

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



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page 12

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Pumphouse celebrates 25 years

Tina Stewart, Peggy Walker, Barbara Ahluwalia, Nancy Butler and Diane Debenham, five of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre founders, modelled local designer outfits at Sunday's fashion show at the Garden Hilton Inn. The large glasses are a tribute to fashion designer Iris Apfel, her trademark. The afternoon luncheon and fashion show was one of many events organized to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the pumphouse. For more see pages 14 and 15. (Penny Coles)

Region testing water quality at Queen's Royal

Penny Coles
The Local

Although Town CAO Holly Dowd said last week she didn't think Queen's Royal Beach had been closed due to bacteria levels in recent memory,

it was closed 14 times in 2018.

The Niagara Region tests the water at public beaches from May to August to ensure they are safe for swimming, and posts notices online for the public when they are unsafe

due to high levels of E. coli, said Anthony Habjan, manager of environmental health for the Region.

Those 14 postings in NOTL were out of a total of 106 days. In 2017, the beach was posted 24 per cent of those days — typ-

ically eight to 10 per cent would be considered a good season, he said.

Higher than average rainfall is a big factor, he explained, as is wind direction, but in 2017 the issue was the contaminated water in the storm sewer out-

let at the beach, which is now being remediated.

Habjan explained Queen's Royal is the only Niagara beach where the municipality collects its own water samples and sends them to the Region to be tested. That's because

the NOTL beach, compared to others, is not as busy and does not meet Regional guidelines to require testing.

"You might see 40 people down at the beach in

Continued on page 4



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Resident, Town staff work together to handle rising water

Penny Coles
The Local

Last Friday afternoon, retired engineer Ron Simkus announced to his 100 or so email contacts, including Town staff and council, that according to the US Army Corps of Engineers, “we have officially reached the record level for Lake Ontario set back in May 2017,” 20 inches higher than this time last year and 31 inches over the long-term average.

Earlier in the day, the River Beach Drive resident said the lake was a touch lower than in 2017 — officially, three inches below the highest level — but that would change. And by afternoon, it had.

The question remains, how much further will it rise?

The charts for Lake Ontario “read like science fiction, numbers that nobody dreamed of predicting,” says Simkus.

Environment Canada data shows the lake has another 10 inches to go between now and mid-June.

He said he hopes the “worst case scenario” number is exaggerated, but if it holds true, “we will have to live through

an extended period of high water that has never been experienced before. The summer storms will come and the waves with them. This is the biggest threat by far.”

Walking along the waterfront Friday, comparing notes with Brett Ruck, the Town’s environmental supervisor, Simkus said most home owners in the Dock Area did what they could to protect their properties during and after the 2017 flooding.

Ruck agreed. “Right now most people are feeling confident the shoreline protection we’ve done since then will do the rest of the work. We learned a lesson in 2017. But we can’t anticipate everything — there are so many variables.”

He said the Town is also better prepared now than it was two years ago, but hadn’t expected a repeat so quickly, or considered it could be worse.

“Now maybe we have to start thinking this is going to be the new norm, but what level do we protect it to?”

He said so far it’s been a matter of “educated guessing,” based on heavy snow melt and a lot of



Town staff Brett Ruck and Rene Landry have been working with Dock Area resident Ron Simkus on an action plan for handling rising water levels. Simkus is out every day with Pearl studying his own reference points for the water level. Ruck says he too has reference points, but he also depends on the detailed research from Simkus to help him. (Penny Coles)

rain. “It’s always a combination of things. We can easily handle one issue or even two, but then you get a third thing thrown in and it’s a juggling act.” They both agreed with

levels predicted to be higher than they’ve ever seen, it’s difficult to gauge the impact.

A lot of what happens will depend on the wind, said Simkus — 90 per cent of waterfront damage occurs when the wind is from the east, but the wind only comes from the east about five per cent of the time.

However, also of concern is the prediction the lake will remain high until November. “The longer it takes to go up, the longer it takes to go down. There are an infinite number of variables as to what kind of storms we can have until then, and what they could do to us.”

Ruck was forthright about the value of the assistance Simkus is providing the Town.

“I’ve said openly I can’t do a better job,” said Ruck.

“The time Ron spends on researching and gathering data, the level of detail he provides, the visual representations — it’s all invaluable.”

As of Friday, Ruck said, he was still running various modelling scenarios to determine what will happen if the water levels continue to rise as predicted.

“At that point we’ll have a better idea of what we’re looking, the impact it will have and what else we can do about it. You can’t address a problem until you know what it is.”

After that will come the action plan, but much of what can be done already has been done, he said.

And Simkus, after expressing some criticism of the Town’s efforts to stabilize the path along the waterfront recently, praised the work being

done on shoreline stabilization. He believes NOTL is “leading the pack” compared to other municipalities, he said, although there is more work to be done, and quickly. He suggested any delay to getting armour stone in place for shoreline protection around the Dock Area parkette would mean extensive damage. As the lake level rises and the soil becomes saturated, heavy equipment working in the area “will tear it apart,” he warned.

In a recent email blitz, he said, “I want to let council know that although we appreciate and value your efforts in our district, we also recognize that the scope of this year’s shoreline challenge wraps all the way around NOTL, from Navy Hall to Port Weller. We are not alone.”

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Residents create berm for flooding protection

Penny Coles
The Local

Dock Area residents decided to get a jump on flooding protection this weekend, creating a berm around a pond of water threatening to overload a ditch along the waterfront.

Lake water has pooled on the land as a result of the historic stone railway culvert at the west end of River Beach Drive. The ditch where it was collecting leads to one of the pumps the Town has installed, explained retired mining engineer Ron Simkus, and would keep the pump going steadily, pumping lake water back into the lake.

“We’re trying to stop that from happening,” he said. “What we’re doing now is saving the pump. The Town will finish it with some equipment that will fit into this location.”

Neighbours pitched in to help Saturday, and were

back at it Sunday, placing a berm of soil and gravel about two feet high around the pool.

Town environmental supervisor Brett Ruck has been trying to arrange for a contractor to finish the work along the shoreline, Simkus said, and would be bringing in some large equipment to complete it, but the residents were doing what they could over the weekend to get the job started.

The part of the project that is unfinished includes moving a pile of large rocks — anchors, explained Simkus — and cobbles along the beach to protect the shoreline from further erosion and slow the movement of waves.

“The water will still get over the rocks, but when it goes back it won’t draw as much soil with it on its way. There is a lot more work to be done. And the contractors are all busy at this time

of year. But Brett is working with one of the best and most efficient to get it done as quickly as possible.”

The work that was done to reinforce the waterfront path to allow for heavy equipment will have to be redone, he said. “The way it is now you can’t use it. They will be putting in the reinforcement as they should have done in the first place.”

Simkus said Town staff are dealing with issues they were not expected to handle, and weren’t prepared for.

However, he added, “this town is populated with people who have dealt with problems like this, people who have the knowledge and experience to help.”

Simkus, who has been sharing his expertise and research with the Town, said during his mining career, “I’ve dealt with issues much bigger.”

He praised Ruck for the work he is doing to manage

a challenging situation.

“People here are concerned about what could happen. My answer is I don’t know. But Brett is doing the modelling necessary to find out the impact of the water rising to various levels, and once that’s done, he can work out the strategies to deal with it.”

While neighbours piled dirt around the pool with their shovels, wheelbarrows and tarps being used to drag the soil and gravel, Simkus was digging to deepen the narrow trench, to keep it from overflowing the stretch of waterfront and reaching the houses not far from it.

The home of senior Lois Cranston in particular was badly damaged in 2017, and they would be placing sandbags along the front of her house as an extra layer of safety, he said.

The threat, he added, was not just to the immediate homes of the Dock Area,



Ron Simkus spent Sunday afternoon trying to dig out a deeper trench along the Dock Area waterfront as protection against rising lake levels. (Penny Coles)



A group of neighbours gathered at the old stone railway culvert in the Dock Area parkette over the weekend to begin a project that will be completed by a contractor at the direction of Town staff. (Penny Coles)

but stretched along to the Nelson Street Park, which was already under water, the Kings Point condominiums, the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre and a private home beside it on Ricardo Street.

Sandbags were being placed at the front of the home, and the large white metre bags, filled with rock, were being moved in to protect the pumphouse, said Simkus.

He refers to the recent news of bacteria in the storm water sewer system, and says the issues of rising water levels, storm water outlets to the lake and cross-contamination be-

tween storm and sanitary sewers are related.

“If the sewers become overwhelmed, then the only thing we can do is shut off the water. The sewers have to be protected more than anything else.”

He said although water quality is tested at Queen’s Royal Park, it hasn’t been at Ball’s Beach, where more people swim, because it’s not considered a public recreation area.

He disputes recent information about Queen’s Royal Beach not being closed — it was posted as unsafe to swim several times last summer, although not so far this year, he said.

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Jim Reynolds, Debi Pratt, Louise Howe and Barbara Worthy help to create a berm to prevent water pooling in front of the old Dock Area railway culvert from reaching a ditch that drains to a storm sewer being pumped by the Town. Otherwise the pump would be running constantly to pump lake water back to the lake, says retired mining engineer Ron Simkus. (Penny Coles)

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Business as usual — almost — at sailing club

Penny Coles
The Local

At the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club, it's business as usual — almost.

Ed McIlroy, general manager of the club, is having to handle situations arising from the high lake levels, but as home owners and Town staff dealing with similar issues have said, the experience of two years ago has made it easier.

Club staff continue to launch boats, although it takes a little longer with the launch ramp under about two feet of water — but then many club members aren't in a hurry to get their boats in the water, says McIlroy. "We are having to be very cautious, because the ramp is under water, but we have an experienced crew who knows what they're doing."

It can be a challenge to get to them, with the docks under water — although risers are being used to raise them to make boats accessible — and there is no hydro available.

"We're doing everything we can to get boat owners to their boats safely, and we email them daily so they're not blindsided."

He's anticipating having to add a third and even fourth set of risers on the docks, if the lake level continues to climb.

Motors from the gas pumps have been removed — one was damaged in the 2017 flooding, said McIlroy, and they are expensive to replace.

The racing season has started, and so far none have been cancelled because of the weather — although one was because of ice in the Niagara River — but participation has been lower, he said.

"We were much better prepared for this than we were two years ago, and I don't see that we can be hurt by it, as far as our facilities go. We've done everything we can to prevent that."

He has photos from 2017 to show how close the water got to some of the buildings behind the club — the yard office and the boat repair, and said he hopes it doesn't go any further.

He also has photos from 1973 and 1993 that indicate high lake levels were experienced before the recent flooding of two years ago. "It seemed that this was a 20 or 20-plus year cycle, so for this to come along just two years later was a real shocker. But we won't be devastated by it. We'll just have to clean up afterwards and move on, doing what we do, putting boats in the water."

He expects the learn-to-sail program to continue as planned.

If the water level stays elevated, as predicted, or if this becomes the new norm, as some have said, it will significantly affect club revenue.

NOTL is a desirable location for visiting sailboats, but in 2017, the club had to close the docks to visitors until August. McIlroy says he's already cancelled all of the reservations until June 22, and expects he might have to continue that at least through July. In a typical season the club sees between 700 and 900 visiting boats, he said.

It's easier for clubs with floating docks, he said, but that's not the case in NOTL.

"I can't discount how it affects our business. It does. It significantly affected revenue in 2017, and it will again. It's an important part of our revenue that's been there forever and is factored in to our operations."

Without a crystal ball to predict what will happen to the lake, he adds, "I guess we just wait and see, and pray for no rain. We're all trying to wrap our heads around what's happening, and what causes it — the large snowfall, the snow melt, the rain. Maybe it will be another 20 years before it happens again, and maybe it won't. One thing for sure, we can't predict the weather."



Andrew Robson, yard supervisor, and Russ Hodgkinson, yard attendant, demonstrate the depth of water in their hip waders on the ramp at the NOTL Sailing Club, as they wait to launch the next boat. (Penny Coles)

Town studying impact of potential water levels

Continued from page 1

NOTL, but zero people in the water," he said, noting other beaches might have 200 to 300 people swimming. With limited resources to be spent where most needed, said Habjan, those are the beaches that are tested by the Region.

But due to the remediation work at Queen's Royal, and the involvement of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, students have been hired and trained to collect samples at the NOTL beach daily, and the Region is offering its support by providing the equipment, doing the testing and posting the re-

sults online the following morning. The Region also notifies Brett Ruck, NOTL's environmental supervisor, of the results, and it's up to the Town to change the posting on the sign at the beach when the water is unsafe for swimming, said Habjan.

Monday was the first day of this season that the municipality took water samples and sent them off to the Region for testing, he said, with results to be posted Wednesday.

Tim Bala of Paddle Niagara, one of the few regulars to go in the water at Queen's Royal Beach, said Tuesday he "has full confidence in the Town at this point."

He said he knew the water quality was being tested, and why, and it's not something that concerns him. "Now it's been brought to their attention, and they're spending money on remediation. Awesome."

The Town began investigating the cause of E. coli in the water two years ago, and has been working to repair aging infrastructure to eliminate cross-connections between sanitary and storm sewers, based on priority.

For more information about beach closures check www.niagararegion.ca/living/water/beaches/default.aspx.



Tim Bala is one of the regulars at Queen's Royal Beach. The postings are not a concern to him, he said, and he's pleased the Town is working on remediation to the sewer system causing problems with bacteria in the water. (Lauren O'Malley)

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LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: CAUGHILL AUTO

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In 1947, United Empire Loyalist farmers Walt Caughill and his brother Roy had a broken-down truck and a dismal harvest ahead.

Parts to repair the truck were difficult to find, and costly. Walt found another farmer with a similar truck which had a different mechanical issue, bought it and used it as a donor truck to repair his.

Soon other farmers with similar trucks became interested in parts and pieces from Walt's donor. His truck repair soon became profitable and he added a few more vehicles to his collection and continued to grow, adding needed revenue to the farming operations. As they say, necessity is the mother of invention and in late 1947 Caughill Auto Wreckers was born.

In 1962 George Dingman, Walt's grandson, became a partner in the business. George grew the footprint of the business to occupy five acres of the farm property, and added equipment and buildings over the following years. He bought his grandfa-



ther's interest in the business in 1972 and continued to expand the types of vehicles purchased to supply the growing parts demand.

In 1982 George's son Wally joined the business and later in 1989 George's other son Brad joined full-time. As the business grew it added a 7,000 square foot shop and more infrastructure to dismantle and depollute the wide range of vehicles being processed. The



Wally Dingman wants people to know Caughill Auto offers full service repairs, including battery and tire installation, along with quality new and used parts.

business computerized in 1993, allowing more analysis of the needs and wants of the growing customer base.

The automobile has evolved in the past 20 years, becoming much more complex, requiring specialized equipment to diagnose and repair. It became apparent the do-it-yourself customer base was struggling to buy parts and do repairs at home, as they had done for the past 70 years of

Caughill's growing business.

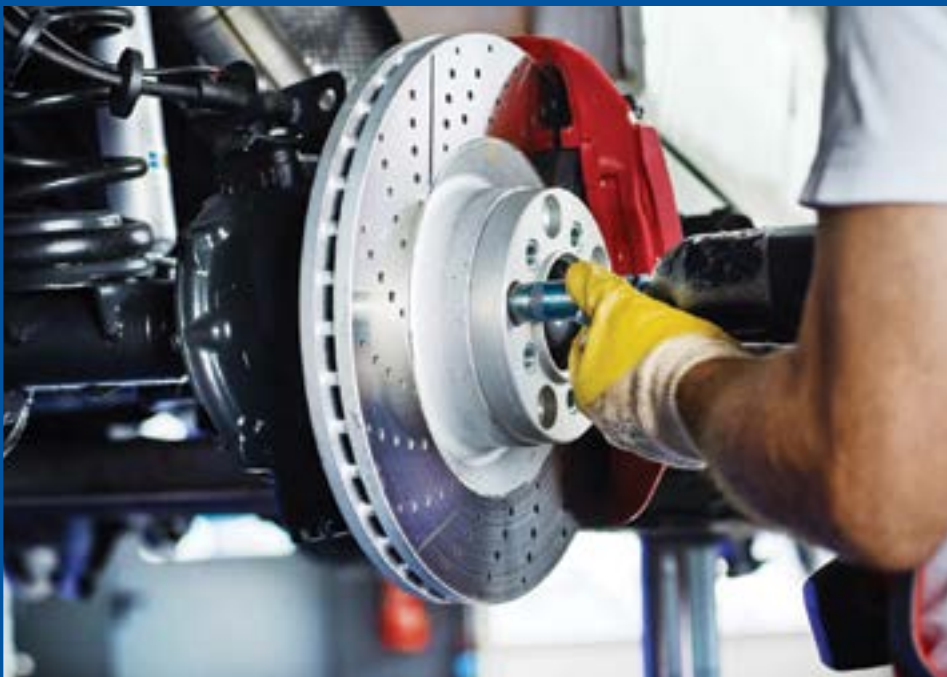
In 2013 Caughill Auto ventured into tire and battery installation for both the farm base and retail customers. This created a further opportunity to move into full auto service and repairs, joining the NAPA Auto Care Group in 2017.

Caughill has enjoyed a long, rich history in Niagara. "We are so grateful to our loyal customers and friends for the continued support of our family business," said Wally Dingman, now owner and operator of Caughill Auto.

Caughill Auto still offers environmentally-responsible auto recycling and quality used and new auto parts. Its repair facility can manage every sort of repair for almost any situation, used auto parts to keep that second car on the road one more year, or New Napa Quality parts with coast-to-coast, 12-month 20,000-km warranty — and everything in between.

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EDITORIAL

Town to share information

Last week, The Local reported that Queen's Royal Beach had not been posted as unsafe for swimming in 2018.

That was incorrect. It was posted 14 times.

There seems to be some lack of communication between the Town and the Region, says Town CAO Holly Dowd, although she was quick to take responsibility for being mistaken in the information she provided The Local, which was clarified by the Region this week.

Although it's not the Town's responsibility for taking water samplings, it has taken on that job. The Region then does the testing, the Region posts online whether beaches are safe for swimming, and Town staff physically flip the sign at the beach to inform those who might be planning on swimming, we learned this week.

Dowd feels the Town is doing the Region a favour by collecting water samples, the Region says it's helping the Town by doing the testing. Either way, it's being done.

Dowd didn't receive any information that the beach was unsafe last year, but other staff members did and carried out their duty to inform the public.

The bad news is that Town staff are once again struggling due to lack of communication, both internally and with the Region. Neither issue is new.

The good news is that staff did what was necessary, and residents and visitors to the town had the information they needed last summer — and

will again this summer — to make a decision about swimming in the water at Queen's Royal Beach.

It seems the current arrangement between the Town and Region may be temporary. It works for now, but the Region's limited resources could mean the NOTL beach may not be tested at all next summer. That, however, is a problem for 2020. There are more immediate issues on which to focus.

Thankfully, it seems Town staff are trying to overcome the tendency toward inadequate communication that keeps getting them in trouble with residents, that feeds the perception, real or otherwise, that information is being withheld, and secrets kept. As with all of us who sometimes are slow to learn life lessons, we say if Town staff are able to acknowledge this shortcoming and repair the damage, better late than never.

Early this week, a decision was made to hold a public meeting for Dock Area residents, to bring them up-to-date with the potentially rising lake level and what is being done to mitigate the impact. It's an ongoing concern for those who live along the waterfront, and not having correct and current information has exasperated what is already a frightening and serious problem. The concern that Town staff were not properly handling what was before them, that they didn't have the skills or knowledge to do so, was not inspiring confidence in those

who fear for the safety of their homes.

Town staff are doing a good job, said operations manager Sheldon Randall. They're just not good at communicating that to residents. That will hopefully be remedied Friday, with a public meeting at 1:30 p.m. at the community centre.

By the end of the day Wednesday, Dock Area residents should have received a notice of the meeting in their mail boxes.

But Brett Ruck, the Town's environmental supervisor, is inspiring confidence in Dock Area residents and in Ron Simkus, a retired mining engineer, who has offered his advice and detailed data to help with flood protection. Ruck will be at the meeting, and safe to assume Simkus will as well.

Although the two issues, water quality and flooding impacts, may seem to be unrelated issues, and are being handled separately as such, at one level — that is, the lake level — they are not unrelated.

Rising water puts pressure on the Town's aging sewers, cross-contamination causes sewage to enter the lake through storm water outlets, and the beach becomes unsafe.

Town staff must be sure they have the information and knowledge required to move forward, whether it's from within or with help from consultants or experienced volunteers, and must act on it. And they must effectively and in a timely fashion communicate that they are doing so to residents.

LOCAL FINDS



Paffard couple have interesting history

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Frederick Paffard's family monument is easily seen from Byron Street. It is white marble and large. Paffard was a successful wholesale druggist and lived with his family in the impressive house that is now the Charles Inn. He was a person of interest, but so was his wife. She was born Katharina Haideen in Greece in 1823. While still young she was taken as a slave by the Turks and then sold to an English traveller who took her back to Portsmouth in England and raised her as his daughter. Later she fell in love with and married Frederick Paffard, and they came to live in Niagara. Katharina's life must have seemed exotic to the other wives of town and there is doubtless a lot more to her story, but the rest remains a mystery.



Waiting for water

But not for long. Daniella and Ethan Ceballos, grandchildren of Dave and Lydia Plett, and Santiago Restrepo ride their bikes in the Virgil Sport Park Sunday, patiently waiting for the splash pad to open. The Virgil splash pad will open this Friday, June 1 to mid-September, depending on the weather, says parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte. The wading pool in Simcoe Park opens June 29 to Sept. 2. (Penny Coles)

The NOTL Local acknowledges the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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Play safe this summer — pay attention to the weather



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Water is the ultimate life force.

Living things require water to live, so it is basically oil to our biological machines. Our body is up to 60 per cent water by weight. Water also changes states of matter, and just over 12,000 years ago, the world where we live was ice, one kilometre thick above our heads and squishing the landscape down, albeit ready to melt and retreat.

Water has shaped landscapes in Niagara, and nowadays, it can shape outcomes to our safety if we're not respectful of it.

Water deserves this respect. Its power is easily overlooked and deceptive, making it an appreciable danger at times. As the weather heats up in Niagara-on-the-Lake, more people will begin immersing themselves in the crisp waters of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, either by means of a swim, or just getting out on the fishing boat or kayak. Unfortunately, the water quality of our One, Two, Four, and Eight Mile Creeks is not the most inviting.

Just because you're at a popular water destination

this summer, doesn't mean you shouldn't be mindful of water's volatile potential.

Two summers ago, my friend and I launched our kayaks on a breezy, hot summer day in Port Dalhousie. The kind of mid-July day where you can just feel all the ingredients are in the air ready to cook up some big storms. The storms weren't forecast until that evening, if at all, so we hit the water directly from the public beach. We knew and accepted there was a risk of sorts.

We pushed headlong out into the open water, with the decommissioned Port Dalhousie pier to our right well within sight. Suddenly we were giving that pier too close a look. The hot evaporative winds rushing over Lake Ontario were whipping up. They were fuelling the upcoming storms and shoving our kayaks around.

While out of the rain, we were not out of the wind. Its onset was sudden, and its power was unusually sustained. It was pushing our kayaks closer to the pier wall and its ugly boulders. My buddy and I shot each other looks with dropped jaws as we bobbed in and out of sight from each other. The waves passing between us were cresting above our heads, sometimes dumping into our kayaks.

These weren't the conditions of five minutes ago.

We swung out around



A view of a surprise thunderstorm from Niagara Street, facing north. You can only hope these pop-up storms don't catch water-goers on the lake off guard. Be mindful on these upcoming hot, humid, windy summer days. (Owen Bjorgan)

the pier tip, and out of the wind around its corner. Amazed that we hadn't cap-sized, we grabbed hold of a metal emergency ladder, linked our kayaks, and hung on for a second. Hanging on was key, as the force of water pushing out from the Martindale Pond into the lake was phenomenal. We didn't expect that current. If we let go, either we or our kayaks would be getting pushed out into the open waters of the lake again.

We clung on, as we were

regrouping our thoughts and having a chuckle about that adrenaline rush. Always save time for a laugh; it can really help sometimes.

There was no way we were paddling back out into the windward side and getting smashed into the rocks. So we decided to climb up a ladder, with two kayaks, in a wind storm, onto the closed pier. Yes, it was tricky. I have no issue with this story of us being on the closed pier made

public, because that mass of land really helped us out.

We successfully marched back down the pier to the parking lot, across a carpet of bird feces, all the while trying not to be blown off the structure with our kayaks acting as a sail.

In NOTL, we share the same lake and the same weather systems as Port Dalhousie next door.

Admittedly, I have an unusual desire to get outside when the elements are a little bit testy. These moments

have shown me the power of water and what it can do, and I have learned from it.

The weather and the water's moods are absolutely correlated. It's not a relationship you want to test, so it's best to be prepared with a solid weather forecast. It's also important to know the area or have a plan to make it to shore. Bonus tip: tell someone where you're going on the water. That's a habit I've had to adopt. It's easy enough, and it could save your life.

Newark says thanks for community support

Suzanne Vaillant
Newark Neighbours

We would like to send out a big thank you to all who donated to our food bank for the Easter baskets and the chocolate goodies for the children. Special thanks go out to Red Roof Retreat, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St. Davids Lions Club, Reif Winery and all who continue to donate to our food bank.

We appreciate and value

the generosity of our community for the donations which allow us to continue our mission of "Serving our Community with Compassion, Care and Concern." Making this mission a reality would not be possible without all our volunteers whose time and effort we greatly appreciate.

Newark Neighbours held their annual general meeting in April. We would like to thank Hilary Bellis, president/chair, who completed

two terms as chair and many kudos go out to her for the great changes and hours dedicated to Newark Neighbours. We would also like to thank Cindy Grant who completed her two years as vice-chair, for her dedication and work accomplished in her role.

The newly elected board consists of Laura Gibson, president/chair; Suzanne Vaillant, vice-chair; Julian Trachsel, treasurer; Marion Ollerhead, food bank manager;

Susan Mace, store maintenance manager; Hilary Bellis, volunteer liaison; and Elaine Baitinger, secretary.

Our volunteers also helped out with the Prom Project. With the donations of prom wear for young women and men, the students were able to select outfits to attend their prom.

Clothing and small appliances continue to come in as people try to eliminate more clutter, and our migrant farm workers seem to look forward to visiting our store on

Sundays, leaving with many great finds.

A small reminder that due to the limitations in our store we cannot accept the following items: children's toys, books and large appliances.

Again, we cannot express how much this community has and is always willing to support our families who need assistance and the workers who are here year after year helping out on our farms and in our vineyards.

Please bring donations to 310 John St. East (just off Riverbend Inn driveway), Sunday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information call: 905-468-3519 or visit www.newarkneighbours.ca.



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Local Grade 8s learn about mental wellness

Limiting screen use would save brain cells, expert tells kids

Penny Coles
The Local

Dr. Ron Clavier had a message to share with Grade 8 students Monday. If you want to be the best you can be, turn off your cell phones.

He's not the first to suggest screen time, including phones, TV, computers and iPads, should be limited to two hours a day. However it may have been the first time the young teens from Crossroads, St. Michael and St. David's elementary schools had a brain scientist tell them why.

The occasion was a Grade 8 Mental Health & Wellness Conference, organized by the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council members with help from Town staff.

Clavier, a neuroscientist, psychiatrist and psychologist who specializes in teen's mental health, has been acting as an advisor to the advisory council, attending meetings and offering assistance — he says he steers away from giving them advice, but prefers to share information that helps them make choices.

That was also the way he handled his presentation on cell phones, screen time and

sleep deprivation, which affects many teenagers — he said he wouldn't tell them what to do, but would give them the information they need to make their own decisions.

The kids were asked to turn off their cell phones for the day — eliciting several groans in response — but Clavier said he wanted them to experience the discomfort of being without their phones, a signal they use them too much.

Then he explained the importance of getting sufficient sleep to recharge the chemicals in the brain that have been depleted during the day. Those chemicals are fuel for the brain, he said. "If you didn't get enough sleep, you may start the day without enough of the fuel you need. Starting off the day with half a tank of gas means you'll run out of it. At the end of the day you'll be running on low."

Teenagers need about 10 hours of sleep, and most get about six hours, he said.

The solution is, "go to sleep earlier. It's simple, it works. Turn off your phone, turn off your devices, let the room get quiet, and go to sleep."

But although it's simple, he said, "that doesn't mean it's

easy. It isn't."

Turning off electronic devices "allows you to have the future you want. I don't want to see you short-changed in your ability to do what you want, that could have been avoided. I don't want you to say 'why didn't someone tell me when I was 13 or 14?'"

He asked them to think about what they are giving up — in study time, the ability to focus, to be "in the zone" to be able to learn. When they are distracted by their devices, he said, they won't remember what they're studying and they won't learn what they need to learn to be the best they can be.

"If you're using screens five, six, or seven hours a day, you're going into an area where you could be damaging your brain, and that damage is permanent."

He dispelled the myth that humans don't need all of their brain cells. "That's not true. I'm a brain scientist, and I'm telling you we need all of our brain cells. We can't afford to lose any. Seven hours a day will make you lose brain cells and you don't get them back."

He spoke of athletes, artists and surgeons who get into

the zone they need to perform, "but if the phone rings or there's a knock on the door, that feeling is broken."

You don't get back into the zone without going back to the beginning, he said. "You can study for three hours and not learn a thing if your phone was on and you were being interrupted."

He also talked to the teens of the importance of relationships. "We need friends, family, classmates, teammates — the brain needs that to be healthy."

Screens, he said, "take away a little of our humanity."

He suggested students ask their parent to also give up some of their screen time, and to do something together. "It doesn't have to be angry, but don't let them off the hook."

Each group of students had the opportunity to sit through four breakaway sessions. In addition to Clavier's workshop, there were two members of the Region's public health department leading sessions, one talking about vaping, including health and legal issues, the other about nutrition and the relationship between sugar and marketing. Karen Post from Red Roof Retreat led the fourth with a vision board exercise on mental wellness.

Clavier closed the conference with a short keynote ad-

dress on anxiety.

While parents do a great job of talking to kids about physical changes of the teenage years, nobody is talking to them about the changes in their brains and their emotions,

he said, which can be even more devastating — kids think something's wrong with them, and that leads to problems.

"It's cruel not to give kids a heads-up," he said. "We don't want that to happen."



Several students left their cell phones on the table during the Mental Wellness Conference workshop, but didn't pick them up. (Penny Coles)



Psychologist Ron Clavier shares some information with teens gathered at the community centre on how to be the best they can be. (Penny Coles)





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Museum offers four new neighbourhood walks

Penny Coles
The Local

Two volunteer guides, working with The Niagara Historical Society and Museum, are ready to introduce locals to two neighbourhoods they might not have explored.

Irish Town/Rye Park and Queen Street beyond the shops are unique neighbourhoods which feature their own landscapes and some interesting history.

The museum volunteers will walk the streets of these neighbourhoods with participants and share some of their history during the return of the popular Neighbourhood Walks program during the month of June.

On June 7 and 21, Denise Ascenzo will lead the Queen Street Estate tours, and on June 14 and 28, Judy Thornton will share stories of the Rye Park and Irish Town neighbourhood.

The June 28 tour is al-

ready sold-out and others are filling up fast, says Amy Klassen, the museum's acting managing director.

The 2018 tours all sold out.

"We had many people disappointed to miss out on tours last year, but we cap the group at 25 to make sure that we can keep them together and so that everyone can hear."

Each tour starts at 6 p.m. and runs for about one hour. Tickets are \$10 per person and must be purchased in advance at the museum. Participants are encouraged to wear walking shoes and bring a bottle of water.

"We couldn't do this program without the generosity and dedication of our volunteer tour guides who spend the winter researching the history of these special parts of town. The guides work hard finding interesting stories that people may not know," says Klassen.

She says the museum

hopes to offer the walking tours again in 2020 and welcomes suggestions for future neighbourhoods.

"Or if there is enough interest to repeat some of the 2018 or 2019 tours,

call the museum to give them your vote."

The museum also offers a general history tour every Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m. from June to September. Tours

start at the Queen's Royal Park Gazebo and are \$10, which includes admission to the museum.

For more information on the museum and its special events and exhi-

bitions, please visit www.niagarahistoricalmuseum.com or call 905-468-3912.

The museum is located at 43 Castlereagh St. and is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Last year's museum walks were sold out, and it's looking like this year's will be as well. (Photo supplied)



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Volunteers hold annual bike safety event for farm workers

Penny Coles
The Local

Guillermo Hernandez Alcantar has come to Niagara-on-the-Lake to work on local farms for the last 12 years. In that time he's missed only two or three bike safety events.

Javier Morales, a volunteer with the Niagara Falls Multicultural Centre, was learning the ropes of the event and helping the Spanish-speaking farm workers by providing his services as a translator.

Morales is learning English, he said, and the event was giving him a chance to practise and improve his language skills, while helping others.

Alcantar said, through the translator, that he needs his bike for shopping and for transportation.

When he has some time off work, he said, he likes to ride his bike around town and visit different spots.

He said he was happy to have Mark Gaudet check over his bike. He was getting new tires for it and its chain oiled, among other things.

"I use it for fun. When I'm not working I'm riding my bike," he said.

Alcantar is just one of

thousands of farm workers who over the years have been able to ride their bikes away from the annual event with it in better shape than when it arrived, at no cost.

Gaudet was hoping to add lights to the bikes he repaired, but they hadn't arrived on time — he said when they do he will put them on bikes that are brought to the former Virgil Public School, where he and a team of volunteers repair bikes for farm workers.

Alcantar also had an opportunity to listen to Spanish music, receive health advice, enjoy a dinner and hope to win one of 37 bikes being raffled Sunday afternoon at the Centennial Arena.

Possibly most important was the opportunity to socialize with other workers from other farms.

It's been more than 25 years since the first bike rodeo was held for migrant workers, but this year might have been the largest turnout yet.

There was also more to offer the men and women who arrived at the Centennial Arena on a sunny Sunday afternoon to socialize, have their bikes checked out for safety, and enjoy a free dinner prepared and served by volunteers, with

live entertainment by Enlace, a group which comes from Toronto.

The annual event has been organized since its inception by what was originally the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Policing Committee, formed as a liaison between Niagara Regional Police and municipalities across the Region.

When the police took a step back, it became the Town's NOTL Safety Committee.

This year, it formed a partnership with another group which has also been offering assistance to farm workers, and combined them. The Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group was formed by representatives of not-for-profit community organizations that can offer help to the men and women working on local farms.

At Sunday's bike rodeo were Positive Living Niagara and some other groups which addressed health and legal issues the workers might face.

Also an important element of the event was Bikes for Farmworkers, with several volunteers on hand to do a safety inspection and repairs to bikes.



Alejandra Vazquez Magno, Rufina Reyes Hernandez and Florencia Medina Hernandez wait in line for dinner at the annual bike safety event at the Centennial arena Sunday. Serving food are long-time volunteers Bill Dickson and Shirley Eden.



Jake Redekopp, a volunteer with the NOTL Safety Committee from its earliest days more than 25 years ago, helps out at the bike safety event with committee chair Catherine Wickabrod and Kathy Reid.



Men and women socialize and eat dinner provided by the NOTL Safety Committee and Migrant Workers Interest Group at the Centennial Arena Sunday. (Photos by Penny Coles)



While Mark Gaudet of Bicycles for Farmworkers repairs a bike for Guillermo Hernandez Alcantar (right), he talks with Javier Morales, a volunteer with the Niagara Falls Multicultural Centre.



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Time to have another look at health teams

InfoHealth to revisit the model offered in NOTL

Penny Coles
The Local

When the InfoHealth program was developed in Niagara-on-the-Lake 12 years ago, the first session offered was a discussion about the local family health team, at that time relatively new.

Dr. Bill Brown, founder of the series, spoke then of the pros and cons, and the reason behind the provincial initiative to establish such teams, which have changed family health care delivery in Ontario.

He plans to revisit the topic at the June meeting, once again looking at the local model, now combined with a much larger St. Catharines physicians' group which has become the Niagara North Family Health Team.

The Province plans to restructure health care agencies and how they are funded, and is including family physicians and clinics, said Brown. The changes coming down the pipe are expected to have implications for some of the services now delivered locally by family health teams.

"How will that play out and what will it look like?"

he asks.
"The public may be interested in knowing who will be greeting them when they come through the door."

He is also worried there is little oversight — nobody is assessing whether family health teams are meeting the mandate set out for them when they were first organized by the Province, he said. Nor is anybody looking at doctors to see if they have kept up their skills or are looking at best practices.

should apply to all professionals," he said, "including physicians. There should be some assessment of skills at regular intervals."

He thinks it's time to revisit the mandate of family health teams, to make sure they are still on the right track and delivering "quality health care."

The next two InfoHealth sessions, in June and September, will have Brown and Dr. Jorin Lukings of the Niagara North Health team look at

quality health care delivery. It's not meant to be confrontational, but really to educate the public about how these systems are working."

He's hoping one of the results of the sessions might be local support for family health teams in the face of government changes.

Doctors, he said, "feel a little under fire from the Ford government. There is the sense they might not have a full partnership across the province. Family health teams created a dramatic change in health care about 15 years ago, and it might be happening again."

It's time for InfoHealth to look at the current situation, he said, especially in Niagara, where one-third of local graduating medical students are choosing family medicine. The next session is Wednesday, June 12 at 2 p.m.

InfoHealth sessions are held at the NOTL Public Library, and are recorded and broadcast on Cogeco Wednesdays and Sundays at 7 p.m. for four weeks following each session, and are available after that on demand.

“ There should be some assessment of skills at regular intervals. ”

Dr. Bill Brown

As a pilot, Brown said to continue to fly legally, he is tested a minimum of once every two years. He considers it a learning opportunity, and a chance to have any bad habits that might have developed corrected.

"This is something that

family medicine in Niagara, and how health teams have changed over the last 10 years. "We'll talk about where they might be headed and what their stress points are, what's working and what isn't. And what the solutions are going forward for



Dr. Bill Brown (Penny Coles)

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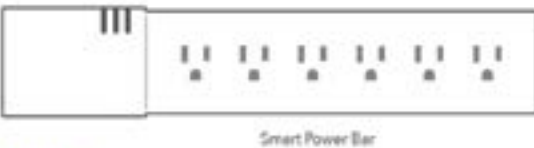
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HYDRO





Participants in Sunday's Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides get set to begin. (Fred Mercnik)

St. Davids Lions, Leos, raise money for dog guide



Tyler Visser begins a trot around the park with his pooch. (Fred Mercnik)

Penny Coles
The Local

It was a beautiful day for a walk in the park, says organizer Susan Snider of the annual Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides Sunday, held by the St. Davids Lions at their York Road park.

There weren't a lot of participants, with 11 Lion and Leo Club members

with their families.

The event takes place across Canada in more than 300 cities. The St. Davids walk raised \$1,236 to train dogs provided at no cost to those in need of assistance.

"We even had a donation from Newark Neighbours," said Snider. "They wanted to give back and show their appreciation for the support that has been provided to them."



Hailee Turner gives Magie a cuddle before beginning the walk. (Fred Mercnik)

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Bravo!

Bravo Niagara! concluded its 2018/19 season at St. Mark's Anglican Church Saturday with a special Piano Six Gala Concert featuring six of Canada's leading new generation concert pianists. Pictured are Ian Parker and Daniel Wnukowski performing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. (Alex Heidbuechel)

Provincial music competition coming to Niagara

Penny Coles
The Local

Queenston singing teacher Lisa Cosens Brillion is scrambling to complete last-minute details of a huge undertaking that will bring 2,000 talented young musicians to Niagara next week.

They will be competing in the Ontario Music Festival provincial finals, which are being held in Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, mainly in local churches.

Cosens Brillion is founder and coordinator of the Niagara Musical Theatre and Voice Festival, and president of the Ontario Music Festival Association, an organization of volunteers serving music festivals across the province, and through them, more than 170,000 young classical musicians.

There are 47 music festivals from across the province sending students to compete in next week's finals. With each sending up to two competitors in the varying disciplines, says Cosens Brillion, about 60 volunteers are needed to oversee 14 venues.

The performances are open to the public for a charge of \$2, and it's a great opportunity to hear talented youngsters perform locally, she says.

"Everyone is welcome to come and listen. The days begin at different times, depending on the venue, so it's best to check the website for details."

There are eight NOTL students participating, and 56 from across the region.

In NOTL, competitions are being held at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Bethany Mennonite Church, St. David's Queenston United Church,

Niagara United Mennonite Church and at the Yellow Door Theatre. Different venues offer different disciplines, she explained — the NOTL churches will be the place to hear young pianists compete, with guitar competitions also at St. David's.

The Yellow Door studio will have harpists and chamber music groups, as well as competitors in the speech arts category.

Cosens Brillion began competing in music festivals as a young girl in piano, singing, speech arts, folk dance and band, she said — her mother was a music teacher, and music has always been a big part of her life. She continued competing throughout high school in Manitoba, and worked for the provincial music festival during her university years. When she moved to Niagara, she became involved in the Stamford Kiwanis Festival. Five years ago, she founded the Niagara Musical Theatre and Voice Festival and joined the Ontario Music Festival Association so she could send talented young local performers to the provincial festival, which is held in different locations every two years.

This is its first year in Niagara — it will be easier next year with so many of the details already worked out, she says — and rotating to locations across the province helps relieve volunteer fatigue and puts less stress on the organizer, she says.

There are many details to be worked out to make the festival run smoothly, some still being finalized — hotels have been booked for board members and adjudicators; she's found an extra grand

piano to be delivered to St. Mark's; all pianos are being tuned in time for the festival opening; scheduling is being finalized for volunteers; and she's still working on finding rehearsal spaces for musicians as they arrive in Niagara.

In addition to being the lead organizer, she has reason to be a little extra stressed, with

16 of her students competing. One of them is her son Alexandre, a high school student at A.N. Myer, who hopes to move on to the national competition in Saskatoon.

It's a lot of work, but work she enjoys, she says, "and at the end of the day, the really exciting part is watching the students when the winners

are announced. For most of the musicians, the competition ends for them, but some will go on to the National Festival in June."

Ontario is always well represented, and usually wins several classes at the national level, she says.

With up to 42 volunteers needed each day, Cosens Brillion

would welcome anyone interested in helping out — volunteers get to hear wonderful music from young performers, she says. She can be reached at 905-401-4088 or niagaraprovincials@gmail.com.

For more details of venues and times for the festival, held from June 1 to June 8, visit omfa.ca.



Some of the Niagara competitors at the OMFA are: Alexis Bowman (musical theatre); Gioia De Leonardis (musical theatre); Milo Boccinfuso (musical theatre); Bronte Ibbotson (voice); Treesha Ray (voice); Althea Jean Timaan (musical theatre); Ayla Jamal (musical theatre); Katherine Simpson (musical theatre); Terrence Wu (piano); Teo Ordinario (piano); Austin Weng (piano); Naomi Shad (musical theatre); Erin VanDyke (strings); Ophelia Xie (piano); Lily Shennan (strings); Jacklyn Saddler (piano); Sterling Tausendfreund (musical theatre); Andrew Romero (musical theatre); Christine Kim (woodwinds); Richard Liu (piano); Hannah Dim (musical theatre); Isabella Milano (voice); Tess Rookley (piano); Sydney Cornett (voice and musical theatre); Krystyna Augustyn (musical theatre); Jessie Gao (piano); Danny Wu piano; Margaret Boom (piano); and Melzee Diao (musical theatre). (Photo supplied)



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JANET CARNOCHAN DAY

June 4 @ 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Celebrate the Niagara Historical Society Museum's founder with free admission all day. 43 Castlereagh Street. www.niagarahistorical.museum.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKS

June 7 @ 6 - 7 p.m.
Explore the history of two unique neighbourhoods this Friday. Queen Street Estates – tour meets outside the Post Office. Tickets are \$10 and must be purchased in advance. Space is limited – 905-468-3912 – contact@nhsm.ca.

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Pumphouse celebrates 25th with luncheon, fashion show

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre celebrated its 25th anniversary Sunday with a fashion show designed to recognize women of “ageless beauty,” inspired by Iris Apfel, a fearless and eclectic fashion icon.
In 2013, at age 92, Apfel was listed as one of 50 “best dressed over 50.”
The Pumphouse show, held at the Hilton Garden Inn, featured fashion artisans, some

of them modelling their work.
Four founding members of the pumphouse, Diane Debonham, Barbara Alhualia, Tina Stewart and Peggy Walker, joined by Nancy Butler, representing her late husband Ian Butler, also one of the founders, took to the runway in celebration of timeless beauty and their role of the establishment of the pumphouse, a not-for-profit community organization supporting visual arts through its school and galleries.
“It’s so much fun to be

here with the founding members,” said Stewart.
“We get together once in a while for lunch, but we don’t see each other often. It’s nice to get caught up.”
Rima Boles, director of the art centre, said there was a great turnout, with more than 100 guests attending the luncheon. The money raised from the event supports year-round exhibitions, programs and events at the pumphouse.
“This event would not have been possible without the amazing contributions

of our team of volunteers,” said Boles.
“A huge thank you to our Fashion Show Volunteer Committee, including Lise Andreana, Lois Chapman, Lorraine Joyner, Patti Knipe, Cheryl Morris and Janet Newey, our founding members who in celebration of our 25th anniversary participated as models in the last run of the fashion show, and all the volunteers who contributed their time on the day of the event to make it such a fun and memorable event.”



Joan King and her sister-in-law Anne Kemp browse in the artisan marketplace at the pumphouse luncheon Sunday, held at the Hilton Garden Inn. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Claire is wearing a Medi Yogi onesie — and showing off a yoga pose.



Janice models a two-piece ensemble called Sherry Baby, by designer Brenda Sauder.



Annette wears Buttercream Beautiful, created by designer Bonnie Glass.



Over-sized glasses and furs, with Iris Apfel as the backdrop, made for fun professional photographs by Megan Muir (left) for Laura Jeffry, Terry Mactaggart and Chris Phibbs. Bethany Loewan (second from left) was helping out. (Penny Coles)



Brian Dim escorts pumphouse founder and model Diane Debenham in her Bonnie Glass outfit.

Love Canal led to Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre

Nancy Butler Special to The Local

When we moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1981, the town was all abuzz about the invasion of buses with their loads of gawking visitors, their exhaust fumes and their tendency to hog all the parking. Even worse, the growing number of souvenir shops meant residents were no longer able to buy shoe laces in town.

But a hidden danger was really threatening the town. That summer the Love Canal scandal made news. It was an unfinished canal once used as a dump site in Niagara Falls, New York. Houses now surrounded it and their residents were getting sick. Alarm bells went off. Investigators discovered the chemistry industry, attracted by the cheap electricity of Niagara Falls, had been dumping their waste in the canal and also in dumps beside the Niagara River. These dumps were leaching into the Niagara River water which we, in NOTL, were drinking, thanks to Region Niagara Municipal Waterworks plant — the pumphouse.

The cost of upgrading the equipment to a fourth level of treatment was costly, and might have been ineffective. Niagara Region therefore decided to build a water main from the Decew Treatment Plant to NOTL.

That solved one problem but raised another. What to do with the obsolete pumphouse?

Wilbert Dyck, our lord mayor at the time, was determined to preserve it. So in 1985, the Town purchased it for \$65,000 and

then had to decide what to use it for. A natural choice would be to turn it into a museum of waterworks. So he asked my husband Ian Butler, consultant engineer to the Town, and John Drope, a successful contractor, to go through the building and choose what equipment was old enough to display. Only one pump was old enough to be considered historic, a Morris pump from 1916. Ian and I visited the company that made it years ago. Amazingly they had an archivist who showed us the history of the pump. It was first sold to a shipping company which used it as a standby pump on a lake steamer.

The Town bought it second-hand and used it also as a standby pump. The town originally had built the pumphouse to house steam pumps for fire protection after the terrific fire of 1886 when the town cistern went dry. It was not built to pump for drinking water — that came later.

A steering committee was formed to find a use for the building. Since it was built in 1897, the Niagara Historical Society appointed three delegates to the committee, the town council sent sitting aldermen, the artist group which was by then renting the building also was represented and finally Clive Buist, the recreational director for the town was chosen to sit on it. Through the 10 years this committee met, the representatives came and went but Ian Butler, the engineer, remained as chair. (They met for breakfast to accommodate his working hours.)

The suggestions came pouring in — a wine museum with a shop, a restaur-

rant, a boat launch, a tourist information booth, rehearsal space for the Shaw Theatre and even a baseball museum. Some would have required a rezoning of the site to commercial, with its attendant needs. Through all this time, the artists rented the space, cleaned up the building, had art shows and organized art lessons.

By 1989, the artists using the building had organized a Niagara Pumphouse Working Committee and decided to hold a day workshop at the Rand Institute with Dave Bowie as facilitator. They invited the town residents to attend.

We were broken up into small groups and each group had to design a mission statement. Surprisingly, all the groups agreed the pumphouse should become a facility for the arts, open to the community, and the fundraising began with a goal in sight.

And so it was that the wretched canal was the seed for the town's successful and lively cultural building — the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.



On the arm of Brian Preston, Peggy Walker (above) hits the runway in an outfit by Bench Artisans.



Escorted by Brian Dim, Tina Steward models a linen tunic by Brenda Sauder.

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Volunteers have the pie assembly line down to a science in the basement kitchen of Cornerstone Community Church. (Penny Coles)



Volunteers have been making pies at the church for more than 40 years.

Church members bake 239 pies for Mennonite Relief

Penny Coles
The Local

It takes about 2,000 volunteers to stage the annual Mennonite Relief Sale in New Hamburg — including 20 from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The members of Cornerstone Community Church, now located on Hunter Road, were gathered in the basement of their former church on Niagara Stone Road early Friday morning, preparing to bake more than 200 fruit pies for the sale.

In total, the event offered 2,000 pies for sale, which were baked in the days leading up to it in churches and bakeries, made from scratch by volunteers.

Church member Dorothy Wiens has taken

charge of the baking. In recent years, ensuring it runs smoothly. She spent most of her day bustling around the kitchen with Kathy Dyck, the two seasoned pie-makers making sure the bakers had the right combinations of fruit, and enough of it to keep the assembly line going smoothly. By mid-afternoon Dorothy and her husband Erwin Wiens were on the road to New Hamburg to deliver the pies — 239 of them, baked and boxed, and coveted by shoppers who attend the sale, now in its 53rd year.

Since 1967, more than \$14,000,000 has been raised, about \$300,000 annually for the last 25 years, from the county fair. All proceeds go directly to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for relief, in Canada and around the world.

The best-known event of the two-day fair, always the last Friday and Saturday in May, is the popular quilt auction, the pie sale a close second.

Wiens says the pies go for \$11 each, \$20 for two.

Erna Falk, making pie crusts in the church basement Friday, said she hasn't been involved since the beginning, but started baking pies for

the sale sometime in the 70s — nobody is sure exactly how long Cornerstone has been contributing baked goods. She supervised the pie production for many years, before “pushing it on to Dorothy,” she said. “But I still come every year. That’s the least I can do.”

The recipes for the fruit fillings have been passed down over the years, said Dorothy, but have been “tweaked” to make the work a little easier, and to improve the flavour. “Our job is to come up with the right mix.”

Many members of the congregation are farmers, and the fruit is all donated and local. The pie fillings include rhubarb, plums, apricots, nectarines, strawberries, blueberries, and even grapes — the sovereign coronation grape pie is a favourite.

“We have some different mixtures of fruit that are popular. We have some that are plum and apricot, peach and blueberry, peach and raspberry, rhubarb with strawberry, and peach with blackberry. They are different flavours than other pies.”

NOTL pies are sought-after by shoppers, she said.

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Dorothy Wiens and Kathy Dyck prepare pie shells to be filled, baked, boxed and delivered to New Hamburg. (Penny Coles)

NOTL to become 'Special Olympics community'

Penny Coles
The Local

Nancy Bailey is on a mission: to turn Niagara-on-the-Lake into a Special Olympics community.

Across the province, nationally and internationally, such communities offer support to children and adults with intellectual disabilities by providing year-round opportunities and accessibility to sports.

Although it operates on a world-wide playing field, Special Olympics is considered a grass-roots organization.

Bailey is a real estate broker and advisor with Engel & Völkers, an international company which has been supporting Special Olympics as its cause since 2015. She said she decided as soon as she got her new Mary Street office up and run-

ning, she wanted to get involved by introducing the organization in NOTL, which is in the south central district of the Ontario chapter.

Each district works at bringing communities under its umbrella, which then begin raising funds, awareness of the organization and its goals, and developing programs for local athletes.

"We want to find out what is needed in this community," said Bailey, "and to become a voice for those with disabilities. I think we may be surprised by what we discover. We know there is need in town for the support we can provide."

That could mean ensuring athletes have the equipment and uniforms they need, the training to help them progress in their sport, and the funds to travel to competitions, she said.

It could also include developing coaches and volunteers to support the athletes — but first, to help gauge what is needed locally and guide how to proceed, Bailey is hosting an open house, inviting potential athletes, coaches and those who would like to volunteer.

Pratima Bhatt, one of the district developers for Special Olympics Ontario, says its mandate is to help athletes in their own communities by developing local programs and raising funds to assist with their training.

"We have programs in many small towns across Ontario," she said. "But I get requests sometimes for assistance and I have to say we don't have a program there. It's important to have them in every community."

Parents don't always know where to look for help or what to ask for,

and accept whatever is available in their community, she said. If she hears from even one parent who is looking for something more for a disabled child or adult, she can work with them, but it's much easier if she has local partners.

"Even if there are one or two families we can help, I would feel we've done something, and the program will grow," said Bhatt.

"To start a program like this in NOTL, a small community, we look for partners, and now we've found one."

Bailey will be holding a meet and greet at her office at 376 Mary Street June 25, 6 to 8 p.m.

In the meantime, anyone interested in becoming involved or looking for more information can call the office at 905-468-4700 or reach Bailey at 905-371-4234.



Eduardo Lafforgue

Chamber announces new president

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce has a new president.

Paul MacIntyre, chair of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, has announced the chamber board has chosen Eduardo Lafforgue to lead the organization.

He will start his new job at the chamber June 17.

The announcement of his selection says Lafforgue brings decades of destination management, marketing and tourism development skills "from sophisticated and mature world markets" to town.

A Canadian who initially moved to Europe in 2004 as vice-president of acquisitions for Intrawest, and went on to serve as associate director and managing partner of one of Europe's largest tourism and leisure business consulting companies, he had responsibility for the direction of more than 80 strategic marketing and management tourism projects, says MacIntyre in a press release issued Tuesday.

"Eduardo will continue the successful implementation of the board's strategic plan to boost Niagara-on-the-Lake's brand equity as one of the country's unique tourism gems. Currently serving as CEO of Headwaters Tourism, one hour north of Toronto, Eduardo and his wife will be relocating to Niagara-on-the-Lake," said MacIntyre.

"I have a deep respect for businesses and the value creation that tourism businesses bring to stakeholders and am committed to sustainable, inclusive development practices and respect for the local community. Niagara-on-the-Lake is competing for the top positions against the best wine tourism destinations in the world, the unique combination of natural sceneries, unique products, heritage, culture and a friendly and open population gives this town a special pole position in the tourism race. I am thrilled to be joining the business community of Niagara-on-the-Lake and look forward to meeting the community members," said Lafforgue.



Janet Tan, Brian Marshall, Nancy Bailey, Carmela D'Amic, Peter Fischer and Candace Walker are working on organizing NOTL as a Special Olympics community. (Penny Coles)

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ACROSS

- 1 Statue of Liberty material
7 Got together
10 Buddy
13 Dry gulch
14 Cab
15 Lawyers' grp.
16 Flower of Rhode Island
17 Rends
18 Affirmative signal
19 Call the whole thing off
20 Very strong winds
21 First lady
22 Stand-up guy
24 "Thanatopsis" poet
William --- Bryant
26 Large handbag
29 Noah's boat
30 Dumped in Boston harbor
31 Homeless child
32 Thick slice
34 First light
38 Bart Simpson's driver
39 Cheryl --- of "Suburgatory"
41 Wine valley
42 Terse
44 Aflutter

DOWN

- 1 Grotto
2 Are you out ---? (Poker)
3 Nudge
4 Cops in general
5 Intention of
6 Baloney
7 Postal delivery
8 Anticipate
9 Cold comforts?

- 10 Control board
11 Aloft
12 Burdened
14 Heptathlete's specialty
20 Little lady
23 Pulverize
25 Lots of things to do
26 Pairs
27 Cuss
28 Former Yugoslav dictator
33 Sires
35 Zilch
36 --- the crack of dawn
37 Is profitable
40 Coordinate
43 Rising current of warm air
47 Each
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64 Uninformative schedule info.

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Down: 1 Cave, 2 Or in, 3 Prod, 4 Police force, 5 Eye to, 6 Rot, 7 Mail, 8 Expect, 9 Tissues, 10 Panel, 11 Above, 12 Laden, 14 Track and field, 20 Girdle, 23 Mash, 25 Laundry list, 26 Twos, 27 Oath, 28 Trio, 33 Begets, 35 Nada, 36 Up at, 37 Pays, 40 Sync, 43 Thermal, 47 Apiece, 50 Swabs, 51 Torso, 52 Roman, 54 Hares, 57 Said, 59 Late, 60 Igor, 61 News, 64 T B A.

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Slo pitch season in full swing

The NOTL Slo Pitch League is underway at the Virgil ball diamonds. The Blue Bombers played the NOTL Balls and Dolls, a co-ed division, Monday night. Games are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, depending on the division, and teams are always looking for members. For information call 416-500-2749. (Fred Mercnik)

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