E-scooters not permitted in NOTL

Penny Coles
The Local

Richard Mell, the director of Grape Escape Wine Tours on Niagara Stone Road, asked Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors Monday evening to consider adopting a provincial pilot project to permit electric scooters in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Instead, no action was taken or decision made, and as a result, e-scooters are not permitted in town.

Mell told councillors he had investigated to see if there was a bylaw restricting them, and when he discovered there wasn’t, he went ahead and purchased 10 e-scooters.

He later learned the provincial program allows municipalities to pass a bylaw approving them, but without that bylaw in place they are not permitted, the opposite to how most bylaws work.

Mell described the electric scooters as two wheels with a board between them, with handlebars. They must have a working bell and a light, riders must be 16 years or older, with one rider per unit, standing at all times, and wearing a helmet if under 18. Any accidents must be reported to a police officer, he said.

If a municipality joins the provincial pilot project, it can decide where they can be used, he added, suggesting the town might not want them on sidewalks, or in the busy heritage district.

He also mentioned helmets could be required for everyone on an e-scooter.

Richard Mell asked council to consider implementing a licensing program that would bring in revenue that could fund bylaw enforcement, and also help to

Continued on page 8

Local student wins board-wide poster contest

Penny Coles
The Local

A young teen from Niagara-on-the-Lake was recently chosen the winner of a Catholic school board mental health contest.

Gracie Cherney, a 13-year-old in Grade 7 at St. Michael Catholic School, had the poster she submitted in the contest chosen from more than 700 entries in the Grade 7/8 division, explains Jenny Reid, a child and youth worker with the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Students were asked to enter a piece, if they wished, in the contest for a chance to win, Reid says.

“The theme for this year was Renew, Rebuild and Restore, which focused on what students can do to improve or maintain good mental health. The students could submit a video, poster, song, poem, or digital art piece.”

Gracie says her poster submission displays all the activities she and other teens enjoy doing, activities that help to contribute to mental health.

Last year, she says, she had an assignment that used letters to express an idea, and in doing some research, discovered similar posters demonstrating healthy activities.

She put those two together, and came up with the idea of incorporating what she and her friends like to do, that can contribute to mental health, into letters that spell out mental health.

“My idea was that taking some time to do things that make you happy can prevent mental issues, and

Continued on page 3
Experts, public weigh in on Rand subdivision

Penny Coles
The Local

Last Thursday’s public information session on the current proposal for the Solmar subdivision seemed to raise more questions than answers.

Town planner Rick Wilson outlined the proposal to date, and explained that a revised application, submitted to the town in March, prompted the session, which was not required under the planning act. It was intended as an opportunity for the public to comment on the changes made to the proposal, which was outlined in a town report made available to the public June 2.

He explained that while councillors would be listening to the comments, they would not be participating, and that town staff have not submitted any recommendations to council.

"This is not a council meeting," he emphasized, and explained that the revised application for the Charlotte Street and John Street East subdivision has already been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal for a decision, which had not been provided by the town within the allotted time permitted under planning legislation for the first application.

He also spoke to the 'hierarchy' of plans and guidelines in place, starting with the province, and also involving regional and municipal plans, and the Official Plan and zoning bylaw amendments that will be required for it to go forward.

The report compiled to explain the revised proposal sets out the plan to develop a property of about 30 acres, which currently contains two single-detached dwellings, a two-storey carriage house, and other accessory buildings and structures, with a stone wall around the north, west and south perimeter and gates at the entry points. A water and sewerage network, regulated by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, crosses the northwest property line behind Weatherstone Court. Surrounding lands include residential, agricultural and open space uses.

Both properties are designated as having cultural heritage value.

The revisions, Wilson said, include going from a total of 191 single and detached housing units, to 172 units, 107 of which will be townhouses — the region requested a greater mix of housing — plus 39 single family homes and 26 semi-detached.

The original stormwater management plan drew concern from residents about an underground holding facility, and has been changed to a traditional stormwater management pond, with a walkway around it.

The revised plan increases the amount of parkland and open space to include some cultural heritage resources, and to improve access to the Heritage Trail. It includes an open space block at the John Street East entrance of the subdivision with a Whistle Stop Parkette at the south end of the site, where a gazebo is to be reconstructed, and a Heritage Parkette at the other end, with a walkway to connect them.

The proposed access to John Street East remains, but with some changes that include moving the existing pillars, with a re-designed private road right-of-way that eliminates the curbs in the original proposal.

Additional trees are proposed to provide a landscape buffer between the driveway and 210 John Street East, and trees planted along the internal roads and streets, although there was also concern expressed by several speakers about more trees to be removed.

An emergency access is proposed through a community garden to provide emergency vehicle connection to Charlotte Street.

Paul Lowes of SCO Planning & Design Inc., representing SOLMAR, said the developer listened to what was said at last summer’s meeting and "we think we have a fair amount of changes that addressed those concerns." They include the broader mix of housing by putting townhouses in the centre of the plan, the stormwater management pond, revised grades, the heritage components that will be preserved, additional green space, and the redesigned entrance from John Street.

But several experts representing SORE (Save Our Randwood Estate), which has been involved in pushing for appropriate development on the Randwood Estate, which has been involved in pushing for appropriate development on the Randwood Estate, said the developer had not been provided by the NOTL Conservancy, said a new heritage impact assessment was called for as a “critical step in responsible heritage conservation” by Brendan Stewart, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Guelph.

He said he is really concerned that the new proposal demolishes several significant buildings on the property, and a new study is required to look at the rationale for all the decisions that have been documented, to allow for proper comment on what is proposed.

Dana Anderson, an urban planner representing SORE, said the intensification and housing mix don’t fit in the context of the neighbourhood. She also spoke of the parkettes and pathways, which were put forward as providing connectivity, as it is really just places for “resting at the edges of the subdivision.”

She also spoke of the developer, saying it “remains unclear what is included and excluded in density calculation,” and that further clarification is needed.

There was also talk of the removal of mature trees and the destruction of a wetland, proposed to be reconstructed offsite at 144 John Street, and the destruction of habitat for two endangered bat species.

Traffic concerns were also mentioned by another SORE expert, a transportation engineer, who said there needs to be an updated traffic study done — the first was conducted in the early part of the pandemic, and also leading up to a holiday, which can skew the results.

Although the stormwater management pond is considered a welcome modification, a thorough analysis of stormwater management pond is missing, said yet another expert hired by SORE.

“Wrapping up their issues were a lawyer who feels development guided by design and conservation excellence, as SORE has proposed, that does not require demolition of heritage buildings, that would save some of the trees, that doesn’t necessitate the removal of the wetland, and that doesn’t require intensification at all costs.”

Penny Coles, a professor of land use and municipal plans, and the NOTL Conservancy, said the proposal for the most important heritage estate property in town is “a poorly conceived and an unnecessary land use travesty that will make it impossible for the town to protect other smaller estate lots in the future.”

It’s not needed provincial or regionally, she said, to meet housing intensification targets, she added.

Other speakers asked questions, including about process, legal issues, and the project’s impact on climate change, but with no answers offered.

The next step, explained Wilson, is the scheduling of a case management conference with the Ontario Land Tribunal, and once arranged, the date will be posted on the town website.
Councillors put e-scooter decision on hold

Rich Mell of Grape Escape has purchased 10 scooters for his wine tours. He will wait to see if council decides to investigate further and consider a bylaw to permit them before deciding what to do with them, he says.

"You are essentially in control in NOTL," he told councillors, adding that he would love for the town to become part of the provincial pilot project.

The province says, in its explanation of the program on its website, that municipalities wanting to allow e-scooters to operate on their roads "must pass bylaws to permit their use and set out specific requirements based on what is best for their communities."

"There are a few benefits and concerns I’d like to raise," Mell said. Given the cost and how accessible scooters are, "they would be a good mode of transportation for younger people to get to work." He noted he has already seen people on the path through Virgil to the Old Town. Also, he added, they would be beneficial for people with accessibility concerns, such as problems with hips or knees, who want to join their friends on bike tours.

He said with 10 scooters, he could envision one tour with scooters, or one person joining a bicycle tour. They would all be guided by tour staff, who could ensure all protocols, safety guidelines and rules of the road are followed.

"I don't like the idea of hundreds of these whizzing around," he said, but could foresee having a small number available, at the most 20, "less than 10 per cent of our fleet."

He also ensured councillors that liability insurance would be covered.

The provincial pilot began in 2020, and sets out requirements for such issues as helmets, minimum age for riders, and speed restrictions. They must also follow all rules of the road.

Coun. Norm Arsenault moved a motion that the issue of e-scooters be referred to staff to review the pros and cons, especially relating to safety issues. It called on staff to review the provincial requirements for the pilot project and bring back a report to the new council to adequately assess recommendations for a decision in time for the 2023 tourism season.

But without discussion, and before a vote could be taken, Coun. Erwin Wiens said he felt that council has discussed the issue this term, and it was decided the first step would be to ask staff to investigate whether that is the case. Mell says he is hopeful for something more positive to come up at next week's council meeting, although he understands councillors "have a lot on their plates right now."

He was disappointed there was no discussion about e-scooters, which he believes to be as safe as any transportation mode.

As far as the 10 he has purchased, just waiting to be used, he plans to hold on to them for now, at least until after next week, hopeful councillors might make a different decision.

Rich Mell of Grape Escape has purchased 10 scooters for his wine tours. He will wait to see if council decides to investigate further and consider a bylaw to permit them before deciding what to do with them, he says. [Photo supplied]
Ride for Dad supports prostate cancer research

Penny Coles  
The Local

Ride for Dad, a group motorcycle event to raise money and awareness for prostate cancer, is back on the road this year in its original format.

Mathew King, co-chair of the Niagara event, rides for friends and colleagues who have fought, and are now fighting, prostate cancer, he says.

This year's ride is Saturday, June 18 — it's always the Saturday of Father's Day weekend, "because what better way to celebrate Father's Day than ride with your dad," or for your dad, and all men, King says.

Established in 2010, the Niagara Motorcycle Ride for Dad has raised more than $600,000 for the fight against prostate cancer. The proceeds are invested in groundbreaking prostate cancer research, as well as life-saving public awareness campaigns that promote the importance of early detection.

Money raised in Niagara is invested locally, says King.

Dr. Abby Hallock, a radiation oncologist and the head of the department at the Walker Family Cancer Center, is the celebrity ride captain this year, and all men, King says.

"It's about a four-hour police-escorted ride, beginning at the legion hall on King Street, touring through a beautiful area that includes NOTL and Niagara Falls, and ending at Club Italia in Niagara Falls, with a pasta lunch.

For the Ride for Dad route, visit https://ridefordad.ca/chapter/niagara/niagra-2022-route-map/

To donate, visit https://ridefordad.akaraising.com/ui/RF-D2022/p/2199c54e6fc9cfb-cd49f13b6b606

Registration is at 7 to 8:45 a.m., kickstand up at 9 a.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #124, 410 King Street, NOTL.

Registration is $40 before ride day, June 18, $50 on ride day, or free with $100 collected in pledges.

This year, prostate cancer also became very real in King's family, when his uncle was diagnosed with it. He was lucky enough to have early detection, and became a candidate for SABR treatment, a highly-focused radiation treatment that gives an intense dose of radiation concentrated on a tumour, while limiting the dose to the surrounding organs, which was also supported with a grant from Ride for Dad. King says he is grateful for the treatment that has allowed his uncle to "still be around for his children, grandchildren and his extended family."

The first Ride for Dad event was held in Ottawa, and as it spread across the country, was initiated locally by a group of Niagara Regional Police officers, including King.

They continue to organize it every year, for all motorcycle enthusiasts who want to ride and fund-raise to beat cancer, he says. There are many women also taking part, knowing that prostate cancer touches their fathers, grandfathers and partners, and as a result also impacts their lives.

Money raised through the event, King says, is curable if caught early, making awareness essential. The annual ride is an opportunity to raise money for research.

The last two years were Ride Alone Together events, with small groups of friends or family members encouraged to ride together, safely, following COVID protocols. The need to keep fundraising, awareness and the fight against prostate cancer in the forefront continued during the pandemic, and the ride was able to raise some money for the cause, says King.

"It's about a four-hour police-escorted ride, beginning at the legion hall on King Street, touring through a beautiful area that includes NOTL and Niagara Falls, and ending at Club Italia in Niagara Falls, with a pasta lunch.

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THE ROAD TO A LONG LIFE STARTS WITH A SHORT TEST.

A simple blood test could lead to the detection of prostate cancer before it's too late. #GetTheBloodTest

Join us Saturday, June 18 for the Niagara Motorcycle Ride For Dad.
MUSIC NIAGARA FESTIVAL | 2022

Atlis Bankas - Artistic Director

THE 24th Season | June 17 - Aug 20

June 17
Mykola Suk & CarmenAtlas Ensemble
7 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

June 20
Mirror Visions Ensemble
7 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

June 24
Sweet热点 with Alex Pangman
4 pm, McArthur Estate, NOTL

Vibrant young vocalist, Alex Pangman, is proud to be known as Canada’s Sweetheart of Swing. With pogo aplenty, a honky-tonk nominee Pangman possesses the requisite taste, talent and historical knowledge of an avid record collector to breathe new life into the studio standards that define the classic jazz era. A song stylist with growing compositional chops, the gifted Toronto scenemaker has built a loyal fanbase amongst jazz listeners and dancers alike through her critically acclaimed work with her stacked Alcylates in the studio, nightclubs and concert halls across Canada including three stellar showcases at the Montreal International Jazz Festival.

June 30
Susan Aglukark
8 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

Get ready for on-stage conversations and Q & A interspersed with live music from Susan Aglukark. One of Canada’s most significant cultural ambassadors, a beautiful singer and powerful songwriter, Susan provides a significant view to the culture of our northern communities. A musician whose blend of Folk music tradition with Country music and pop songwriting has made her a major recording star in Canada. Her most successful single is “O Sermi”, which reached No. 1 on the Canadian a deep-into adult contemporary charts in 1999. She has released seven albums and has won three JUNO Awards.

July 9
Heather Bambryck
6 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

July 12
Georgie Bix - Six - English Meteots
7 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

The Georgie Bix Six is an award-winning British vocal ensemble comprising some of the UK’s finest consort singers, directed by Owen Lascelles. Their flair, musicality and impeccable blend, the ensemble formed in 2014 for a performance of Georgie Bix’s Tenoraria Rhapsodies in Cambriedge and has gone on to perform at numerous major festivals across the UK, Europe, North America and Australia. Video of the ensemble performing a diverse selection of works filmed in Eltham Cathedral have been watched by millions online.

July 14
Elmer Iseler Singers
7 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

The Elmer Iseler Singers are a Canadian professional chamber choir that has performed and recorded an outstanding choral music for audiences worldwide for over 40 years, provincially, nationally and internationally. They present music which inspires and brings people together in a shared appreciation of beautiful vocal sound. The Elmer Iseler Singers are leaders in the development of professionalism in choral music in Canada and regularly seek the creation of new works for performances in Canadian and international choral arenas as well as working with recording companies, music publishers and other arts organizations.

July 21
A Fresh Look at Beethoven
with Artur Pereira
4 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

A Fresh Look at Beethoven. Being a Beethoven scholar, Portuguese pianist Artur Pereira will present music of the great Ludwig van Beethoven in a new light. Born in Portugal, Pereira studied music in Portugal and South Africa and received a doctorate at the University of Manchester in 2018. His recordings feature historically informed performances of Beethoven’s piano sonatas and piano music by Portuguese composers. These recordings are part of his seven-year project to record the complete cycle of Beethoven’s piano sonatas and lesser known music by Portuguese composers. Artur Pereira will also be presenting compositions by Portuguese composer Luís Costa.

August 1
Toronto All-Star Big Band
5 pm, Club Italia, Niagara Falls

One of the most exciting bands around, the Toronto All-Star Big Band revives the spirit, style and sound of the 30’s, 40’s and 50’s – that golden age of the big bands. TABB provides an intense and stimulating youth music program in Canada. To achieve their extraordinary standard, they engage cream-of-the-crop young musicians from across the GTA in a rigorous regime of rehearsals, workshops and skill-building performance experiences with such international stars as Clark Terry, Doc Severinsen, Cleo Laine and John Dankworth, Eddie Daniels and Larry Elgart. Set-out conductors, standing ovations and rave reviews are for this all-star ensemble.

August 14
Moving Pictures
with Paul Vostekstel
4 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

A Lithuanian pianist and painter residing and working in Vilnius, the ever-expressive Paul Vostekstel appeals audiences with his audio and visual interpretations of classical music. To Victor, the stage is not simply a place to play, it is also an opportunity to pursue a deeper understanding of the art itself. A unique experience, his paintings are paired with his performance, drawing a sensitive combination between the two. With appearances in Callaway Hall, the Wiener Musikverein, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Salle Cortot in Paris, Victor has also participated in the Sixth Vilnius Art Fair of Fitos Akdola and the International Holland Music Sessions Festival.

August 19
Heather Bambryck
7 pm, St. Mark’s Church, NOTL

Wholeworld Magazine calls her “one of the finest jazz singers in this country”. JUNO-nominated vocalist Heather Bambryck prides herself on being an entertainer and through her performances, she has appeared as a guest performer with numerous jazz ensembles, as well as with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, the Hamilton Philharmonic, and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. She is also an award-winning broadcaster, hosting and producing shows on JAZZFM93 in Toronto, and also co-founder of JAZZCAST, a 24-hour internet-based jazz station out of Canada.

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Today, June 15, is the last day to complete the town survey suggesting potential locations for a rainbow crosswalk, as well as rainbow benches.

Thankfully, the installations have already been approved by council. Money has been put aside, and I am confident the grant and the rest in this year’s budget, to pay for the projects. It can’t be easy, when we have known there has been pressure on councillors to take this issue to voters, or to just drop it altogether.

The Local has and will continue to support a Pride crosswalk in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We fully agree with the efforts of the town to do something that indicates it is inclusive, that says all residents and visitors are welcome, and we applaud council for moving forward with these projects. The choices in the survey offered for the crosswalk are the corner of King Street and Front Street, the intersection of Niagara Stone Road and Anderson Lane, or Wellington Street and Picton Street. There is also an opportunity to offer a different location.

We hope the town will tell us what suggestions, if any, have been made, and we also would like to think residents will consider voting for a location they would find local, and that might be most likely to be seen and appreciated by the public, declaring a Pride crosswalk offers a diverse community.

If we want to make a point that everyone, including the LGBTQ2 community, is accepted, respected, and valued in NOTL, it’s important to get the location right.

For example, a crosswalk might be helpful at Anderson Lane and Niagara Stone Road, but it would only be used by residents who live across the street and want to visit the library or the community centre. It’s practical, but not exactly a gesture of opening our arms in welcome to all of the visitors, or at least a well-travelled route in the Old Town.

A suggestion that might have covered both would be across Queen Street, close to the grocery store and post office. ‘That’s a location that could also be a crosswalk — not that we’re traffic experts, but anyone who has driven up Queen Street knows how often people cross there, sometimes acting as if there are remote and wild as northwestern Ontario, and we can see it as a crosswalk, and how likely are there to want to rest on a bench.

Hopefully there will be a good, healthy, positive discussion when the results of the survey are known, and some good suggestions that haven’t been considered.

The survey also lists potential locations for rainbow benches in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with all five communities covered. Just the base in the park itself, or Queen’s Park, or the Regional Park, or the Queenston Firehall? Why not why not?
I would add to your staff report (The Local, June 8) regarding garage break-ins etc. With the exorbitant costs of gasoline it has been reported that theft from automobile gas tanks are increasing. Reportedly thieves were observed, in daylight hours, siphoning gas from cars at the Outlet Mall. Additionally and more serious, thieves have drilled holes in parked car gas tanks to drain the tank. In these instances, apparently the tank is not repairable and has to be replaced at significant costs.

Be aware of these events and where possible, park your car in the garage overnight.

Samuel A. Young, NOTL

Regarding Lord Mayor’s comments on NOTL’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Committee (The Local, June 8) four questions were asked, and I would like to address one: “Do we try to ensure everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to all share in the wonderful benefits and beauty of our town?”

My answer: A resounding no. How can a senior or person using a cane/wheelchair access the restaurants/shops on Queen/aside streets if the walks are not shovelled? No, they can’t enjoy a meal in town after a snow storm. I need to buy a birthday present for my girlfriend, but no, I can’t because the sidewalks are not shovelled, and it is noon! It is just plain rude to a huge portion of NOTL’s population (not to mention the business owners) that it is unsafe to venture out when it snows overnight.

Lord Mayor, I have a recommendation for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Committee: at 5 a.m. there should be as many town workers as needed to clear the sidewalks and the town’s budget will pay for it! (Perhaps you could instruct them to start in front of places where locals eat brekky?)

And furthermore, could you assign one of our dump trucks to be idling by to collect snow piles before the sidewalks are plowed, possibly to reduce the risk of a slipping hazard.

So, yes Lord Mayor, to answer your last question. I am thinking about accessibility all the time.

Janet Trinder
NOTL

Help needed to foster kittens, cats

NOTL Cats Rescue, our only local cat rescue group, needs the community’s help. We are in desperate need of foster homes for many kittens and cats.

What is involved with being a foster? A loving, caring person or family with a spare room. NOTL Cats Rescue will supply everything needed to foster — food, litter and litter boxes, scratch posts, toys, etc. If you can help, please contact: notlcatrescue@hotmail.com or message us on NOTL Cats Facebook.

We will be happy to answer any questions regarding cat care as a foster.

Erika Buchkowsky NOTL Cats Rescue

Yes, this reader is thinking about inclusivity

I do agree. I was moved to tears when I read the article. Our community needs to show inclusivity and equality to everyone. It is the right thing to do and it will make our community a better place.

Karen

Yes, this reader is thinking about inclusivity

I am the first time I read an article about inclusivity and I am impressed. I think it is important to be inclusive and to make everyone feel welcome. We need to make our community a place where everyone can feel safe and respected.

Julia
Activities that make you happy reduce stress

Continued from page 1

that it’s super important to take care of yourself.”

Included on her poster are drawings of some of her favourite activities, including baking, reading, sports, arts, nature, and one really important to her — music.

She also incorporated reminders of help that is available, such as Bell’s Let’s Talk, a well-known program designed to break the silence around mental illness, and support mental health across Canada; a kids’ help phone line; and a drawing of two kids talking to each other.

Gracie says her love of music began when she was a little girl. She can play a few musical instruments a little bit, but listening to music is one of her favourite activities, and helps her relax, especially when she’s doing school work, so it’s well-represented on her poster.

“I’ve always loved music,” she says. “Music makes me happy,” and that is the point of the mental health exercise — to encourage kids to make time for activities that make them happy.

She has a record player in her room, and a collection of vinyl records and LPs, mostly from the ’90s, listing Queen, Van Halen, The Killers, an American rock band, and INXS from Australia as her favourites.

Her uncle has a large collection, she says, and they swap records, “so I have a variety to choose from.” Gracie also loves sports, which help keep her physically active.

She plays soccer with the town’s minor soccer league, and has fun playing football with her friends during recesses at school.

Because many of the activities she has included on her poster are ones she enjoys, they are naturally part of her life, but there are others she makes a conscious effort to remind herself are important, such as sleep.

“I do sports a lot, I listen to music all the time. But sleeping is important too. When I’m doing homework at night, and it’s getting late, I tell myself I should probably be sleeping.”

Most likely to make her stressed, she says, are studying for tests and big projects at school, “but I get them done,” usually with music playing while she works.

Because of the range of activities promoted on her poster that make her happy, she explains, “I’m not super stressed. I can get stressed, although not very, and not often.”

- Luxury Waterfront Sales -

Thrilled to announce the sale of these two spectacular waterfront properties. Congratulations to all!

SOLD: 42 Ann Street, St. Catharines, ON
Listed at $7495,000

SOLD: 6 Shore Boulevard, St. Catharines, ON
Listed at $2,799,000
No coyote sighting reports in several weeks

Penny Coles
The Local

After months of urban coyote sightings and encounters around town, mostly in The Village but also other Old Town neighbourhoods, the coyotes appear to have returned to their rural habitat.

In an effort to pin down where coyotes are seen and what attracts them to specific areas, the town has an online coyote reporting system, with 200 reports submitted since the beginning of the year.

However, there hasn’t been one report of a sighting since May 26, CAO Marnie Cluckie said in her recent updates to councillors.

The uptick began in mid-March and sightings continued until early May, at which time they decreased significantly, says Marah Minor, the town’s communications coordinator.

Much of the success of efforts to discourage coyotes in urban areas can be attributed to efforts of the community to adjust to their part; residents and our community partners, “she says. "Successful wildlife management requires that everyone contributes toward these outcomes require that every-

The town implemented a strong community outreach plan that included public educ-

cation sessions and consistent field investigations to identify attractants, Coyote Watch continued. “Hotspot areas were addressed and residents did their part by making simple adjustments to meet the guidelines set forth by the town and our community partners.”

Wildlife-proofing property is a community effort, says Coyote Watch. “Successful outcomes require that everyone contributes toward these initiatives with everyone doing their part; residents and our community partners (Coyote Watch Canada and LCHS) that were on the ground and worked together to achieve these goals. Involving a local community champion that worked directly with neighbours facilitated effective outreach with residents as well.”

Wildlife must forage and/or hunt for sustenance on a daily basis, says Coyote Watch. “Food attractants influence where and how wildlife such as canids navigate throughout their home range. Anthropogenic food prov-

Coyote Watch continued. “Field investigations to identify attractants were on the ground and working together to achieve these goals. Involving a local community champion that worked directly with neighbours facilitated effective outreach with residents as well.”

Wildlife must forage and/or hunt for sustenance on a daily basis, says Coyote Watch. “Food attractants influence where and how wildlife such as canids navigate throughout their home range. Anthropogenic food provi-

Successful wildlife attraction is what needs to be considered and how directed removal of these attractants proves successful in mitigating an increase in human-coyote encounter.

Arderh Staz, president of the Village Community Association, says she gets the sense that residents are feeling more comfortable out walking in the neighbourhood, although she’s seen some with their small dogs and still carrying garbage bags, which was one of the tips they were given to scare off coyotes with noise. “They aren’t entirely satisfied that it’s over and done with,” she says.

Residents have been diligent about not leaving food out or putting seed in bird feeders, but they have to continue to keep that up, she says.

The VRA distributes a regular newsletter, and will continue to remind residents about putting out garbage, food and bird seed. “We have to be preventative and proactive,” she says.

Rylie Niven understood coyotes were a hot topic in NOTL, and chose it for a Grade 2 school project, after seeing a photo in The Local and becoming very interested, says her father Andrew Niven. (Photo supplied)
Pedal Pub changes route to suit town

Penny Coles
The Local

The popular Pedal Pub has a new route, although it was approved by just one vote Monday evening.

There were concerns raised about the route last season that needed to be addressed, Marlo Saganski, the general manager of the attraction, said. The problem is specifically Queen Street, and the U-turn and parking next to The Exchange Brewery.

The solution is to eliminate most of the Queen Street route, the U-turn and The Exchange Brewery from their tours, although this was a difficult decision, because The Exchange Brewery and Pedal Pub NOTL have partnered since 2019.

Instead, the Pedal Pub will work with three local businesses, starting at Selfie Mode Niagara on Mary Street, then visiting Fournos Greek Restaurant and the Hob Nob Restaurant in the Charles Hotel on Queen Street before returning to Mary Street. The Pedal Pub supports local business, and is introducing new ways to do so — this year, Saganski said, "we've already given back $50,000 to our business partners."

"We've also challenged ourselves to make a bigger impact on local economy, encouraging guests to stay in NOTL and visit more businesses," she added. "Our team is working hard to deliver a safe, fun and unique experience of Niagara-on-the-Lake while supporting the local economy."

In response to a question from Coun. Gary Burroughs, Saganski apologized for "bad timing, with a Pedal Pub passing by a solemn ceremony to recognize Polish soldiers who died of influenza while training in NOTL."

She said she would do a better job of communicating with the town to be aware of events on their route.

Also answering a safety concern mentioned by Burroughs of cars trying to pass the slow-moving vehicles, she said Pedal Pubs are being outfitted with new, 'slow-moving vehicle' signs, and they also move onto side streets to let vehicles pass safely.

The new route was approved by councillors, with Burroughs, O’Connor, Coun. John Wiens and Lord Mayor Betty Disero voting against it for safety reasons.
Gateway project construction to begin in September

Penny Coles
The Local

Gerry Kowalchuk, the resident who has donated the funds and taken a lead in the gateway project at Queen and Mississauga Streets, is anxious for the project to move forward.

He spoke to councillors Monday night about the next step, and got the assurance he needed.

It was the fall of 2019 that he first approached the lord mayor and staff about the project, he said, and now “working plans are complete, and we’re set to begin construction in September.”

He was asking that Aldershot Landscape Contractors be hired, with approval for the quotation they have submitted to the town, to complete the project in accordance with details contained in the working drawings.

“There are noteworthy benefits if we proceed with this contractor,” he said. The town will have the benefit of a general contractor, he explained, who will supervise all trades.

With very few dry stone masons in Canada, and a dry stone wall planned for the project, he said, specialist Menno Braam has been selected to construct the wall, “which is very important — it’s the focal point of the gateway project.”

Braam’s resume describes 15 years’ experience in dry stone construction, teaching, and being a founding member of the Canadian Dry Stone Walling Association, said Kowalchuk.

“I have also viewed photos of some of his dry stone projects, and it is a definite advantage to have Mr. Braam as a sub-contractor to Aldershot Landscape Contractors.”

A redesign of the project, which originally incorporated a limestone wall, was approved last fall by council. The final design incorporated a smaller dry stone wall instead.

Last but not least, Kowalchuk said, “the quotation provided by Aldershot Landscape Contractors is within the budget for the project,” and he is satisfied with the overall price to complete the work on time and within budget.

When asked by Coun. Gary Burroughs about Dean McLellan, a master craftsman and dry stone waller who has worked with Willobank School of Restoration Arts, parks and recreation director Kevin Turcott said McLellan offered his services, “but when it came to a contract we couldn’t come to an agreement.”

Menno Braam, who has similar experience, will work with the general contractor, while staff will be the general advisor to keep track of budget and timelines, Turcott said. Although councillors expressed reservations about the issue of single-sourcing for the project, CAO Marnie Cluckie explained that while a competitive process is preferred, in this situation it was a benefit for the town to meet its timeline, but more important in this case it was a matter of finding someone with the right skills to do quality specialty work.

Councillors voted to approve hiring Aldershot Landscape Contractors, with Burroughs dissenting.
Scott Paines of NPNG in Virgil is helping Dylan Rumsey prepare for his fundraising swim from the Queenston boat launch to the mouth of the Niagara River. (Ryan Bruce Photography)

Dylan Rumsey has two goals to accomplish as he prepares to swim from Queenston to the mouth of the Niagara River in August — to raise money for much-needed mental health programs for youth, and to bring change to the way people with mental health issues are treated in the healthcare system.

And he would know how desperate those needs are — he’s been treated for mental health problems for the last decade, hospitalized sometimes twice a year, without a lot of progress, he says. He has had the benefits of a support network in the hospital, and has seen therapists, some through Pathstone Mental Health, but he has been told his brain chemistry “is so out of whack” he needs medication. He has a problem with the health system’s reliance on medication that makes him feel like a zombie, without treating the root of his problem, which has been diagnosed as PTSD.

On the GoFundMe page he set up, hoping to raise $7,500 for Pathstone Foundation, Rumsey is open about dealing with mental illness, and what he sees as a failure with the system in treating himself and others.

He told The Local his problems began with a traumatic experience as a 15-year-old, which led to the PTSD diagnosis. He has been dealing with that ever since, and expects it will stay with him for the rest of his life.

Before that time, “I had always been a happy, outgoing kid,” says Rumsey, who turns 26 this year. “That situation really damaged me. I’m still trying to get it back together, to keep my brain occupied and set goals for myself.”

He has support from his family, and also from friends, who will reach out to him when he needs them, but once those conversations are finished, he goes back to hearing “the voices in his head,” he says.

He spent some time in the hospital recently after a suicide attempt with drugs, and he has lost two good friends from drug overdoses.

“I see it as a huge issue of kids getting lost in the system and having an extremely high rate of falling back in the same hole, over and over again,” he says.

“I still struggle every day. Right now, I’m setting goals for myself, keeping busy.”

That includes working out at NPNG, and if he doesn’t show up, trainer Scott Paines, “will be in touch, telling me to get back to the gym. He knows my story, and understands it. He is an incredibly good trainer, and he knows what I need.”

Paines is helping him prepare for the August swim, with NPNG mascot Mocha, Paines’ constant four-legged companion at the Virgil fitness studio.

Rumsey would like to see more advice and encouragement being offered by the healthcare system on eating healthy foods, getting exercise and being in good shape physically, before being released from the hospital, “rather than depending on anti-depressants and other drugs.”

He says he’s not opposed to taking medication, but would like to also be offered a natural treatment, and have a doctor talk to him about how to deal with the “root problem”, the cause of his depression.

Rumsey graduated from Fleming College in 2017 as a heavy equipment technician and works in that field now, but has set himself a goal of going back to school for a degree in social work. “I’d like to be able to help other kids, offer them free counseling.”

Pathstone Foundation, the recipient of his fundraiser, works at improving the quality of life for children, youth and families across Niagara who are dealing with mental health challenges. Rumsey says he has seen the difficulties faced not only by young people suffering from mental illness, but the impact on their families, the emotional toll, and the cost of therapy. He feels guilt over the cost to his family.”
Therapy helps, as do regular fitness workouts

Continued from page 12

parents, and knows others in similar situations who feel the same.

He estimates he has spent about $10,000 on therapy sessions, but in the end, any help for him depends on medication he doesn’t like taking.

Rumsey says in addition to seeing doctors in the hospital, he has had several therapists, funded by OHIP, but doesn’t feel he received the kind of help he needed.

He believes he is finally making progress with the right person, but because of the cost, can manage only monthly appoint-
ments, and sometimes not even that. He would like to be able to increase that to once a week, but the cost would be prohibitive.

He knows he has sup-
port for his fundraising goals, he says. He has nev-
er organized a fundraiser before, and was pleased that in the first 72 hours after posting the GoFund-
Me page, he had received donations of more than $4,000.

Nor has he ever sworn that stretch of river, a dis-
tance of about six kilomet-
tres, or been a competitive swimmer, which is part of why he chose that particu-
lar activity as a fundraiser.

His swim from the Queenston boat launch to the mouth of the river, he says, will likely take about four to six hours, and he plans on doing it with no breaks.

“I want to show people not to give up, or think something’s impossible.”

He grew up in Niag-
ara on the Lake, fishing and swimming, and con-
siders himself a decent swimmer, but there are ed-
dies between coves along that stretch which will cre-
ate some challenges.

He will have to beat two boats and two kayak-
ers out in the water, and people cheering him on, he adds. “I won’t be doing this swim alone.”

“I’d like to see this be-
come bigger than myself,”

he says, turning into an annual event every August. For more information or to donate to his Aug. 13 fundraising swim, visit it https://www.gofundme.com/j7e6aqw-mental
-health-awareness

For more information about mental health sup-
port, contact Pathstone Mental Health. There is a crisis and support line op-
eraing 24/7 at 1-800-263-4944; in-person support

is available at eight walk-

in clinics across Niagara, Monday to Friday; and support via video is also offered Monday to Friday. For more information, visit https://pathstone

mentalhealth.ca

With the help of trainer Scott Paines, Dylan Rumsey feels confident he can complete his swim. (Ryan Bruce Photography)
James Russell and his wife Marilyn were in NOTL recently to mark grave sites with small flags and grass-friendly paint. He plans to return with sturdier flags he hopes will last the winter.

(Mike Balsom)

June 15, 2022

THE NOTL Local

Work on hold at Negro Burial Ground

Penny Coles
The Local

James Russell is hoping an archeological team will be permitted to unearth the 18 gravestones that lie beneath the grass at the Negro Burial Ground on Mississauga Street, but says it will likely be next spring before that work can proceed.

He plans to return to Niagara-on-the-Lake June 28 to put fresh flags on the graves that have been located by ground-penetrating radar — hopefully flags that will last through the winter. He has received a proposal from ARA, a professional archeology company recommended to him by an inspector with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario, to do the dig, but that project is on hold for now.

The BAO is the administrative authority designated to enforce most provincial burial regulations. Russell has been in contact with BAO recently “to make sure I’m following all the correct procedures,” he told The Local, but that organization and the town need to approve the work before the archeological dig can go forward.

“The BAO says I need to sit down with them and town staff first to talk about the process,” he says, since the town is the landowner of the property.

The stones, properly referred to as monuments, and likely made of marble, are not buried far beneath the ground. The ground-penetrating radar used recently to pinpoint graves found the deepest about one and a half feet beneath the surface. “The rest are just below the turf,” says Russell.

He has also spoken to Al Ernest, a recognized stone restorationist who has spent quite a bit of time working in St. Mark’s Church Cemetery, but he is not an archeologist, so according to the BAO is not qualified for the work in the Mississauga Street cemetery, where 28 early Black settlers, as yet unnamed, are thought to be buried.

It was Ernest who told him the monuments are most likely marble, which was readily available at the time of the burials, he says.

Russell had planned to make a deputation to council this Monday, but discovered he has to meet with the BAO and town staff.

With the ARA report in hand, and a proposal for Stage 1 and 2 archaeological assessments, a conservation plan that address best-practices for the conservation of the headstones, and associated costs, Russell hopes to set up a meeting with all involved, and have all the necessary approvals in place to allow the work to go ahead next spring.

“The cost, if the work continues through the stage 2 assessment, and includes the conservation plan, would total about $60,000, to be paid by the town, as the owner of the cemetery, he says.

So far, he feels he has had the support of the lord mayor and some council members, and many residents as well who have stopped to chat and encourage him when he’s been at the cemetery.

Russell has paid for the ground-penetrating radar himself, at a cost of about $5,000, including expenses.

Until the monuments are unearthed to help provide at least some of the information he is looking for, all he can do is continue his research through old archives and documents, hoping to give names to the people buried in the cemetery.

Penny Coles
The Local

James Russell and his wife Marilyn were in NOTL recently to mark grave sites with small flags and grass-friendly paint. He plans to return with sturdier flags he hopes will last the winter. (Mike Balsom)
The summer solstice event at Ryerson Park hasn’t been held the last two years, and this year has been cancelled due to lack of parking, organizers say. (File photo)

LemonAID Day, sponsored by Mountainview Homes, drew a group of fundraisers with their lemonade to raise money to send kids to camp. Adelaide Cameron, Gary Burroughs, Harold Cameron (above) and Clare Cameron and Katrina Boccia (left) enjoy the day, and the lemonade.

Carlson says she and NOTL resident Loretta Pietrobon came to the difficult decision they couldn’t host the celebration this year, for a number of reasons — most importantly, they discovered there is no parking near the park now, “which confounds the event,” says Carlson. She and Pietrobon will be searching for a new NOTL location for 2023, a spot along Lake Ontario where the setting sun is visible, not like the first year at Queen’s Royal Park, where they discovered on the evening of the solstice the park doesn’t have a view of the sunset.

Carlson is inviting residents to join one of the other two locations for yoga and drumming down the sun. This will be the 25th year at Lakeside Park in Port Dalhousie, with yoga, starting at 7 p.m. and then drumming down the sun until it sets.

At Charles Daley Park in Lincoln, yoga starts earlier, at 6:30 p.m., with The Yoga Vine from Beamsville, for free yoga and solstice tea. Then join master drummer Zephie James on the west beach to drum down the sun. Bring a blanket or yoga mat, lawn chairs, and anything to shake, rattle or drum, says Carlson. She is asking for donations to help defray organizational expenses, and the cost of park permits, with a portion going to the Niagara Land Trust.

For further information please contact Carlson at 905-562-3746 or www.niagaraturetours.ca

Penny Coles
The Local
Les Marmitons host international event

White Oaks executive chef Michael Price was among several hundred people addressing the gathered crowd of about 150 to outline the menu for Saturday’s Les Marmitons International Gala.

Though Price claimed he just doesn’t enjoy talking to large groups of people, one must wonder if the fact that more than half the attendees were wearing their crisp, white shirts might have something to do with it.

“Typically, our events are very well-attended,” he said, referring to the event three days before the planned gala, which began Thurs- day, to experience more of the wines than Les Marmitons had to offer.

“We rented a B&B on the Niagara River for the first few nights,” he said. “Then we spent two nights at Shaw. We walked the Old Town, ate in some of the very nice restaurants, and we even went to a high-end wine tasting (at BarB&).”

Loosely translated, Les Marmitons means kitchen boys. The organization is a gastronomic and social club of individuals, all with a common interest in fine food, wine and the culinary arts. They are not professional chefs who work in kitchens, but rather do one-off sessions and learn from them via monthly cooking meetings.

Niagara president Mike Berlis and former president Ross Midgley to lead them out. The group shifted to online sessions, enlisting the likes of Riverbend Inn chef Ross Midgley to lead them through cooking sessions.

In the past they’ve worked with chefs Ryan Crawford of Ravine and John Vetere of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, among others. They also enlist winemakers such as Ravine’s Lydia Toenek to tut- tor them on the best pairings with each menu.

Membership to Les Marmitons is $100, and members contribute about the same amount each time they participate in the monthly gatherings, which they hope to return to in the fall.

“They enjoy working with us,” Berlis says of the chefs and winemakers. “They’re not compensated by us, though all their costs are covered. They do it because it’s a passion for them as well. They enjoy having 20 or so men who are interested in everything the chef is saying. It’s a captive audience that is very interested in learning.”

Les Marmitons come from all walks of life and bring to the club a varied set of skills. What is common is that passion for food and wine, and for learning about those pursuits. Many of them are retirees, but there quite a few younger members who got involved at Saturday’s gala as well.

Prior to Saturday’s dinner, LMI attendees were able to enjoy organized brewery excursions, historic walking tours, and a visit to Niagara College. There was also a Fri- day evening welcome event at Ravine Vineyard. Of course, there was some LMI business to attend to. Macfarlane and other members of the international board, as well as the presidents of each of the 19 chapters present, conducted meetings to discuss business and share plans for the upcoming year.

Niagara last hosted the international gala in 2010, though the Toronto chapter of Les Marmitons hosted the gala at Niagara College in 2004. Next year’s event is scheduled to be hosted by the Calgary chapter.

Unlike their monthly sessions, the 80 or so chef’s jackets were worn mostly for show this past weekend. Les Marmitons were doing none of the cooking at either White Oaks or Ravine, but instead were enjoying the fruits of other chefs’ labours.

“It’s an opportunity for us to meet some new acquaintances and to see some old friends as well,” Berlis says. “Over the years, when you go to these galas, you see some of the same faces, and get to know people from different chapters in Canada and the U.S. Quite often, a lot of new friendships come out of it.”

Lord Mayor Betty Disero attended the gala, congratulating Mike Berlis and local members on the event they hosted.

Photos by Mike Balsom

Mike Balsom  
THE NOTL

Mike Balsom  
THE NOTL
Bravo Niagara! duo brings quartet to PAC

Mike Balsom
The Local

The message from the outgoing voicemail said, “you’ve called a Brubeck. Please leave a message.”

The caller was left a bit awestruck at how everyday it was, maybe even mundane, to hear Tish Brubeck apologizing for not being able to answer the family’s phone. After all, the Brubecks might be considered the first family of popular jazz.

Tish lives in Connecticut with her husband Chris Brubeck, bassist and trombonist with the Brubeck Brothers Quartet. Chris, of course, is the son of one of the most legendary jazz musicians of all time, pianist and songwrit-er Dave Brubeck.

Bravo Niagara! Festival presents the Brubeck Brothers Quartet - Chris, his brother Dan on drums, guitarist Mike DeMicco and pianist Chuck Lamb - Wednesday, June 22 at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre’s Brav-ond Hall. The show, postponed from its original date in 2020, will celebrate the music of Chris and Dan’s famous father to mark the centennial of his birth.

Dave Brubeck was one of the jazz world’s first pop stars. His 1959 album Time Out peaked at number two on the Billboard pop chart and became the first jazz album to sell a million copies. That records Blue Rondo à la Turk and Take Five, both played in unusual time signatures, are two of the most recognizable jazz numbers ever.

Chris says the first time he realized how important his father was in the music world was when he was about 10 years old. The family had stopped at a diner in New Jersey. “My dad was playing at a concert in New Jersey, and we stopped to eat,” says Chris. “The diner had those table-top jukeboxes. I remember flipping through the pages. It had the Beach Boys, the Rolling Stones, then I saw Take Five by Dave Brubeck. I thought, holy cow, my dad must be important!”

Born in 1952, Chris was a teenager when rock and roll nudged jazz out of the way in the early- to mid-1960s, but he says he never went through a rebellious stage when it came to talking music with his fa-mous father.

“I was in seventh grade when the Beatles really hit,” he remembers. “My father didn’t understand what all the commotion was about. If you wrote In Your Own Sweet Way, or The Duke, how are you going to be impressed with the Kindergarten-level harmonic complexity of She Loves You. I didn’t like any of the early rock and roll stuff, like Duke of Earl, either.”

It was when Dave Brubeck finally told an old friend that his opinion on the Fab Four softened a bit, and Chris remembers the fami-ly sitting around the record player listening to Rubber Soul intensely.

“The first time he heard Michelle and Norwegian Wood, he really, really loved that stuff!”

Chris dabbled in rock music early in his musical ca-reer, with bands such as New Heavenly Blue and Sky King. Listening to their records now, though, it’s clear that their musicality was a step ahead of most contemporar-ies, combining rock with ele-ments of jazz, classical, blues and bluegrass in their sound.

In fact, it was while touring with New Heavenly Blue in 1972 that the idea of join-ing his father’s quartet arose.

“We would play plac-es like Oberlin College (in Ohio), where Dave had re-corded a record,” Chris says. “My brother Darius had the Darius Brubeck Ensemble, featuring Dan on drums, and within the space of a single weekend his band, my band and Dave’s band would all play the same place.”

At that point, Dave’s most famous quartet — Gerry Mulligan on saxophone, drummer Alan Dawson and Jack Six on bass — had just broken up. A promoter sug-gested that father and sons get together to do a few numbers as a family.

“We hadn’t even thought of it,” marvels Chris, “because we were each doing our own things. But when we did it, the reaction was crazy. There was this fifth element, the family playing together, that knocked it up a level. Then we thought about touring with just the four of us instead of our three separate groups, and it just made perfect sense.”

Dave, Chris, Dan and Darius became the New Bru-beck Quartet, the three sib-lings immersing themselves in their father’s music while playing together off and on for nearly three decades, until 2001.

“I played hundreds and hundreds of gigs with [Dave] all over the world,” Chris says, “but we have fun playing it.” Chris says, “Jazz is a vehicle to stretch out on. With a number like Take Five, we never play it the same way twice. We don’t imitate Dave’s music, and audiences really seem to love what we do.”

As much as he reveres his father for his musical talent, Chris also holds up his ser-vices during the Second World War and his subsequent role as an ambassador for the U.S. with his historic 1958 State Department Tour as points of admiration.

He also points out that his mother Lola collaborated with his brother Louis Armstrong on a musical called The Real Ambassadors, which addressed the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, the nature of God, and a number of other themes. The musical had only one performance, at the Monterey Jazz Festival, though Dave recorded an al-bum of the songs in 1961.

Surely, if there was a list of those in the jazz world who deserve a tour in honour of their centennial, Dave Bru-beck would be near the top of the list. And it’s worth the two-year wait for the Bravo Niagara! Festival show, sched-uled appropriately just three days after Father’s Day.

“I’m glad that Alexis and Dan stuck with us,” a grate-ful Chris Brubeck says, “Dave was born in December of 1920. So all of 2021, it was still 100 years. That gave us an au-tomatic extension. You know Leonard Bernstein’s centenni-alm lasted five years. So it’s not a stretch for us to do it now in 2022.”

Tickets for the Brubeck Brothers Quartet, Wednes-day, June 22 at the PACs Recital Hall, are available at bravoniagara.org/live. The show begins at 7:30 p.m.
Fort George perfect setting for Foster’s 1812

Mike Bolstar
The Local

Experiencing a Norm Foster play called 1812 on the grounds of Fort George. National Historic Site makes perfect sense.

Though the story itself doesn’t take place in Niagara on the Lake, the Parks Canada property acts as a fitting backdrop to the tale of neighbouring towns split apart when U.S. president James Madison declares war against Britain in an attempt to defeat and perhaps occupy part of Canada.

Ontario-born playwright Foster lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick, about an hour’s drive from St. Stephen, a town of 4,000 on the St. Croix River. Across the river sits another small town, Calais, Maine, with a current population of 3,100.

The population of both towns were much smaller 210 years ago when war was declared. Early settlers on both sides of the border freely crossed the river to visit friends. Most didn’t identify themselves as American, British or Canadian. Instead, they considered themselves one community, until the American Revolution brought their differences to light.

Foster has often heard a story about Calais running out of gunpowder while preparing for the town’s Fourth of July celebrations in the midst of the War of 1812. The mayor of Calais asked his counterpart in St. Stephen for a loan of gunpowder so they could have a fireworks display. St. Stephen’s mayor obliged, and the celebration was held. That story became the groundwork for 1812, a play directed by Shaw Festival veteran Jim Mezron, that adeptly and humorously explores the themes of love, friendship, loyalty, racism and patriotism.

At its heart, 1812 is a comedy. David Nairn portrays St. Stephen’s Mayor Wallace Edwards, who has recently experienced a fall from his trusted steed. Having seriously bumped his head, he has become quite addled, needing constant reminders by his wife, played by Patricia Yeatman, that her name is Millicent. It also means that Wallace says what he is thinking, often without thinking much at all. That is evident first when he expresses his opinion of Britain’s King George, whom he refers to as an imbecile. It is also evident when he meets visitor Ben Strong for the first time.

Strong portrays one of the early free Black settlers in the area, many of whom worked in construction and in local mills. Recently arrived from England, Strong is sent by his American employer to offer assistance to the Edwards family in light of Wallace’s accident.

In his addled state, Wallace asks Ben, played by Foster Festival newcomer Edmond Clark, if he knows he is a Negro, using the term that was common at the time. He utters the word completely without malice, but deserves the dressing down he continues to receive from both Millicent and his daughter Caroline.

Ellen Denny’s Caroline is smitten with Strong, much to the chagrin of American Frederick Thomas, who hopes to win her heart. Much humour comes from Strong asking the 30-year-old Caroline why she has yet to find a suitor. It seems her ability to win over frequent rides through the countryside. He also defends himself to the only servant remaining on the Wallace staff, the ribald and forward Henrietta. Lisa Horner, a Dora Award winner and television actor (Kim’s Convenience, Little Mosque on the Prairie) is hilarious every time she bursts onto set, blantly throwing herself at Strong, who seems confused by her advances.

Nairn portrays Mayor or Edwards with a perfect mixture of bluster and confusion. He’s a marvel, especially in Act 2. Strong has offered to teach Wallace Italian to help “work out” his memory muscles. Nairn’s face can barely conceal Wallace’s joy as he eloquently strings together phrases in that language.

And Nairn’s back-and-forth with Dwyre about the pivotal battles of the War of 1812, with each bragging about their own country having won, is a tour de force.

Mixed in with all the humour, Foster’s play leaves one pondering the idea of loyalty in general. Is one to be loyal to their country in this time of war, or is one to be loyal to those with whom they share a common bond despite the border that separates them? It’s clear where the Edwards family stands on this.

It’s also clear that Strong finds himself at a crossroads near the end of the play due to his race. As the war progresses, he announces his plans to leave Calais, feeling that he has not been fully accepted by the townsfolk on either side of the border.

Though 1812 has a cast of only six actors, the seventh principal playing a part in this performance is the fort itself. The sounds of the birds flying by and the blue sky above the parapets, where the stage is nestled, add an air of authenticity to the subject matter.

And it must be mentioned that Fort George staff and members of the Friends of Fort George are perfect hosts for the world premier of one of 10 plays written by Foster during the pandemic. Audiences last Friday were greeted by an introduction from Dan Laroche in full period officer’s uniform. Laroche gave a short history of the halved grounds and their importance in the battle that cemented the national identity of Canadians.

1812 runs until June 23 at Fort George. Special event packages are also available for some performances, including a Drinks, Duels & Dads, a Father’s Day package, and Food in the Fort on Wednesday, June 22. Visit fosterfestival.com for information and tickets.
Music Niagara's new season at St. Mark's begins Friday

Ukrainian pianist Mykola Suk joined by chamber ensemble

Mike Balsom
The Local

Local lovers of classical and contemporary music are finally able to enjoy performances in the aesthetically beautiful and acoustically excellent St. Mark's Anglican Church this weekend.

Ukrainian-born pianist Mykola Suk kicks off the 2022 Music Niagara season this Friday, June 17 with a performance of works by composers Antonín Dvořák and Ivan Fedorovich Karabyts. Suk will be joined by the CamerAtis Ensemble, led by virtuoso and Music Niagara founder and artistic director Atis Bankas.

Board chair Richard Baker is excited for the return to Music Niagara's long-time home after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It’s a fabulous venue for music," Baker affirms. "And Mykola Suk is a great choice to start the season there."

Suk is no newcomer to St. Mark’s Church or Music Niagara. Bankas reminded The Local that the pianist performed there in Music Niagara’s first season, when the festival was known as the Niagara International Chamber Music Festival.

A professor of music at University of Nevada - Las Vegas, Suk’s career has spanned four continents, taking him to prestigious venues such as the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

He has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras, from the Russian National Symphony under Mikhail Pletnev to the Beethoven Orchestra Bonn conducted by Roman Kofman.

His passion for chamber music has brought him to many distinguished chamber music festivals and collaborations throughout the world, including the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival (Finland), Kiev International Music Festival (Ukraine), Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and International Keyboard Institute and Festival in New York City.

As well, throughout his career Suk has premiered numerous works, especially by Ukrainian composers, most of which were composed for, dedicated to, or commissioned by him.

Suk will be joined by a chamber ensemble led by Bankas and featuring Jasmine Meng Jia Lin on violin, cellist Dobrochza Zubek, Troy Milkeer on bass and violist Emad Zolfaghari. Friday’s program includes Dvořák’s Piano Quintet Opus. 81 and the Concert Divertimento for Piano and String Quintet by Ukrainian composer Karabyts.

Music Niagara’s second concert follows Monday night at St. Mark’s. Mirror Visions Ensemble (MVE) brings their unique combination of music and text to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The group’s passion for storytelling will turn its focus on the topic of travel via music by the likes of Joseph Haydn, Benjamin Britten, Cole Porter and Kurt Weill and texts from Henry James, James Joyce and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

“They are really fascinating,” an excited Baker says of MVE. “They are absolutely unique and we are fortunate to have them here Monday.”

Soprano Mireille Asselin will be a featured performer Monday. Though it will be her first time performing in NOTL, the Almonte, Ontario resident has visited a few times.

“My husband, Chris Enns, has family in Virgil,” she says. “They are coming to the concert and really looking forward to it. We are very excited to have an excuse to come to Niagara-on-the-Lake. We’re going to come a few days early and load up on strawberries.”

Asselin was born in Ottawa before the family moved to St. John, New Brunswick. They returned to the capitol city for her high school years, following which she earned a degree at Toronto’s Glenn Gould School of Music, before attaining her Master’s at Yale. She spent 2011 to 2013 as a member of the Canadian Opera Company’s Young Artists Ensemble.

The accomplished singer spent five seasons at the Metropolitan Opera, where she debuted as Poussette in Manon.

“It was incredible,” Asselin says. “I never saw myself as someone who would end up on the Met stage, so it all felt like a little bit of a miracle, graceful blur. I covered a bunch of lead roles and sang some small roles as well. It was a wonderful, inspiring place to work.”

Asselin has been one of 10 singers with MVE since 2017. She quickly learned that the ensemble’s model is markedly different from that of the Met.

“We were always told in school that even though we all love to sing chamber music recitals, there’s not a lot of money to be had in that area,” Mireille recalls. “We’re lucky that the opportunities to perform brand new music are still out there.”

Atis Bankas

MVE’s journey to St. Mark’s Church may influence Monday’s performance as well.

“We always have a moment when we come into the space collectively and figure out how we want to present that show in the space for these people,” explains Asselin. “All three singers and pianist make the show whatever feels right to us in our surroundings.”

Tickets for the recitals by Mykola Suk (Friday, June 17) and Mirror Visions Ensemble (Monday, June 20) are available at musicniagrarora.org. Both performances begin at 7 p.m. at St. Mark’s.
Shaw garden tour a ‘picture-perfect day’

Penny Coles  
The Local

This season’s Shaw Guild Garden Tour might just have been the best yet.

Jane Catcher, convenor of the tour, gives the weather a lot of credit.

“It was an absolutely picture-perfect day in every way, from a weather standpoint,” she says. “It couldn’t have been any better if we ordered it.”

She is also confident that it was a record-breaking total for cash ticket sales the day of the event, at least in part thanks to the weather.

The lifting of COVID restrictions also likely brought out a good crowd, and her marketing team took advantage of every opportunity to spread the word about the event, she says, reaching a lot of people and giving the garden tour great exposure.

Catcher says she wanted to create a walking tour, and some people did walk it. Gardens were spectacular, with a really good variety to view — a couple were professionally-designed, perfectly-groomed gardens, and others were labours of love by homeowners who have planted, grown and nourished their gardens for years.

Her initiative to add a special touch to each garden, bringing an artist or musician into each, was also very much appreciated.

And finally, Catcher credited her volunteers, in every aspect of organizing the tour, for its success.

“I don’t say this lightly,” she emphasized. “I really could not have done it without my team.”
Irish Harp scavenger hunt partners with businesses

Penny Coles
The Local

Sunday morning was a time to gather friends and monodies for the Irish Harp Pub’s scavenger hunt to help promote local businesses. The pub partnered with dozens of local businesses for its event, says owner Jovie Joki, with businesses generously donating prizes to be won by the top teams.

“Many of the businesses are participating in profiling their establishment in this event,” says Joki. “What we entailed from each business was some creativity in providing a question or task.”

One of the tasks performed was doing 10 jumping jacks while reciting something, others included naming two types of animals in the pen at Frogpond Farm Organic Winery, or writing down the answer to what the heart sign says at the Butterfly Gallery — the answer is happiness is like a butterfly.

“The ultimate goal was to highlight each establishment and their products,” says Joki.

There were about 10 teams participating, maximum four people to a team, and 30 businesses within and outside the Old Town involved.

Prizes to the scavenger hunt winners were provided by The Irish Harp Pub and most of the participating businesses, with many generous gift donations, such as $100 gift cards from Irish Design, Ara shoes and accessories, and Glamour Jewellery, certificates to Spa at Q, Sentinel Carriages, Beau Chapeau, elBike Niagara, Neob Lavender, Tour de Vine, and Sunset Grill, gift baskets from NoLa’s Keto Bakery, Cheese Secrets, Creek Road Paints and a variety of tastings and samplers from businesses, including Chef and Pub Gourmet Ice Pops, Spirit of Niagara, Niagara Oast House Brewers, The Exchange Brewery, Inniskillin Wines, Silversmith Brewing Company, Lailey Winery and Ironwood Cider House.

“All of these charitable donations will help promote future visits to these establishments,” says Joki.

The Harp’s first scavenger hunt to promote NOTL businesses was attended by Lord Mayor Betty Disero, who kicked off the event promoting local tourism and business growth. The NOTL Chamber of Commerce assisted with advertising and also participated in the event.

Joki says The Irish Harp Pub is grateful for the relationships created to stage the event, and hopes to grow “a new NOTL tradition to highlight all entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses within our community.”

Sean Kennedy chairing United Way Campaign

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara College president Sean Kennedy has been named chair of United Way Niagara’s 2022 campaign.

The announcement was made via a press release last week.

“As a loyal contributor for many years, Sean has a deep understanding of community needs and is well-positioned to lead the campaign, especially as our community continues to recover from the effects of COVID-19,” said Frances Hallworth, CEO of United Way Niagara in the press release.

“Sean’s personal commitment to United Way is exceptional,” she continued, “but his leadership as campaign chair also exemplifies the caring spirit of the Niagara College community. The college has been one of United Way’s top 20 employee campaigns for decades, and we’re really looking forward to continuing that partnership through this upcoming campaign.”

As a workplace, Niagara College has raised more than $850,000 through employee contributions and events since its first campaign in 1991. That ongoing commitment earned the college both the 2020 Long-Standing Community Service and 2015 Workplace Campaign of the Year Awards.

“I am incredibly proud to be leading the 2022 Campaign for United Way Niagara,” said Kennedy. “It is an honour to step into such an important role that many dedicated community leaders have held over the years. Niagara College is firmly committed to building a stronger community for all who live here.”

“Supporting the United Way has never been more important,” he added in a video posted to United Way Niagara’s YouTube channel. “We know the need for the social services programs they fund has more than doubled since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Kennedy pointed out in the video that Niagara College’s support of the organization goes beyond raising funds. He said the college joins the United Way in supporting the community by providing access to education and support that ensures everyone in Niagara has an opportunity to pursue their dreams.

“Together, we can continue to support the over 120,000 people who rely on United Way funded programs every year,” Kennedy said.

That number actually came in at 123,000 Niagarians who benefitted from United Way’s investments in programs and initiatives in 2021. Niagara Regional Police Chief Bryan MacCulloch led last year’s campaign, during which $4.75 million was raised to support a network of 126 social services agencies at 46 partner agencies.

With COVID-19 restrictions easing, hopes of in-person events have returned for United Way Plans for an in-person campaign kick-off are underway. The 2022 campaign led by Kennedy will launch in September.

Sean Kennedy concluded his video presentation with an appeal to Niagarans 450,000 residents.

“Please join me in supporting the 2022 United Way campaign in whatever way you are able,” he pleaded. “Let’s keep our community strong. Please give.”
The weather forecast for the annual cricket match promised sun and thunderstorms Sunday afternoon, and the suspense was enough to keep the organizers and participants praying under their ponchos and umbrellas, says Jane Andres, at Memorial Park to enjoy the day.

“The cricket match was a community event full of faith and hope,” says Andres, “despite a fairly lengthy deluge when the storm clouds rolled in.”

“When the sun finally broke through, the joy and relief swept through the entire crowd and the game kicked off,” thanks to the Caribbean Workers Outreach Project (CWOP), the annual event has become more than just a cricket match, evolving to a celebration of community and friendships with our neighbours on the farms.”

After a two-year absence due to COVID, the CWOP brought together teams of workers from NOTL and Vineland farms for an annual cricket match, says organizer Rev. David Pritchard. “Up to 200 people enjoyed visiting and watching a great game.”

The cricket team from Vineland (David Gilchrist)

The final score was 105 to 81 in 15 overs for Niagara Clippers over Vineland Lions. After the game and trophies and prizes had been given to players and referees, everyone was treated to chicken, biscuits, coleslaw and rice and peas provided by CWOP from Popeyes Louisiana Chicken and Charms Jerk House.

Popeyes also purchased new uniforms for the Vineland side, says Pritchard.

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NOTE OF THANKS

Ann Evelyn Gallagher (1928-2022)

Ann’s family would like to thank Irene Cook for her loving friendship and support while Ann was at home. We will never forget your kindness and compassion.

HAWLEY, DENNIS JOHN—Passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, February 10, 2022 at the age of 94 years.

Dear husband of the late Mary Hawley (nee Ryan) for 63 years; she passed away on October 24, 2017. Dennis subsequently found companionship and married Barbara Lane (nee Teague) on March 19, 2020.

Dennis was the father of five sons: John (late Liz), Ransom, Chris, Adam (Julia) and Mark (Teresa).

Dennis was also the proud grandfather of ten grandchildren: Adam (Brianne), Ransom (Whitney), Jay (Samantha), Casey, Cody, Claire (Matthew), Erica, Stephanie, Melissa, and Nicholas and nine great-grandchildren: Merritt, Malcolm, Easton, Callie, Addy, Ransom, Levi, Joshua and Henry.

Dennis is survived by his sister, Daphne Kinnaird (nee Simmance) and predeceased by brothers, Cecil Simmance and George Hawley.

In keeping with Dennis’ wishes, cremation has taken place. There will be a memorial service held at 2:00 pm on Friday, June 24, 2022 at Redeemer Bible Church, 3017 Montrose Road, Niagara Falls. A private family graveside service will be held in Markham at a later date.

Memorial donations can be made to the following non-profit charitable organizations; For the Needy-Not the Greedy Medical Equipment & Supplies of Niagara Falls or WEC International of Hamilton.

Arrangements entrusted to Considerate Cremation & Burial Services, 26 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines (between Lake Street & Scott Street), 289-362-1144. Online donations & condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca

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Across:
1. Cited as cause of 2003 Iraq war
2. Lawyers’ grp.
3. Chef’s seasonings
4. Wedding implement
5. Mohon rock
6. Letters after business names
7. Colorist
8. Mental or Lamburry
9. Inaction
10. S.N.L. network
11. Stage
12. Enter
13. Bolt
14. Indicate
15. Happening
16. Jacq’s after ego
17. Cereal grain
18. Outcry
19. Tha Emirates
20. Pt. divisions
21. Hit
22. NASAQ debut
23. Vino selection
24. Heated argument
25. Run off
26. Detect
27. Ship
28. Some music storage media
29. Water meter
30. Relax
31. Mine
32. Haemonchus paederus
33. Gatherer
34. Open up
35. Street
36. Graze
37. View
38. Naples
39. Pay
40. Actor
41. Triathlon
42. Fashion label
43. Painter
44. Paint
45. Smuggle
46. South African
47. Bovine
48. Road
49. Hate
50. Apologize
51. Antitrust suit
52. Art
53. Painting
54. Head
55. Minute
56. Earth’s moon
57. Arrival
58. National capital
59. In the slightest
60. Farm fertilizer
61. Zoo animal
62. Centenary
63. Casual bone
64. Breeze
65. 2014 album by 30 Seconds to Mars
66. "Before Abraham was..."
67. Print
68. Motor vehicle
69. Chest bone
70. Ooze
71. Theater for some vets briefly
72. Double helix molecule (Abbr.)

Down:
1. Egg boiler
2. Spanish card game
3. Rot
4. Type of Venetian type
5. Howls at the moon
6. Hair
7. Solo (Harrison Formby)
8. Heart test
9. Carron
10. Vulture
11. Catch
12. "Ammendment Development" star Will —
13. Sensitivity
14. Team
15. Social gathering
16. In order
17. The “Locomotion” singer
18. L-W-Z
19. Forbidden activity
20. Track legend — Zalopex
21. Informal negative
22. Stepped
23. Centers
24. Connecticut university
25. College head
26. Jailed
27. Ignited
28. Playing cards
29. Banana
30. House defense
31. Advisory grp.
32. Medicament
33. Tire problem
34. Promiss
35. Regard
36. Spade
37. Scottish land proprietor
38. Clemens’ pen name
39. Rio de Janeiro dance
40. Hemispherical r.
41. Horse problem
42. Restaurant card
43. Southam soup ingredient
44. Chun
45. Wharf
46. Distant but within sigh
47. Canadian capital
48. Admiration
49. Scottish
50. Cited as cause of 2003 Iraq war
51. Roosevelt
52. Hat
53. Horse
54. Admiration
55. Sheep
56. Purple r.
57. Ice
58. College
59. Doctoral degree
60. Large body of water
61. At the outset
62. Combination
63. In a manner
64. Stepped
65. Canadian capital
66. A Romney Ford character
67. "The Locomotion" singer
68. The Frenchman
69. "The Locomotion" singer
70. Treble
71. College
72. DNA.

PUZZLE ANSWERS   Across:
1. W M D, 4 A B A, 7 Herbs, 12 Hoe, 13 Lava, 15 Take in, 16 Inc, 17 Dyer, 18 Angela, 19 Stasis, 21 N B C, 23 Leg, 24 Key in, 25 Seethe, 28 Denote, 30 Event, 34 Hyde, 37 Oat, 38 Clamor, 39...

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LANDSCAPING SERVICES
Newark Park Community Garden gets top marks

Penny Coles
The Local

The community garden in Newark Park is officially open, it has a great-looking sign, says organizer Julian Trachsel, and gardeners are frantically getting plants in the ground.

There was a ‘soft opening’ Saturday to celebrate the garden and give the gardeners a chance to meet each other — socializing is one of the benefits of a community garden.

The garden plots were fully booked, but with one couple backing out, there is one more plot available, Trachsel says.

About 25 to 30 people were in attendance Saturday, including Lord Mayor Betty Disero, and J.B. Hopkins, the town’s parks supervisor, who was a great help in getting the garden established.

Keith Bullen and his wife Mary Webster were two who attended. They have a plot, and are growing butternut squash, turnips, leeks, cauliflower, peppers and marigolds. He says they had a community garden plot elsewhere last year, and “this is heavenly luxury” in comparison.

Trachsel, he says, “has done an exceptionally good bit of work here.”

Keith Bullen, Mary Webster, Jane Locke and Ruth Denyer were at the community garden for its opening, and to admire the new sign. (Photos supplied)