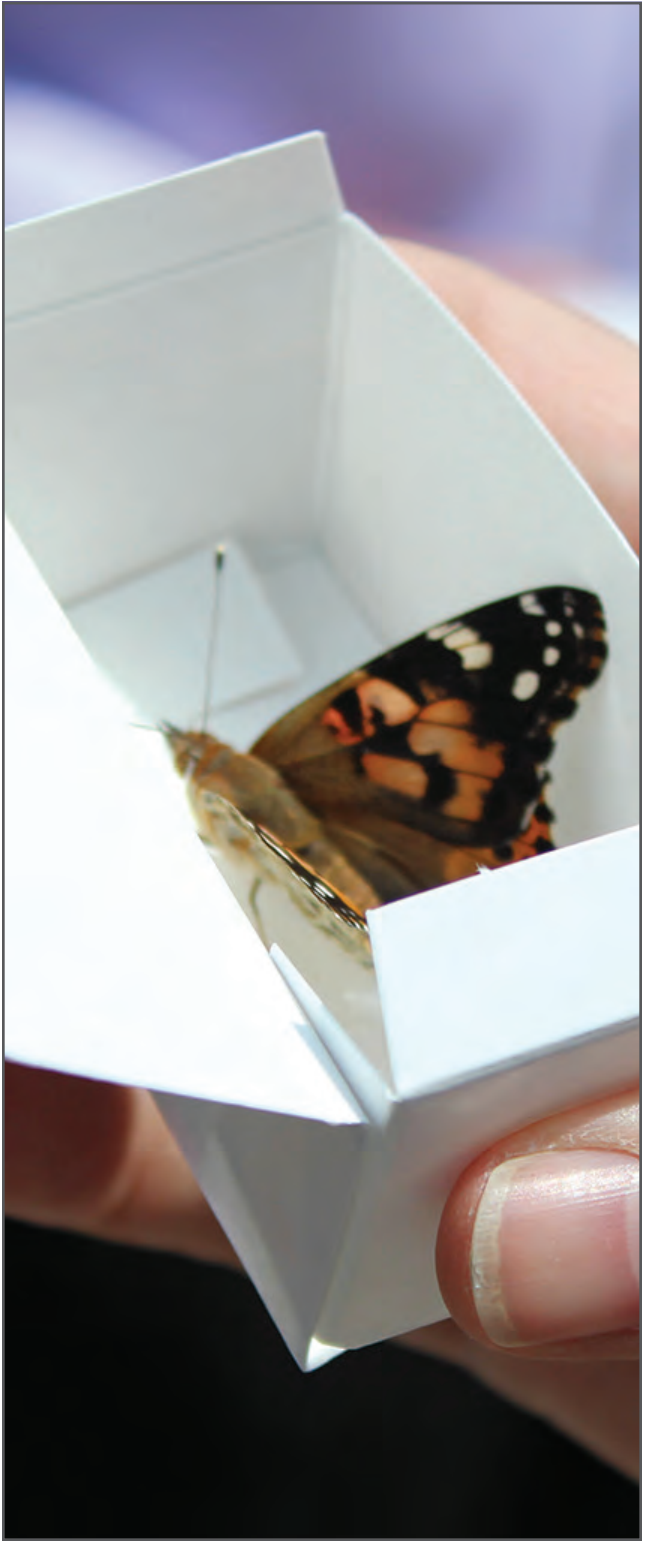
Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.

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.development@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





Painted lady butterflies will be released in memory of loved ones lost. (Photo supplied)

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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 2022, 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.

"TC (Shaw artistic director 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 audience really wanted it back desperately 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. Puppeteers Alexandra Montagnese and Mike Petersen brought to life Niagara's story, from its pre-settler roots to the founding 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 presentation 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 characters 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 features Alexis Gordon, Graeme Kitagawa, James Daly and Jenny L. Wright.

Molly Atkinson directs *Fairground* in the Shaw Festival 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, music, 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 array of song, music, dance, visual arts and a few hidden talents.

More than a dozen Shaw

ensemble members collaborated 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 theatre," Jennings says. "It's one of the things that makes Shaw, Shaw. We're on Parks Canada lands, we're in the most beautiful 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 audience 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 setting. 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 *Fairground*, *1922 - in Concert* is another collaboration between a number of members of the Shaw ensemble. Performed on the BMO Stage from Aug. 17 to Oct. 2, it turns the clock back 100 years for the music of the



Puppeteers Mike Petersen and Alexandra Montagnese in *A Short History of Niagara*. (Lauren Garbutt)

jazz age and the fashion styling of the flappers.

There's also a series of classical music performances from members of the Shaw Festival Orchestra, being billed as *Coffee Concerts* on June 5, Aug. 28 and Oct. 2.

Back for another year is *What's In Your Songbook*, giving members of the Shaw ensemble a chance to showcase their favourite audition songs and share some of their humorous experiences from their lives in theatre, bringing them closer to the audience.

"It really gives us a chance

to show off our people with a different set of skills," Jennings says, outlining yet another motivation for the return of the outdoor shows. "We get to hear some of the great voices of some of our ensemble members who may not be in our musical currently."

"It's a great opportunity," Jennings continues. "Our ensemble members appear in two shows and understudy for a third or fourth. This year we've had to add some extra understudies due to COVID. This gives these folks some opportunities to get out there in front of

an audience on their own. And some of the folks in the musical are simply doing concerts as their second track."

Shaw's outdoor program is rounded out with *Speakeasies*, an evening of jazz favourites under the stars, and *Gospel Choir*, presented on the Humeniuk Foundation Stage, a morning concert with the inspirational sound of gospel music performed by members of the Shaw company and community members as well.

For dates, information and ticket prices, visit shawfest.com.



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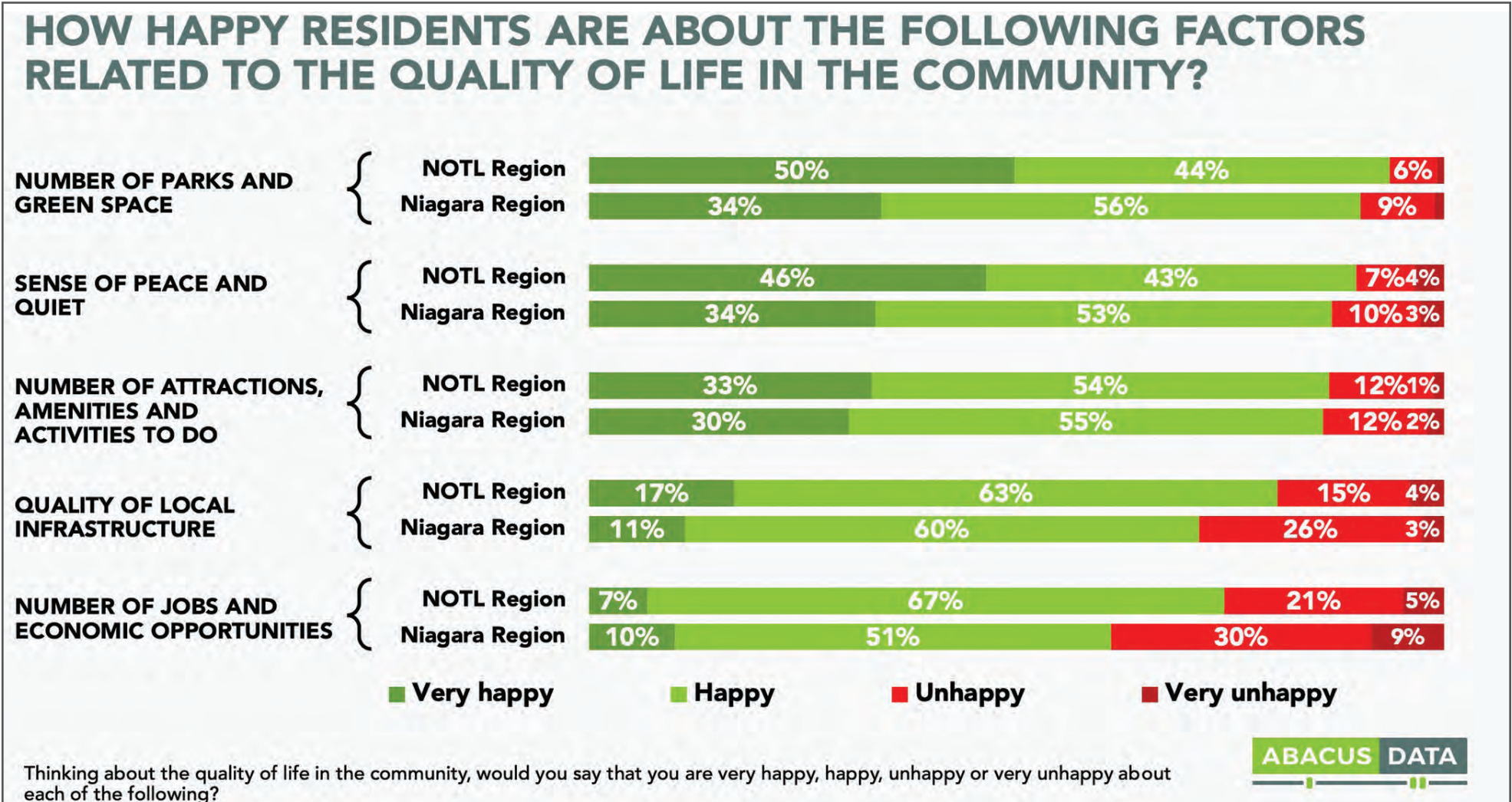
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Councillors hear from those with ‘axe to grind’



Continued from page 1

happily, show that our residents believe strongly in the importance of tourism to their lifestyle, economic well-being, sustainability, the diversity and inclusivity of our community, and in building a brighter future for the town.”

The purpose of this survey, Coletto explained to councillors, was to understand how residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the wider Niagara Region feel about their quality of life, the impact that tourism has on their life and the broader communi-

ties, and whether they feel their community can be both a tourism destination and a great place to live.

A random telephone survey reached 300 NOTL residents, while an online survey went to 500 Niagara Region residents, he explained.

The results, Coletto sum-

marized, are that while some residents want to see the town focus on improving parking and traffic congestion, “there is little evidence that many residents want to see tourism curtailed. In fact, as is clear in the results, tourism is seen as essential to the character and quality of life in the town. Without tourism, NOTL wouldn’t be what it is – a great place to live.”

Coletto, an Ottawa resident, joked that the results were so positive he might have to reconsider some of his life plans.

NOTL residents believe tourism is essential to both the economic and social life of the town and region, and 85 per cent of those living in NOTL believe the town can be a great place to live while also attracting a lot of tourists, he said.

“Almost all residents believe NOTL is a great place to live, and believe it is so because of tourism.”

Those living in NOTL are “more positive about their

experience living in the community” than those living in the wider Niagara Region, the survey showed.

Almost all residents say they are happy with the number of parks and green space, the sense of peace and quiet, and the number of attractions and amenities. “There is little evidence that many residents are unhappy with these core attributes of their community.”

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 reducing traffic congestion.

The overall message, the survey showed, is “don’t change or limit what makes NOTL a great place to both live and visit.”

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

To explain why councillors receive complaints and

negative emails about tourism, Coletto said, “the general rule is you typically only hear from people with an axe to grind, or who have problems.”

While those people are not to be ignored, he added, “they may not be representative of the broader community.”

The survey “overwhelmingly concluded” if councillors are hearing from residents who are unhappy with tourism, “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:

- Replacing selected cross culverts
- Milling off the top course of asphalt or doing a cold in place strategy of the road section
- Repairing cracks in the base course asphalt and replacing concrete curbs that are in poor condition
- Paving new top course asphalt, line marking and adding granular to shoulders

Please expect traffic delays and that daily road closures and detours as identified will be required for paving operations during construction. The contractors’ anticipated hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., weather permitting.

Businesses and residents will have access during the closure but may be directed to take an alternate route to get to their destination.

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.

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Bruce Zvaniga
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WeekendEVENTS

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 every-

thing 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.



The upstairs at Cornerstone Church, with Rotarian Jeannie Manning helping to supervise, was busy throughout the weekend. (Photos submitted)



Lauren Crickmore, Shari Crickmore and Daniel Corvino arrive and finish their shopping early, as a lineup stretches out behind them.



Rotarian Penny Milligan checks out a scooter, which was later sold to a lovely senior, she says.

Volunteer Maddie Milligan (standing) looks after shoppers Imka Weedon and Deb Twohig.

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 Fosse, 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.



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)



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Police training exercise message for reporters, public

Mike Balsom
The Local

As part of Police Week across Ontario, the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) invited members of the local media to experience a morning at their Training Unit in Welland. The Local was 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 communities," Gavin told The Local. "The media is a major partner for us in how we get our message to the communi-



Reporter Mike Balsom gets some practice on the gun range and with a taser. (Mark Wikobrado)

ty. 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 relationship between the police and the greater community,

something that he added has always been important but may have taken on increased relevance in recent years.

The day began with each participant being fitted for a Kevlar vest and a nylon utility belt. The belt was equipped with a fake blue Glock pistol, a taser and a pepper spray canister.

Though the vest was much lighter in weight than anticipated, the snug fit took some getting used to. At least one colleague remarked, though, that the vest itself was quite slimming. And trying to take my seat for the commencement of the classroom portion of the session was a bit challenging, with the holsters at each side of the belt bumping into the chair's arms.

After welcoming comments from Gavin and NRPS Chief Bryan MacCulloch, Sergeant Matt Whitely introduced the five members of his training team and began to outline the day, including all the safety measures that were in place.

Whitely then ceded the floor to Constable Andrew Watson, who outlined the police Use of Force Model, developed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and used by police forces across the country. Visually represented 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 presence.

This is where it became clear that as much as the participants were there to experience drawing a taser, shooting a gun and learning how to strike by hand in defence, it was really all about decision-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 consequences of a wrong decision, or even the correct decision, can be devastating.

To put a face on the impact that a use-of-force incident can have on an officer, we were privileged to hear an account of an incident from just a few short years ago from a first responder who 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 emotional impact on the officer in question.

Following the classroom session, the group moved into the defensive tactics room. 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 the real thing a try. I volunteered, and Vujasic swapped my training taser with the real thing, loaded with two unarmed cartridges for safety's sake.

After being shuffled into position by the constable, I took aim at the target, shouted my "warning taser, taser, taser," and fired. The cartridges flew out from the weapon and attached themselves to the target, about 15 inches apart, a near-perfect strike according to Vujasic.

From there it was on to the indoor firing range. Const. Brittany Wright explained that since the range was currently under construction we were unfortunately not able to use live rounds this day. Instead, we were to use Simunition rounds, non-lethal bullets that give users a somewhat realistic experience.

We turned in our dummy guns for Simunition Glocks, then entered the range. Wright instructed us on the proper stance and how to use the sights to line up our target, then handed us our clips to load into the handle. We took our spots 10 feet from our target, each of us with a training officer at our sides, and followed Wright's instructions, aiming at the proper area of the target to stop, not kill, an attacker.

Finally, we were ready to apply what we had learned that morning in a practical manner. Each participant was to be put through a training scenario, beginning with a dispatch explanation, then we were to enter a room and act as a responding police officer to the situation.

I was placed first on a stationary bicycle. It was explained to me that this was to increase my heart rate to simulate the adrenaline flow that an officer might feel respond-

ing to a situation. As I pedalled, I was told that I was responding to a report of a theft at a Best Buy store, where the perpetrator had fled the building with a security guard in pursuit. He was trapped in an alley, acting agitated.

I disembarked from the bike, and walked around the corner where I saw Const. Chad Davidson, acting as the thief, walking back and forth next to a wall. Perhaps because the previous two participants did so, I took out my flashlight and shone it at Davidson, who was holding a backpack in front of him.

"You're too close, get away," he said, as I approached.

"Sir, drop the bag," I shouted.

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

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

"You're agitated, sir, 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, take it," yelled Davidson. He reached into the bag and pulled out a bigger box and threw it again at my feet. "You're still too close, back up."

"Sir, you need to drop the bag," I yelled.

"I've got something else in here for you," Davidson shouted.

He reached into his bag and this time pulled out a gun from the backpack and aimed it at me. I immediately reached for my holster and pulled my gun. I shouted to him to drop the gun, and before I could pull my trigger, he shot five times.

The standoff with the gun seemed to have taken a split second. Davidson told me later he had actually counted out five seconds before firing at me. I was wearing the vest, so there would have been a chance that I could have survived the shooting in real life. But there was no doubt I had made some poor choices faced with a clearly agitated subject.

"Don't beat yourself up," Davidson told me. "All things considered, you did a great job. It's challenging, and that's why we do so much training. A big focus of what we do here is judgement or scenario-based training, in order to put officers in that pressure-cooker."

He went on to explain that new recruits spend two full weeks at the training unit before shipping off to the Ontario Police College in Aylmer for 13 weeks. They then return to Welland for further legislated instruction. Training is ongoing for all of the more than 800 NRPS officers, as legislation requires them to be retrained annually.

There are of course many, many more aspects to learning how to do the job, as well, beyond the use-of-force activities that the members of the media spent just five hours learning Monday.

Following the live scenarios, we gathered in a computer room, where Davidson and Const. Mike Warnock took us through more scenarios, these via a computer and video simulation by a Colorado-based company.

During this one, I failed to notice the presence of a rifle leaning against a counter in a garage. Afterwards, I tried to blame that on the screen resolution, but nevertheless I misjudged the level of aggression from the suspect. Though I tried to draw my weapon, I was, one more time, shot.

The day's activities left me, and I am sure the other four participants, with a new respect 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 emotion and evaluate the situation at its face value. It looks much easier on television.

Gavin would like to roll out similar such opportunities for other community influencers who might benefit by visiting the unit to experience 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 to have an understanding of the specific elements that go into decision-making."



Mike Balsom's shooting skills turn out to be pretty good. (Mark Wikobrado)



Const. Rich Vujasic demonstrates the use of a taser. (Mike Balsom)



Const. Chad Davidson demonstrates the use of a baton to pry a prone subject's arm open for cuffing. (Mike Balsom)

Queenston brings back its art show

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 11a.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 Eltoft 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)

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Museum walking tours back on weekends

Barbara Worthy
NOTL Museum

Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's popular Historic District Walking Tours are returning.

The guided walks will take place every Saturday and Sunday from June to September, starting the weekend of June 4.

The tours begin at 11 a.m. and meet near the gazebo in Queen's Royal Park, at the bottom of King Street. The walks usually last approxi-

mately one to one and a half hours, ending at the museum, 43 Castlereagh St. Cost is \$10 and includes museum admission.

In the heritage district there is something to learn at every street corner about the people, events, and architecture that make up the extraordinary history of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Walks are accessible, and friends, visitors, and neighbours are encouraged to enjoy the beauty of the town, while learning a little more about Niagara and

Canada's history.

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)

Nyanyas' annual spring luncheon returns

Penny Coles
The Local

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 grandmothers in Africa as

they struggled to raise their grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. There are now more than 240 groups supporting African grandmothers.

For the last two years and more, Africa has been fighting two pandemics, AIDS and COVID, Mactaggart says.

"That's the horror of it all. They were really impacted by COVID. But they have such resilience," she says.

Ruth-Anne Seburn, the development officer with the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, has worked for several non-prof-

its in Canada, Sri Lanka and New York City.

Alanna Wallace is the deputy director of philanthropic partnerships at the foundation, overseeing the organization's corporate partnership program and community campaigns, including the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign. Wallace and Seburn will speak to those at the Nyanyas luncheon, at the Old Winery Restaurant Friday, June 3, at 12:30 p.m.

"It feels like coming home," says Mactaggart — the last couple of very suc-

cessful luncheons were also held at the Old Winery.

The Grandmothers groups are also carrying on with a national effort that staged a virtual concert across Canada during COVID, raising more than \$150,000.

"That was quite amazing," Mactaggart said. "There were a lot of grandmothers who worked on that and wanted to stay together, and to work on another project."

They are looking at a project on diversity, inclusivity, recruitment and retention, to build up groups that have

lost members during the pandemic, some of which folded.

"We all really want to get some new people back."

Many of the grandmothers have died, or are not continuing, she said.

In Africa, grandmothers have also died, and Mactaggart says many of the grandchildren, now adults, are starting their own women's movement.

Tickets for the June luncheon are available by email at: nyanyas2018@gmail.com

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Bravo Niagara! presents pianist Jon Kimura Parker

Mike Balsom
The Local

Genial, charismatic, enthusiastic, dramatic. Those are all adjectives often tied to Vancouver-born pianist Jon Kimura 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 Island, "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 Rubenstein, Elton John and Oscar Peterson. They shared an incredible enthusiasm 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 listener 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 odd 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 superstar," Parker remembers about his early love for the flamboyant Brit. "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 lunch in the cafeteria."

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.

"If I play the last movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*," explains the 62-year-old, "which is viscerally exciting, kind of a perpetual motion from beginning to end, 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.

That, along with a fiery piece ("Scherzo Op. 14") from Clara Schumann, whom he calls a brilliant composer, and Brahms' Handel Variations make up the first half of his program.

"The Brahms is the big serious 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 approach to playing the piano.

"I was always a huge fan of Chick Corea, and Alexina Louie is my favourite Canadian 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 American composer John Adams is another one I've worked with



Pianist Jon Kimura Parker will play classic and more contemporary pieces at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre May 29. (Photo supplied)

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. Parker 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 music. Parker's wife is violinist/violist Aloysia 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 Friedmann and 101-year-old oboist Laila Storch, who lives with the couple on the island.

Though Friedmann grew up in Seattle, just two-plus hours from Parker in Vancouver, the couple met in the Juilliard School cafeteria in New York in the early 1980s. Their 22-year-old daughter fittingly studied both piano and violin on her way to becoming a visual artist.

Orcas Island is the north-

ernmost of the San Juan Islands, situated northeast of Victoria. Friedmann is the founder of a chamber music festival there, at which Parker will be performing for two weeks this August.

Parker learned piano at the side of his uncle Edward Parker, taking his weekly lessons home to work on them with his piano teacher mother Keiko. His sister Liz followed in their mother's footsteps, becoming a piano teacher in Toronto, while his brother Jamie heads the piano department at the University of Toronto.

Of Parker's many CD releases, he points to the collection of Mozart piano concertos that he worked on with Jamie and his conductor/pianist cousin Ian as his fondest recording memory.

"The process was so much fun," Parker recalls. "We were just having a blast. And I snuck the *Star Trek* theme into the recording. I did it very subtly, but

if you listen to the first movement 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 program begins at 3 p.m.

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West49 holding tricks competition Saturday

Continued from page 1

on the property, funded in part by the 2019 stampede proceeds, the VBA decided to add an event to make use of the popular facility. West49, a retailer of skateboards and skateboard apparel, has been invited to participate, and will be at the skatepark Saturday afternoon from 2 to 5 p.m., offering demonstrations, and a trick competition with prizes.

The same great food concessions will be back, provided by local businesses and volunteers, and at the same prices as 2019.

“We’ve really tried wherever we can to keep the prices the same as 2019, including the food,” says VBA president Richard Wall. “It’s our way of saying thank you to the community. Despite inflation since then, we didn’t want to take advantage and raise our prices. Everything we could keep the same, we did. And whatever we raise from this year’s stampede will go back to the community.”

Wall is as excited about this year’s event as he’s ever been. “Everything I’ve seen and heard makes us feel it’s going to be a great year,” he says. “There is a lot of interest out there, from a lot of people who want to be part of it. It feels like everybody is happy to hear it’s back. It’s going to be a great event.”

And if it is, the VBA will begin to look for a project to fund, he added. In the decades since the first stampede, when proceeds went to help fund the first arena at the sports park, the VBA has raised



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)

more than \$1.2 million to put back into the community.

Amusement rides are being provided by Albion Attractions all three days, with bracelets for all-day rides. Although rides were traditionally provided by Homeniuk, a family-owned business, one of the family members passed away recently. Randy Homeniuk, who has been onsite for decades of stampedes, is partnering with Albion.

Bracelets will be available at Phil’s Independent in Virgil at a discounted price of \$35 until Friday May 20, at 9 p.m. — also the same price as 2019. Gate admission is free for those with bracelets.

The Kids’ Pavilion will be back, with lots of free entertainment for the youngsters

in the crowd. The Ben Show’s high-energy comedy, juggling, unicycling and circus stunts will be performed three times each of the three days. Ben Burland wows audiences and makes people laugh, perfect for a family event.

The popular air-brush face painting that kids love will be part of this year’s stampede, also in the Kids Pavilion. It is offered by a family of artists who do their best to make sure the line-up is never too long for youngsters to wait. There is a charge for the face painting.

And Mike London, a veteran at the stampede, will be back to provide an opportunity to interact and learn about some of his reptiles — he brings different ones each year, but usually includes an

iguana, a 10-foot python and an alligator, along with an assortment of geckos, chameleons and jumbo tortoises.

There will also be free pony rides for the kids all three days.

The Niagara Electric Flyers will be back, inside the Centennial Arena, all three days. The enthusiastic group of radio-controlled model plane operators always put on a great demonstration.

And as always, the event will wrap up with the traditional Victoria Day fireworks, Monday at dusk.

New this year, says Wall, is increased security at the gates. The property will be fenced, with personnel from a professional security firm — one accustomed to handling major

events with large crowds — checking bags as people enter. There have been some minor incidents in past years, Wall says, so on the advice of the Niagara Regional Police the decision was made to bring in security guards, “to ensure we continue to have a great family event for everyone.”

Volunteers are still needed. For those who might have time to give, visit <https://virgilstampede.ca/contact/>

volunteer-registration/

Gates are open at the Virgil Sports Park Saturday, May 21 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday, May 22, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Monday, May 23 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Parking will not be permitted in the sports park itself. The entrance from Four Mile Creek Road will be open just for drop-offs, says Wall, but while there is no parking on the site, there are several choices in town.

Parking will be permitted at the town hall parking lot on Lorraine Street, and from there, it’s a short walk along Lorraine Street or to the Four Mile Creek entrance to the sports park.

Cornerstone Church on Niagara Stone Road is offering its parking lot for all three days.

Niagara Motors has given permission to use their parking lot, only for Sunday and Monday.

The Niagara Credit Union has also agreed its parking lot can be used Sunday and Monday. There is access to Loretta Street from the back, and from there it’s a short walk to the sports park.

Phil’s Independent parking lot is available for parking only on Monday.

For more details visit virgilstampede.ca.

Virgil 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 overflow 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. 1567 Niagara Sone Road, five-minute walk to Gate 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 Virgil arena 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 must obtain permission or risk your vehicle being towed.
- The Virgil Sports Park is at 1565 Four Mile Creek Road in Virgil. For more information visit virgilstampede.ca



Photos from the 2019 Stampede include rides, volunteers making great food, Mike London’s reptiles, and free pony rides, all of which will be back.

Actual Kid-Friendly News

Kids

GAZETTE



SILLY PET PHOTO

Diane
the ducky
looking for her
buddy Jack!

May 2022 Volume 2 • Issue 7

FIND THE SMILEY FACE HIDDEN ON THIS PAGE!

Announcements

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 neighbourhood 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

N W O N T A R I O V
W I D L J U I Y Z B
S A A C I F U H B O
P C T G S B Z V L O
B I H E A L R H R K
E P C O R R A A H T
A A P N O F A K R D
C R Q F I L A L E Y
H K G F H C U L F Z
S J W W A T V P L B

WATERFALL
ONTARIO

PARK
NIAGARA

SCHOOL
BOOK

PICNIC
LAKE

LIBRARY
BEACH



RIDDLE

Q. Where do sheep go on vacation?

A. To the Baa-hamas.

Interview with Jayden

Q. What do you want to be when you grow up?

A. I want to be a 911 dispatcher. I think it's a cool job, dealing with all the calls and helping transmit the calls to the police.

Q. What is your favourite book?

A. It has to be *Dogman*. It entertains me when I need to be entertained. I like how funny it is, I also like how colourful it is. It makes me smile.

Q. What do you do to help others?

A. When they are down or sad and have nobody to play with I try to invite them to come play. That's not just at school, if I see a friend at a park I'll do that there too. Also, this June I am doing a lemonade stand to raise money to help send kids to camp. We did a lemonade stand before to raise money and we are going to do it again.

Q. What is a fun family tradition your family has?

A. We have a lot, but my favourite is probably the

Athertoonie Open. The entire family and some of our friends get together for a golf tournament. I enjoy it because we get to be outside and play golf - a sport that I love and enjoy. It also means spending quality time with my family. I won the longest drive once (I outdrove my dad).

Q. What's that certain something that makes you special?

A. I have the best mom ever. She's the best because of the love that she gives.

Q. What is your favourite thing about Niagara-on-the-Lake?

A. My favourite thing is probably the sunshine in the summer. I also like how beautiful the locations are, like down by the water. We like to do family paddleboarding in the summer.

Q. How did you keep yourself busy during COVID lockdowns?

A. I tried to keep myself entertained by playing video

games and going outside for bike rides.

Q. How would you change the world if you could?

A. If you make a promise, you would have to keep it. And, if you don't, there would be consequences.

Q. What is your ideal day in Niagara-on-the-Lake?

A. I would wake up and go to Tim Hortons for breakfast. Then I'd see a pug ... any pug. Then I'd go hang out with friends and go bike-riding, swimming, paddleboarding, play video games and just chillax. After that I'd play a round of golf with family. And, we'd go to Garrison House for dinner.



Jayden Polgrabia, 12

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 place would never 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 on the ceiling as if they could fly.
Strolling slowly to the kitchen,
Looking out in the yard, past the big, empty deck
Rain smacking 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 and fell,
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 wonder for what lies ahead.
She heard her mother's voice but the words didn't sink in.
Still in disbelief,
The girl follows her mom out the front door.
With tears in her eyes that were hidden by her crooked bangs.
Driving away from the one

place she could truly call home,
She longed to reach back,
Wishing she could hold on for a little longer.
But it served no purpose
Living in the past.

This poem is a ballad/narrative. It was inspired by *Looking Back* by Enos D. Watts. After reading his poem, I felt a connection with it. I have moved houses multiple times and some of the places I lived were very special and hold a lot of memories for me. That's why when I wrote this, I made it about one of my favourite houses we lived in for five years, and added things from my childhood. I hope when people read my poem they remember that moving on can hurt but it's no good to live in the past. If you do, you will miss all the amazing opportunities the future can bring.

SUBMISSION INFO

The hope for this page is to get kids involved and interacting with the community in a positive way. We welcome submissions for all categories from kids of any age. Please keep the reviews positive and all submitted content appropriate for kids of all ages. Please send all submissions to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com and in the subject line please put the category for which you are submitting. Thank you.

CHARITY

We are looking for charities in which kids can participate. If you would like your organization to be highlighted here, please send your information to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com.

Nature photography as both entertainment and tool



Despite the privilege of having a powerful and spacious desktop computer, it churns and moans 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? It's me, force-feeding the machine endless rounds of nature videos and photos.

I made another road trip away this weekend with my parents and a couple that we're great friends with. I was able to show them around some areas I have been picking away at during my Hidden Corners nature documentary series.

Sitting back at the desk as I write this, I have found some inspiration to discuss nature photography taken by everything from your phone, to cameras as expensive as a used car.

What cameras do I use for these educational nature films, including images you have seen here in The NOTL Local? As they say, good things come in threes.

As much as I appreciate the biodiversity of an old-growth forest or wetland, I also appreciate camera diversity.

I use a GoPro Hero 9 for action shots, durability, and story-telling. The wide angle, built-in stabilizer, and superbly high-quality image that fits in the pocket is an adventurer's essential. Not to mention that, in light terms, it is "idiot proof." You can drop it, dunk it, soak it, and muddy it up with no consequence. I use this small but mighty gem to focus on my animal encounters and physical escapades over the terrain.

My second camera is the cinematic and finely detailed Canon Rebel SL2. With its regular and long lens attachment options, I can bring the pupils of a frog or a soaring bald eagle to life in focused and stunning style. It hangs around my deck on any day, providing it isn't pouring rain. It gives me the choice to put the foreground into detail while blurring the background. A subject is a product of its environment, and I can toggle between which of these two facets I'd like to hone in on.

Last but not least, we look to the sky to find the DJI Mavic Mini drone. Cleverly sneaking under the relatively new legal drone licensing requirements, its small and inconspicuous size is a contrast to its enormously bold imagery taking in hundreds of acres at a time. I use it to give viewers a scope of the landscape I am studying, with an added wow factor we all enjoy — a rare glimpse from the air.

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 scamper 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 historically 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 cameras strings together either a photo or video product that reads as a story. These stories educate and inspire the public about why biodiversity matters. Without knowing about a subject, there are barriers to caring about it. When we don't care about the environment, issues such as water quality, flooding,



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)

and human-animal conflicts are given room to grow faster than the wildflowers 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. Taken with the Canon Rebel SL2.

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The Forces of Evil
Revelation 17
www.ccchurch.ca

CROSSWORD

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measure

51 Bashful

53 Top

54 Harsh treatment

57 Applicable

59 Entertainment

60 Bench with a back

63 Letters on Royal Navy ships

64 E.g. a street kiss

67 Horse controller

69 Spanish fashion designer --- Rabanne

71 Long

73 Aware of

74 Overnight stops

75 Law

76 Fight against underwater threats

77 Penny

78 U R L starter

4 One of the Indian majority

5 Quarrelsome grouch

6 Very fashionable

7 Hog-wild

8 Recording medium

9 Belief system

10 Bad weather

11 Paved outdoor area

12 Karate degree

15 Hammer god

21 Aim

23 Federal fiscal watchdog

25 One of a hundred in D C

27 Eye cell

28 Methods

29 Statement of understanding

30 The Beatles' lovely meter maid

32 Apiece

33 Antidotes

34 Classic Ford model

37 Type of rechargeable cell

39 Man-eating giant

40 Stimulating South American shrub

41 Sit in a tub

43 Bank machine

46 E.g. Robinson, Doubtfire

48 Plump

50 Vigor

52 Thanksgiving dish

54 Spherical hairdo

55 --- Vista, Disney brand

56 Military groups

58 Outguess

61 Heroic

62 Diminish slowly

63 Vast multitude

64 Gasp

65 Bead

66 Newswoman --- Curry

68 The present time

70 Cable/satellite network

72 Dine

**Crossword puzzle
answers on page 19**

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

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Celebration of Life for Lion Alexander Power to take place at the St. Davids Lions Club, 1462 York Road, St. Davids on Sunday, May 29, 2022 from 1pm to 4pm. Mask optional.

Donations can be made to St. Davids Lions Club. Include your name, address, phone number on your cheque. Mark in Memory of Alexander Power.

Address: St. Davids Lions Club
P.O. Box 137, 1462 York Road,
St. Davids, ON. L0S 1P0

Please RSVP by May 25 if you are coming.
Email atpewer@hotmail.com.



OBITUARY

CELEBRATION OF LIFE



WILLOUGHBY, COLIN EDWARD 1949 – 2022 With deep sadness, the Willoughby family announces Colin's passing on May 14, 2022, at St. Catharines General Hospital at the age of 72. Loving son to Edward and Joan Willoughby and father to Caitlin and Maxwell Willoughby. Colin's career as a social worker started at Aids Niagara (Positive Living Niagara) in 1993 and spanned 23 years until his retirement from Cason in 2016. Born in England, and coming to Canada at the young age of six, his family initially settled outside of Toronto. He later moved to St. Catharines to attend Brock University where he put down his roots. He majored in Classical Studies, with a specific interest in Philosophy and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1979. His life experiences, love of learning and formal education made him well cultured and knowledgeable in many areas. Colin's love of 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



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.

OBITUARY

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.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 18

Across: 1 Hash, 5 Chat, 9 I S P, 12 Dubai, 13 Roma, 14 Stat, 16 Allan, 17 Atop, 18 Moth, 19 May, 20 Deb, 22 Keg, 24 Rio, 25 Sun, 26 Armor, 28 Wire, 31 Dec, 34 Loo, 35 A sin, 36 Aunt, 38 Docs, 42 Yet, 43 Acrid, 44 Goo, 45 Seam, 47 Them, 48 Orca, 49 R p m, 51 Shy, 53 Peak, 54 Abuse, 57 Apt, 59 Fun, 60 Pew, 63 H M S, 64 P D A, 67 Rein, 69 Paco, 71 Year, 73 Onto, 74 Inns, 75 Canon, 76 A-S W, 77 Cent, 78 H t t p. Down: 1 Hula, 2 Abby, 3 S A A, 4 Hindu, 5 Crab, 6 Hot, 7 Amok, 8 Tape, 9 Ism, 10 Storm, 11 Pato, 12 Dan, 15 Thor, 21 End, 23 G A O, 25 Sen, 27 Rod, 28 Ways, 29 I see, 30 Rita, 32 Each, 33 Cures, 34 LTD, 37 NI-M H, 39 Ogre, 40 Coca, 41 Soak, 43 A T M, 46 Mrs, 48 Opt, 50 Pep, 52 Yam, 54 Afro, 55 Buena, 56 Units, 58 Psych, 61 Epic, 62 Ware, 63 Host, 64 Pant, 65 Drop, 66 Ann, 68 Now, 70 C N N, 72 Eat.

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Local
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Penny Coles

The Local

A yellow disc golf basket with silver chains is in the foreground. In the background, a woman in a purple shirt and white cap is standing on a green field, and another person is further back. The scene is outdoors with trees in the distance.

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

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