



Ordinance
boundary
stone #1
found
page 10



There were six pickleball courts on the go Saturday at the Meridian Credit Union Arena. Cogeco's YourTV had cameras set up to record and broadcast the games. For more photos, see page 20. (Mike Balsom)

Arenas transformed into pickleball palace

Mike Balsom
The Local

If the goal of this weekend's Pickleball Classic tournament in Virgil was to put Niagara-on-the-Lake on the sport's map for all the right reasons, then it was mission accomplished for John Hindle and the NOTL Pickleball Club.

With nearly 300 competitors vying for medals in a number of different categories based on skill level and age, the Meridian Credit Union and Centennial Arenas were converted into a pickleball palace for three straight days.

And the efforts of Hindle and more than 100 volunteers were certainly appreciated based on the rave reviews The Local heard from visitors to the town and local competitors alike.

Referee Steve Hast came all the way from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to officiate Friday night's pro exhibition. An in-demand pickleball ref who first took up the game in 2016 while on an Alaskan cruise, Hast says he was on another cruise in January when he met some members of the NOTL club. They mentioned the tournament, and he offered to come up and help work with club members who volunteered to officiate on the 12 courts this weekend.

"I am really impressed with this tournament," Hast told The Local Saturday. "Especially for a first time effort, for them to have almost 300 players, that's an incredible turnout. And the attendance for the pro night was fantastic."

Hast, whose home club boasts a whopping 1,500

members and 19 courts, referees matches all over Canada and the U.S. He's scheduled to work the Canadian Nationals in Regina, Saskatchewan and the U.S. Nationals in Dallas, Texas, where 3,500 people will compete. His expertise on officiating was invaluable for the volunteers.

Competitors Jim Kostin and Mike Bowcott were visiting from the Toronto Pickleball Club. They were competing at the 3.5 skill level, the highest at this weekend's tournament, in the 50 to 64 age group.

"We've been playing in a few tournaments," Kostin said. "We just played up in Barrie and won that tournament. We love the location of this one. We usually come here twice a year, so it's great to come here and get a chance to play pickleball."

Kostin and Bowcott were playing in the same men's doubles category as NOTL players Enzo Mancuso and Ron Pychel, who went on to capture the gold medal Saturday against fellow club members Ian Sutherland and Peter Si.

"It was a close game," says Mancuso. "We went back and forth a few times. It was a good battle between the two teams, but we ended up winning 15-10."

Mancuso also played in Sunday's mixed doubles event in the same skill level and age categories, paired up with Christine Bozek. They lost in the semi-final to Shirley Ancker and Colin McAdorey, and went on to capture bronze with a relatively easy 15-5 win over Dale Anne

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Moving, untold stories of Indigenous history

Sharon Burns
The Local

On a day when local schools cancelled field trips and kept children indoors for recess due to smoke from wildfires, Rick Hill, a renowned educator of Indigenous culture, suggested that "maybe we need to turn back to the original knowledge of this land, the Indigenous

knowledge of how to get along with this earth."

At the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum last Thursday, several Indigenous presenters talked about Indigenous history, from early contact with Europeans through to issues of contemporary relevance, as part of a partnership program called Explore The Niagara, between the museum and

the Niagara Parks Commission.

Host Tim Johnson, board member of the museum and senior advisor to the Niagara Parks Commission, is a Wolf Clan Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River. "This meeting," he said, "is a 'continuum that emerges directly from the development of the Landscape of Nations commemorative

memorial, in Queenston Heights Park, that draws attention to the contributions Indigenous peoples made as allies to the Crown during the war of 1812."

All presenters are authors who have contributed to the forthcoming book, *Beyond the Mist: Niagara's Indigenous History*.

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Bjorgan explains impact of forest fires, climate change

Penny Coles
The Local

Outdoor classes and events, outdoor recesses, school board sports and minor sports games in Niagara were cancelled for a couple of days last week, while Environment Canada warned residents in several areas, including Niagara, to stay indoors due to the very high risk posed by poor air quality from forest fires in other provinces, including Alberta and Quebec.

Friday air quality was listed as moderately bad, and by Saturday was considered a low risk in Niagara.

By early this week, forest fires were raging across northern Ontario, causing air quality warnings up north, but on Tuesday, and predicted into Wednesday, showed little risk in the Niagara area.

Owen Bjorgan, an outdoor teacher for the school board, had his Woodend Conservation classes cancelled Thursday. Friday was a professional development day for District School Board of Niagara, so there were no decisions made in relation to air quality — that would be left up to parents and any groups with outdoor activities organized, he told The Local.

Bjorgan is an environmentalist often called upon to make presentations, including an official Ted Talk at the University of Guelph. He also runs his own eco-tours across the Niagara

Peninsula and beyond, has released four independent nature documentaries called Hidden Corners, and hiked the 885-kilometre Bruce Trail on his own — raising more than \$27,000 for charities.

And he still finds time to write a weekly column for The Local.

In an interview about climate change and the catastrophic fires in recent weeks, he pointed out that forest fires aren't new, but for a short time so far this season, have impacted our daily lives in ways that they haven't before.

This year they are particularly bad, and 2023 is expected to be the worst on record.

And that, says Bjorgan, is a sign of climate change. He quickly clarifies that statement however, by saying there are a number of factors to consider, and climate change is just one of them. Until this season is repeated over years, it can't entirely be blamed on climate change, he says.

However, Bjorgan explains, the fires, which are created by heat, dry spells and lightning strikes, cause damage to forested areas, and that damage makes it increasingly difficult for those areas to cool themselves, thus beginning a cycle that can lead to more and worse forest fires.

Bjorgan himself was just getting over some health issues last week that caused a fever, stuffiness and sore throat, and although he was feeling better when he was outdoors Thurs-

day, he was still not fully recovered, and couldn't differentiate between the impact of the air quality on his throat and what was caused by symptoms that hadn't cleared up.

However, "I can sense it," he said of the smoke in the air, from where he was on the escarpment, "I can see it, I can smell it and I can taste it."

"This geographical area is a chemical soup for the pollution in the air all around us," he explains, "and the smoke just adds to it. When chemicals like that combine, they can become worse than they would be individually."

Bjorgan stresses "that even though this (season of forest fires) is a large-scale incident, it is still an individual incident, so I'm always cautious to say that climate change caused this immense start to our forest fire season."

It is, however, an "unprecedented and record-breaking start. As we continue to see long-term trends, and these major outbreaks more frequently, that's the pattern you can paint with climate change being at least partially to blame. Climate change could have led up to this event, but I'm always clear to say one individual event doesn't mean that it's because of climate change. We've had catastrophic events like this in the past century, and in other parts of the world as well where they are extremely severe.

It's when they start happening more frequently that you

can point to climate change as the cause."

He explains that climate change can fuel longer, dryer hot spells, cause forest fires which will spread, creating more fires which will keep burning and spread even more, "and by then, you've removed a lot of living trees and vegetation, further taken away the ability of the earth surface's ability to cool itself, and taken away those once-alive plants that take in carbon dioxide."

That continues with a loop that is even hotter and longer, and becomes more inviting for fires, so there will be more fires in the future, he explains.

The conditions will create more of the same, and can be quite destructive in nature, he says.

"The only way to end it is for the fires to go out, but in the meantime they continue to create conditions to make more fires, and that sets the stage and ingredients for them to begin again and continue. That's the world of climate change — it gets harder and harder to get a grip on it. These events just create conditions for more of these events to happen."

Bjorgan points to the irony of the pandemic years, when we were told to avoid indoor events and crowds, and spend time outdoors, and now we're told to go indoors for different health reasons.

"It's tough for me not to be outdoors," he says.

He hadn't cancelled any of his own outdoor eco-tours, hoping the air quality would improve, as it did over the weekend, and make that unnecessary.

A season like this, he says, may encourage people to take climate change more seriously.

"Living in southern Ontario, we've been fortunate to avoid the acute effects of climate change. We live in a very climate-stable



This selfie taken by Owen Bjorgan on the escarpment shows the haze created by smoke in the area.

area, where severe weather rarely impacts us, thankfully. We're also fortunate to live in an area of the world with modern amenities and technologies, and we can be innovative in ways that others can't. We've been lucky in where we live in the world."

Bjorgan says we've been able to "cheat the climate change system, because it hasn't yet arrived at our back door, figuratively speaking. Now the storm has arrived at our back door, so maybe we're at the point where we will say we have to take action."

As politicians fight over who is at fault and what should be done, Bjorgan's message is what we take away from this season of catastrophic forest fires.

"We can learn from this: that our ecosystems are dwindling and fragile, and those ecosystems are burning right now. When we take care of our ecosystems, especially the vegetation in the world, we are taking

care of ourselves."

And we've learned that human-made borders don't protect us: forest fires may not be in southern Ontario, but they are affecting us, he adds.

"Nature ecosystems and weather changes do not know boundaries, and now we're seeing the results of that. Canada should be concerned about what the U.S. is doing with its natural resources. We should be concerned about what's happening to the Amazon rain forests in Brazil, or in this case fires in Quebec and other areas. Everything is connected."

The message, he continues, "is that our decision-makers and our policy-makers at the highest levels need to stop having meetings about meetings about climate change, and instead use their available resources to better educate the public at a ground level, without scaring them or changing their lifestyles dramatically. And to also seriously reinvest in natural resources, such as mass tree-planting initiatives. There needs to be a will at the government level and also at the ground level, with both working together, to successfully mitigate the effects of climate change."

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Popular patios may become permanent

Carrie Gleason
The Local

At last Tuesday's municipal heritage committee meeting, town staff made recommendations for the 2023 temporary patio program along Queen Street, originally put in place to give restaurants an increase in capacity during the pandemic, and an initial discussion with committee members took place about what a permanent program might look like.

Staff has recommended that a height restriction for patios be put in place for 2023 so as not to obstruct views of heritage buildings along Queen Street. After discussion with committee members, it was also decided that decorative greenery be a "requirement" rather than "encouraged" on patios, and that umbrella colours be muted.

Committee members seem to have been paying special at-

tention to patios in other towns in their personal travels, with several members describing both the atmosphere of towns with patio dining and the streetscape aesthetics, and comparing that to Niagara-on-the-Lake. St. Catharines, for example, has potted plants supplied and maintained by the city that patio owners can rent to give the streetscape a more cohesive look.

Some committee members voiced concerns about the visual clutter that patios will create on the street, and whether to limit the number of patios that will be allowed, along with the possibility of establishing rules about the distance between them. Town heritage planner Denise Horne said that, due to "a number of new restaurants moving in," the town expects to receive a higher number of temporary patio applications this year.

Horne also said that in the fall, town staff will be preparing a report with recommendations

for a permanent seasonal patio program. While it is too early to say what that program will look like, committee members discussed some issues they would like to see included, such as pedestrian safety, sightlines for traffic turning off side streets, the need for better building materials, pest control, access to drain-water grates and accessibility.

Some committee members commented that they don't feel the look of the current temporary patios is pleasing, and that part of a new program would be to ensure that patios fit in with heritage character of the town. Committee member David Snelgrove even went so far as to say that there is "an opportunity to maybe encourage a theme that would be shared by the patios to bring them together."

Members agreed that patios add a vibrant, lively feel to Queen Street, and that aesthetics will play a major role in any future permanent seasonal patio program.

Lakeshore Road, site of recent fatality, a dangerous stretch

Penny Coles
The Local

A 49-year-old woman has died after hitting a tree on Lakeshore Road across from the cemetery Saturday morning.

Niagara Regional police, Niagara paramedics and Niagara-on-the-Lake firefighters went to help around 11:40 a.m., but when the woman, who was alone in the car, was taken by ambulance to a local hospital, she was deceased.

The police are not releasing her name.

A photo taken for The Local will not be published out of respect for her family, but it clearly shows the car severely damaged from the collision with the tree.

Shirley Madsen lives beside Lakeshore Cemetery, on the other side of the road from the site of the collision, and has seen many serious incidents, including fatalities, along that stretch, involving cars travelling in both directions. She took some flowers this weekend to tie to the tree, and says there is a note posted there by a loved one, using the first name of the "sweet, beautiful" woman, and asking her to "please rest easy."

"She was loved, and she had a name," says Madsen. "It breaks my heart to think about it"

It also makes her angry that despite the number of collisions, including one at that same tree

not long ago, the region has resurfaced the road, but done nothing to make it safer.

She had an interesting experience Tuesday, she says, driving from the Old Town to her home. "It was just the way the light was on the road, and coming around the corner, it appeared like the tree was in the middle of the road. It looked very strange, almost making me want to go back to take a picture."

In a letter to The Local, she lists the many incidents she recalls, finding details online to confirm dates, that paint a picture of the danger along that part of the road, beginning where it meets Four Mile Creek Road and continuing into Old Town. She calls on the town and the region to consider ways to make it safer, she says, believ-

ing there have to be solutions, some of which have been used in other areas of town. Most recently there has been a stop sign to slow traffic on York Road at Concession 6, but in past years and at other locations, larger signs and flashing lights have also been installed to warn drivers of danger, she says.

Detectives assigned to the collision reconstruction unit are appealing to members of the public who may have been in the area at the time to contact the lead detective at 905-688-4111, option 3, badge 1009170 with any relevant information.

Members of the public who wish to provide information anonymously can contact Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477.



A small memorial has started at the tree on Lakeshore Road, with flowers left by Shirley Madsen, and a note left by a loved one. (Shirley Madsen)

Town lifts fire ban as risk recedes

Penny Coles
The Local

Due to improved air quality, the town's Fire & Emergency Services Department is lifting the open-air

burning ban this morning, Wednesday June 14, at 8:30 a.m., CAO Marnie Cluckie told The Local Tuesday.

The town will also notify the public that the burn ban has been lifted through the

town's website and social media channels Wednesday morning.

It comes as other municipalities in Niagara Region are lifting their bans, after some rain over the weekend and Monday.

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Pillitteri family celebrates winery's 30th anniversary

Penny Coles
The Local

The story of Pillitteri Estates Winery began generations ago in the heart of Sicily, but continued in Niagara-on-the-Lake when Gary Pillitteri arrived in the Niagara area with his father in 1948.

He and his family spent some time on Lakeshore Road, but Gary and Lena, married in 1960, "extended our family roots," bought the

Niagara Stone Road property and opened a farmers' market 70 years ago, and then Pillitteri Estates Winery 30 years ago.

"But first," Gary said, "my wife and I had to clean up the pig farm here."

Gary shared the story of their family, the hard work that led to the winery's success and its 30th anniversary, with a small crowd of friends and family gathered in the Barrel-Head pizza patio Friday.

The tractor parked on the grass beside the patio "was all I

had to work with then," he said.

The winery, he added, was designed to fit into the community, "because this is what we're all about. I never dreamed 30 years ago that we'd be where we are today," with Pillitteri wines sold in 30 different countries.

"And that's not because of Lena and I, it's because of our kids."

Next for the couple, he said, is retirement, and spending it right here in the community they call home.



Gary and Lena Pillitteri started off with nothing but a tractor he has kept over the years. Lena says she drove the tractor, including taking it into town, until finally Gary said, "if you can drive a tractor, you can drive a car," and she discovered he was right. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa has words of congratulations for Gary and Lena Pillitteri, their children and grandchildren, and other family members.



Lena (left, in red) and Gary (right, sitting) with family and friends on the Barrel-Head pizza patio.

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Kids helping kids

Lemonade day started Friday at Petrullo's in St. Davids, with Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Coun. Tim Balasiuk visiting the stand Coun. Adriana Vizari organized with her kids and their friends to sell lemonade and cookies. (Penny Coles)

The Neal family had a Mountainview lemonade stand on Concession 6 Saturday, with Emery and Tra-cyn in front, Kaliana in back. They ran out of lemonade and were offering iced tea and homemade chocolate chip cookies. (Mike Balsom)

Local

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Help Me Rhonda's Interiors

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Help Me Rhonda's creates showroom spaces in your home

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It's her passion, and has been for as long as she can remember. Rhonda Holloway of HMR — Help Me Rhonda's Interiors — has been interested in design since she was a child, rearranging friends' bedrooms before a sleepover began.

Her parents were both very creative, she adds, so her talent came naturally.

"My mother could design a room on a dime, and that's how I started as well, on a dime, although I don't do it that way any more," she jokes.

She got her start selling furniture, and quickly discovered her customers trusted her design advice, asking her to come to their homes to help with colour and fabric selection. Starting her own interior design business became the next obvious step, which she did, in the Durham Region in 1992, offering consultations on interior decorating, and specializing in furniture, blinds, custom draperies and accessories.



In 2005, with her husband John's help and skills, they expanded the business together to include full renovations, doing the most amazing kitchen and bathroom makeovers — check out Help Me Rhonda's online photo gallery to see how amazing — and relying of the best contractors and suppliers available

to make sure they delivered great service and top-quality results.

Rhonda says she often had clients call on her for help when contractors had gone over budget, or in some cases, hadn't even completed the job they had promised. Clients were finding themselves without the resources to finish the work.

By offering renovation and decorating services, HMR can ensure the job gets done properly, within budget, and with the results clients are expecting.

A decision to move house and business to Niagara-on-the-Lake was both "scary and exciting," she says, but she and her husband John have adult children in the

region, and an expanding number of grandchildren they wanted to be closer to.

"We really didn't want to miss out on spending more time with them," she says, "and we love it here. People are very warm and welcoming, and we feel very much at home."

They bought a fixer-

upper on Concession 6, and they are both immersed in making it into their dream home, but they are hard-working and motivated, and interested in taking on the dreams of others.

While Rhonda brings a keen design sense, taste and style to help fulfill her clients' wishes, she also understands the fundamentals, and considers herself to be open and direct, saying what she thinks. If she believes a client is headed down the right path with her design ideas, Rhonda says so, but she's not afraid to tell a client if she disagrees. What matters to her most, she says, is that her clients are happy with the results — and they are. "We're every customer-oriented," she says. "We do a great job, and we make sure we have happy clients. Renovations are hard to live through, but I make sure they turn out beautiful in the end. The client gets something they love with the budget they have, everyone is happy, and it's all been worth it! The end result is all that matters."



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– Rhonda and John

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EDITORIAL

Golf courses can act as unintentional conservation areas

Owen Bjorgan
The Local

I remember my first time golfing at what was formerly known as Peach Trees golf course, a delightful nine-hole course off of Niven Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I was likely around 10 years old, and I thought it was a real treat to swing some clubs with my dad, Moe, for the first time.

There is an ongoing internal debate as to whether my golf skills have actually improved since then. Thankfully, my biology skills did, though. It was at my first golf outing that my dad probably realized I was destined to study the natural world instead of making the PGA tour.

I teed off the day by immediately walking over to one of the numerous ponds that dotted the course. I absolutely had to know what could be

swimming, floating or slithering around in there. I was not disappointed to see a dozen bullfrogs the size of a shoe. At this point, my dad was likely attempting to tell me when the appropriate time to use an iron versus a driver was, but instead of a club in my hand, I wanted to grab one of these amphibious behemoths for myself.

The frog was so big that it could barely be contained in my two hands. Some golfers wear a white glove, and I was wearing a mitten of algae and pond sludge. I released Ontario's largest frog back into the water, and then proceeded to hit a few balls in various directions.

In this moment of youth, I couldn't fathom why these ponds were called water hazards. What an insulting name, I thought. They were joyously full of bullfrogs, green frogs, American toads, painted turtles, snapping turtles and scores

of waterfowl and wading birds. Who wants to get a birdie when you can stare at a cool birdy?

Fast forward to this past weekend, and I am here to report that not much has changed since then, as evidenced by my most recent golfing session at the annual Moe's Golf Tournament fundraiser for Red Roof Retreat. Not only was this golf tournament dedicated to a good cause, but it was also a pause to reflect on an idea for this week's environmental article.

Golf courses aren't designed to be a conservation area, but they certainly and inadvertently act like one. These properties are more biodiversity friendly than monocrop farm fields, suburban parks and other human catered landscapes.

Firstly, let's consider the acreage. Be it nine holes or 18, this is a considerable amount of space where high traffic and motorized vehicles barely ex-

ist. Given the desired peaceful nature of the game, most golf courses are located away from any major noise sources. Nobody wants to tee-off next to a roaring highway, and our local wildlife would generally prefer to avoid that, too.

To the demise of most golfers, ponds exist everywhere. The collection of large and small water features across a golf course gives ample habitat opportunity for the aforementioned species. Last weekend on the golf course, I saw a great egret — a large and elegant white bird more frequently found in Niagara's more secluded backwaters. The trees, which seem to have an unusual habit for stopping my golf ball, provide perching habitat for birds of prey who capitalize on their prey venturing across the open fairway.

The golf course is generally a giant green park with natural features and peacefulness. If

you don't care what lives in the pond (besides your golf ball), I can respect that. However, I would guarantee that even the

most serious of golfers at least subconsciously enjoy the benefits of fresh air, being surrounded by trees and biodiversity.



Jordan Pozzobon, David Byers, Isaac Bjorgan and Owen Bjorgan were a team for Moe's Golf Tournament. Isaac and Owen's father organized the event to raise money for Red Roof Retreat, which offers respite care and programs for kids with special needs and their families. (Sharon Burns)

Local LETTERS

Embrace diversity, live and let live

Happy Pride Month to all and heartfelt thanks to Ted Mouradian for his thoughtful contribution in Wednesday's NOTL Local (June 7).

Given some of the local hostility directed toward the LGBTQ2 community

recently, it must have taken some courage to write his appeal for unity. As a straight, cis gender woman, Ted's reflections are closely aligned with my own. I join Ted in his appeal for all of us to embrace diversity, live and let live and engage in

the behaviours toward all others, especially those who are marginalized, that we would like others to demonstrate toward ourselves. Life is short. Let it be gracious

Melanie Morris
NOTL



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

The Ruling Class (Netflix, 1972), a black comedy, is unashamedly and outrageously theatrical, and starts with the accidental death, by asphyxiation, of the cross-dressing 13th

Earl of Gurney, so his son and heir, Jack, a paranoid schizophrenic, becomes the 14th Earl. Jack believes he is Jesus Christ, and so the drama continues. This is a well-crafted film, unusual though it is, with brilliant performances by Peter O'Toole and Alastair Sim.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to the 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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Where's Ben, on a rainy day

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week, Christine Rizzuto told us Ben was at Queenston Heights by the Landscape of Nations memorial, beside the statue of John Norton.



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

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Support for hotel proposal would be throwing away planning tools

Dear Lord Mayor and members of Council,

The area surrounding the Parliament Oak school site is a very important established residential neighbourhood in the Heritage Character Area of Old Town. Would anyone have the audacity to propose or support a large commercial hotel and event space in the middle of Rosedale in Toronto? In Forest Hill? In The Beaches? I would think not. Then why is it being considered here in the middle of an established residential neigh-

bourhood in the Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake?

The site itself has very important historical and heritage attributes that are thoughtlessly and begrudgingly preserved and simply commercialized by this proposal.

If this proposal is supported in any way by staff or council, there is no longer any need for the Planning Act, official plans nor zoning bylaws. In fact the profession of planning would be obsolete, the concept of planning becoming an oxymoron

as developers would be free to build whatever, wherever and however they choose.

Connie Tintinalli
NOTL



This is the neighbourhood.

Local LETTERS

Canada needs to change course or end up like Hong Kong

I want to thank you for your thoughtful and detailed feature article about political prisoner and one of my personal heroes, Jimmy Lai.

However after watching the incredibly inspiring and heart-wrenching video you linked to in the article ('The Hong Konger' on YouTube) it's impossible to ignore the extremely concerning similarities to what has been happening here in Canada under Justin Trudeau and

his Liberal government.

The list of concerns is far too extensive to list here — Trudeau's open admiration of Xi Jinping and his "basic dictatorship" (which can be also be seen on YouTube — youtu.be/sLTGbtfxh_s), his online censorship bills, the physical trampling, freezing of bank accounts and vilification of peaceful protesters along with the recent cover-up of the Chinese Communist Party's influencing and interference in our elections

are but just a few.

If we do not collectively come to this realization and change course immediately, I do fear that we (especially our children and grandchildren) will all face the same fate as those in Hong Kong under exactly the same kind of oppressive government as the one Jimmy Lai has spent most of his remarkable life fighting against.

T. Weichel
#freejimmylaiNOTL

Local LETTERS

In last week's editorial, Coun. Erwin Wiens was asked to explain the effects of the forest fire smoke that blanketed our area. He may be a competent viticulturist and municipal politician but he is not a meteorologist, as he admits. At this point, the Local should have consulted a qualified meteorologist for an explanation of the climatic conditions responsible for the delivery of this smoke. The facts can

be easily found online (but no one uses the internet to lookup facts anymore!).

Ordinarily, winds are directed by the jetstream to move from west to east. This would take wildfire smoke from the west, northern Ontario and northern Quebec to Labrador and Newfoundland and out to the Atlantic.

Periodically, a system called an Omega Block sets up across

Reader offers explanation of climate change

the continent. The Greek letter omega looks like a curly W. Low pressure, in the Atlantic northeast, together with one in the Rockies, blocks in a high-pressure area around the Great Lakes. This pattern can last for days or even months (remember the summer of 1975 and the winter of 1983).

The winds circulate around a low counter-clockwise (cyclonic) while winds circulate

around a high clockwise (anticyclonic). This brings a concentrated flow of air from the north to cover our area.

Being under the high pressure area gave us cloudless skies, which made the smoke more pronounced. With the breakdown of the Omega Block on Sunday, we get rain and the end of the smoke.

I know it is politically correct to blame every weather

fluctuation on climate change.

Twelve thousand years ago (a blink in earth's history), at our location, there was miles thick ice on top of us. So in a relatively short time, the earth warmed over 36 degrees, so that we can live here. As farmers we have experienced extremes of weather that have destroyed a whole year's crop.

This summer should be cooler than normal since the El Nino is pushing up warmer air

in the Pacific northwest, which moves cooler weather into our area, from the north. But farmers adapt to the weather to grow enough food for all of us to eat. So don't worry!

Robert Bator
NOTL

In fairness to Coun. Wiens, The Local contacted him to ask about the impact of the smoke on agricultural, and he did answer that question for us.

Local LETTERS

I read with interest Anthony Orsini's letter (The Local, June 7,) and while he makes some valid points, some clarification is needed. An article in the Globe & Mail recently stated that some 3,000 Canadian students enroll in foreign medical schools each year — not 1000 — but less than 500 make it back to Canada for a post-graduate residency training position. The number of residency slots needs to be dramatically increased, particularly in specialties which are under-

resourced and where positions are already available in our public hospitals. Private healthcare has no control over creating additional training positions — this comes from the medical school programs. This will take time but is vastly cheaper than building more medical schools.

It should be pointed out that unfortunately there are slots in family practice training programs that are unfilled as "cradle to the grave" family practice is becoming less and less popular.

Private healthcare clinics not an ideal solution

The reasons for this are complex — remuneration is one, but too many family physicians feel isolated not being part of a family health team where they have access to nurse practitioners, social workers, physiotherapists, pharmacists and dieticians. The provincial government has all but abandoned creating new family health teams or expanding existing ones.

Shouldice Hospital is mentioned as providing excellent care for hernia surgery,

which indeed it does, but it is a for-profit organization. While the surgeon and anesthesiologist's fee is covered by OHIP, the hospital stay is not, and every patient is required to stay three or four nights in hospital at a rate of \$305 per day (semi private). This is where the profit comes from. In a public hospital patients are allowed home the same day after they have awakened from the anesthetic, which is the accepted norm.

Many other developed

countries do indeed have blended models of health care, public versus private, of which the U.K. is an example, but I would suggest not one to follow. Despite having this two-tier system, the waiting lists in the U.K. are longer than ever in public hospitals, so it certainly does not act as a safety valve. When surgeons can make many times more operating in their private hospital this is a clear conflict of interest, since the same surgeon also has patients in the public hospital

and cannot be in two places at once.

For example, a former colleague of mine in a teaching hospital in the U.K. bemoaned the fact that she had two patients languishing in the ICU, waiting for urgent cardiac surgery, while the same surgeon was operating on elective patients in the private wing of the hospital.

This is the real face of two-tier private healthcare.

Dr. Richard James
NOTL

Local LETTERS Please leave Balls Beach accessible for local kayakers

I would like to acknowledge Ron Simkus for his dedicated efforts in safeguarding his home and neighbourhood against the recurring threat of high waters. Over the past decades, he has demonstrated commendable commitment to achieving adequate protection for the community. The parkette restorations he has advocated for serve an important purpose.

However, it is crucial to remember that this parkette is

public property, intended for the enjoyment of all townsfolk and visitors, and it can serve multiple purposes.

Prior to the installation of rock reinforcements at Balls Beach, citizens were invited to provide input on its design. As an avid kayaker myself, along with a fellow enthusiast, we were assured that we would have access to the water at Balls Beach for launching our kayaks.

I find it rather perplexing

that Mr. Simkus suggests that the parkette should be a passive space, expressing concerns that people might expect a beach with full-fledged park facilities akin to Malibu. In reality, all we seek is a relatively calm area where we can launch our kayaks without risking injury.

A recent article in The Local highlighted that not too long ago, the town placed a sign directing visitors to a kayak and canoe launch at the beach.

When Mr. Simkus rightfully pointed out the absence of an actual boat launch or any expected amenities, Rome D'Angelo, then the newly-hired director of operations, had the sign removed.

Kayakers and canoeists do not require a formal boat launch or extensive amenities. We simply need a convenient entry into the water from the shore. While we do not necessarily require picnic tables, having benches

available for spectators who wish to watch and support our activities would be greatly appreciated.

It is regrettable to hear that the grass at the parkette is not growing as expected. We hope that the town fulfills its promise to water it properly.

In conclusion, I urge all stakeholders to recognize the inclusive nature of the parkette and to ensure that residents who enjoy water activities, such as kayaking and canoeing, have reasonable

access to the water at Balls Beach. By accommodating these needs, we can foster a greater sense of community and provide recreational opportunities for all. Furthermore, we feel it is important to preserve the historical name of one of the few water access points in town, and continue referring to it as Balls Beach, as it has been known for many years.

Frances Boot and
Jeannie Manning,
Local kayakers.

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS Too many serious, fatal collisions on Lakeshore Road

By now several have seen the posting on Facebook regarding the fatality on Lakeshore Road which occurred Saturday morning, June 10. A single vehicle car had crashed and the front body of the car was wrapped and impaled into a large tree on the north side of Lakeshore Road, opposite Niagara Lakeshore cemetery. The road was closed for six hours.

On Sunday as I walked over to leave a bouquet of flowers cut from my garden, I noticed a note and another bouquet someone left. What a tragedy to lose a loved one in such an instant. How that family's life will be changed forever.

Prior to this accident, I had noticed that same tree several weeks ago had the bark at the base of the tree removed. Later we heard from someone in town that a person who works at a local establishment had a collision with that same tree although there was nothing mentioned about this in any of the media.

What I found startling on Saturday was that there was a large sign at the intersection of Four Mile Creek and Lakeshore Road stating 'Closed by Police Order' but that did not make a difference to some. Cars were still going around the sign until they got further up the road and saw the police cars with flashing lights. They then had to make a 360-degree turn on Lakeshore. I know some were going to the event at Ironwood Cider House which was not a problem, however, I am talking about the others that were not. An older man pulled over and stopped to ask me what the problem was. I told him the road was closed due to an accident.

He asked me for how long; my reply, I had no idea. The police cars had blocked off the entrance before the cemetery. He said he had to visit someone in the cemetery and I guess this was his priority so he drove off Lakeshore Road, through a ditch and up on the grass to the driveway.

Hats off to the officers that were on the scene for the full six hours. How can you not totally support them and what they do, as well as all the other first responders on the scene.

Friday night coming home from the White Effects event, heading west on Lakeshore I slowed down, put my left turn signal on, a person behind me at that exact moment who was tailgating me decided he would pass me on a solid line. When he noticed oncoming traffic, he got back behind me and got on his horn.

We have lived on Lakeshore Road for over 20 years. Our neighbours on one side are Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery, and Ironwood Cider House on the other. Throughout the 20 years we have witnessed after the fact, the most horrific motor vehicle accidents imaginable.

The first sights/sounds you hear are either the impact of the collision(s) or the lights/sirens of the first responders and sometimes the next sound is that of the Ornge (ambulance rescue helicopter) landing on Lakeshore near Niven Road.

• March 14, 2023, approximately 8 a.m. a lady hit a telephone pole on Lakeshore near Four Mile Creek Road, and was badly injured. Road was closed and our hydro was off for several hours

• March 31, 2021, around 6 a.m. a man in a Mercedes hit a telephone pole opposite Ironwood Cider House on Lakeshore Road, mangled his car and cut the hydro pole in half. Our hydro was out for hours.

• I think it was in 2009/10 an elderly lady pulled out of the Lakeshore Cemetery turning right eastbound on Lakeshore Road, when a car with two young fellows were traveling west on Lakeshore and hit her head on. She was pronounced dead. From what I remember, I believe one of the young men died as well and I do not remember what happened to the other young man.

• Feb. 23, 2008, single car crash, and two teens died. Car was westbound on Lakeshore Road and hit a large tree on the south side at the entrance to the Lakeshore Cemetery.

These tragedies do not include any cycling accidents or other accidents on Lakeshore Road closer to town or from our location to the canal, such as June 16, 2022, at Irvine and Lakeshore Road, when at 10 a.m. a single vehicle struck a pole and the occupant was taken by air ambulance. On April 5, 2021, Lakeshore Road and McNab Road, a young man was found dead, hit by a vehicle, and left on the side of the road.

And let us not forget all the four-legged animals we have assisted with or picked up off the road between the stretch on Lakeshore Road from Four Mile Creek Road to One Mile Creek Road.

There is an increasing number of people, cars and cyclists entering and exiting Niagara Shores Park,

Lakeshore Cemetery, and Ironwood Cider House . . . you get the picture?

Statistics obtained from the Niagara Region tell us that between the period of 2015 and 2019, the total number of collisions continued to be on the rise, with an average of 5,695 collisions annually. The number of injuries and fatal collisions has remained consistent with an average of 736 collisions per year.

On a granular level, the Niagara Region experienced one collision every 89 minutes, two injuries every day and one fatality every 40 days.

On average the cost to our region for the collisions/accidents over this period (2015 to 2019) was \$350 million per year. So, we all understand road safety is a shared responsibility and as such we are all responsible for making our roads safer for all concerned.

However, over this same period the only change with shared responsibility I have noticed is Lakeshore Road has been resurfaced, a new bridge was installed just west of Four Mile Creek Road, as well as at One Mile Creek, and not one change or improvement has been made to save lives, nor to save money at the back end (i.e. as a result of collisions).

These traffic collisions impose direct and indirect costs to our society and more importantly add to the pain and suffering of the victims and their families. It begs the question as to why we do not spend more up front to reduce the cost of collisions at a societal cost of \$350 million per year?

Niagara-on-the-Lake's population has increased

by 1,677 permanent residents between the period 2015 and the 2019 census. That represents a nine per cent increase and makes NOTL the third highest growth area in the Niagara Region. Let us keep in mind we have about 3.5 million visitors per year and more and more of them will be cycling and scooting around the wineries. Again, no increased accessibility for cycle lanes on Lakeshore Road from Four Mile Creek to Old Town.

Somewhere, someone must start exercising common sense and looking at the Niagara Region Strategic Plan and its implementation schedule when it comes to Lakeshore Regional Road and come up with some improvements to reduce injuries and fatalities on this stretch of dangerous road.

Here's the deal:

1) Speeding is a problem on this section of road. Not only the cars but also the young kids on their motorbikes who think the curves and bends are a racetrack and hit 100 km/hour-plus. I witness this on a regular basis from my window.

2) Even though there is a solid line marked on the road, cars insist on passing, as if another 10 seconds will make a difference whether leaving Old Town or driving to it.

How about the region spends some money and implements the following:

1) Place flashing-light signs at the intersections of Lakeshore and Four Mile Creek Road, and Lakeshore and Niven Road, saying 'Caution Zone'.

2) Reduce the speed limit with flashing-light signs.

3) Double the centre lines to enforce 'no passing in this zone' with a sign that says passing fines doubled and/or speeding fines doubled.

4) The region should have planned cycle lanes for Lakeshore from Four Mile Creek Road to Old Town when they were completing the repaving of the two new bridges.

Many on social media have suggested reduce the speed limits . . . that's great, however, without having signage saying fines doubled and the amounts posted, that will do nothing. Some have said more police presence or ride checks, again great, however, they cannot be there 24/7.

The region needs to make a move and 'get it done.' The town needs to lobby the region to address the issues and concerns with the regional roads. York Road and Concession 6 has huge stop signs.

We are a growing and vibrant community in the best region in Ontario. Let us be proactive and make Lakeshore Road safer for our citizens, tourists, cyclists and our neighbouring wildlife. We need to develop a speed management program and have a strategy to address the concerns and issues. How many more deaths before something is done? It is never too late! Good for tourists, locals, business and, most importantly, lives.

Let us recap, on average there were 722 injuries and 13 fatal collisions per year on Niagara roads: fatal and injury collisions accounted for 13 per cent of this total.

Shirley Madsen
NOTL

Local LETTERS Baha'i community honours all women contributing to better future

On a single night 40 years ago — June 18, 1983 — the Islamic Republic of Iran executed 10 Baha'i women in a square in the city of Shiraz. Their crime? They refused to renounce

their beliefs in a faith that promotes the principles of unity, justice, truthfulness and the equality of women and men.

The women were hanged one by one, with

each being forced to watch the next woman's death. One girl was only 17; most of the women were in their 20s.

The persecution of the Iranian Baha'i communi-

ty, and all women, continues. Women continue to lose their means of employment, to be arrested, imprisoned, tortured and executed. They are barred from universities, public

employment, and a meaningful social life.

The Baha'i community of Niagara-on-the-Lake wishes to honour not only the 10 Baha'i women of Shiraz, but all women across Iran

— and around the world — who are contributing to a better future for all women in the face of continuing oppression.

Lawrence Clarke
Virgil

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REAL ESTATE WILLS BUSINESS

Crossroads strives for inclusivity for all students

Penny Coles
The Local

When the Pride flag was raised at Crossroads School, it was a message to all students: “You belong here.”

Not just for Pride month, or for certain kids. The goal of the school, says principal Kate Fish, is to ensure every one of the 454 students who enters the doors of Crossroads knows it is a place where they belong, there they are safe, and where they and their families are all welcome.

It’s a message that will be hard to miss, with the school in the process of having a two-and-a-half metre banner made for the front hall that says “You belong here.”

Raising the Pride flag and all it represents is just one small part of the big picture of what the school does all year.

“It’s a message that is embedded in everything we do,” says Fish, “recognizing that every student has a place here, and recognizing the diversity of our school population.”

“It’s also embedded in our curriculum,” she continues, “like talking about Black excellence, Indigenous history and Truth and Reconciliation, about women in history — all the things we do that revolve around social justice are embedded in what we teach, based on the curriculum and age-appropriateness, so it looks different in every classroom.”

Inclusivity as part of the curriculum includes acknowledging days of significance

and celebration for all kids, she says. “It’s just who we are. We get to know who the students are when they arrive in Kindergarten and continue until they graduate in Grade 8. We make sure they are recognized. We acknowledge the value of every single student at Crossroads.”

She and staff all continue to work on that on a daily basis, getting to know and understand the “bits and pieces” of every child, “their skills, their talents, and what makes them unique.”

“It’s about really knowing who our learners are when they’re here,” she adds, “and making sure they know this is a safe and comfortable place to be.”

“Inclusivity is also a direction of the school board,” Fish says, and has a trickle-down

effect to its schools. Each year, the goal is to always move in the direction of equality and inclusivity. “It’s in everything we do. It’s hard to miss, and it’s ongoing. We really love our kids and we want everyone to feel safe here. It’s what we all set for ourselves over the course of the year, what we set as a school, and emulates what the board sets for us.”

Fish began her role as principal of Crossroads just as the pandemic was shutting down schools, she says, arriving on the very first day of virtual learning.

“For a couple of years we all missed that sense of community. It’s really important to me and to all of us to foster that sense of community. When we were able to go outside and see the smiling faces and kids running around,

it was super heart-warming.”

Fish says from the moment she walked into the school, she felt how welcoming it was, with its strong sense of community.

For the flag-raising, teachers brought their students who were available and wanted to be part of the celebration, orga-

nized by the Brave Space Club, which is formed and run by students who want “a forum and opportunity to really be themselves,” says Fish.

She found it a moving ceremony — once the flag was raised, “all the kids turned to each other and said ‘you belong

here.’ It was lovely to hear, a really heart-warming moment, with hundreds of kids saying that.”

About two-thirds of the students were there, representing every grade in the school, she says.

Continued on page 12



All three elementary schools in NOTL are flying a Pride flag: Crossroads, St. Davids and St. Michael Catholic School. Both school boards have approved them at all schools. (Penny Coles)



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Ordnance boundary stone #1 a triumphant find

Sharon Burns
The Local

Ordnance boundary stone number one has been found just in time for the 200th anniversary of its placement as per the order of E.W. Durnford, commanding officer of the Royal Engineers on June 19, 1823.

Ordnance boundary stones, used to mark the boundary between town

land and military reserves, are some of the oldest historical artifacts in the Old Town. To date, 19 of the 37 stones have been found.

Just last week, Richard Larocque, an Ontario land surveyor, and Ted Rumble, board member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, found stone #1 on the Niagara Parkway, just past the John Street parking lot. Rumble posted the find on social

media: “Eureka! Ordnance Boundary Stone 1 found! Placed near the river walking path in 1823, 200 years ago this year. So exciting!”

Local residents John and Liz Vanderperk first heard about the stones through Rumble’s 2019 posts. “During COVID, John and I would get on our bikes and off we’d go” looking for these stones, said Liz.

“I have always known about these stones, but never knew what they were until I started following Rumble on Facebook,” said John. “The stones mark the beginnings of our town.”

As fortune would have it, the Vanderperks went looking for that first stone and found Rumble in the brush on the parkway this past rainy Sunday. John took a waypoint reading to identify the stone’s GPS coordinates.

Historically, after the War of 1812, townspeople were afraid of another attack, explained Rumble. After a series of land swaps with private owners, the town had four military reserves “which made it a heavily militarized town.”



Continued on page 11 John Vanderperk shows the GPS coordinates of stone 1.



Ordnance boundary stone 1 was found by the Niagara Parkway not far from the John Street parking lot. (Photos by Sharon Burns)

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Ted Rumble at OBS 16 near Brock’s bastion, outside of Fort George.

Ted Rumble with John and Liz Vanderperk, who were also looking for the stone when they met Rumble.

Stones ‘a matter of international significance’

Continued from page 10

The town owned an area designed for a hospital bordered by Johnson, Nassau, Queen and Dorchester Streets. This ‘hospital block’ was swapped with the military and became a military reserve, marked by four posts, all of which are still there today.

The stones are made out of Queenston limestone from the Queenston Quarry. The Royal Engineers Workshop, which was where the stones were made, was located at Queen’s Royal Park.

“All the stones are the

same,” explained Rumble. They are nine inches square, made of white limestone. A broad arrow is the mark of British property and is carved over the initials B.O., which stands for Board of Ordnance. On the other side a number indicates which stone it is.

Some of the stones have been pulled out by the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company while others have dropped below grade. Some have sidewalks or roads paved over them.

Rumble’s interest started with his home’s proximity to OBS 23 at the corner of Simcoe and Prideaux. “This

stone was here for 200 years and was intact,” he said. Since then, however, the stone was broken by a sidewalk snow-plow. The top of it is currently sitting in the town offices.

Frank Racioppo, owner of Queenston Quarry, and business partner Joe Lamanina, are making a duplicate stone to replace OBS 23.

“The recognition and repair of these ordnances is a matter of historical importance,” said Racioppo. “This is internationally significant. The Royal Engineers installed and marked land with this emblem all over the Commonwealth. The BO marking is so distinctive, Joe

and I are thrilled to see it engraved on our prized Queenston limestone.”

“Queenston Limestone is 400 million years old; hence, a new stone made 200 years later is not new at all, as the old and new stones will appear the same about 100 years from now,” said Racioppo.

“Special thought has to be given to the tooling and style of the markings on new stones,” he explained. “These are very important archaeological artifacts that you want to know and distinguish between the stones that were cut and finished 200 years ago versus the stones that are

cut and inscribed today.”

“The 200 year anniversary makes it even more special, and I encourage our community to get behind it,” Racioppo said. Joe, Ted and I will do our best to engage the local community with the goal to complete this special task at no cost to the town.”

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says he is aware of the importance of these stones. “Residents came forward several months back and updated the council on the background and significance of the ordnance boundary stones. Council agreed in principle, and asked our heritage staff to work on bringing some

suggested next steps for the community,” he said.

According to Rumble, the best-preserved stone is OBS 26, at the inner corner of the Charles Inn and best approached from the ninth tee of the NOTL Golf Course.

More information about ordnance boundary stones can be viewed on the NOTL Museum’s YouTube channel. Three more stones have been found since the airing of that video, which includes many artifacts, such as the letter written by Durnford, various maps indicating town and military property, and the location of the stones.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Public Information Centre #2 Glendale Secondary Plan Update

Overview

Niagara Region and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake are working together to prepare an update to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Glendale Secondary Plan.

A Secondary Plan is a land use plan for a particular area, which includes detailed policies guiding future development. The Glendale Secondary Plan, which was originally approved by Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Council in 2010, applies to the area surrounded by Queenston Road, Concession 7 Road, the Niagara Escarpment and Homer Road in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The purpose of the update to the Glendale Secondary Plan will be to review and revise the existing policies for this area so that they align with the Glendale District Plan, which was endorsed by Niagara Region and Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Council in 2020. In support of this work, technical studies, including a natural heritage/subwatershed study, transportation assessment, infrastructure analysis, commercial/employment lands study, and financial impact assessment are currently being undertaken to assess the concept plan for the area that was prepared through the District Plan. The final outcome of the project will be an amendment to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Official Plan that will contain detailed policies and guidelines for future development in the area.

Purpose

The first Public Information Centre for the Glendale Secondary Plan Update was held in November 2022. The purpose of the upcoming Public Information Centre will be to:

- Provide an overview of the purpose and scope of the project
- Share a draft Land Use Concept for the area
- Present the work that has been completed since the first Public Information Centre
- Explain the next steps for the project, including opportunities for public participation
- Provide an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments and feedback

Public Information Centre Details

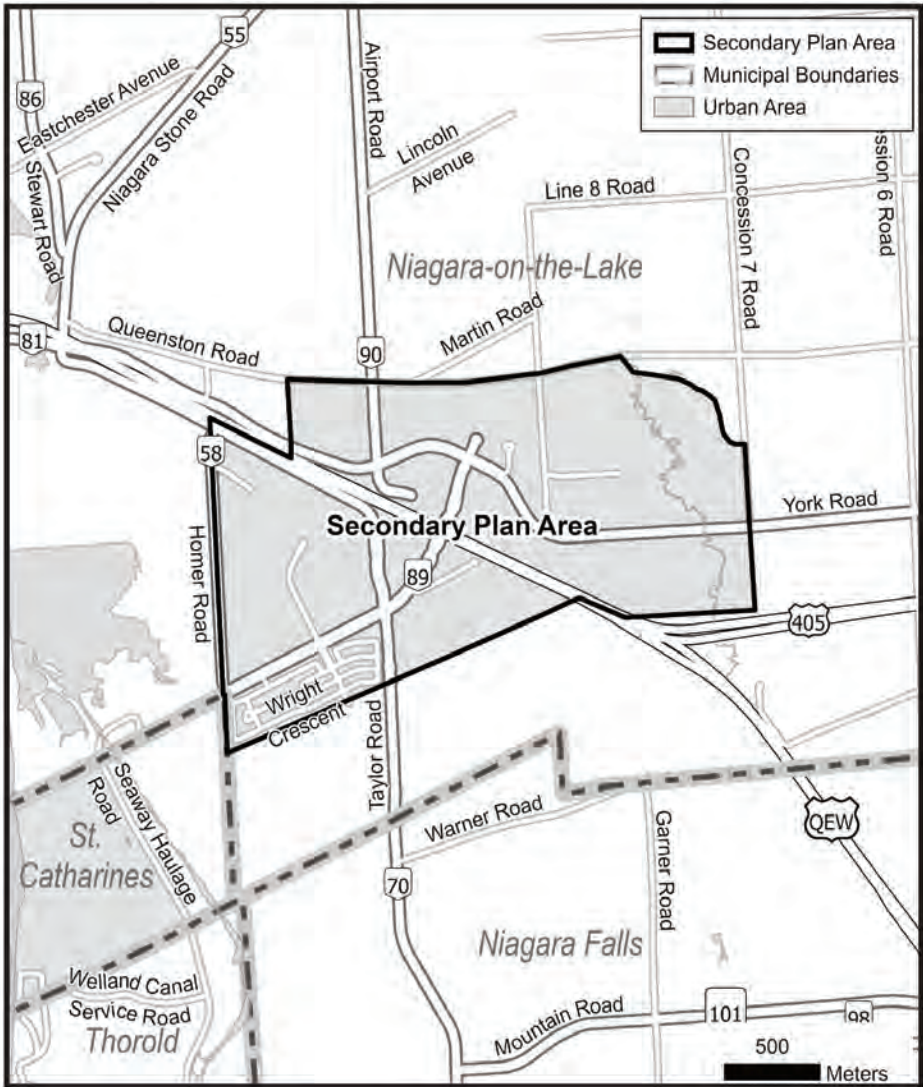
Wednesday, June 21, 2023
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn, Garden View B
500 York Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake

More Information

For more information about the project, timeline and background, please visit niagararegion.ca/projects/glendale-secondary-plan-update, or contact:

Amy Shanks

Senior Planner, Niagara Region
Phone: 905-980-6000 ext. 3532
amy.shanks@niagararegion.ca



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Director of Community and Development Services,
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
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public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the **Privacy Office** at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca.

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'We work on it every day'

Continued from page 9

And then they went inside and had freezies, a fundraiser organized by the Brave Space Club, with the proceeds going to Quest Community Health Centre, says Fish, which provides healthcare to the vulnerable, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

The principal herself obviously has a deep personal sense of social justice, but while it comes from within, she says it extends to all teachers, who take it very seriously, because it's so important to the students.

"You can't access the academic piece of your education if

you don't feel a sense of comfort and confidence in who you are."

And she credits Crossroads and everyone involved, including the community, for creating that environment long before she arrived.

"I was floored by it at the time, and we continue to work on it every single day."

"Certainly this place has a deep feeling of community," she says.

"Every single supply teacher, supply secretary, visitor or volunteer who comes into the school says the same thing, that this place feels different. It feels happy and warm, it feels engaging. It's a really nice place to

spend eight hours a day."

And what Fish sees in the symbolism of the Pride flag, she says, is not just for those kids it may resonate with, "but also for their allies, who stand up for them, and for human rights and social justice. You see that activism in 11- and 12- and 13-year-olds, and we want to continue that as much as we can."

"I think," she continues, "that's the message as we move toward the end of June and the school year: there are wonderful things happening in our schools today that are moving us forward to a kinder and gentler society."

Museum welcomes distinguished guests



The NOTL Museum held their members launch for the new exhibit Bound & Determined last week, and were pleased to have some special guests. Pictured are Sarah Kaufman (co-curator), Dorothy Abbott (Ontario Black History Society), Rochelle Bush (co-curator), Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine, Natasha Henry-Dixon (co-curator), Wayne Moore (commissioned artist), and Shawna Butts (co-curator). Dr. Augustine was the first African Canadian woman elected to the House of Commons and is credited with putting forth the motion to establish Black History Month. (Supplied)

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Students from across the region compete for chess success

Sharon Burns
The Local

A rainy Monday was the perfect setting for an elementary school chess tournament at the community centre.

The District School Board of Niagara tournament, designed for students in Grades 3 to 8, allowed entry to four students from each grade, per school. All students were guaranteed four rounds of games.

Debbie Peters, who teaches intermediate French at Crossroads Public School, was coaching Grade 7 student Jackson Dodridge through a final game of the day.

"This is our first chess tournament for the DSB since COVID finished," said Peters. "We are pretty excited to be back at it again. There are about 250 students here today, and I brought 22 from Crossroads."

Madelyn Josiak, a Grade 4 student at Crossroads who learned the game in Grade 2, said she "got to know quite a few people from different schools." As for her games on Monday, "I would say I did okay-ish. I lost twice, won once and got one draw," she said.

Matthew Cater, a Grade 4 student at St. Davids Public School, started learning the basics when he was five years old. "Chess is a hard game. It's complicated," he said. But he went on to win all four of his games for first place in the Grade 4 division.

"I went four for four here," said Cater. "I did my best. I accomplished my goal and I think I am going to do well. I was the only kid who won all four of the games in Grade 4 today."

Josh Bateson, organizer of the tournament and teacher at St. Davids, and St. Davids principal, Carl Glauser, were on hand to make sure everything ran smoothly.

place was earned by Kian Rahbar from St Davids. Zuzanna Bator, from Crossroads, won third place.

St. Davids students in the Grade 6 division were Hanlin Guo, in first place, and Aleksandr Keda in second place.



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa offered opening remarks to an auditorium full of kids. (Photos by Sharon Burns)

Having fun, raising funds



St. Davids students raised funds and had fun on the Rankin Run.



Older students help out looking after the younger kids.



Organizer Jeff Climenhages with staff member Cara Bodnar, who has been diagnosed with cancer.



Principal Carl Glauser and Grade 8 teacher Sean Hall lead the students through Sparky's Park.



Matthew Cater was happy after winning a medal.



Madelyn Josiak looking triumphant — she did okay, she says, winning one game.



Organizer Josh Bateson with Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and St. Davids principal Carl Glauser. (Adriana Vizzari)

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March might help name freedom-seekers

Penny Coles
The Local

James Russell, the man from Toronto who first introduced Niagara-on-the-Lake to the need

for restoration of the Negro Burial Ground, is continuing his quest to see his vision fulfilled. Although he began working with the town more than two years ago, re-

ceiving permission to carry out ground-penetrating radar at the cemetery, he is now on his own. He paid for the radar himself, and discovered there are likely 19 grave-

stones below the surface of the cemetery, established by the Baptist Church in 1830, and 28 unmarked graves “of Black freedom-seekers,” he says in a news release sent to The Local this week.

He has also put markers in the ground to show where they are. A town fundraising committee, first formed to help pay for the work he hoped to see completed, is going in a different direction from Russell, who believes the unearthing of the stones and their restoration is the responsibility of the town, the owner of the cemetery.

“The marchers,” he says in his news release, “are gathering to tell the politicians of the town council to commit the \$59,000 quoted by ARA,” the company that has just finished Stage 1 of the project, which has been only research so far.

That is the cost of future stages, including unearthing, cleaning and restoring “the 19 headstones the town’s employees buried back in the ’70s and ’80s, to make it easier to cut the grass.”

The town has said their maintenance crew only laid down headstones that were broken, which eventually sunk beneath the ground, with grass growing on top of them over the years.

The ARA research and report, now completed, is unlikely to have any more information than he has now, Russell says — anything further, such as the names of the people buried there, “would be a guess.”

Anyone wanting to join Russell should meet him Sunday, June 18, at 1 p.m. at the cemetery.



Assistant Don Johnston, technician Steve Watson and James Russell, heading the project, looked at what the ground-penetrating radar Russell commissioned in 2019 was telling them.

Niagara Foundation announces next Living Landmark

Local Staff

The Niagara Foundation has two important announcements: the next Living Landmark, and the three new directors. The foundation has chosen Ward Simpson to

be honoured with the 2023 title of Living Landmark. “Ward has played a significant role in our community, whether through founding and operating Simpsons Pharmacy, or his positions with the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Arena Fund-

raising Committee, Community Centre Fundraising Committee, Red Roof Retreat or the Christmas Parade Committee,” said Lyle Hall, Niagara Foundation chair. The Living Landmark award has been given annually since 2006 to a per-

son or group who have demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the quality of life in Niagara, says a recent news release. Taking on the new board positions are Bruce Caughill, Clare Cameron and Weston Miller. They join Albrecht

Seeger, Gabe Takach, Jane Dagg, Lyle Hall, Michael Fox, Paul Shepherd, Richard Merritt and Sam Ridesic as confirmed at the Annual General Meeting held May 30. “Speaking on behalf of my fellow directors, we are thrilled to welcome Bruce, Clare and Weston to the board. Each of them brings a unique set of skills and experiences but, above all, a love for our community and an appreciation of its heritage,” said Hall. This year’s Living Landmark dinner will be held at the Court House Nov. 18, at 6 p.m. To purchase

tickets please contact Jane Dagg at jdagg.notl@gmail.com. The Niagara Foundation, established in 1962, is a charitable organization whose mission is to preserve the built and natural heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake and surrounding communities, quietly and effectively advocating for preservation, undertaking innovative partnerships, fostering knowledge and appreciation, and securing and advancing the qualities that are now so strongly associated with historic Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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Ward Simpson, the next Living Landmark (Supplied)

Moe's Golf Tournament brings friends together

An annual fundraiser for Red Roof Retreat

Sharon Burns
The Local

For the past 29 years, Moe's Annual Family and Friends Golf Tournament has raised between \$8,000 and \$20,000 for Red Roof Retreat, which provides respite and recreational programs to people with special needs.

This past Saturday, 25 foursomes, some dressed in matching shirts and fake mustaches, played for brag-

ging rights of closest to the pin and longest drive at the Niagara Falls Golf Course.

"Some players have never missed a year," said Moe Bjorgan, the tournament organizer. "The golf is great, but the fun and camaraderie is what really makes it. And everyone knows why we are there — it's for the kids."

Matt Dietsch, co-owner of Sandtrap Pub and Grill and longtime golf tournament sponsor, said, "My

son Dylan utilizes a bunch of the amazing programs that Red Roof Retreat has to offer, so I know firsthand how important they are and how lucky we are to have them in our community.

"We are so thankful at Sandtrap to have so much support from our locals, and we want to make sure we give back. We had an amazing time, and Moe and the crew did a fantastic job."



Moe Bjorgan, with Chris Begely, shows off the money the event is raising for Red Roof Retreat.



The group of golfers and volunteers, many of them returning year after year to help Red Roof Retreat.



Nikki Normandeau and Phil Wall with Sandtrap sponsors Kristen and Matt Dietsch. (Photos by Sharon Burns)

Ride for Dad raises money for prostate cancer

Mike Balsom
The Local

Local resident Matt King expects up to 200 motorcyclists to gather at Niagara-on-the-Lake's Royal Canadian Legion Branch 124 this Saturday morning.

They'll be at the King Street location bright and early, rolling in to register for the Niagara Ride for Dad beginning at 7 a.m. It's one of 35 such events scheduled between May and September across the country to raise funds for the Prostate Cancer Fight Foundation, a leading investor in cutting-edge prostate cancer research.

King, co-chair of the Niagara ride, tells The Local that 2,294 riders have helped raise \$708,000 in the region over 13 years of the event. Money raised locally gets earmarked to fund research in and around Niagara, including recent studies at the Walker Family Cancer Centre and Brock University.

This year's Ride for Dad also marks the 13th year of involvement for the Niagara Regional Police sergeant.

"It was started by Ottawa police officers," King explains. "Some fellow officers knew that I had a bike so they asked me to come out to the ride. The next year I was on the volunteer committee and two years after that I became the co-chair."

King also sits on the national chapter advisory committee, where he connects with Ride for Dad chapters across Canada. He recently rode his Harley Davidson Electra Glide up to Kitchener to participate in the Grand River chapter's Ride for Dad and will also take part in the Hamilton region's Golden Horseshoe event in September. An enthusiastic King says a dream vacation for him would be to take part in the Ride for Dad Yukon chapter one day.

Kickstands will be raised and riders will roar out of the

legion parking lot at 9 a.m. on June 17, rolling down King Street to Queen Street, where they will head toward the Niagara Parkway on their way to their first stop at Kingsbridge Park in Niagara Falls.

There, they will draw the first of five cards for their poker hand, which could earn them prizes at the end of the 172-kilometre trek that also takes them through Thorold, Pelham, rural St. Catharines and Virgil before wrapping up at Club Italia back in Niagara Falls for a spaghetti dinner.

The legion in NOTL has long been the starting point for the Niagara chapter's annual event.

"They've been a partner for several years," King explains. "It kind of came about because of the relationship between police and military. They've opened up their arms and invited us to have the kick-off there in the morning. It's a fantastic spot

and close to the Parkway."

This year's local sponsors include Thorold Auto Parts, Paul Davis Restoration, Gales Gas Bars and the Niagara Regional Police Association, as well as the national sponsor, BMW Motorrad, which has contributed to this year's goodie bag for each chapter's ride.

"We make stops at each of our major local sponsors," King says, "to thank them for their support. It's a time to stretch and take a bathroom break, too. But more importantly, that's where we get the conversations going. Guys ask others why they're riding, and they share their personal stories."

Over the years King has been heartened to see and hear so many usually tight-lipped men talking about their own experiences. Some of them are prostate cancer survivors themselves. Others have family members who have fought the disease.

In an average year almost 25,000 Canadian men are diag-

nosed with it, while more than 4,500 will succumb to it.

"For so many years men didn't talk about prostate cancer because it can be embarrassing," King claims. "It's actually more embarrassing to not talk about it and to end up in a hospital bed instead of walking your daughter down the aisle, or going golfing, or riding your bike."

"The start," he continues, "is just a PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) test. It's a little blood test. The chances of survival go way, way up with early detection. If you leave it, those chances go way, way down. Prostate cancer tends to be a gateway to cancer spreading. If you find it early, you can get treatment."

The Niagara Ride for Dad is always held on the third Sunday in June.

"It's Father's Day weekend," King explains. "That increases the significance of the event. We make it a great family day. My son Dawson has come

along for the ride year after year. He's 18 now, and too tall to ride on the back of my bike this year. Maybe next year he'll ride along on his own bike for the first time."

King has also been impressed to see more and more women joining the ride.

"They're affected as much by prostate cancer as men are," says King. "It's taking their men away, and forcing them to become caregivers."

With the local goal of \$25,000 already surpassed more than a week ago, King is hoping to double that amount by the end of Saturday's ride. There's still time to contribute online with a pledge at ridefordad.ca/chapter/niagara, and if you have a bike to ride, late sign-ups are still being accepted.

"People are out there raising money and spreading the word about prostate cancer," King says. "I'm hoping we get over the \$50,000 mark. It would be a really nice number to reach."



Matt King is an organizer of the Niagara event, and rides every year, usually with his son Dawson. (Mike Balsom)

Music Niagara season begins on Father's Day

Mike Balsom
The Local

If Dad's a choral music lover there may be no better way to celebrate Father's Day than with tickets to the first concert of Music Niagara Festival's 2023 season this Sunday.

Artistic director Zimfira Poloz is bringing at least 90 young singers, all members of Toronto Children's Chorus ensembles, to St. Mark's Anglican Church Father's Day afternoon for a performance entitled

Reflections of Life.

About 50 members of the Toronto Youth Choir, consisting of singers between the ages of 18 and 30, along with another 40 members of the children's chorus Main Children's Choir, aged 12 to 18, will be filing in to the church. They will perform music from Bach, Brahms and Debussy, as well as a diverse selection of compositions from around the world.

"We will sing some Arabic music and some Malaysian songs," says Poloz on the line

from her Toronto home. "Also some Canadian composers, a song from Slovenia, one in Estonian and one final piece with both choirs together."

Besides the fact that all 90 singers will perform that final number, its origins may make it the most fascinating of the day's repertoire.

"It's a Samoan song," Poloz explains. "It's called *Su Manu La'iti'iti*. Translated it means 'little bird'. We sing it in the original language."

As well, the Youth Choir

program includes a song by Indigenous composer Sherryl Sewepagaham, who hails from northern Alberta's Little Red River Cree Nation.

"The story of the song is about Mother Earth," says Poloz. "It includes some body percussion, too. We feel it is important to honour the origins of the music that we sing. When we do our Malaysian song (the traditional children's song *Ikan Kekek*) we perform the body movements. Each movement has a meaning."

It's all part of the rich program of learning that each of the young singers experiences as part of the Toronto Children's Chorus. Poloz, who took over the role of artistic director in 2021, says that she works with people from these countries to ensure the choirs present the music in an authentic way.

"We try to connect with the real culture," says Poloz. "Children learn so much from learning the movements. It's more than just music."

Poloz, who teaches choral conducting at the University of Toronto, calls her young students "very special kids." With children as young as six study-

ing with the chorus, she works to develop the leadership potential in her students as well as their singing voice.

"It takes a lot of care and commitment," she insists. "We rely on our older singers to help take care of our younger choristers, to help them feel safe and comfortable."

If it sounds daunting to get 90 young singers from Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake this Sunday, just think of the planning that goes into trips further afield. Now in its 45th year, the Toronto Youth Choir has performed at the Sydney Opera House in Australia, London's Royal Albert Hall and the Dom in Salzburg, Vienna. They also perform an annual Christmas recital at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall.

In July, Poloz will be travelling with her choristers to Washington, where they will connect with three other children's choirs to perform together at the University of Maryland. Then, all four choirs move on to New York City for a date at Carnegie Hall.

"Each choir will have a 20-minute solo set there," says Poloz, who established her musical credentials in Kazakhstan

as the founder of that nation's first choir school. "Then we will all perform together with the New York City Children's Orchestra."

As one might imagine, performing in such esteemed halls demands a certain level of professionalism.

"Working as a team and exploring these experiences," Poloz says, "brings us to a high level of expectations for us. The people who invite us to perform expect quality. We work hard toward those goals together."

Poloz will be conducting the choirs, while Dakota Scott-Digout will play piano. She will be joined by percussionist Jamie Drake and violinist Gloria Verhovsky, a former singer with the Toronto Children's Chorus and now a student of Music Niagara Festival founder and artistic director Atis Bankas.

With a start time of 4 p.m., you will still have time to take Dad out for a Father's Day dinner following the concert.

Tickets for The Toronto Children's Chorus performance at St. Mark's, at 41 Byron Street in NOTL, are \$40 and are available at musicniagara.org.



The Toronto Children's Chorus will be singing at St. Mark's Church Sunday afternoon. (Supplied)

White Effect is dazzling



The NOTL Chamber of Commerce White Effect dinner was held at Peller Estate Winery, surrounded by vineyards on a perfect evening, with guests outdoing themselves with table decorations. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Hostess of the evening NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Minerva Ward with Anthony Annunziata, president of Tourism Partnership of Niagara. Ward said she was thrilled with the setting — moving the event to a local winery was the right decision.



Cathy Weiss, Coun. Maria Mavridis, town CAO Marnie Cluckie, Dorothy Soo-Wiens, and Cluckie's husband Jim Miller in the background.



Shirley Madsen and Louisa Ervahlo at their table with a beautiful centrepiece and great food just waiting to be enjoyed.

Jazz in the Park returning to NOTL

Mike Balsom
The Local

The TD Niagara Jazz Festival will kick off its summer lineup with a bang on Saturday, July 15.

In front of a group of supporters, board members and sponsors at Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate, co-creator and executive artistic producer Juliet Dunn announced eight shows over nine days, with five events taking place in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Understandably, Dunn became emotional a number of times during the announcement, with this summer being the first without her husband, Peter Shea, by her side. Shea lost his battle with cancer last August.

At the other end of the emotional scale, Dunn was excited to introduce the crowd to her father and sister.

"It's the first time they've ever been here for a media launch," she said. "They've been at a lot of events. But Dad has moved here now. Maybe we'll have an after-party at Dad's house one of these nights."

Jackson-Triggs was a fitting venue for the announcement, as the first concert, billed as Jazz Under the Stars, features Juno and Canadian Jazz Award winner Laila Biali and her band at the winery's amphitheatre.

As Dunn explained, the July 15 kick-off is a bit earlier than usual. That's because the indefatigable Dunn was determined to open the summer at the amphitheatre to mark the festival's 10th anniversary.

As well, the choice of Biali is a tribute of sorts to Shea, the pianist and drummer who began the festival with Dunn years ago.

"During the pandemic, Laila was one of our live-streamed events," she explained. "Peter was in hospital that day. Laila didn't even know that Peter was ill. He emceed from the hospital in Hamilton, while I was in our studio at home, and Laila and her husband Ben were at home in Toronto. I know it means a lot to Laila, as it does for Peter and me, for her to be here for our 10th anniversary."

Jazz Under the Stars will also feature opening sets from the John Sherwood Trio and another pianist, Nicholas Mustapha, winner of last year's Jazz 4 the Ages youth contest.

The very next day the festival moves to the Willowbank School for the Restoration Arts. Sponsored by Andrew Humeniuk and the Brown Homestead, an historic home in

rural St. Catharines, the entertainment will be provided by Alex Pangman, known as Canada's Sweetheart of Swing. Catering for the picnic will be provided by Treadwell Cuisine.

Pangman will take the stage with Grammy-nominated violinist Drew Jurecka and a rhythm section which includes Peter Hill on piano, Glenn Anderson on drums, and Chris Banks on bass.

The scene shifts to St. Catharines three days later for Fusion Jazz on the Roof, when the Wojtek Justyna TreeOh! appears atop the Niagara Artist's Centre on St. Paul Street. Visiting from Poland, the TreeOh fuses funk-jazz and world music with sonic explorations incorporating traditional African instruments and throbbing synth bass lines.

It's back to Niagara-on-the-Lake the next day, July 20, for Soul Jazz in the Vineyard. Gospel, blues, jazz, pop and R & B singer Cinnamon Jones headlines the concert accompanied by the Quincy Bullen Trio.

"We kind of have a soft spot for Cinnamon Jones," Dunn said. "She just brings the house down, gets everyone up dancing. She's just a riot."

Friday, July 21 features Berlin, Germany, musician and composer David Friedman at Henry of Pelham Winery in St. Catharines. Friedman is one of the most influential vibraphonists in the history of the instrument, having recorded and played live with the likes of Joe Henderson, Horace Silver, Jane Ira Bloom and Ron Carter.

Friedman will be joined by the cream of the Canadian jazz crop, with Lorne Lofsky on guitar, Neil Swainson on bass and the legendary Terry Clarke on drums.

It all wraps up back in NOTL the following day with Music in the Park, though final venue details were being ironed out at press time. As well, later that night, Randy Stirtzinger and his trio will move the party over to the Irish Harp as the weekend house band for the first of two nights of Late Night Music Jams.

Stirtzinger will be inviting musicians and singers to join him on stage both Saturday and Sunday. Dunn says you never know who will show up. There is no admission fee for the Irish Harp shows.

Information and ticket prices for the summer series performances can be found at niagarajazzfestival.com/schedule.



Alex Pangman will perform at the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts. (Supplied)



Juliet Dunn announces the opening of the Jazz Festival summer lineup. (Mike Balsom)



Laila Biali opening the festival at Jackson-Triggs is a tribute to Peter Shea, Juliet Dunn's partner, who passed away from cancer last year. (Supplied)

After war Indigenous leaders pledged 'never again'

Continued from page 1

Rick Hill, Tuscarora Nation, told the packed house a few creation stories, including one from the Anishinabe people who camped out by Niagara Falls 12,500 years ago. In this story, the Muskrat dove to the bottom of the river and gave his life to bring up a little ball of mud. "He put it on the back of a turtle and that became our world," said Hill.

He also explained the One Dish One Spoon concept. "Everything that grows on the back of this turtle is a huge dish full of plants, medicine, food, and trees; all the sustenance that makes a good life," he said. "In that treaty, we make peace by saying that everybody has a right to take from the dish. We are not going to fight each other, but there are some simple rules: you take what you need for today to heal yourself or to feed yourself. Always leave something in the dish for people who follow, and you keep the dish clean."

"I have to admit we haven't done such a great job on keeping the dish clean," said Hill. "We can barely breathe the air."

"As long as there has been a waterfall here," said Jim Hill, whose career path includes Parks Canada, the Friends of Fort George, and the Niagara Parks Commission, "there have been people here, over 12,000 to 13,000 years ago."

"Every step you take away from the brink is about one year in history," said Jim. "It's like the rings of a tree. You only have to walk about three football fields, 300 metres, and you're done with European history."

"You have to walk another 12,000 metres to cover our human history here in Niagara," emphasized Jim.

Historian Ron Dale concentrated his presentation on the early 1600s and the first encounters between Europeans and the Indigenous people in this area. His formal studies focused on the Seneca Nation from 1754 to 1783.

"The word 'Niagara,' said Dale, referring to the river, "comes from an Iroquoian word that means the straight or the neck, which describes this area very well."

"In the past," said Rick, "we had a great tradition of peace. However, there were a couple of times when that peace was hanging by a thread, and one of those times was

during the war of 1812."

Rick explained that his father's relatives fought against his mother's relatives during the War of 1812 and the revolutionary war. In 1815, leaders from Six Nations, Tuscarora and Senecas made a pledge "never again," said Rick.

"A significant part of the reconciliation took place in the commons," said Rick. They performed a Ceremony of Condolence where the Indigenous leaders wiped each other's tears with the blood that was shed and they replanted that tree of peace that had been planted a thousand years ago, explained Rick. "It was quite moving when you read the minutes because you can see where these men were hurt from the loss in the war and also hurting because why were we fighting each other."

Jim referenced Norton's Grove in Fort Erie. John Norton, whose Mohawk name was Teyoninhokarawen, wrote the best account of the conflict, he said. "He basically saved the British army. He left a couple hundred men in this little low ravine and the British and Canadians were all running away at one point. They got beat up very badly, and it was Norton's men who covered for them, allowing them to get away."

Karl Dockstader is an advocate for Indigenous peoples and co-hosts the radio program One Dish, One Mic. He was born in Buffalo and raised in Fort Erie. "On paper I could be both a Canadian and an American," said Dockstader. "People say 'you're lucky — you are a citizen of both nations.' I am not. I am not a Canadian. I am not an American. I am a sovereign. Six Nations, specifically Oneida of the Thames. Before there was a Canada, before there was an America, there were First Nations people."

The Jay Treaty, explained Dockstader, signed by Canada and the U.S. in 1794, allowed Indigenous peoples the right of free passage between the two countries. "For 12,500 years we had the right of free passage," explained Dockstader. However, eventually the Crown and the U.S. made new laws, making it difficult to honour that treaty.

"Because of the Jay Treaty," said Dockstader, "every time I go see my dad in Lockport, they ask where I am from. I say Six Nations, and they say 'okay, on your way,' because they are honouring the Jay Treaty. When I



Jim Hill (Photos supplied)



Rick Hill



Karl Dockstader



Ron Dale

come back, it is a different story."

Dockstader told about a time recently when he bought a carton of cigarettes from the Senecas, in the U.S., and was told by Canadian customs agents that he had to pay duty. He explained about the Jay Treaty and added that "tobacco is our tradi-

tional medicine. I am not paying for my goods from my people. I am Oneida, I bought it from Senecas. These are your lines (referring to the border). You put your lines through my territory. This doesn't affect me. The blood of my people spilt on these very lands so that you can have freedom."

Rick talked about the rededication of Brock's Monument in 1912. "My great-grandfather was there as part of this delegation to share this message with the people in 1912. The message was very simple: 'we were staunch allies to the crown, we shed our blood in defence of our treaty and now we are

wondering when you are going to fulfill your treaty obligations to our people."

"In 2012, at the Landscape of Nations, I repeated those words but also added, 'I hope that in a hundred years from today, my great-granddaughter isn't going to be standing here asking for the same thing.'"

Shaw Guild Garden Tour shows off nine gardens

Sharon Burns
The Local

The 17th annual Shaw Guild Garden Tour, Saturday, June 24, showcases the gardens of nine privately-owned homes in the Old Town this year.

“We are very excited about the gardens, because we have a good variety,” said Jo Ann Ely, marketing convenor for the Shaw Guild. “We go from a condo courtyard all the way up to a recently planted estate garden. It’s a nice mixture and there

is something for everyone.” The Shaw Guild is a large group of volunteers who support and promote the Shaw Festival. “We will have entertainment at all of the gardens in the form of either musical entertainment or an artist,”

said Ely. Experts from Master Gardeners, Niagara, will be in each garden to answer questions about the plantings. Those on the tour will receive a booklet outlining the details of the plants in each one of the nine gardens.

The event is held rain or shine and tickets are available at shawguild.ca/garden-tour for \$30. Tickets can also be purchased on the day of the event, Saturday, June 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for \$35 cash only, at any of the nine

homes. More than 100 volunteers will be actively working on the day of the self-guided garden tour. “Plan your day,” said Ely. “Come for the day, go for lunch, go to one of the wineries, and make a day of it.”



The extensive King’s Park condo waterfront gardens are part of this year’s Shaw Guild Garden Tour. (Supplied)

Get ready to drum down the sun at Ryerson Park

Local Staff

The seventh *Drumming Down the Sun* event celebrating the Summer Solstice hosted by Niagara Nature Tours is returning

to Niagara-on-the-Lake after a three-year hiatus. It will take place on Wednesday, June 21, at Ryerson Park. It will kick off with gentle yoga in the park from 7 to 7:45 p.m. led by Ara Ribas, of *On &*

Off the Mat Yoga, a newcomer to the area by way of Miami. Experience the magic of Ara’s harmonium as you gaze out over Lake Ontario. Afterwards the drumming circle will be led by

Kevin Richard Hotte of *Circular Motion* who has given his time and talent in the past to help participants “appreciate and revere the approach of summer.” Along with a mat or

chair, bring a drum, a pot or anything to shake and rattle. Donations are gratefully accepted to help cover costs. Participants are advised to bike or walk since there

is no parking on the nearby streets of the Chautauqua neighbourhood. For more information, call Loretta at 905-468-0062 or visit niagaranaturetours.ca/niagara-summer-solstice.asp.



June 2019 was the last time the solstice was celebrated in beautiful Ryerson Park. (File photo)

LocalSPORTS

Pickleball competitors ‘given exactly what was promised’

Continued from page 1

Courtney and Ken Forstinger. When asked if his shoulders were sagging from wearing both a gold and a bronze medal from the weekend, Mancuso said no, but his thighs were feeling a little tight. He played a lot of games over the two days.

“Overall it was a great tournament,” Mancuso added. “Everybody had a great time from Friday night through Sunday. The play, the sportsmanship, it was all great. Everyone was pleased with the tournament, with the grab bag, and with the Friday night exhibition as well.”

After Mancuso and Pychel made quick work of Paulo Melo and Jorge Lujambo of Mississauga in their first

game Sunday, The Local chatted with the visitors briefly.

“We’ve been playing a lot of tournaments this summer so far,” Melo said. “You end up seeing a lot of familiar faces in all of them. This is a big one, there’s a lot of people here.”

“And they’ve got a nice set-up with the sponsors,” added Lujambo, “one of the nicest I’ve seen. The loot bag, by the way, is the best one we’ve had in any tournament we’ve been in.”

Mancuso and Pychel were not the only local players to top their categories. At press time the club was working on compiling a list of members who medalled.

“Our members represented the club very, very well,” said Hindle, the club president. “It will be interest-

ing to see what percentage of club members won medals. A number of folks from out of town came up to me and mentioned how competitive our club was, how high their calibre of play was.”

The weekend also featured a dinner and party at the community centre Saturday night. Hindle says it was an amazing night.

“Great band, great music, great food,” raved Hindle. “Everybody was up dancing. We sent them all home at 10 o’clock, though, because they all had to play the next day. We had 160 people there. It was an unbelievable night.”

Hindle says the club gave all participants exactly what they promised them — a classic tournament with a combination of fun activities, good

competition and a great collegial atmosphere.

“Everyone from the committee is just delighted with how it all went,” Hindle told The Local Monday afternoon after finishing the clean-up from the weekend. “We over-achieved on the professional night with the number of people who showed up. And the players that night were thrilled to play in front of 400 fans.”

The number of people not connected to the sport who showed up to watch may be another indication of the success of the tournament. Hindle says a few people approached him about trying the sport out in the future, and the St. John Ambulance staff, who provided emergency medical assistance all weekend, inquired about

booking a session so they could learn the game.

When asked if next summer will see the Second Annual Pickleball Classic in Virgil, Hindle was elusive in his reply.

“It was an enormous amount of work,” he chuck-

led. “We’re all exhausted. It’s too soon to make that commitment. It would be my hope, though, that there is enough enthusiasm from the club to do it again.”

Look for more pickleball photos at notllocal.com.



Ron Pychel backhands a return. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



David Dailly from the NOTL club shows off his custom-made shirt that sums up his pickleball strategy.



Cheryl Schwartz and Vince Serratore, NOTL club members, were winners in the 2.5 skill level, 65 and over category.



Kim DelGrande and Denise Hattin of the NOTL Club playing womens doubles Saturday.

Double gold for Gruosso brothers of St. Davids



When the St. Paul Catholic High School Patriots captured gold at last weekend’s OFSAA double-A soccer championship in Bradford, the Gruosso brothers, Mateo, 18, and Marco, 17, were a big part of the winning effort. In the championship game against the Louis-Riel Rebelles of Ottawa, it was midfielder Mateo who fed the pass to teammate Lucas Vetere which resulted in the game’s only goal. Marco meanwhile, held down the back end as part of the defence. St. Paul beat Sir Winston Churchill to take the SOSSA title and qualify for OFSAA a week ago. In Bradford, the Pats went 5-0 in the round-robin and playoff rounds to make it to the final. Mateo now moves on to post-secondary studies at Niagara University in nearby Lewiston, New York, while Marco returns to St. Paul for a run at another Ontario championship. (Supplied)



NOTL club member Barb Bailey and Debbie Lewis playing in a womens double match Saturday.



Ron Pychel and Enzo Mancuso defend against Jorge Lujambo of Mississauga in a mens doubles match.

LocalSPORTS

YourTV shines spotlight on NOTL Pickleball Classic

Mike Balsom
The Local

Eyes across Ontario were on Niagara-on-the-Lake this weekend as YourTV Niagara broadcasted the NOTL Pickleball Classic tournament across a number of its partner systems.

Cable subscribers in locations as far afield as Windsor, North Bay and Smiths Falls were able to follow the action Friday through Sunday as a crew of producers and volunteers were on site at the Meridian Credit Union Arena all three days.

To producer Rich Ewtuchovich's knowledge, none of the 16 other YourTV systems across the province had attempted to cover a pickleball tournament prior to this weekend.

"I guess that makes us pioneers," he laughed.

What viewers saw on their television screens was the culmination of over four months of planning and preparation.

"I think it was back in February when we saw the announcement about the tournament," says Jack Custers, YourTV's manager of programming and community relations. "I reached out to the organizer, John Hindle, and he was very interested. From that point on we met on a regular basis to go over the details and to figure out where it would be best to shoot from."

With six courts in use simultaneously on each arena floor, it wouldn't be possible for YourTV to air every game. The decision was made to focus the broadcast on a single centre court at the Meridian Credit Union Arena.

"The committee worked with us to try to schedule the more high profile games on that court so we could get some of the best players and the best competition

possible," says Custers. "The way we placed our cameras, though, we could cut to the action on other courts in that arena when we needed."

The centre court was also the sole focus of activity for Friday night's opening event, a professional exhibition that saw two teams of expert pickleball players face-off to capture a \$2,000 prize.

Custers says NOTL parks and recreation staff were incredible in working with the production crew on their requirements to pull off the broadcast.

"We had to get into the arena a number of times," Custers says. "They allowed us to mount some special brackets to hold our robotic cameras. We had to run electrical wiring to ensure our mobile had enough power for our equipment. And we needed a special internet connection. The town worked with us to run a temporary Cogeco fibre line to the arena so we could go live."

Ewtuchovich took the lead on the production with help from fellow producer Anthony Luongo, the two of them visiting the arena with Custers a number of times prior to the event to scope out the best camera angles and figure out how to run cable without disrupting the flow on the floor.

Ewtuchovich created the mounts for six robotic cameras. Five were mounted up top on the spectator tier; the fifth one was mounted in the corner, affixed to the glass above the boards. There were three mobile cameras, including one on a jib, while two were manned by volunteers. A 10th camera was fixated on the score clock for Friday night's professional pickleball exhibition match.

"It's a lot like doing a tennis match," Ewtuchovich tells



Pickleball president John Hindle and Noah Vogel at the broadcast table in the arena with a full crowd surrounding them on pro night Friday. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

The Local. "With tennis, you usually have one main shot looking down from the end. That's why we set up a jib. The rest of the cameras shot from the side of the court. Most of the action in pickleball is closer to the net, so there's not a lot of long shots. Our camera operators were getting most of the action in the kitchen (the centre area on either side of the net)."

The crew had a chance to test out their angles and their technical specifications about two weeks before the tournament when Hindle agreed to organize a practice tournament with NOTL club members on site.

"It gave us an idea as to how the game was played," says Custers. "The guys were able to get familiar with the rules, too. It also gave us a chance to talk to some of the organizers and local club members, who were all so helpful."

Ewtuchovich and Luongo spent the weekend at the arena taking on various technical jobs, with Custers spelling them off on Sunday. Volunteers Josh Blyth-Whittle, Connor Croft and Zachary Williamson operated the cameras, while another volunteer, Bob Clemes, took the role of the ever-important floor director, communicating from courtside back to the mobile production truck and to the play-by-play desk.

That desk was set up at the top of the spectator deck. Niagara College broadcasting student Noah Vogel was responsible for calling the play-by-play with help from Hindle, pickleball consultant Mike Robinson, NOTL club pro Adam Eatock and others with connections to the sport.

Luongo confirms that the broadcast went on without a snag, other than a few moments when there were gaps in action on the TV court and

they had to fill the air time with pre-recorded material.

"We've gotten some feedback from a few people who said the YourTV coverage was excellent," Hindle says. "And the fact that it was shown in other areas helped us to use

this tournament as an ambassador for the sport. It was all about growing the game."

YourTV will be replaying the pickleball action later this week. Check the schedule on their website at yourtv.tv/niagara for days and times.



Connor Croft on camera during the weekend pickleball tournament.

Pickleball, tennis courts in the works at Queenston Heights

Penny Coles
The Local

As the popularity of pickleball grows exponentially in Niagara-on-the-Lake — and this weekend's tournament will likely add to it — there are plans underway for more court locations for those who want to play.

They are a couple of years away, but the demand for the sport isn't going anywhere but up.

At the top of the escarpment, Queenston Heights Park already offers trails, picnic areas, pavilions and a great playground and splash pad for kids.

It also has beautiful gardens, the Landscape of Na-

tions Memorial, and the Brock Monument.

Nestled within the park, surrounded by mature trees and picnic tables, just steps from one of the pavilions with washrooms, are five dilapidated tennis courts, unused and ignored for a long time in a park that is otherwise welcoming and immaculately maintained.

Coun. Erwin Wiens, a board member of the parks commission, says the decision was made recently to resurface and restore the courts, providing three completely new tennis courts and four specifically for pickleball.

He told The Local Friday "they will be within the original footprint of the tennis

courts there now, with the cost in the 2024/25 budget, to have them ready for the start of the 2025 season."

It has been confirmed by the David Adames, CEO of the parks commission, Wiens says.

"Those courts are very dated, in very poor condition. They will be all new," he says, and within 100 feet or so of washrooms.

"There are details to be worked out, but right now it's definite they will be replaced. This is something that has been on the radar of the Niagara Parks Commission for a while."

The discussion and decision to include both pickleball and tennis courts, he says, "is to give people options."



The courts, needing to be resurfaced and restored, are in a beautiful area of Queenston Heights Park with a playground, pavilion and washrooms nearby. (Penny Coles)

Niagara beats Vineland in annual cricket match

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara Clippers came out on top of a 55-54 decision over the Lincoln Lions in Sunday afternoon's annual Caribbean Workers' Outreach Program cricket match at Memorial Park.

The festivities are a huge event on the social calendar for the many seasonal employees who work on farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Vineland each summer. Besides the 30 participants playing cricket on the pitch, there were another 70 friends, coworkers and farmers there to enjoy the afternoon.

Rev. Dave Pritchard of Grace United Church got the event started with the ceremonial first bowl, then gathered everyone together to lead a prayer before the match started.

With reggae music blaring from the sound system provided by Hector Nemphard of Brampton, emcee and toaster Joseph Hamilton took to the microphone, entertaining the crowd and setting the party-like atmosphere.



Jay Aziz (centre) with the Niagara Clippers. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

The cricket match organized by outreach program volunteers has been an annual event for nearly 30 years, since it began at the old Colonel John Butler School on East and West Line. It moved to Memorial Park on King Street many years ago, with the town contributing rent-free use of the park for the game each year.

Volunteer organizer Nancy Howse tells The Local that for a few years there was some consideration to shift from cricket to soccer. But with the former being Jamaica's national sport, and

many of the seasonal workers having played the game growing up there, they have been reluctant to make that change.

As well, about seven years ago, Anjum Aziz, a cricket enthusiast and the owner of a number of area Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen franchises as well as a Baskin-Robbins location, began generously contributing resources to the two teams.

With Aziz's support, the participants who once played the game in their work or street clothes now take to the field in impressive

professional-looking cricket uniforms. The Clippers, who played the field first, donned maroon-coloured uniforms with the Popeye's logo. The Lions, meanwhile, wore crisp whites emblazoned with the Baskin-Robbins trademark as they took to the wickets.

Aziz also donates trophies for each team, gifts for the players and the 66-by-8 foot cricket mat where the bowler and batsman stand during the match. Howse also points out that win or lose, everyone goes home happy and stuffed full with a chicken dinner provided

by Aziz and served by volunteers.

Aziz's brother Jay was there Sunday, excitedly posing with each team before the start of the match. During the proceedings he could be seen following the action eagerly, taking the time to graciously explain the game's rules to some of the uninitiated on the sidelines.

"We are big cricket fans," Jay told The Local Sunday. "We always try to take this game to a different level, in terms of training, in terms of practice and in terms of the equipment. They tell us what

they need and we help them get it. Some of this equipment is quite expensive."

He added that many of the players express their appreciation to him and Anjum, and he often sees them at their restaurants where they will stop by and say hello.

"Cricket is known for its nail-biting matches," Jay said. "This is something that I grew up playing as a kid (in Pakistan). It's a sport we love, a sport that we live."

Coach Prophet Steel had Niagara working well on both sides of the game, dominating Brian Burton's Lincoln squad. Steel and Burton, both farmworkers themselves, also officiated Sunday's game.

Though the 55-54 score may suggest a close contest, the Clippers, made up this year entirely of employees from Tregunno Farms, actually dominated the Lions. The Niagara squad took the lead with seven overs left to go, but both coaches and all players agreed to end the game after about two hours and 30 minutes.

It was, after all, dinner time.



The Clippers and the Lions play to what looks like a close finish, but actually wasn't — it was called for dinner.



Cricket emcee and toastmaster Joseph Hamilton in fatigues contributes to the fun of the match.

LocalWORSHIP



CORNERSTONE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday, June 18th

FATHER'S DAY
9:45 a.m.
Cornerstone Kids Sign In
(Nursery - Grade 8)

10:00 a.m.
Worship Gathering
Online & In-Person

Message: Matthew Unruh
Jesus on Fasting
(Matthew 6:16-18)
www.ccchurch.ca

To advertise your
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OBITUARY



TAYLOR, RONALD "RON" WAYNE – In Loving Memory of Ron Taylor, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend, passed away peacefully in his home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, on June 6, 2023, at the age of 82. Born to parents Nos and Thelma Taylor in Sudbury, Ron had the North in his heart from the very beginning. He was predeceased by his three older brothers, Jim, Glen, and Chuck. And by his Brothers-in-law Walter (Donna) and Victor Kochowiec. He will be fondly remembered by his niece Tammie and family. Ron was a devoted husband to his wife, Raisa. She thanks you (Ron) for cutting in on Fred Hardy (twice) so that you could build a beautiful life together filled with love, laughter and cherished memories for over 60 years, 50 of which were spent constantly remodeling their home. A wonderful travel companion, they enjoyed such wonderful vacations as an African safari and Alaskan Cruise. 39 Countries total by their grandson's count.

Ron provided unwavering support throughout the lives of his children Ryan and Rhonda (Murray Saramak). He coached many minor soccer games. Some of their favorite memories were mornings of coffee and contemplation where Ron would impart simple words of wisdom. Or watching nature, both birds and The Maple Leafs.

One of Ron's greatest joys was spending time with his grandsons Jack, Sam, and Luke. He adored them with all his heart and was their number one fan in everything they pursued, whether it was hockey, soccer, or academics.

Ron's passion for the outdoors was evident in his love for fishing and spending peaceful moments looking at Georgian Bay from the window of his condo in Collingwood. In 1964, Ron moved to Niagara to pursue a 35 year long career as a Printer at the St. Catharines Standard, where he cherished his pre-work coffee sessions with his workmates, and post-work beers. Post Early Retirement, he was a proud owner of Looney Lizard dollar stores in Niagara Falls and Welland.

Ron loved to host a good party, and he was famous for ending it with his "happy dance". He was a chartered member of dinner "Gourmet" club that started with his close friends that has lasted for nearly 40 years. He was the glue that held long friendships together. Annual Bocce tournaments were eagerly attended by these friends for over 20 years.

An avid music fan, Ron had an impressive vinyl record collection that brought him immense joy. When the world went digital, we still couldn't get him to understand that the mp3 music files were not in the speaker, but came from his phone. He played drums in several local bands when most weddings had live music. Ron had a knack for bringing life and vibrancy to any space he occupied, with his quick wit, jokes, and infectious personality. He was often described as funny as hell. His puns were legendary, leaving us in stitches and reminding us of the light-heartedness he brought into our lives.

He was a die-hard Leafs fan, that he would very typically, at the beginning of every season, claim that this was their year. And then when the Leafs got put out (or never even made it into) of the playoffs, he would swear them off, never to be a fan again....until next season.

Ron's love for golf extended beyond the sport itself; it was an opportunity for him to bond with his buddies, children, and grandsons. The golf course became a place of camaraderie and laughter. He loved arm chair football, especially CFL and hosted annual friendly Grey Cup games and parties for over 20 years. He enjoyed his time with the St. Davids Lions Club, particularly the years of co-running the Clam booth at the Carnival.

One of Ron's most remarkable qualities was his ability to instantly connect with everyone he met. He had a warm smile, kind heart, and genuine nature. Ron's optimism and love for life were infectious, leaving a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Special thanks are given to the outstanding palliative care team that was put in place and to Dr. Chum and Dr. Murray. Their kindness and care were exceptional.

Arrangement entrusted to Morgan Funeral Home, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Special thanks to Jocelynn Rodgers, Funeral Director.

Cremation has taken place and a private interment will follow at Parklawn Cemetery, Sudbury, Ontario, at a later date.

Celebration of life to be held on Saturday June 24, 2023 at 2pm at Ron and Raisa's home. 1772 York Rd, N-O-T-L. All welcome, casual, and please bring your own lawn chair. Instead of flowers, those who wish may make a memorial donation to ALS Canada (for Niagara) at www.als.ca

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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			25		26				27		28			
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63			64		65				66		67			
68					69						70			
71					72						73			

- Across:**
- 1 Arabian ruler
 - 5 Following
 - 10 Some providers of wood for furniture
 - 14 Prepare
 - 15 Larry --- in "The Iceman Cometh"
 - 16 Largest island in the Marianas
 - 17 Stage accessory
 - 18 Fire prodder
 - 19 A single time
 - 20 Abandon
 - 22 Overhaul
 - 24 Aeronautics group.
 - 25 --- Lama
 - 27 Round Table leader
 - 29 Baseball official
 - 32 Lowest of the low
 - 34 Eye defects
 - 36 Notes
 - 40 Heel
 - 41 Sheltered spots
 - 43 Short written reminder
 - 44 Ethiopian capital --- Ababa
 - 46 "The --- Dancers" (Jean Thesman)
 - 48 About the eye
 - 50 Did, once
 - 51 "--- and her Sisters" (Woody Allen movie)
 - 54 Intriguing group
 - 56 --- Annie ("Oklahoma!")
 - 57 Battalion XO, often
 - 59 Moves cautiously forward
 - 63 Names
 - 65 Author Evelyn ---
 - 67 It replaced the French franc
 - 68 Noted scat singer --- Fitzgerald
 - 69 Boredom
 - 70 Former Mrs David Bowie
 - 71 Move
 - 72 Palm tree fruit
 - 73 Sports defeat
 - Down:**
 - 1 Smartphone programs
 - 2 Brandy made from pressed fruit
 - 3 Matinee idol --- Novello (d. 1951)
 - 4 Disavowal
 - 5 Egyptian cobra
 - 6 Roman flower goddess
 - 7 Consider
 - 8 Garden west of Nod
 - 9 Go over again
 - 10 Self-esteem
 - 11 Middle meal
 - 12 Former Portuguese territory in China
 - 13 Slander
 - 21 Comedian Roseanne ---
 - 23 Warrant
 - 26 Bony
 - 28 Deceptive decorative paintwork
 - 29 Where the Wizard of Westwood coached
 - 30 One of three in "The Mikado"
 - 31 Formerly known as shell-shock
 - 33 Inquires
 - 35 Escherichia ---, potentially dangerous bacterium
 - 37 Dweeb
 - 38 Give off
 - 39 Alone
 - 42 Counterfoil
 - 45 Irritating email
 - 47 Straight --- arrow
 - 49 Melted
 - 51 Underworld
 - 52 No longer a minor
 - 53 Type of metal or gas
 - 55 Debate
 - 58 Country singer and actress --- Kramer
 - 60 Japanese heavyweight contest
 - 61 Subdivisions of eons
 - 62 Male heirs
 - 64 Plant juice
 - 66 Not hers

PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Sudoku solution from
June 7, 2023**

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

Across: 1 Amir, 5 After, 10 Elms, 14 Pave, 15 Slade, 16 Guam, 17 Prop, 18 Piker, 19 Once, 20 Scrub, 22 Renew, 24 C A A, 25 Datal, 27 Arthur, 29 Umpire, 32 Nadir, 34 Catalysts, 36 Tones, 40 List, 41 Nooks, 43 Memo, 44 Addis, 46 Last April, 48 Optic, 50 Used to, 51 Hannah, 54 Cabal, 56 Ado, 57 Major, 59 Noses, 63 Dubs, 65 Waugh, 67 Euro, 68 Ella, 69 Ennu, 70 Iman, 71 Step, 72 Dates, 73 Loss.

Down: 1 Apps, 2 Marc, 3 Ivor, 4 Repudiation, 5 Asp, 6 Flora, 7 Take into account, 8 Eden, 9 Reread, 10 Ego, 11 Lunch, 12 Macau, 13 Smeat, 21 Barr, 23 Writ, 26 Lean, 28 Trompe l'oeil, 29 U C L A, 30 Maid, 31 PT S D, 33 Asks, 35 Coll, 37 Nerd, 38 Emi, 39 Solo, 42 Stub, 45 Span, 47 As an, 49 Thawed, 51 Hades, 52 Adult, 53 Noble, 55 Argue, 58 Jana, 60 Sumo, 61 Erras, 62 Sons, 64 Sep, 66 His.

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