



Teen
bitten by
coyote
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It was a time for quiet, not speeches, at a Sunday afternoon gathering organized to honour Indigenous children who were taken from their families. (Mike Balsom)

2:15 gathering honours Indigenous children

Small group pays respect to all children buried at residential schools

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

A group of just under 30 people came together in Simcoe Park Sunday at 2:15 p.m. to share two minutes and 15 seconds of silence, recognizing the 215 Indigenous children whose bodies were discovered buried

at the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.

Organizer Cosimo Chiovitti, a local resident, put the word out on the Facebook group NOTL 4 All on Friday.

"I'm not a parent, and cannot imagine the pain of losing a child," Chiovitti

ti told The Local. "In this case, the parent lost the child twice, once to the school and once in death. The purpose of this gathering is to shed light on that pain."

Just before 2:15 p.m., Chiovitti and a group of friends, all wearing orange shirts, approached Simcoe Park where a small gathering

had begun. There was very little communication, other than a signal that the specified time was approaching. Maintaining physical distance, the participants bowed their heads in quiet reflection, considering the plight of the young children and the horrors they must have faced.

Fred Ouimette of Niagara Falls was one of the participants.

"I happen to be First

Nations," said Ouimette. "I think like everybody, we've all been touched by what we've learned. Canada has a history. We know that this existed. But having the 215 confirmed dead is something that wakes us all up and makes us want to do better."

Ouimette wasn't surprised by the discovery of the bodies. He is certain that further investigation will uncover more secrets behind the country's

treatment of Indigenous children through the residential school system, which removed them from their families and into the church-run institutions.

Growing up in Northern Ontario, Ouimette recalled attending school with classmates who revealed many years later that they had spent time in residential schools. He remembered being told at

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Hirji urges vaccinations, especially for younger groups

Penny Coles
The Local

Young Niagara residents aren't jumping onboard with appointments for their first vaccination as quickly as Dr. Mustafa Hirji, the region's medical

ical officer of health, would like to see.

A little more than 40 per cent of those in two age groups, 12 to 17 and the 18 to 29 age group, have been vaccinated or made appointments, he says.

When eligibility for those

age groups first became available, there was a good uptake of those making appointments, but that number has plateaued.

In the meantime, those in the older age groups who can now book their second appointments are doing so, and

while that is good to see, Hirji says he is concerned about an apparent hesitancy among younger folks, who are now in the age groups with the most infections.

He says he doesn't know what is causing the hesitancy

for their first dose — possibly they become impatient with the booking system, or because they have to wait a couple of weeks for their appointment.

The lack of uptake might also be due to hesitancy among parents of the 12 to 17 age group, and with those 18 up to 40, because of the busy lives of those who need to get to work and make a living, Hirji suggested.

Public health has tried to offer lots of availability, he says, including youth and family-oriented clinics, "and we didn't get much uptake on them."

Hirji continues to stress his work about the B1617 variant, now referred to, as dictated by the World Health Organization, as the Delta variant.

He believes it may be responsible for new cases in Ontario and Niagara, although Ontario labs are not confirming numbers for that particular variant. Reporting is lagging behind both due to screening capacity, and the lengthy time it takes to do the sequencing, explained Hirji, so at the moment, the two cases known to be in Niagara date back to March and April. He is afraid there are many more than that, and that the Delta variant is known to be about 50 per cent more contagious than other variants, causing more severe illness that is more likely to end in hospital and intensive care unit admissions.

In another few weeks, the region will begin looking at data to determine where vaccination hesitancy is taking place.

He hopes that will shed some light on what is motivating that hesitancy, and how to overcome it.

He compared the initiative to the private sector which uses similar data to sell products to people, he says. "We're going to be using that to try to understand how to influence people, and to sell them on the importance of getting vaccinated."

Hirji had some good news about cases in the province and in Niagara, with below what



Samantha Fretz, 15 and a student at Laura Secord Secondary School, has now her first vaccination dose. (Photos supplied)



Jack Clarke, 14, made his own decision to have the vaccination as soon as he could get an appointment. The Grade 8 student at St. Davids has had his first shot.



Janvi Ganatra, 18, says she's not sure why there seems to be vaccine hesitancy among her age group — her friends have all been very positive about getting vaccinated. She has had her first shot.



When Lily Porteus asked her parents Justin and Noemie for a vaccination for her 12th birthday, they discovered they would have to wait until the day she turned 12 before being able to book a shot for her. At midnight on her birthday they made the booking, and she got her vaccination a week later. Her NOTL grandparents Louise Waldie and Andrew Porteus, couldn't be more proud of her birthday wish.

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17	8	9
# OF SOLDS	# OF SOLDS	# OF SOLDS
22	5	10
DAYS ON MARKET	DAYS ON MARKET	DAYS ON MARKET
\$1,176,600	\$901,100	\$1,117,200
HOME PRICE INDEX*	HOME PRICE INDEX*	HOME PRICE INDEX*
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Lena Disero, mother of Lord Mayor Betty Disero, does a happy dance with pharmacist Julie Dyck of Stone Road Pharmacy. Disero was anxious to get her second vaccination, which Dyck was able to provide last week. Public Health is encouraging first doses for younger age groups and second doses for the older groups, saying there are thousands of appointments available, including through pharmacies and primary care physicians, and lots of vaccines expected to arrive in Niagara in the coming weeks.

Mourning deaths of Indigenous children

This is a letter to be read by Michaiiah Ivri at the flag-raising for Indigenous Children at the town hall Wednesday.

I would like to start off by acknowledging that the land on which we stand 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



Michaiiah Ivri

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 this reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

Every year, on Sept. 30, people across Canada wear orange shirts for Orange Shirt Day.

A six-year-old girl named Phyllis Webstad (she is Northern Secwepemc from the Stswecemc Xgat'em First Nation) went shopping with her grandmother for a beautiful orange shirt to wear on her first day of school. She was just like you and me on our first day of school; excited and nervous all at the same time. She said, "Just like any other six year old, I was happy to be going to school — I didn't know exactly what was to come." When she arrived at school, they tore her favourite orange shirt from her and she never saw it again. We wear an orange shirt to hon-

our the children who were forced to attend residential schools.

Indigenous children were abducted from their homes, stripped of their culture, and put in abusive boarding schools called Residential Schools. This was all sanctioned by the government and Christian churches. The Catholic church ran 70 per cent of residential schools with government funding.

Children's heads were shaved and their names were replaced with numbers; but that's not all. The goal of these residential schools was to take away the children's identity and replace it with a Eurocentric one. Think of it as replacing the skin you are in. How uncomfortable and unnatural would that feel? Imagine speaking the language you have known all of your life, and getting beaten for speaking it. You are told instead to speak a foreign language. This (among other things) was what these children had to endure. The landmark Truth and Reconciliation Commission called this "cultural genocide."

There are effects that are still being felt today. There are parts of Indigenous people's culture and traditions that are lost. There are children who never came home, and there is land that has never been returned. Residential schools and all of the assimilation that was forced upon Indigenous people is a shameful section of Canadian history. But we mustn't ignore it because it hurts. We must move forward with this knowledge, and right the wrongs of the past, so that we do not repeat them in the future.

We mourn the death of all the Indigenous boys and girls who have been omitted from our story until now. We are here for the survivors of residential schools and the families who never got to see their children again.

We need to make sure that we never forget.

The tragic discovery of the 215 Indigenous children found buried on Kamloops Indian Residential School grounds should spark conversations to inspire real change, and to help our Canadian family heal together.

I say these things in the name of the Canada we want to build. One that is a mosaic of unique people from different backgrounds. One that learns from her mistakes,

and a Canada that lifts each other up.

**Michaiiah Ivri
on behalf of the
Lord Mayor's Youth
Advisory Council**



Mateo Gruosso and Julia King, members of the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, and council mentor Amy Casey, were on hand for a flag-lowering at the town hall Saturday to remember the Indigenous children buried on the property of a residential school. The flag was to be raised Wednesday, with a reading from LMYAC member Michaiiah Ivri. Across the country, shoes have become symbols for the 215 Indigenous children found at the former grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation grounds, near Kamloops, B.C. (Town photo)

'Mind-boggling' that people could be so evil

Continued from page 1

the time that these children had gone to live with relatives, and had no idea that the institutions even existed.

"Being within the Native community, it was something that we felt shame around," he said. "Having the opportunity to have stuff come out of the darkness and into the light is necessary to move forward for all of us."

Ouimette feels the Canadian government and the Roman Catholic Church share in the responsibility for the deaths of the young members of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

"I think there's equal share to go around," Ouimette says. "Accountability is one thing that helps move forward. I don't proclaim to know the answer, but I do know that in order for there to be reconciliation, whatever that means to people, we have to face what happened."

Having a chance to share their grief with others was important to Ouimette and other mourners in the park Sunday.

"I've been on a personal healing journey this week," Ouimette explains. "There's been a lot of emotions. I've been having moments that are very challenging. Meeting strangers here who are experiencing the same thing, that's an important

thing to do, that collective moment of recognition."

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Bruce Howard expressed shock and dismay at the discovery of the mass graveyard in Kamloops.

"We're capable of great love, and we're capable of great horrors like this," Howard told The Local. "It's just carried on through history. Hopefully we'll evolve at some point, but it's too near in our past. We keep thinking this is something many, many years away, but this is something in our recent history as well. That's the shocking part, I think, that it's in our lifetime. We tend to think these things don't happen in our backyard."

The Kamloops Indian Residential School operated from 1890 to 1969. At that time, the federal government took over its administration from the Catholic Church, and continued to run it as a day school, until it closed for good in 1978.

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir said in a statement to the press in May that the 215 children found were all undocumented deaths. Since the discovery, other First Nations have promised to use the same ground-penetrating radar applied in B.C. to sites in their own communities.

Chief Cadmus Delorme, of the Cowessess First

Nation in Saskatchewan, has said his community is planning to explore the grounds of the Marieval Indian Residential School, which operated from 1899 to 1997.

Veronica Puskas, an Inuk originally from Rankin Inlet, has lived in NOTL for about 10 years. She joined in the vigil to honour her First Nations cousins. While speaking to The Local about the horror of the discovery, emotion brought tears to her eyes.

"The sheer number, and the age, as young as three years old," she laments. "It's mind-boggling, especially for those who were in authority to have kept it quiet. It blows my mind that people could be so evil."

"The history books need to be rewritten," she continues. "I want the Pope to apologize. And the Canadian government. I don't want any more lip service. I want the people to be educated on the history of the residential schools, and the treaties that were made, and how they've been broken time after time. We're just fighting for our survival."

Chiovitti felt heartened by the turnout Sunday, and plans to organize another gathering in the near future to honour and reflect on the lives lost. He is hoping to consult with Niagara Regional Native Centre before moving forward with those plans.



Veronica Puskas (left), an Inuk originally from Rankin Inlet, spoke to The Local Sunday about her horror of the discovery of the buried bodies of 215 Indigenous children at a residential school in B.C. Bruce Howard (right) also attended the gathering to remember the children, and spoke of his shock and dismay on learning of the graves. (Mike Balsom)

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Chamber distributing rapid tests to local businesses

Penny Coles
The Local

There are 5,000 rapid tests packed in boxes at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce office, waiting to be picked up by local business owners in the coming days and weeks.

They will be able to use them to test themselves and their employees for COVID-19, receiving results in 15 minutes or less.

The goal of the program is to identify asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases of COVID-19 in the workplace that might otherwise be missed, helping to curb the

spread in the workplace, at home and around the community, says NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo Lafforgue.

Almost 2,000 tests have been ordered and are ready for pickup, he says, with most businesses ordering one or two boxes of 25 tests in each box.

More than 230 businesses have already signed up for the program, with more expected in the coming weeks.

With a negative result, employers and employees will know they can carry on their business without the risk of infecting others, and that they are safe to go home to their families.

A positive result must be reported for a follow-up by public health, to confirm the finding and carry out the necessary contact tracing.

Jordon Williams, founder of Lahava Magazine, with a staff of four, was one of the first to pick up a box of rapid tests at the chamber office Tuesday. He has been given a rapid test before when visiting a relative in a long-term care home, he says, and he was impressed by how quick and easy it was, and the level of comfort it provides.

He will use the tests to help keep his employees and the community at large stay safe, he explains.

"The kits make good business sense," says Williams. "I see them as an opportunity to be a good corporate citizen, and also to provide peace of mind for everyone involved."

He could be asymptomatic and unknowingly have COVID, and this test would prevent him from spreading it to others.

"We have so much economic fragility right now. It's on all of us as NOTL businesses to ensure that everyone is safe and healthy, so that we can have a faster recovery. My employees are very receptive to the idea. It's an easy way to keep everyone safe," he says. "It's so

accessible, it's a no-brainer.

"To me, it really feels like doing a good thing for all of us, the people we work with, our families, and our community."

Monique Landry of the Old Winery Restaurant was also at the chamber office Tuesday picking up testing kits. "I have some employees, younger ones, who are reluctant to get vaccinated," she says. "I'm double vaccinated now, and a lot of my management staff have had their first vaccination. I don't want to lose any staff by telling them they have to be vaccinated. So I want to use the kits in a way that will keep everyone safe."

The program was orga-

nized and tests supplied free of charge thanks to the federal and provincial governments, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber through its Chambers Network, says Lafforgue, and is expected to continue for about two months.

When the idea was first hatched to provide these tests to small and medium-sized businesses, the local chamber was one of 28 involved to help work through the process. More have come on board, and others will join the effort in the coming weeks.

Changes have been made since the beginning of the discussions, says Lafforgue, who has been working to iron out any issues that have arisen, and more changes could be made in the future, but the NOTL Chamber began handing out boxes of tests Tuesday based on the current regulations.

Each business participating must appoint one person to pick up the tests. That person will be shown a video explaining how to administer it, says Lafforgue, and will also be responsible for reporting matters.

The tests are being provided through the StaySafe rapid antigen workplace screening portal.

More than 760,000 rapid test kits have already been shipped to the 28 chambers that were the first to participate.

The StaySafe COVID-19 program has a portal for learning about and ordering the tests, through chambers of commerce, but businesses do not have to be chamber members to participate.

The NOTL chamber has put aside two days, Tuesdays and Thursdays, for 15-minute appointments to pick up the tests and view the instruction video, says Lafforgue.

Once the tests are ordered through the StaySafe portal, there is a schedule showing openings for appointments that can be booked online.

With files from Mike Balsom.



Business owner Jordon Williams, with NOTL Chamber president Eduardo Lafforgue, town CAO Marnie Cluckie and Lord Mayor Betty Disero, were at the chamber office Tuesday, when rapid testing kits were being picked up to be used by local businesses.



Monique Landry of the Old Winery Restaurant watches a video of rapid testing with Nicole Cripps of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, before picking up kits for restaurant employees. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Drive-in dining

Jennifer Colicchia, and Jason, Dani and Ben Van Beghel-Wood enjoy Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill Car Hop in the restaurant's Mary Street parking lot. They were celebrating Dani's birthday. You don't need a picnic table in a truck to order outdoor dining, just a vehicle with a window, where '50s-style drive-in dining will be offered. Serving them was Rachel Dickinson. (Penny Coles)

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Local BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Re/Max Greg Sykes

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Another Sykes Moves To NOTL!

Greg Sykes is ranked in the top three realtors out of nearly 1,700 agents in the Niagara Real Estate Board, and has been selling and investing in real estate for nearly 15 years in Niagara. Once a professional musician and contemporary Christian music songwriter, Greg is now a full-time realtor who leads a team of six agents, called The Sykes Team, at Re/Max Niagara.

They are a powerhouse bunch, who have already sold more than 100 homes in Niagara in 2021 alone. But the most exciting part of this story is that Greg and his family now reside in Old Town, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Just a couple of blocks from the water, Greg's new home caught his attention last January, while he was looking at the morning's latest listings, just moments



Greg Sykes

after the house was listed for sale. He raced to the home in his pyjamas and made an offer from the kitchen, he says. Greg's brother, Jeff Sykes, and his family also live in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Jeff owns and leads one of Niagara's premier landscape design and construction companies, Sykes Landscaping. Greg and his forever love are now completely renovating their new home near Gage and Butler Streets, and design plans are underway for a major overhaul of the

already beautiful treed backyard, which will of course be handled by none other than Sykes Landscaping. Greg and Jeff were born and raised in Windsor, Ont., and moved to Niagara almost 20 years ago to set up shop for themselves in the beautiful Niagara Region. He was living in Virgil when his two children were born, and they spent their early years in Virgil. After a time living in St. Catharines, he's happy to be back in town. "Life can be so fast-

paced, but in Niagara-on-the-Lake, there is just the most beautiful tone of serenity and appreciation for life. Getting out for walks, chatting with the neighbours and enjoying the most beautiful town in Canada is a privilege that I will never take for granted, and I'm grateful to be able to call Niagara-on-the-Lake home." Sykes says he's excited to announce that plans are also in the works for a real estate office in town, with those details to be rolled out in the coming months.

He's also still having fun with his music, and has even found a way to use his creativity and love of music in his real estate business, writing songs to accompany his listings on social media to help his clients market their properties to a broader audience. Life seems to have come full circle, says Sykes, who is overwhelmed at his good fortune, able to live and work at a job he loves, close to his brother and family, in a town anyone would feel proud to call home. "It feels so good to be back."

GREG SYKES real estate TEAM



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EDITORIAL

‘Normal’ is simply no longer good enough

So much news this week, and unfortunately more heart-break for many who are already burned out by bad news, fighting to stay positive in a challenging environment.

First off, the declining number of daily cases in Ontario and Niagara, and all the accompanying statistics — especially the decreasing number of admissions to hospitals and intensive care units — as a result of that, are a relief. But then, we’re reminded of the Delta variant, and what could come of it.

There is a sense we’re being too lax.

Photos show people outdoors, having fun, enjoying the fresh air, getting exercise.

Some of the medical experts are looking at photos of those activities in the GTA, much more crowded than in NOTL, and saying in outdoor situations, the risks are low. The weather is great, we’re getting outdoors where it’s safer, as

long as households stay within pods and keep their distance or wear a mask. But we’re at a stage where we’re inclined to believe if it looks like people are having fun, there is something they’re doing wrong, and that’s wrong.

Although the numbers of visitors has increased with the warm weather, the parks don’t look terribly crowded. The town’s new parks bylaw is doing its job, with visitors enjoying their barbecues and tents at Niagara Parks property along the Niagara River Parkway, where they can spread out. It’s good to know they are able to find a comfortable spot to enjoy their outings, without being shoeed away.

We’re told about an increased concern over the Delta variant, which we have to watch closely. But with more and more people being vaccinated, many with their second dose, we look forward to a gradual reopening we will hopefully be able to navigate safely.

And we’re told there are lots of vaccines coming to Canada, to Ontario and hopefully in fair measures to Niagara to continue to increase the percentage of people vaccinated with first and second doses at a good pace throughout the coming reopening.

That’s the good news that helps us see a gradual return to normalcy.

And yet, as we look around us, it’s hard to understand what normal means anymore in this country. Our grasp of what we thought it meant is being snatched from us.

We’re being forced to face the fact that our good life, our great country, is showing disturbing sides that are unacceptable. Bigotry, racism, hate. Unacceptable.

And inaction, completely totally unacceptable.

In addition to calls for the Catholic Church to apologize — a move that seems so obvious and simple, yet early this week

was so far not forthcoming, but hopefully may have changed by now — there are also calls for the government to move forward on action called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including providing funding for investigation into the deaths and disappearances of children at other residential schools, and further, that the government should ensure all Indigenous children should have access to health care and all support and services our country offers to others.

These are calls for action that cannot be ignored.

While we mourn the deaths of young Indigenous children,

taken from their parents by the Catholic Church, with permission from the leaders of the day, we are faced with another display of intolerance and bigotry that isn’t part of our past, but our present.

It brings another call to action for every Canadian, every single one of us, to not only recognize and denounce the killing of a Muslim family in London, Ont., as a hate crime, and an act of terrorism, but for each of us to actively show our support for all communities of all people across this country.

Hate is not acceptable, ever, anywhere. The call to action is reverberating across the prov-

ince and the country, and cannot be ignored.

All of us, in our hearts and our personal actions, and in our communities, along with our leaders at all levels of government in their ability to initiate action on a larger scale, are responsible for taking steps to put a full stop to any signs of hate or violence toward anyone, for any reason.

It’s a huge task, but there has to be a start, a movement, and now is the time to acknowledge the need for change and act on it.

The normal we are imagining is simply not good enough.

Penny Coles
The Local

Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

The full week of Auchterlonie on Astrology can be found on the Facebook page for The NOTL Local, and on the website www.auchterlonieonastrology.ca.

Now, the week ahead:

On June 11, 1993, a new record was set as Jurassic Park opened, eventually earning \$502 million.

Saturday, June 12: The Moon and Venus, both in Cancer, make for a lovely, warm

and supportive time where an opportunity to heal an old wound is not easy, but is definitely worth it.

Tuesday, June 15: It’s the Ides, not of March, but of June. Ides means the 15th, and today it’s not backstabbing, as with Julius Caesar. Rather it’s likely a bit of a wake-up call regarding a health or work matter. It was June 15, 1215 – 906 years ago — that England passed the Magna Carta, the first ever document outlining human rights in the history of the world.

Wednesday, June 16: With the Moon in Virgo, this may prove to be a day of worry. But don’t worry, a sweet surprise awaits later on. Phil Michelson turns 50 today. He stunned the world of golf by winning the PGA tournament 2 weeks ago, becoming the oldest golfer in history to win a major.

And that’s AonA for this week. Next week, Jupiter goes Retrograde. Mercury goes Direct. And the Summer Solstice – aka the start of Summer 2021.

So, shine on!

Town update shows weekend visitors

Town staff provided an update on traffic to Niagara-on-the-Lake, from Friday through Sunday, June 4 to 6:

Number of devices entering NOTL boundaries (excluding the QEW):

There were 28,840 unique Bell Devices; translates to approximately 87,000 total

unique devices. (Down 35,000 from last weekend)

- 55% Niagara (Up 13% from last weekend)
- 27% GTA (Down 14% from last weekend)
- 6% Hamilton (Down 1% from last weekend)

Number of devices entering Old Town:

11,710 unique Bell Devices, translates to approximately 35,000 total unique devices. (Down 14,000 from last weekend)

- 61% Niagara (Up 15% from last weekend)
- 20% GTA (Down 20% from last weekend)
- 6% Hamilton (Up 2% from last weekend)



Although there haven’t been recent complaints about barbecues in town parks, visitors were able to sneak one in between the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Cemetery and Simcoe Park. (Photos by David Gilchrist)



Simcoe and Queen’s Royal Parks appeared to be busy, but the stay-at-home order has been lifted, and they were not as crowded as last year, without the many barbecues and tents.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Relative Values (Prime, 2000) is an adaptation of Noel Coward’s play of the same name. The film stars Julie Andrews, Colin Firth,

William Baldwin and Stephen Fry. It is a trite, predictable tale focusing on love and class distinction. Good acting saves what is totally inconsequential, but remains amusing.

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.

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COMMENT

Thrillers, spillers and fillers:
Marrying annuals and perennials

Janet Ennamorato
Member of the NOTL
Horticultural Society

The marriage of annuals and perennials makes for a gorgeous show all through the season. The effort involved in selection, placement and care is well worth it!

The quality of soil is critical. Amending with fresh triple mix each year ensures a great start to the long-awaited warmer seasons, and working in a slow-release fertilizer is a huge bonus to all the plants.

The perennial base you choose frames the space for annual fillers. It is best to consider hardy, reliable perennials to lower overall maintenance.

Below are some great annual/perennial combinations you're going to love trying:

1. Sedum comes in many varieties - a spectacular low sedum "takes immense Atlantis" works really well with the Pink Diamond

petunia. Of course, Frost-ed Fire and Night Embers sedum, the showy upright varieties, perform beautifully from spring to fall with a chartreuse annual like Nicotiana glauca Lime Green.

2. Russian Sage (especially the shorter varieties that stand firmly upright) and Sweet Romance Lavender (with the deeper shades of purple) both thrive on neglect. Great annual companions would be Rio portulaca for hot spots.
3. Rudbeckia is juglone-tolerant and the Irish Eyes cultivar is a beautiful colour choice. What fun to combine this with Salsa Purple salvia.
4. Echinacea look gorgeous in the garden and work well in containers. Try Yellow My Darling with Sunsatia Blood Orangenemesia to provide dramatic accent.
5. Veronica is a long spike flowering perennial that brings movement into the garden. It is said that Veronica is host to lady bugs. White Wands is a romantic, wispy white that honey bees love. Make magic with these

ecologically supportive plants by combining them with Love-in-a-Mist nigella.

A few shade-loving perennials for the framework:

1. Hosta, with an almost endless variety of sizes and texture of leaves, causes no fuss, as long as you proactively sprinkle the garden with bug and slug treatment. A spectacular hosta to check out is Empires Wu, growing three to four inches tall and five to six inches wide. The annual companion to enhance Wedgewood hosta is a John Smith begonia.
2. Heuchera Lime Ricky and Coleus Colorblaze Golden Dreams are solid choices.
3. Brunnera has a great leaf structure and in combination with Hakonechloa macra Aureola. Again begonia provides an eye popping colour and textural contrast. With many more wonderful perennial combinations to consider, there's no stopping us now!

This is the third in a 10-week gardening column series, organized by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Communities in Bloom Committee.

Local LETTERS

Ontario's COVID response
'unmitigated disaster'

We are being encouraged to book our second vaccine jabs, and all vaccines, according to government officials, are readily available to all those over 70 years old, amongst others.

As "a good citizen," I spent several hours on the computer and then, since booking was refused online (big red

letters, "appointment cannot be booked, contact support), hours waiting on the telephone to book the second accelerated dose. I have the first appointment set originally at my first injection site March 22, and second appointment July 12.

I was then stunned by the support worker stating my first site was not on her sys-

tem, and I would have to go elsewhere.

I explained I had the confirmation of the second dose, on paper, in my hand, but the worker was adamant this site did not exist.

What an unmitigated disaster is Ontario's Covid response.

Peter Thomas (Dr.)

Stay off the rocks, town asks



There have been no injuries on the rocks at Balls Beach that the town is aware of, but the area has been blocked off with safety fencing and caution tape, and a security guard hired. Fencing was erected to keep people off the area while the town works towards a long-term solution, after town staff observed people attempting to access the area. (David Gilchrist)

Regional medical campus brings doctors to Niagara

Dr. Larry Chambers
Dr. Amanda Bell
Special to The Local

Since The Niagara Regional Campus (NRC) of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine was established in 2008, it has improved medical care in Niagara by involving physician trainees in many clinical sites across the region, as well as attracting doctors to work in the region upon graduation.

The Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine is a campus of McMaster University, providing training for 84 medical students and 26 post-graduate trainees, as well as many other medical learners who come for blocks of training in the Niagara Region.

The campus is home to more than 400 faculty members in a variety of medical specialties, of whom 200 are family physicians, as well as an administrative team. The campus is housed at Brock University,

with classrooms and teaching space, as well as an anatomy lab.

Community and engagement from the NRC faculty and students have been strengths and cornerstones of the culture in the NRC. Teaching, clinical learning and scholarly research activity take place in collaboration with family physician clinics throughout the region, all hospital sites of Niagara Health, Brock University's Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, the Regional Municipality of Niagara (Public Health and Community Services) and other healthcare and social service agencies throughout Niagara.

Last month, the NRC produced an interim Strategic Plan update, which reiterated the commitment to maintain a sense of community and engagement through intrinsic enthusiasm to teach and learn. The interim report outlines the four key NRC goals: scholarly

activity excellence and impact; innovation, economic development and community engagement; access and equity; and innovation in teaching and learning excellence.

The NRC has seen recent growth in the development of a program of scholarly activity. These increased opportunities have allowed NRC students and faculty to achieve many national and international peer-reviewed, student-authored publications and presentations. Moving forward, the campus has increased its supports and leadership for community-based research, and secured funding for a professorship in family medicine, with plans to increase collaboration with community organizations and other programs of research.

Ongoing engagement opportunities have been established to serve marginalized populations for medical stu-

dents, postgraduate medical trainees and NRC faculty. Clinical work and scholarly activity are ongoing, with the Regional Essential Access to Connected Healthcare (REACH), the Niagara Homeless Emergency Liaison and Peer Support (HELPS) and the Agricultural Worker clinics. NRC plans to continue to track participation in these activities and engage with stakeholders to ensure meaningful contributions to the work of the programs. Access and equity also are priorities for the NRC, with particular focus on engagement and connection to the underserved South Niagara community. Meetings with community leaders have fostered an environment to support medical education. Through intentional outreach and advocacy, there has been a consistent increase in faculty recruitment and learner placements in South Niagara.

Innovation in teaching, and learning excellence, are upheld by the Niagara Regional Campus. The move to increased virtual offerings throughout the pandemic has allowed NRC faculty to increase their involvement in, and consumption of, faculty development. Simulation is also used more frequently as a training technique, whereby individuals and teams are exposed to realistic clinical challenges through a variety of tools, including mannequins, virtual reality and standardized patients, to practise skills, communication and problem-solving in a low-risk setting. NRC has established and supported a positive teaching and learning environment for faculty and learners, and will continue to work toward these goals.

The Niagara Regional Campus has a focused vision and direction for growth and engagement with our community. The

presence of a medical school in Niagara has benefitted our community through attracting and retaining high-calibre family physicians and specialists, training new physicians who choose to stay in Niagara for practice, and increasing research activity that directly improves patient care. Moving forward, the Niagara Regional Campus is eager to continue to improve the health of our citizens through high-quality healthcare education.

Dr. Larry W. Chambers is the research director, of the Niagara Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, and professor emeritus, Department of Health Research, Evidence and Impact, McMaster University.

Dr. Amanda Bell is a family physician, and the assistant dean of the Niagara Regional Campus, Michael G. DeGroote, School of Medicine, McMaster University.

ATTENTION NOTL HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AND FAMILIES!!

We would love to help celebrate your 2021 graduation in The *Local* in our June 30th issue.

Deadline will be Monday, June 21 at noon.

This is once again a challenging year for celebrations, and we would like to make it a little bit better by sharing your accomplishments at no charge — *this is our gift to you.*



If you would like to see your photo in the paper, please email it along with your name and school name to:

karen@notllocal.com

Couple looking for answers over denial of B&B licence

Penny Coles
The Local

Owners of a Dorchester Street bed and breakfast are into the second season of struggling to understand why they have been denied their licence to operate.

They are seeking answers, a monetary settlement through the court system, and have recently asked the Niagara Regional Police to investigate if criminal charges should be laid against the town.

Jennifer Elliott and Colin Telfer operate the ESkoot business on Niagara Stone Road, and have two rooms they rent out in their ESkoot Bed and Breakfast.

They had four successful seasons with their B&B, but ran into trouble when their home required new inspections by a bylaw officer and fire inspector for a 2020 licence renewal.

In her affidavit to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice Elliott says after working for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce for almost 20 years, assisting in the growth of the community's bed and breakfast industry and often helping owners with various issues and challenges, she felt she was knowledgeable about the licensing process.

It unfolded as expected, Elliott says, with a bylaw officer coming by and inspecting the rooms for rent, the facilities in their home, and a visual inspection of the outside of the home and garage, which was new. She was given a verbal confirmation that the inspection had been successfully completed and no changes were required.

The fire inspector asked them to relocate their smoke alarms, and recharge or purchase new extinguishers, which they did.

They paid their fees, confirmed their insurance, and waited for their licence to arrive.

It didn't.

Instead, they were notified by a bylaw officer that a neighbour had complained that they were using their garage as living space. They were told the garage needed to be inspected.

The garage is not heated, there is no air conditioning or insulation, and in the summer it's often more than 100 degrees F in there, says Elliott.

"Everyone knows we don't live in our garage," she added.

She says they knew "beyond a shadow of a doubt" that no neighbour truly believed they were using the garage as a dwelling, and felt if there was a complaint, it had to be malicious. That the town was aiding that harassment didn't sit right, she says, so after thinking about it, "we

said no on principle, and were immediately told I could be charged with obstruction, which is a criminal charge. I think that was the point of no-return in my mind. I was insulted, hurt, angry, baffled — you name it."

The three-bay garage, built with all the permits required from the town, has a car in one bay, and a second bay looks like any other garage with tools and work bench.

The third bay is Elliott's "she-shed," with a fridge, an old, free sofa they picked up that has the stuffing coming out of it, and a second-hand pool table she thought the grandkids might use when they visit, although that hasn't happened because of the pandemic.

But Telfer, a retired detective with Peel Regional Police, was disturbed that they were being asked to allow the bylaw officer entrance to their garage, their property, without a legal reason to do so.

What followed, they said, was an eight-month series of emails and letters, including them hiring a lawyer who wrote to the town on their behalf requesting their B&B licence be issued. Telfer and Elliott continued to believe the town was being used by a disgruntled neighbour. They told the bylaw officer that to inspect their garage, he would have to conduct an investigation and get a warrant.

Last summer, in an effort to resolve the issue, Elliott wrote a letter to the lord mayor and town councillors asking them to intervene, but nothing further happened, and no licence was granted.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, whose property backs on to Elliott and Telfer's lot, says she knew the garage was being built, and that, after receiving Elliott's letter, believed there to be a problem between them and a neighbour.

She told The Local she and council members are told by the planning department not to intervene for people with legal disputes. If they do, in an effort to help, it could end up being a problem for the town should the issue go to court, Disero says.

In January, anticipating opening their B&B this season, Telfer and Elliott hired a lawyer to work out a solution with the town. No further action had been taken, with no sign of an investigation or charges. Their lawyer stated the only "lawful course of action" was for the town to issue a B&B licence.

The response, in a letter from the town's lawyer to theirs in February, was a surprise.

Over the entire course of the eight months of correspondence with the town, through phone calls and emails, Elliott says they

thought they were dealing with a complaint from a neighbour, which is what they were originally told by the bylaw officer.

Instead, the town's lawyer said that rather than an investigation that emanated from an anonymous complaint, the town was exercising its authority to inspect their home prior to issuing a B&B licence — an inspection that had already been carried out, they believed successfully.

"Our jaws dropped," says Elliott. "All along we've been thinking it was a neighbour. There never was a neighbour, or a complaint. Now all of a sudden it's just part of the original B&B inspection."

Elliott and Telfer believe this was an attempt to "rewrite history," and they want to know why, if there was no complaint, an investigation under the short-term bylaw was required after they had already had their inspection.

They are now seeking redress through the court system.

They will have lost out on about \$20,000 in revenue, and about \$17,000 in legal fees.

Their lawyer has now also sent a letter to the Niagara Regional Police chief, saying they believe they were targeted and misled, and asking police to investigate whether there was a crime committed against them — a letter Telfer made public for a short time on Facebook.

They say they have been denied enjoyment of their property and suffered a loss of income and a sense of security.

When town staff was asked about the ongoing legal issue, and how it reached this point, the response was that "staff is aware of the letter from Duxbury Law to the chief of police, seeking an investigation regarding a short-term rental licence at 468 Dorchester, that was

posted on Facebook. Staff is reviewing the situation in its entirety and has no further comment to provide at this time."

Elliott, whose family in NOTL goes back three generations, says she doesn't see herself as a fighter, but feels betrayed by her town.

Looking back, she says if a request to see the garage had been made during the original inspection, "although I would have known it to not be part of the B&B inspection, I would have shown it to her for sure. I was proud of it, and got a lot of joy from it."

In 20 years at the Chamber involved with B&Bs, she added, "I never have heard of such a thing. When we had our first inspection, nobody wanted to look at our garage, and it was attached," she says.

"Part of me wishes this had never happened, but another part of me is glad that we have uncovered some

strange goings-on."

Telfer is acting on behalf of what he believes to be his fundamental property rights, and he's not going to let it go.

"Canadian law is very specific that if you want to allege a structure is a residence, then you are legally bound to treat it as such and get a provincial offences search warrant," he says. To get a warrant, he adds, "the Justice of the Peace has to be satisfied that the person applying for the warrant has reasonable and probable grounds to believe an offence has been committed. An anonymous complaint won't cut it."

Because of the "obvious lies being told," he continued, "I felt it was prudent and responsible on our part to make sure the legalities were adhered to, and as it turns out, it was the right thing to do."

None of the allegations of Elliott and Telfer have been proved in court.



Jen Elliott has a she-cave in one bay of a three-car garage, with a car, tools and a workshop taking up the rest of the space. She says she can't imagine anyone thinking they are living in the garage, and wants to know why she is being denied a B&B licence. (Photos supplied)



Local teen bitten by coyote in sports park



Billy Pillitteri-Smith is used to seeing coyotes on the farm, but was shocked to be chased by one. (Photo supplied)

Penny Coles The Local

Billy Pillitteri-Smith, 14, has grown up on a farm, and is accustomed to seeing coyotes. But he was surprised by how close one came to him and some friends at the Virgil Sports Park Monday evening. And even more surprised when the coyote, which he described as mostly white and about the size of a German shepherd, charged the group. The boys scattered when they saw it looking like it was in “attack mode,” which he hadn’t seen before. When they all started running, he was the one who got caught, ending up with a scrape and a puncture wound on his leg. He was tired after the incident and just wanted to go to bed, but Tuesday, his dad Steve decided a trip to the emergency department was in order.

“Poor Billy,” says his mom Eileen. “He’s had eight needles today. He’s been a real trooper, but that is a lot of needles.” And there are more to come. A representative from Public Health arrived at the hospital with a rabies kit, and Billy had the first of the regimen — seven needles in his leg and one in his arm. He will go back in three days for another, then seven days, 10 and then finally 14 days, says Eileen. She was torn between not wanting to make a big deal of the incident, and feeling she should warn others about the attack. She says she has noticed there have been more of them sighted on the farm, but they don’t come too close. This has been unsettling, she added, “but it could have been a lot worse.”

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CAA supports local search and rescue team

Randy Klaassen
The Local

Bob Moore became a volunteer with Civil Air Search And Rescue Association (CASARA) Niagara to save lives.

While training as a ground homing specialist (GHS), Moore spent considerable time traveling with the unit's mobile command vehicle. Learning the vehicle's long history, and its role in search and rescue as a communications platform, Moore combined his volunteering with his career as service responder with Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) Niagara.

More recently approached CAA Niagara's President and CEO, Peter Van Hezewyk to request a donation of CAA membership for the CASARA vehicle.

In response to CAA's donation, CASARA Niagara President, Stewart Harris presented Moore with a certificate of recognition. Accompanying Harris was Rick Kaczkan, who is the team leader for the mobile command vehicle. With Moore was Todd Morris, a CAA fleet driver, who has experienced vehicle extractions in his work. Both Moore and Morris know the importance of helping people in distress, and support the volunteers of CASARA.

While CAA focuses on rescuing stranded drivers, CASARA volunteers focus on rescuing stranded aviators, and also respond to searches involving people on the lakes. CASARA is tasked by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) at Canadian Forces Base, Trenton. As with CAA, CASARA is classified as an "essential service."

CASARA Niagara has found it a challenge to maintain operations of "on-call" status during the pandemic, as all members are required to continue their training and certifications. With anticipation of COVID restrictions being lifted over the summer, they have

been informed by JRCC to be ready for a higher-than-normal level of calls. Commitment for searches conducted by CASARA volunteers can range from a couple of hours to several days. In the previous two years, CASARA Niagara was involved in 22 searches, four of which were major, involving several other military and civilian aircraft and ground vehicles.

As a non-profit, charitable organization, CASARA Niagara depends on donations for its vehicle, aircraft and facility at Niagara District Airport. All members volunteer their time, and their personal equipment, spending hours training and re-



Bob Moore asks and receives a CAA membership to cover the local search and rescue command vehicle. (Randy Klaassen)

sponding to call-outs. The contribution from CAA Niagara will provide roadside service for the aging mobile command vehicle.

For more information on CASARA, or to share a tax-deductible donation, see the website www.caresniagara.ca

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Thanks to caring community



When Kathy Brown (left), manager of the Virgil Avondale heard about the tragic circumstances of the Pusey family in Jamaica from an article in The Local written by Jane Andres (right), she decided to show support by putting a donation jar at the checkout. Gladstone "Gussy" Pusey worked for Froese Farms for 35 years before suffering a heart attack and passing away in March, just a few weeks before his return to the farm for the season. Brown and her customers raised \$705, which will gratefully be received by Eunice Pusey, Gussy's wife of 35 years. Although she will be entitled to a small death benefit, his widow was informed by the Jamaican Liaison it will likely be a year before it will be processed. The amount contributed by caring locals will be a big help in providing food and necessities. (Julia Buxton-Cox)

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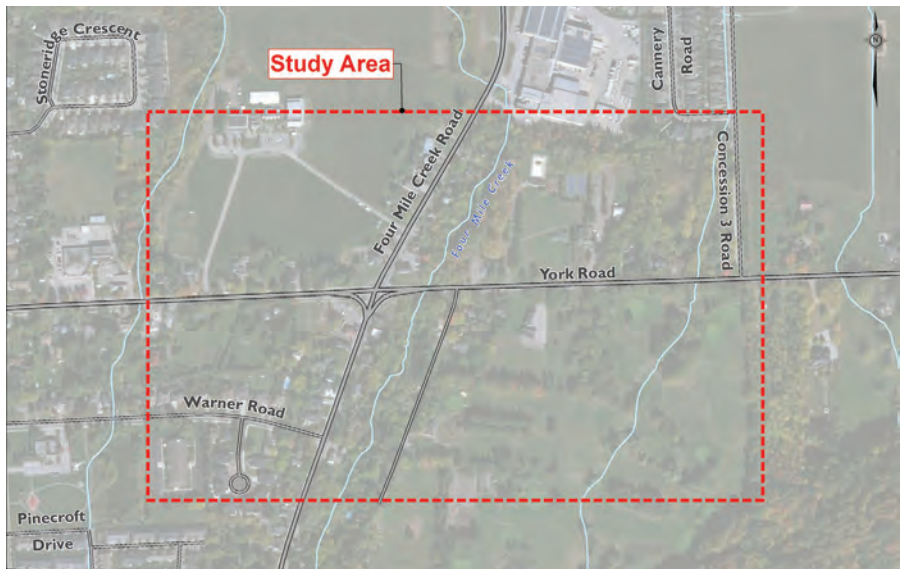
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Virtual Public Information Centre #2
Municipal Class Environmental Assessment
York Road and Four Mile Creek Road
Intersection Improvements, St. Davids, Ontario

Niagara Region is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment to address and improve conditions for all modes of transportation at the intersection of Regional Road 81 (York Road) and Regional Road 100 (Four Mile Creek Road), St. Davids. Public Information Centre #1 was held on March 25, to introduce the study. A summary report documenting the comments received from Public Information Centre #1 and the study team's responses are provided on the project webpage niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-road-100



The second Public Information Centre will be held in an online format on **June 23, 2021 from 6 - 8 p.m.** As part of this event, the study team will deliver an online presentation at 6 p.m. followed by a Q&A. The purpose of this Public Information Centre is to share information about the study, the evaluation of alternative solutions, and the preferred solution.

Information about the online Public Information Centre #2 will be available on the project webpage by **June 23, 2021**, and comments are welcome through one of the project managers, until **July 7, 2021**.

If you would like to receive future notices via email, or have any questions or comments, please contact one of the project managers identified below:

Maged Elmadhoon, M.Eng., P.Eng. Manager, Transportation Planning Regional Municipality of Niagara 905-980-6000, ext. 3583 maged.elmadhoon@niagararegion.ca	Phil Weber, M.Eng., P.Eng Senior Project Manager CIMA+ 905-695-1005, ext. 6732 phil.weber@cima.ca
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Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)**. The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the Privacy Office at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Please contact the Accessibility Advisory Coordinator at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

This notice was first issued on June 9, 2021



A green frog, our most common species of frog in NOTL, lives in a small leftover puddle that serves as protection during heat waves. (Owen Bjorgan)

NOTL's wildlife, forests gear up for long, hot summer

Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

It's not too often that by early June, we've experienced not one, but two profound heat waves here in NOTL. It's not impossible, but it's certainly not common. Daytime highs of low 30s and an unseasonably dry spring have set the tone for what the remainder of summer may look like for our town, its locals, and local wildlife.

In the natural world, especially in a region with four distinct seasons, wildlife is considerably adaptable. We've got to give credit where it's due. Every year, frogs emerge from hibernation to call in the early spring sun, only to get put on pause by another flash freeze or a last minute winter storm. Bees, snakes, and turtles enjoy more than half a year of positive temperatures before they return to some sort of dormancy, where the sun doesn't shine. Deer, eastern cottontails, and coyotes will use their mobility strengths to travel and find essential resources when things begin to dry up.

I recollect growing up with warm springs, or a spring with a few hot days, but never a hot and dry spring. Of course, it was during the first heat wave in late May that I recently planted 32 native tree species. Every morning before work, I would step out into the morning and its tropical air to water each tree. The earth was hard, cracked and crumbly — not so typical for a NOTL spring.

However, I began to notice a pleasant theme when I would walk up to the base of the tree with a water bucket in hand. Without fail, I could find toads hunkered down into the damp soil at the base of the tree, taking full and clever advantage of

yesterday's watering session. They intentionally wiggle their bodies a couple inches into the marginally wetter soil, and during the hot spells, this is the only place I'd see toads on my 12 acres. If you have a pile of mulch, soil, or a consistently watered spot in your yard, this is where these warty amphibians are most likely hanging out.

While tending to the "tree babies" and their associated amphibian friends, I also got polka-dotted in dog ticks. Many people have asked me over the past five years or so, 'is it just me, or are the ticks really bad this year?' Although there has been a slight uptick (pun intended) in their prevalence over the years, this year seems exceptional. This is most likely the result of having two short and warm winters in a row, and then catapulting straight into summer weather. Another couple of factors to consider are how NOTL's explosive suburban growth have brought more wildlife (tick carriers, such as birds, rabbits and deer) into more backyards and other areas, as they adapt to a dwindling green landscape.

While hiking in a local woodlot with a good friend this past week, I noticed the classic effects of how even a small forest can become an ice cube refuge. On the outside of the treeline, we felt like we were walking in some sort of intense Texan heat. On the inside of the forest, the temperature must have dropped a handful of degrees. The soil was dark with moisture, where scores of Solomon's seals, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and trilliums grew (their iconic flowers now seasonally shrivelled up). You can also bet that deer and coyotes take shelter in these forested areas in the

heat of the day. The surrounding, scorched vineyards were surely but silently benefiting from the forest, which was working hard, if you will, to keep all that soil moisture on the property, and provide relief from the direct and intense UV rays.

If NOTL had a higher coverage of forest and wetland features, we wouldn't see such severe desiccation of our local creeks. Seasonally, it is expected that One, Two, Four, and Eight Mile Creeks all become reduced in water flow come summer, and that's pretty normal, versus a sign of bad health. What sparks concern though is when these water levels begin to drop much earlier in the year. This allows more time for the waterways to be exposed to ambient heat and sunlight, which leads to higher rates of evaporation, warmer water temperatures, and the explosive growth of algae, which deoxygenates the water. This leaves local fish species which depend on deeper and healthier waters in a stranded setting, and that could be troubling for birds which hunt inland versus on the open water.

Arguably, southern Ontario is one of the most difficult geographical locations in the world for which to make accurate, long-term seasonal forecasts. We have far too many variables to consider, as our weather systems and climate as a whole are connected to other weather systems of the U.S. and the world. Considering that water is the ultimate life-giver and taker, I would suspect the wildlife is going to congregate at the local watering hole, just like many locals are looking to do this coming weekend as the province moves to step 1 of its reopening.

Picnix a successful summer business for university student

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

When a parks bylaw was approved by Niagara-on-the-Lake council in March, Queenston resident Abbie Gowans breathed a sigh of relief. Her summer business, delivering gourmet five-course meals for two in a fancy wooden picnic box on wheels, would be acceptable under the new rules.

This will be the second straight summer running Picnix for the 22-year-old Laura Secord Secondary School graduate and current University of Waterloo arts and business student. Last year, after having completed two previous cooperative education semesters in Gatineau and Mississauga, she decided to start her own business to fulfill the requirements of her program.

"I had (co-op) job offers in Amsterdam and Toronto, and I was really excited about both of them," remembers Gowans. "Unfortunately, because of COVID, those both got cancelled. My dad had been following this Picnix company in Vancouver, kind of thinking about it here in Niagara. He encouraged me to try running something myself."

Gowans looked into the university's Enterprise Co-op program, which provides mentors to help students start their own businesses. She and her father, Keith, reached out to Simon Pearson-Roach, the founder of Picnix. He was excited at the prospect of his company building a presence in the Niagara area.

Keith got to work in his renovated barn/garage, re-designing Pearson-Roach's original carts to make them lighter and more functional. Once he had a number of them ready to roll, Abbie launched Picnix Niagara in 2020, taking bookings through an offshoot of the Vancouver operation's website.

The concept is perfect for NOTL. Abbie prepares the menu at home. They load up the picnic wagon, tossing in reusable dining ware, a blanket and a few other extras, and deliver the cart to Simcoe Park at a pre-arranged time. Patrons can then wheel it to their chosen location, where they unfold the cart into a makeshift table to enjoy their picnic. Abbie returns to pick it all up at another pre-arranged time.

Last Friday she had a special booking for a birthday picnic. She parked her car near Queen's Royal Park and wheeled the Picnix cart across to the gazebo, where she laid down a blanket and attached an umbrella to the cart. Mical Lysias of Welland was planning to surprise her boyfriend with a romantic

lunch.

Lysias left a five-star review on the Picnix website following her experience. "Excellent," the review said. "The set-up was amazing and the food was awesome."

Abbie has five carts in operation right now, with Keith currently in the process of building another three. With her Niagara website now exclusive of the Vancouver operation's, she's busy seven days a week, and will only get busier as the province opens up and more tourists return to town. She estimates that 70 to 80 per cent of her customers so far have come from the GTA.

Picnix offers four different menus, including dairy-free, vegetarian and vegan options. Gluten-free options are also available, and items can be mixed and matched from one category to another. Each menu is five courses, including a green summer salad and a dessert. Water and lemonade is also provided. And Abbie is dedicated to supporting other local businesses through Picnix.

"A lot of the vegetables and fruits are sourced locally," she explains. "I try to get as many from local farms and small businesses. We get our local honey from somewhere on Line 6, and when the blueberry farm opens up, I'm a regular customer there."

For the May holiday weekend, Abbie had all five carts fully booked.

"I woke up at 7 a.m.," she says, "and prepared food until about 11. Then I delivered the lunches for 12. It was the first time I had to close off a day on the site, which was super exciting, though a little nerve-wracking. And my Mom (Sandra) was so clutch, if I could use the slang, helping with all the dishes in the kitchen."

Abbie credits both of her parents for instilling in her the entrepreneurial mindset that it takes to run the business. She showed signs of that mindset as early as 13 years ago.

"My parents own a B&B, and when I was around 9 or 10, I created a fudge business," she remembers. "I would make fudge and sell it to the guests. I made a few batches a week. During the summer we would steadily have all three rooms booked. I would go out there with my fudge, packaged with a sticker that said The Redcoat Fudge, and I would sell it to them for a dollar apiece."

When speaking about her business, her enthusiasm is contagious. Her mind seems to be full of ideas on how to get the word out about Picnix. She talks of social media influencers and bloggers taking notice, and has captured the attention of wine tour companies and even CAA,



Abbie Gowans delivers five-course meals to Queen's Royal and Simcoe Parks. The university student is exploring options for an expanded business once she graduates. (Mike Balsom)

which is interested in adding her to its list of discounts offered to members.

The Picnix carts are attention-getters. She often hears from her patrons that people stop to ask where they got the set-up. She ensures that she loads each cart with her business cards and pamphlets so those patrons can help spread the word.

She's hoping to bring Picnix to other parks in the future, perhaps in Niagara Falls or at Queenston Heights. And she is also looking at ways to expand beyond her current demographic, which she defines as the 25 to 45-year-old age group.

"I was thinking of starting a dessert sunset picnic option," explains Abbie. "It would be on the lower price point, for those who would want something smaller. That could potentially be happening in the near future. It would be a cute thing to do for a date night."

Abbie will graduate from Waterloo next spring, and hasn't decided which road she might take at that time. The popularity of Picnix so far has given her at least one option to consider.

"I think it definitely has huge prospects to grow," she says. "It's such a great idea. It's a great thing for people to do. It's super unique, super Instagrammable, as people like to say nowadays. It's a great way for people to spend quality time with each other, too."

When asked about expanding into other markets herself, she doesn't fully count that out either.

"I think it's definitely a possibility down the line,"

she tells The Local. "We were talking to a cooler company who makes a bike attachment, and they thought it would be a great idea to

bring to Toronto or even up north. Maybe we'll explore that option, either with Simon or without."

The basic Picnix package

is \$125. Deliveries to Simcoe Park are made at noon or 6 p.m., seven days a week. Visit picnixniagara.com for information.

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Three local girls to become Rangers in Guiding



Pathfinders Annika Janzen, Samantha Fretz, and Tannin Driedger-Bradshaw will become Rangers, the highest level of Guiding. (Photos supplied)

Megan Gilchrist Special to The Local

Next Monday, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pathfinders will celebrate our collective achievements and experiences over the past year, and in particular, those of our three members who will be advancing to Rangers (the oldest youth branch of Girl Guides) in September.

Tannin Driedger-Bradshaw, Samantha Fretz, and An-

nika Janzen have been members of Guiding in NOTL for many years, joining in Sparks for Sam and Annika. They have journeyed together through the Guiding program in Niagara, attending camping trips, learning new skills such as woodworking, coding, canoeing and rock climbing, and have helped to mentor younger Guiding members.

A large part of the Pathfinder program includes the option

to work toward the Canada Cord, the highest award a youth member may earn in Pathfinders. In order to achieve the award, Pathfinders must complete all eight program areas, learn and demonstrate leadership through camping and leadership events, earn a community service award (totalling 15 hours of service in three areas), and complete bridging activities with both older and younger branches of Guiding. In addition, they

must complete first aid training, and earn their Citizenship Certificate.

Not only have Annika, Sam and Tannin completed these mandatory parts of the Canada Cord, they have also fully completed the Pathfinder program, earning all 32 badges and three awards, as well as numerous optional challenges. Extraordinarily, they have accomplished this feat while living through 17 months of a pandemic, and balancing virtual schooling

and Pathfinder meetings. We could not be prouder of their achievements, and it has been a true pleasure watching them grow into confident, capable and contributing members of our NOTL community. We can't wait to see what they achieve next!

As Sam, Annika and Tannin advance, we look forward to reopening our NOTL Ranger unit next year, where we will be offering our oldest youth members the opportunity to

participate in fun activities or to challenge themselves by working on the Trailblazer and Duke of Edinburgh Awards. If you are interested in Guiding in Niagara-on-the-Lake, please visit www.girlguides.ca/joinus for more information. We have units for youth aged five to 17, and we welcome women aged 18-plus as volunteers. Congratulations to all of our current youth members, and we hope to see you in September!

Brock's Monument to open for guided tours

Local staff

Brock's Monument will be re-opening June 16 for the 2021 season.

Although the monument itself will remain closed due to the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic, heritage interpreters will be on site to welcome guests and share the history of the Battle of Queenston Heights and the life of Major General Sir Isaac Brock.

Thanks to support from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tourism Recovery Grant, there is a

new tent, and external displays available to help visitors connect with the history of the site.

There is also a small outdoor gift shop with books, souvenirs and other heritage items.

Towering over the quiet village of Queenston Heights, Brock's Monument measures 56 metres (185 feet) in height, and is the largest monument of its kind in Canada. Situated on the site of the Battle of Queenston Heights, where British and American soldiers struggled for the destiny of two nations, the monument is the final resting place of Major General Sir Isaac Brock and his Aide-de-Camp, Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonnell.

Guests can visit with costumed heritage interpreters, or take part in featured tours at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. each day. Those wanting to take a tour are encouraged to purchase their tickets in advance through the online store



The Friends of Fort George Gift Shop at Fort George opens June 16 for the summer, with limited capacity to ensure staff and visitors are safe. The store will be open Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Proceeds from sales help support student employment at Fort George and Brock's Monument.

as space at talks is limited. To purchase tickets visit friendsoffortgeorge.square. Tours are \$3.50 per child ages six to 16; \$4.50 per adult ages 17 and up, and free for children under five.

Heritage interpreters will

be at the monument to welcome visitors from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays to Sundays until Labour Day Weekend.

All proceeds from the programming at Brock's Monument help to support student

summer employment opportunities at Brock's Monument and Fort George.

For more information, contact the Friends of Fort George at www.friendsoffortgeorge.ca or call 905-468-6621.



Heritage interpreters will welcome visitors to Brock's Monument, and guided tours will begin June 21. (Photos submitted)

LocalHAPPENINGS

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Speaker: Kevin Bayne
Message: Teaching, Exhortation, & Prophecy
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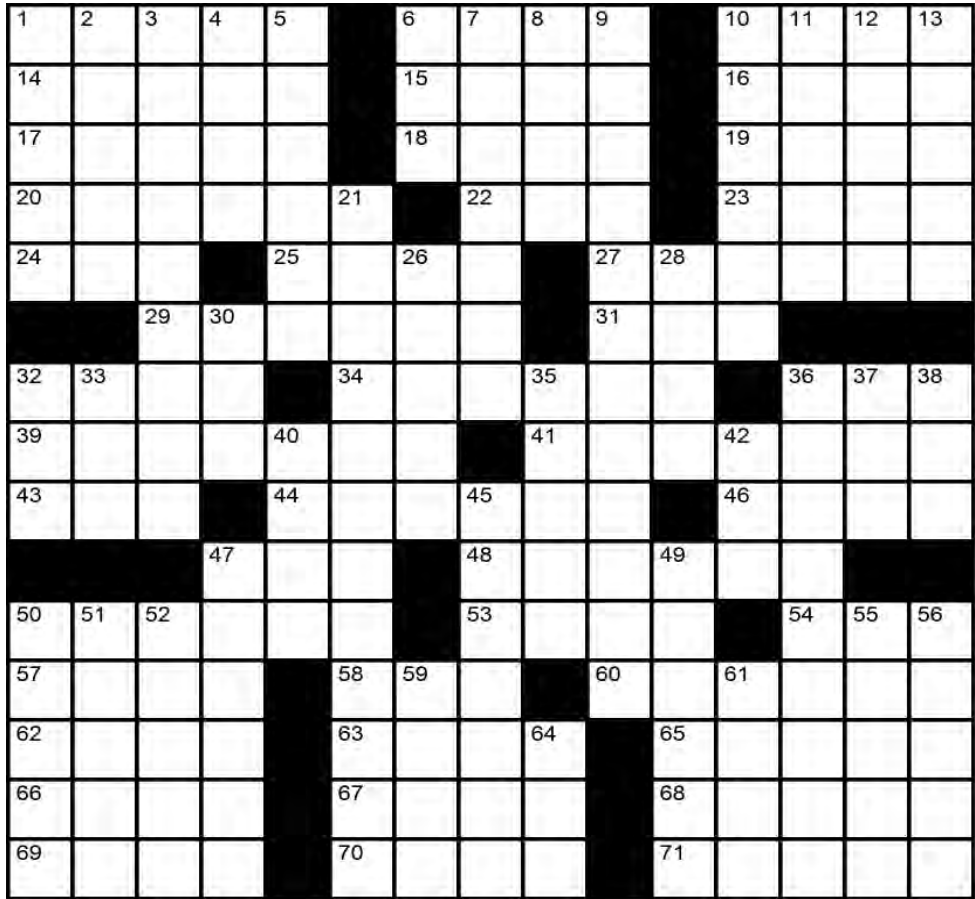
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- Across:**

1 With a forward motion

6 Guitarist --- Clapton

10 And others in Rome

14 "Boléro" composer Maurice ---

15 Lead vocalist of U2

16 Sleepless in Seattle director --- Ephron

17 Overweight

18 Embryonic flowers

19 --- Lane, Clark's love

20 Shell lobster

22 Exercise venue

23 --- the ground floor

24 Adeptness

25 A lot

27 Think constantly

29 Badger

31 Beloved

32 Anti-ageist org.

34 Pulpit delivery

36 Cushion

39 Comparatively costly

41 Getting on

43 Chop

44 Base

46 Part

47 Web address

48 Cleared
- 50 E.g. Courvoisier

53 Pricey

54 World's largest economy

57 Stock-market debuts

58 Monotonous routine

60 Daytona racing supervisory grp.

62 Established ceremony

63 Workplace regulation agency

65 Imperial sites?

66 Sweet

67 It starts every Sunday

68 Fifty after

69 ---, a plan, a canal, Panama

70 Fictional Ozzie dame

71 Author/astronomer Carl ---
- 11 Common odds ending

12 Operatic solos

13 Endures

21 "A Beautiful Mind" actor

26 Record keeper

28 Deform

30 Emulator

32 Fire residue

33 Consumed

35 Donnybrook

36 Bringing forth

37 Everyone

38 Stain

40 One paid to jump out of perfectly serviceable aircraft

42 Before, poetically

45 Soon afterwards

47 Invisible

49 Areas of land

50 About

51 Anything that stupefies

52 Have to

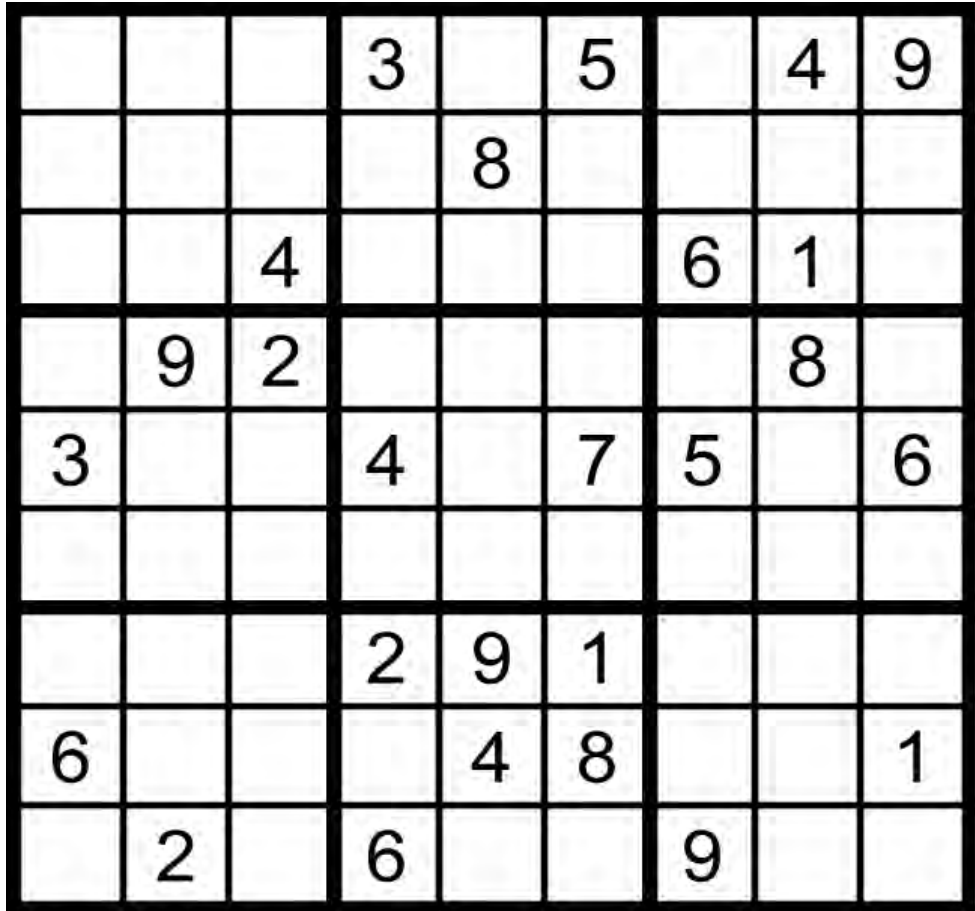
55 Generous annual visitor

56 Fire-raising

59 Pre-loved

61 Mets' old stadium

64 Alias



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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from
June 2, 2021

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

Across: 1 Along, 6 Eric, 10 Et al, 14 Ravel, 15 Bono, 16 Nora, 17 Obese, 18 Buds, 19 Lois, 20 Mortar, 22 Gym, 23 In at, 24 Art, 25 Much, 27 Obsess, 29 Hassle, 31 Pet, 32 A A R P, 34 Sermion, 36 Pad, 39 Steeper, 41 Elderly, 43 Hew, 44 Alkali, 46 Role, 47 U R L, 48 Netted, 50 Cognac, 53 Dear, 54 U S A, 57 P Os, 58 Rut, 60 N A S C A R, 62 Rite, 63 O S H A, 65 Chins, 66 Cute, 67 Week, 68 Ten to, 69 A man, 70 Edna, 71 Sagan.

Down: 1 Aroma, 2 Labor, 3 Overthrew, 4 Nest, 5 Gileams, 6 Ebb, 7 Rougher, 8 Indy, 9 Cosmopolitan, 10 Enlist, 11 To one, 12 Arias, 13 Lasts, 21 Russell Crowe, 26 Clerk, 28 Bend, 30 Ape, 32 Ash, 33 Ate, 35 Melee, 36 Producing, 37 All, 38 Dye, 40 Para, 42 Ere, 45 And then, 47 Unseen, 49 Tracts, 50 Circa, 51 Optim, 52 Gotta, 55 Santa, 56 Arson, 59 Used, 61 Shea, 64 A k a.





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"Life should get easier for people as they age," says David, co-owner of Heart to Home Meals. "And yet as people advance in age, new challenges can arise that make maintaining an independent lifestyle more difficult."

Shopping for one gets harder and cooking is not as rewarding as it once was. Heart to Home Meals handles the prep work and the cooking so seniors can receive deliveries of convenient, nutritious, and delicious meals. "We know that we play a big part in making living life at home easier," says Marianne, co-owner of Heart to Home Meals. "And that is what gives us the motivation every day to go out and do what we do."

Heart to Home Meals is a compassionate and friendly service that delivers nutritious frozen meals that accommodate special dietary needs directly to customers' homes. As part of our commitment to being leaders in senior nutrition and championing for all seniors to live a healthy lifestyle, Heart to Home Meals is now a proud supporter of the Relay For Life and the Canadian Cancer Society.

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