



Native art store 'feast for the senses'
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notllocal.com JUNE 23, 2021 Volume 3 • Issue 25

Newark Neighbours food bank manager Cindy Grant, Newark chair Laura Gibson, and chair of the Communities in Bloom Committee Vicky Downes harvest some of the vegetables grown in the community garden behind the NOTL Public Library. (Town photo)



Newark Neighbours happy recipients of fresh community garden produce

Penny Coles
The Local

A rewarding volunteer initiative is flourishing in Niagara-on-the-Lake, providing fresh produce for the needy of the community.

Three years ago, the town's Communities in Bloom Committee took over a small square of garden tucked away behind the NOTL Public Library.

Members of the committee, and others interested in gardening, plant, tend and harvest a range of produce to be shared locally, chiefly with farm workers and Newark Neighbours' food bank, says Vicky Downes, chair of the Communities in Bloom Committee.

In 2019, in its first sea-

son and pre-pandemic, there was a market stand at the library, and may be again once restrictions are lifted, says Downes.

The rewarding feeling of doing something they love while helping to fill an important need in NOTL is motivating volunteers to work in the garden several days a week, with sufficient produce this early in the season to make weekly donations to the food bank.

Its success inspired the committee to double the size of the garden for this year, from 20 feet by 20 feet to 40 feet by 20 feet, Downes says, allowing for more vegetables to be planted, and a wider variety of choices that will offer produce to be harvest-

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Parliament Oak property development revealed

Penny Coles
The Local

For about five years now, Old Town residents have been wondering about, and concerned by development on the iconic historic property of the former Parliament Oak school on King Street.

Last week Liberty Sites Ltd., a Montreal company known for developing suburban business parks, unveiled its plans for Parliament Oak Residences, with a dozen

semi-detached units of 1.5 storey semi-detached homes, plus a three-storey apartment building.

The apartment building will face King Street, set back as the former school was, and will incorporate some original components of the school. The mature trees on the property are also intended to be preserved, the release outlining the project explains.

Although there has been some consultation with neighbours to the property,

which is bordered by King, Gage, Centre and Regent Streets, there have been no public meetings to date about the project.

The redevelopment of the property, the announcement says, "will pursue a garden-like-approach predicated on the development team's commitment to the preservation of trees on the property."

The goal of the project, according to Liberty Sites' Ralph Levy, "is to create a new generation of residences

which exceed all expectations in term of quality, design, features, and amenities." He adds that to do so successfully "requires both an appreciation for the historic character of the surrounding neighbourhood, and an appropriate vision for the neighbourhood's future. And it requires both local insight, and international talent."

Former Niagara-on-the-Lake planning director Stephen Bedford, representing the developer, spoke to The

Local about "the grand project," which he's been involved in from its early days.

He says developer Ralph Levy "saw the site, loved the site and wanted to build something that would fit in the neighbourhood," respecting the school and the historic significance of the property, and paying special attention to the transition from new to old, after studying home designs in the Old Town.

The semis are designed to look like singles, "reflect-

ing the design you'd find in the Old Town," says Bedford. Portions of the first floor of the school, including the steps and most of the entranceway, will be incorporated into the design of the apartment building, he says, being repaired where necessary, but "will look the same as it is now," only with a ramp to be added around the stairs.

"The front yard will look like the front yard of the

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St. Davids senior attacked by neighbour's dog

Penny Coles
The Local

Ming Jiang goes out for a walk through the Cannery Park neighbourhood of St. Davids every day, and often stops to chat with her neighbours.

That's how she came to be friends with Esther Marcos, and she knows now how lucky she is to have such a good friend.

Last week, Jiang and her husband realized they had a problem with drainage from their backyard into the yard that backs on to theirs.

The homeowner had done some planting, and dirt piled up along the fence was stopping water from draining as it was supposed to. Jiang's husband said he could fix the issue, and she made arrangements with the homeowner to enter her backyard for a short time. Since the neighbour has an aggressive dog that is often in the backyard, "I asked her if she would keep her dog in the house while my husband was there working."

When he was finished, she knocked on her neighbour's door to let her know, and took her some fresh mangoes as a way of saying thank you for agreeing to let him complete the work, she says.

But when she knocked, the dog began furiously scratching the inside of the door. "It was trying to escape, and I was very nervous. I felt I needed to escape."

When the door was opened, the dog sprung at her, viciously attacking her.

Jiang, 72, a tiny woman, says she was screaming for help on her neighbour's porch, and a man passing by

in a black car stopped, got out and approached the porch to help her.

The dog was distracted and took after the man, and she isn't sure what happened to him — he must have jumped back in his car to get away.

But that gave her a chance to also run, screaming, and her friend Esther, who had been in her backyard heard her and ran to her aid.

Fortunately for Jiang, Esther has worked for decades as a nurse, having retired as a charge nurse from an Oakville hospital. She's accustomed to the sight of blood, and knew what to do, although she's 75, and found acting on her own difficult.

"There was so much blood," she says, describing a section of Jiang's left arm where about six inches of skin was just hanging down, blood pouring from it. "It was really bad, just gushing blood."

Jiang was shaking and crying, extremely upset and clinging to Esther, and Esther was trying to pat her on the back, trying to calm her down, telling her she was going to be okay, to take deep breaths, all the while trying to hold a towel with enough pressure on the wound to at least slow the bleeding.

Another neighbour from across the street had brought her the towel, and Esther, after trying to call 911 herself, realized she couldn't answer all the questions she was being asked and shouted for her husband Roger to place another call to 911.

He was being asked all kinds of questions by the dispatcher that he didn't know the answer to and was shouting the questions to Esther, who was furiously trying to

stop the blood flowing from Jiang's arm.

"Questions, and more questions, so many questions," says Esther. "I just wanted them to hurry up and get here."

Another woman walking by also called 911, and the paramedics arrived, as did the police and humane society officers, who went to talk to the dog owner, who has since brought flowers and apologized to Jiang.

Esther says she's been told it's a rescue dog, a rottweiler, and is known in the neighbourhood for being aggressive.

Jiang has several stitches under her arm — she's not sure how many — and has been told there is nerve damage that will probably improve.

Her left hand is badly bruised and swollen, and her right hand has a couple of stitches, as does her right calf — six, she thinks.

Although she's in pain, she can deal with that, she says. However, she keeps replaying what happened in her head, and the fear of the dog isn't going away. She keeps asking herself why the neighbour didn't put her dog in the backyard before answering the door, and Jiang says she will always be nervous when she is out walking and hears it barking — she can hear that it's still there, she says.

She wanted to tell her story to The Local for two reasons — to warn others in the neighbourhood about the dog, and to especially watch children playing in the Angela Crescent area, and also, she dearly wants to meet the man who was driving the black car, to say thanks.

He put himself in danger by coming to her rescue, she says, and without him and her friend Esther, who knew what to do to help her, the outcome could have been so much worse.

To the man in the black car on Angela Crescent last week, June 17, please email penny@notllocal.com so your contact information can be passed on to Jiang.



Ming Jaing, with Esther Marcos and paramedics, was taken to hospital after being attacked by a dog in her Cannery Park neighbourhood last Thursday. (Photo supplied)



Ming Jaing and Esther Marcos relate what Jaing calls the accident, when Marcos came to her aid last week. (Penny Coles)

Charges laid

Charges have been laid following the death of a 40-year-old Niagara-on-the-Lake man.

Matthew Wilson was found dead at the side of Lake-shore Road near McNab Road, around 8 a.m. on the morning of Monday, April 5.

Police believe he was hit by a vehicle the evening before.

As a result of the investigation, the driver, a 54-year-old man from Niagara-on-the-Lake has been charged with failure to report an accident.

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Lots of open space in King Street development

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school,” he adds, with a “generous” side yard between Gage and Centre Streets, a small parkette on Regent Street, and walkways that connect Regent to Centre, Gage and King Streets.

The landscaping onsite will remain unchanged, with the addition of an interpretive heritage walk and sitting areas along the front, and plaques to explain the heritage of the property and the school. The trees along King Street, including one large oak, will also remain, he says.

A zoning change from institutional to residential is necessary, as is an amendment to allow for the medium density of the apartment building.

The application and requested amendments encompass the whole block as one project, says Bedford.

During a virtual discussion with neighbours, a proposal similar to the current application was presented, and there were lots of questions, along with a reaction that made those involved feel confident they were going forward in the right direction, Bedford says.

He expects there will be further questions about the apartment, but he believes it meets all of the urban design requirements in the town's Official Plan.

There have been no public meetings to judge the community response to the project, but objections about the size, density and design have



Renderings of the proposed development show the apartment building facing King Street, incorporating some front portions of the school, two of the buildings of semi units, and a view of the project from above. (Submitted)



‘Treat having fresh produce’

Continued from page 1

ed right up until October.

“Everything in the garden is doing superbly well,” she says.

“It’s a wonderful community project.”

The garden has been supported from the beginning by Ravine Estate Vineyard Winery with cash donations, and by Seaway Gardens, which provides many of the vegetable plants for the gardens, she adds.

At the moment, Newark Neighbours is receiving donations of spinach,

kale, Swiss chard, herbs and rhubarb. Soon there will be zucchini, “tons of peppers,” tomatoes, garlic and green onions, and a little later, carrots, beets, squash and potatoes, among other vegetables.

Newark food bank manager Cindy Grant says clients very much appreciate the wonderful variety of produce from the community garden. “It is such a treat to be able to offer fresh veggies and herbs to them on a regular basis.”

As much as Newark Neighbours loves having fresh produce to distribute, says Downes, the

Committee and the Urban Design Committee for comment. “If all goes well, we’ll have the approval from council before Christmas, with more design details to come in 2022.”

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Hirji almost ready to lift Niagara dining restrictions

Penny Coles
The Local

Dr. Mustafa Hirji wasn't quite ready to lift restrictions specific to dining in Niagara early this week, but he says he's getting closer to making that decision.

The acting chief medical officer of health has been very politely asked by two federal Niagara politicians to drop his Section 22 orders, which limit diners in outdoor patios to four people of the same household, with some exceptions for those living alone.

Conservative MPs Tony Baldinelli from the Niagara Falls riding, and Dean Allison from Niagara West, said in a letter to Hirji that "despite seeing a renewed sense of hope across Niagara," the enforcement of the Section 22 order continues to be met with frustration.

"Phase one of the provincial framework allows for outdoor dining with individuals beyond immediate family members, which not only helps our local restaurateurs, but also begins the process of a return to normalcy, which contributes to improved mental health and emotional well-being," their letter says. "With a decline in new

COVID-19 cases across Niagara, we respectfully ask that you consider lifting the Section 22 restrictions for restaurants here in Niagara."

Some Niagara regional councillors and mayors have also been outspoken with their belief that it's time for the local restrictions to be dropped.

Hirji said Monday he is looking specifically at two metrics, the number of COVID cases per 100,000 of the population, and the reproduction rate, which indicates how quickly the virus is spreading.

Although the most recent seven-day average number of new cases as reported Monday was 14.82, Hirji says he's looking for a trend of under 15 to continue for a few days before lifting the Section 22 order, which further impacts restaurant owners who are already restricted to four patrons at a table and physical distancing requirements set by the province.

He said Monday he would be closely watching what happens over the next few days, and hopefully, if a downward trend continues, Niagara will get to the point where "it would be possible to lift that restriction on dining with only your

household."

The other all-important metric he is watching is the reproduction rate. Anything less than one shows the number of new cases will be declining, as each new case spreads to less than one other person. The reproductive rate was .77 Monday, but that was up from a low of .64 last Friday, and Hirji is waiting for it to fall again, although he said the marginal increase wasn't "too concerning" to him.

However, he warned, as he has in recent weeks, that the Delta variant, which spreads faster and is thought to cause more serious illness than other variants, could be on the rise in Niagara. It's becoming the dominant strain in other areas, and could be here as well, he said. Although it still appears to be a small number, representing only four cases in Niagara Monday, the difficulty in screening for it means it could be more prevalent than it appears, he said.

And once that Section 22 order is lifted, there will be more people heading to outdoor patios to socialize with their friends, creating more opportunity for the virus to spread, he warned, asking residents to make

the choice for themselves to dine only with household members.

He asked again to spread the message that more peo-

ple get tested if they have even mild symptoms, to allow public health to carry out contact tracing, which, along with having a greater

percentage of the population vaccinated, will reduce the number of new cases and allow for the lifting of further restrictions.



Cause to celebrate

Lord Mayor Betty Disero celebrates her second shot in the arm, administered at Simpson's Apothecary Sunday. Public health is expecting a lot of vaccine to arrive in Niagara over the next two weeks, and new clinics with more appointments will be announced, allowing for more first and second doses to be administered to all who are eligible. (David Gilchrist)



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Local BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Hospice Niagara

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‘When the time comes, that’s where I want to go’

Soon after his mother died, his father made a heartfelt request. Alois Schwendinger, a man who left Austria after the Second World War for “temporary” work in Canada, a father, grandfather and cancer survivor, a cabinetmaker with rug-

ged hands and a gentle heart, wanted to die in the same place as his wife, Ruth. His beloved Ruth – the love of his life for almost 60 years and reason he never returned to Austria – was 81 when she died at Hospice Niagara in 2018.

And that’s where Alois wanted to go. When it was his time, of course. Glenn Schwendinger, Alois’ son was both surprised, and impressed, with his dad’s matter-of-fact approach. “He said, ‘That’s where I

want to go when it comes to my time,” says Glenn. “And I said, ‘What do you mean dad? You’re not sick.’ “And he said, ‘When the time comes, that’s where I want to go.’ It was just before Christmas 2017 when Ruth was admitted to hospice. “It’s a really tough decision, a really tough day to bring your parent to a facility that you know what’s going to happen,” says Glenn. “It ended up being some of the most special times we had with her.”

The weight, the burden, the endless worry of caring for Ruth at home was lifted. “We’ll take care of her,” staff in the residence assured the family, “Your job now is just to love her.” And love her, they did. Ruth died Jan. 15, 2018. In the months that followed, Alois would drop by hospice, sometimes with an offering of chocolates and always kind words. “He wanted to say, thank you. They made such an impression on him when he was going through such a difficult time,” says Glenn. “It was beyond touching.” And then, less than a year later came more devastating news: the prostate cancer Alois

thought was gone for good, had returned. It was aggressive and had already spread. Alois wanted to live at home for as long as possible, surrounded by memories of Ruth, and then, as he’d told his son months before, come to hospice when the time was right. Alois was admitted to hospice one Thursday in February 2020; he was gone, by Monday. His wishes, honoured; he died in the very room in which Ruth had spent her final days, surrounded by his family. “It’s hard to describe, that a

place where you lose a loved one has such special memories, but it does,” says Glenn. “Hospice was such a comforting and supportive place to be during such a difficult time.” *** *Hospice Niagara helps people live well from the time of diagnosis with a terminal illness, at end of life and while grieving a death. No one needs to do this alone. We are here to help, no matter what life presents. Call us at 905-984-8766 or info@hospiceniagara.ca*



Ruth and Alois Schwendinger.



Glenn Schwendinger with his father, Alois.



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EDITORIAL

More development headed our way, more battles to fight

It seems this was a week for more news, and of course, not all of it good.

Although the COVID-related news actually is good. The number of COVID cases continues to drop, with fewer hospitalizations. There were just nine new cases in Niagara reported Monday, and seven Tuesday. There were 215 active cases in the region Tuesday, and seven in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Section 22 restrictions in Niagara could be lifted soon, which is good news for local restaurants, and diners who will be able to go out with their friends.

The province is moving closer — we are all moving closer — to the next step of recovery.

For those anxious to be vaccinated, first or second dose, there should be lots of vaccine on hand, and hopefully enough appointments for all who want them. Life is looking up.

For some of us, the pandemic may have given us a different perspective on other challenges in life, from personal problems to some of the municipal issues we face — the challenges that for the most part have taken a back seat to COVID.

We're learning more now

about the new subdivision on John Street East, on historic property, and also on the landmark site of the former Parliament Oak school on King Street.

Both properties are significant in NOTL, not just because of their historic or cultural importance, but because they are well-known neighbourhoods that have a place in our heart, and that deserve to be treated with respect.

There will be meetings, there will be discussions, there will be news stories and editorials and letters to the editor, the developers will be blamed, the politicians will be blamed,

and at some point, something will be built on those sites. Neighbourhoods will change, and change won't be popular.

Such is growth in a beloved and beautiful town. We'll speak out, we'll hopefully find some compro-

mise, and lovely new people will move to share the Niagara-on-the-Lake we all love.

Small comfort, but development battles have been fought for decades, some lost entirely, some with small compromises won, but we will fight any battle

and for any compromise that will preserve what we love about our town.

And will continue to love, despite the change that can't be stopped.

Penny Coles
The Local

Local VOICES: Ugly suburbs thanks to Ford and MZO's

David Israelson
Special to The Local

If Niagara-on-the-Lake becomes just another ugly suburb because of projects that some developers want to force on the community, ultimately, you may have Doug Ford to thank for the mess.

To be fair, it didn't start with the Ontario premier and his Progressive Conservative government. Bad planning decisions have a long, unfortunate history across Ontario.

But it's bound to get uglier with the heavy-handed way Ford is managing local planning. He and his cabinet cohorts have been using brute force, deploying Minister's Zoning Orders to overturn any planning decisions they choose — and they're choosing badly. Ford and his Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Clark are twisting facts and showing stubborn unwillingness to listen to anybody except the well-funded developer friends of Ford.

"We use MZO's in close consultation with municipalities to build critical projects Ontarians need," Ford tweeted. That's not exactly true though.

In 2017, before Ford took power, the Ontario government issued zero MZO's overriding local planning. Since taking over in 2018, Ford and his cabinet have slammed through 44 of these — the "critical" projects in many cases being suburbs and buildings that override environmental concerns.

While this may sound like overreacting, take a look what's happening in NOTL right now and consider how, under Ford, it can easily play out badly.

What we're seeing across this province is the unfolding of a pattern of bad decision making that the Ford government is making worse by design.

There are two problems. The first is the local situation — the unpleasant and acrimonious debate now taking place about several projects in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town area that are opposed strongly, widely and loudly by at least a plurality of local residents.

Two of these projects, as most local residents know, are adjacent to each other — the proposal to redevelop the historic, heritage-designated Rand estate and the overstuffed suburban tract that's proposed for the property next to it.

The details of both of these unpleasant looking proposals are being examined and debated exhaustively elsewhere, most recently in a comprehensive online public meeting that looked at the Brampton-style suburb plan that would cram 191 homes onto land that used to include old-growth trees — until the developer cut them down.

Another NOTL proposal, about to come up for consideration is for development of the former Parliament Oak elementary school, a school that was integral to community life until the uncaring District School Board of Niagara closed and sold the land to a private developer.

The circumstances that led to the community losing its only public school in the Old Town, and the sale of such properties for dubious-looking redevelopment, is now water under the bridge — dirty water perhaps, but many of the stronger opportunities to protect such sites have mostly ebbed away.

Local councils still have the ability to call for changes to developers' plans, and one of the key roles of Niagara-on-the-Lake's current council is now to protect Canada's most beautiful town from turning into a suburban bore.

But there's still Ford, Clark and those MZO's to contend with down the line. That's the second problem with planning — and although perhaps less emotional than the loud debate

between developers and community residents, it's arguably the bigger problem.

Province-wide guidelines call for developers to build more higher-density neighbourhoods with a mix of housing for different incomes. That's a reasonable, laudable goal, especially after home prices in southern Ontario since the pandemic have skyrocketed beyond the means of many would-be first time buyers.

It's also a vague goal, though. It's easily manipulated by developers who will label whatever ugly tract housing they propose as "affordable," and consistent with provincial goals.

Add to this a bit of timely support, including financial contributions, to the Ford campaign, and no matter what reasonable proposal a local council and a community might prefer, the minister can issue an MZO and order up a new suburb.

Is there a way out of this? Well, in less than a year Ontario voters will go to the polls. Bad enough how the Ford government has mishandled the pandemic, long-term care and vaccine rollouts — think about use of MZO's to ram through ugly development, and what might happen here if it continues.

On the other hand, if Ford is truly vulnerable, here's something he can consider right away — an MZO to stop developments that communities fear will ruin their town. He has that power now — and so will any premier who replaces him.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident David Israelson is a non-practising lawyer, consultant and writer. The Local invites submissions to our Local Voices, which we hope to offer as a regular column. Submissions can be on any topic that would be of interest to NOTL readers, and can be up to 1,000 words. Please email ideas or submissions to penny@notllocal.com.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

The Duchess (Netflix, 2020), is a woman who knows what she wants and has a lot to say about single motherhood, and

the uselessness of men. The series is rude, funny, considerably flawed and not for everyone. However, I must have been engaged, as I watched all episodes at one sitting.

Donald Combe is a retired

English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of *The Local*.



Letters! We want letters!

If you have a letter to the editor you'd like to see published, please send it to penny@notllocal.com. Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won't publish anonymous letters. And please stick to the issue at hand, rather than attacking those involved. The deadline is Monday at noon.

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COMMENT

Deadheading boring but necessary



Marla Percy
Past president, NOTL
Horticultural Society

Unless your garden has nothing but shrubs and evergreens, you will inevitably have to confront flowering plants with shrivelled, spent blooms. If you want your garden looking presentable, you will have to dead head.

Dead head doesn't refer to your odd nephew, it simply means cutting off spent blossoms to tidy up the appearance of your plants. But appearance isn't the only reason for deadheading.

By cutting off old blooms, the plant is encouraged to send out new blooms, and often the second blooms are longer-lasting. Without deadheading, the plant thinks it's time to produce seed, so it will stop the production of flowers.

Grab the stem and cut

just above the first set of full healthy leaves. Cutting off the stem too high leaves silly sticks, so cut down to the first set of a good leaf joint and tidier plant.

For small flowers with small stems, simply pinch the stem and snap it off with your fingers. Garden snippers (similar to but sharper than scissors) are easier for arthritic fingers.

For larger stems, use secateurs and cut at a 45-degree angle. The sharper the better, as mashed edges make a messy job and encourage diseases.

If your plants are low, get a pad to kneel on so you're not bent over for long periods.

Deadheading is not difficult, but can be boring. Try to deadhead every couple of days for short periods, rather than one day for hours. Although you can always think of people you don't like as you're snipping.

You can get great value from deadheading plants such as phlox, delphiniums, lupines salvia, shasta daisies,

yarrow, coneflowers, and of course roses. If you dead-head them before they have wilted, you can enjoy them for a few more days indoors.

Some plants with many small flowers growing together can be sheared, but be careful not to shear so low that you're shearing new blossoms coming up from beneath.

Summer is short, so this is only a two-month job. Once September comes around, you can let your flowers go to seed and enjoy the seedpods in the lovely autumn months, or collect the seeds for next year.

Visit jointheconversationnotl.org/garden to check out the Garden of the Week Contest, run by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Communities in Bloom Committee, and submit your garden or garden feature for consideration in one of 10 great categories.

The fifth in a ten-week gardening column series, organized by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Communities in Bloom Committee



Deadheading is tedious but necessary. (Photo supplied)

Local LETTERS

Founders of Friends of Fort George want view of Fort Mississauga opened

Having read about the proposed re-design of the entry to Old Town at Queen and Mississauga Streets, we are astounded that consideration is being given to fabricate a 40-foot long x (a partial) 8-foot high stone wall which will obscure the view of Lake Ontario and the 200-year, national historic site - Fort Mississauga. In addition, instead of focusing visitors' views on the "real" architecture and site's "real" history as a designated national historic site, this proposal suggests building a 25-foot obelisk to represent the lighthouse. Our first reaction is "welcome to Disney North."

Incredible amounts of effort, Canadian pride and money have been invested by the heritage community, the town, Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to recognize and preserve Niagara-on-the-Lake's history and original buildings. It is beyond belief that con-

sideration is being given to divert attention at this critical location.

While a three-way stop may provide better opportunity for visitors to be directed back to the QEW and reduce traffic toward Ryerson Park, it does not require the proposed scale of landscaping and fabricated monument to change the traffic pattern. If it is the intent to allow visitors to park and photograph the wall, we would suggest that this will create a traffic hazard resulting from last-minute pullovers, wandering pedestrians and therefore, even more, unnecessary traffic tie ups.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the Old Town in particular, has an incredible collection of nationally designated historic buildings and sites which tell the story of Canada's history. We have beautiful vistas, restored and well-maintained heritage homes, a designated na-

tional historic district, the first museum, Fort George and Fort Mississauga, which were sites of conflict in the War of 1812. We do not need to fabricate sites or obscure existing resources in order to welcome visitors. Perhaps more consideration should be given to directing visitors travelling in on Niagara Stone Road to alternate arrival locations, like the Fort George parking lot where the Chamber of Commerce operates a convenient Visitors' Centre or create an area at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre - both sites having appropriate and safe parking.

We would encourage council to reconsider what the impact of a large, lit-up and manufactured structure would have on this historic community which proudly maintains and presents a heritage ambience.

Erika and Jim Alexander

Back by popular demand



The town's annual tulip bulb sale was held Tuesday morning at the community centre, with proceeds to benefit the Town Tree Fund. (Dave Gilchrist)

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

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

Deadline will be Monday, June 21 at noon.

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



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

karen@notllocal.com

Pumphouse spearheads visual arts collective

July 1 scavenger hunt to raise awareness of NOTL's vibrant art community

Penny Coles
The Local

Professional visual artists in Niagara-on-the-Lake have taken a huge step toward promoting themselves as a group, forming a partnership that will help them network and support their community.

Lise Andreana, five-year chair of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, has plant-

ed the seed by creating the NOTL Arts Collective, for professional artists and representatives of art galleries and commercial art spaces.

It's been a long-standing dream of hers, she says, to help promote the local visual art community. It is spearheaded by the Pumphouse, which as a non-profit organization is well-placed "to grow the artistic community, while build-

ing strong ties to our cultural partners through collaborative public events."

To launch this initiative, the Pumphouse is hosting a Canada Day event, with residents and visitors to NOTL invited to participate in an art scavenger hunt, which will lead participants to various artworks and locations throughout town. About 16 local artists will be setting out

pieces of their work for the public to view this July 1.

"We love engaging with our community and promoting the local arts scene," says Rima Boles, Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre's director. "The Canada Day Art Scavenger Hunt is a perfect opportunity to showcase the local talent, while having fun doing it," she says.

It's the first of many events which will be designed to increase awareness and appreciation of local visual arts, says Andreana. "By working together, there is so much potential for NOTL to become known as a destination for visual arts."

In the months leading up to this event, the Pumphouse held virtual meetings with local professional artists and representatives of art galleries and commercial spaces to form the collective. The goals of those who attended, most of whom work from home and may at times feel disassociated from other artists, were prioritized as advancing the local arts community through promotion, partnership and networking initiatives, says Andreana.


"We've been talking to different artists, and they are wildly excited," she says. "It was past time NOTL did something like this for us to come together and work as a group."

It's why Andreana joined the Pumphouse six years ago, she says. After travelling extensively to cities around the world with vibrant art communities, including her all-

Continued on page 9



Art works will be displayed on easels around town for scavenger hunt participants to find. Visit the Pumphouse website for details. (Photos supplied)



Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre

niagarapumphouse.ca

Art is all around us.

On Canada Day, local artists invite you to search for them in & around Niagara-on-the-Lake. Play the art scavenger hunt for a chance to win an art-themed gift basket filled with pieces donated by local artists, studios & galleries.

Here's how to play:

- Form a straight line (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) or complete them all by answering the questions related to the artist, artwork or venue pictured.
- Tell us why you think Niagara-on-the-Lake is a visual arts destination.
- Drop off or email a photo/ scanned copy of this form before July 5th.
- For additional entries, visit: niagarapumphouse.ca/news

name

email/phone

Why is Niagara-on-the-Lake a visual arts destination?


Submit Entry Here:

Mail slot found by the front door: 247 Ricardo St., Niagara-on-the-Lake


Email: marketing@niagarapumphouse.ca

CANADA DAY

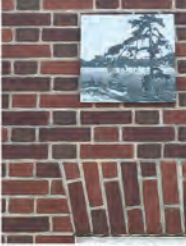
ART SCAVENGER HUNT




'Vineyard With a View #3' is the artwork installed as part of the NOTL Hydro Box Beautification project found at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre. Who is the artist?




This quaint cottage is home to beautiful, handmade pottery. Visit and name this shop found along Lakeshore Road.




This artwork by Tom Thomson (c. 1916, oil on board) is part of Samuel E. Weir Collection at RiverBlink Art Museum. What tree am I? (Hint: Answer is in the artwork's title)




Stroll along Centre St. (Hint: near Gate St.) to find the painting 'Iris Inspiration' on an outdoor easel. Who is the artist?




Take a walk along Centre St. (Hint: near Gate St.) and find the artwork 'I Hear, I Imagine', on an outdoor easel. Who is the artist?




This Monet-inspired outdoor garden is picture perfect. Can you guess where this is?




The painting 'Solitude' is on display in a charming gallery located at 106 Queen St. NOTL. Who is the artist?




As the art hub for the community, can you guess the new motto of Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre?




Get 'pumped' this Summer when you see the upcoming exhibit. Name the artist who will be featured in the Joyner Gallery this August.




Get '2-alarm, fired up' about this artwork when you find the address! (write it down below)




Opened in 2018, this public space is dedicated to commemorating the town's Black History. Name the park where this art installation can be found.



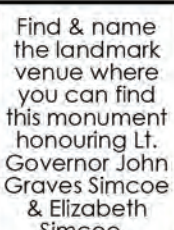
Find the statue of George Bernard Shaw in old town. Name the internationally-celebrated sculptor of this piece.




We are 'nuts' about 'Speaking Figuratively'. Find & name the gallery where this piece is located. (Hint: Do you want fries to go with that?)



Visit this beautiful gallery on Queen St. and meet the staff & owners. Tell us the proprietor's name.



Find & name the landmark venue where you can find this monument honouring Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe & Elizabeth Simcoe.



A local artist makes this iconic chair. Can you name the artist? You'll find the clue once you spot this chair on a front porch along John Street. (Hint: In your search for the chair, you won't miss the historic William Stewart Homestead)

NOTL has everything needed ‘to make it happen’

Continued from page 8

time favourite, Santa Fe, New Mexico, with its art colony, she has seen the economic benefit visual arts can bring to the economy, and envisioned something similar for NOTL, “which has everything it

would take to make it happen.” It has a strong, vibrant cultural community, but needed something to bring artists together to work as a group, she says, to strengthen and recognize visual arts. The scavenger hunt, the start of many activities the arts

collective is planning, is a fun way to do that, providing an opportunity to create awareness of the rich visual arts community, says Andreana. “It’s the start of many projects we can do in the future.” Art works will be displayed outside, on easels, for

the scavenger hunt, which will be fun for the artists and participants, she adds. Participants will have to answer questions to win an art-themed gift bag consisting of original artworks, art books, cards and more. The entry form to join is found on

the ‘News’ section of the niagarapumphouse.ca website. The completed form must be dropped off before July 5 in the mail slot found by the door of the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre building. Alternatively, a scanned copy of the form can be emailed

to marketing@niagarapumphouse.ca. With the collective in its early stages, the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre invites NOTL professional artists to join the group and help build it. Information to participate is found on its website.

Burger nights begin



St. Davids Lions Susan and Allen Snider, Bonnie Pfab and Betty Snider were some of the many volunteers cooking burgers and fries for the Lions Friday drive-through fund-raising burger night. With no carnival, the burger nights are expected to continue until Thanksgiving. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Members of the local Leos Club, the youth organization of Lions International, were taking burger orders and delivering them as cars pulled up. Aidan Bilon (left, back), Zoe Abraham, Bella Recine, Dawn Truon and Kylie Black, with Jason Christie and Andrew Christie in front, were happy to be helping out.



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14554 NIAGARA RIVER PARKWAY

\$2,395,000

MLS 40129783 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk



SOLD

263 WELLINGTON STREET

\$1,399,000

MLS 40125018 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk



540 SIMCOE STREET

\$875,000

MLS 40103601 • Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft



NEW LISTING

12 FIRELANE 6A

\$1,495,000

MLS 40128222 • Thomas Elltoft and Weston Miller



SOLD

LOT 17 – THE “MONTRACHET”

\$1,149,000

Exclusive • Randall Armstrong



406 VICTORIA STREET

\$1,295,000

MLS 40086720 • Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft



NEW LISTING

374 QUEEN STREET

\$2,750,000

MLS 40129238 • Viviane Elltoft and Thomas Elltoft



LEASED

18 CASTLEREAGH

\$2,900

MLS 40115228 • Patricia Atherton and Caroline Polgrabia



14555 NIAGARA RIVER PARKWAY

\$1,065,000

MLS 40080386 • Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk



NEW LISTING

474 SIMCOE STREET

\$1,300,000

MLS 40132783 • Thomas Elltoft and Viviane Elltoft



NEW PRICE

5727 THERESA STREET – NIAGARA FALLS

\$668,800

MLS 40126945 • Randall Armstrong



14729 NIAGARA RIVER PARKWAY

\$4,500,000

MLS 40040891 • Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft

Christopher Bowron*** 905-468-2269

Kim Elltoft** 905-380-8011

Randall Armstrong** 905-651-2977

Victoria Bolduc* 905-941-3726

Philip Bowron* 905-348-7626

Bonnie Grimm* 905-468-1256

Nicole Vanderperk* 905-941-4585

Viviane Elltoft* 905-468-2142

Thomas Elltoft* 905-380-8012

Jane Elltoft* 905-988-8776

Cheryl Carmichael* 905-941-0276

Sarah Gleddie* 905-685-2458

Christine Bruce* 905-328-9703

Linda Williams* 905-401-4240

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Bylaw officers face challenges, especially during pandemic

Penny Coles
The Local

There isn't a week goes by that councillors don't talk about bylaw officers — whether there are enough of them (there never are), how hard they're working, how many tickets they're issuing, and during the pandemic, sometimes, how badly they're treated.

In a tourist town such as Niagara-on-the-Lake, just writing parking tickets could keep a small complement of bylaw officers busy, but add to that a new parks bylaw, trees, noise and short-term rental issues, and they are extra busy during the tourism season.

Craig Larmour, director of planning, oversees the

bylaw enforcement department.

He says although there are specific shifts and duties laid out, they are flexible, especially at this time of year, and even more so during a pandemic, when there are more complaints and more restrictions to enforce.

At the moment the town is attempting to hire an enforcement officer. There are two year-round enforcers, one of them for parking, and four seasonal parking officers, as well as one seasonal bylaw officer. And there is one full-time position designated as an urban forestry officer to deal with the tree bylaw, but who can also help out with other duties.

That person, Larmour says, "can be all over the

place." The year-round officers are experienced, and can also help out wherever needed, he says.

Shifts are staggered, with hours covered seven days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 12 to 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

There is also some parking enforcement 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

During the pandemic, parking officers help out by responding to COVID-19 related complaints over the weekend, in addition to their regular duties.

"Because of COVID," says Larmour, "these days, it's all hands on deck. COVID has totally complicated everything. Parking

officers help out in parks, with COVID complaints, and with complaints about short-term rentals."

And they still manage to hand out an impressive number of parking tickets each week, which add to the town's revenue and help offset taxes.

Many of the seasonal bylaw employees return during multiple summers, and most are interested in a career in law enforcement. They have a background in police education, having gone to Niagara College or some other enforcement course, and then also receive some training from the town, shadowing the more experienced officers.

When it comes to complaints, the first approach is always looking for voluntary compliance rather than ticketing, which creates animosity, says Larmour.

"We assume most people are not educated about our bylaws and COVID restrictions," and once they're explained, people are usually willing to comply, he says.

Often officers will respond to a complaint such as more than five people

gathering, and it's just a couple of groups of friends who have run into each other and stop to chat.

"The officer talks to them, and they move on," he says, "at least for the most part."

But there are also situations where people flaunt the rules. They don't agree with them, they don't feel they have to comply, "or they are just sick and tired of COVID."

Recently bylaw officers have reported instances of people spitting on them or swearing at them, "but it doesn't happen often," says Larmour. And when it does, it may be because the person is under far more stress than is being created by the bylaw officer.

"The vast majority of people are polite and respectful. They might be frustrated about being ticketed, but they're still polite."

While COVID restrictions bring the most complaints, the new ban on barbecues in town parks is also keeping officers busy. Most people aren't aware of the ban and behave respectfully when it's explained to them, packing up and moving on, although one person recently set the grass on fire instead, which was quickly extinguished.

Most of the seasonal bylaw officers find their work rewarding, and will return each year, at least until they're finished their schooling, says Larmour.

"Most of them like being here, and find it a great opportunity to get some

experience before moving along. Some officers experience some crazy situations that are not the norm, but it's very occasionally, and it's just part of the job."

Ben Hopkins, supervisor of enforcement services, says he's grateful to work alongside a group of dedicated bylaw and parking enforcement staff. "This is a group of staff who are committed and strive to complete their work well," he says.

"In addition to their typical responsibilities, officers have worked tirelessly over the last year." They've responded to more than 6,000 concerns related to the enforcement of the provincial COVID-19 regulations, "a difficult task that I appreciate and respect more each day."

CAO Marnie Cluckie is also pleased and proud of the bylaw staff during a difficult time.

"I feel incredibly fortunate that Niagara-on-the-Lake has a good team of bylaw enforcement and parking officers. The team works hard to support the community and respond to bylaw inquiries and complaints," says Cluckie.

"In addition to their regular duties, they have effectively and respectfully taken on enforcement duties related to provincial orders and regulations, with great professionalism and courtesy. Their job certainly is not easy, but they work hard, and I am so proud of the entire team."



If you encounter one of the town's bylaw officers at work, it wouldn't hurt to say hello and thanks for doing a thankless job. Working in enforcement and parking are Chris, and April, Kristina, Katie, Joe and Ty, and Devon and Zachary. (Photos supplied)





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Surface restoration of service bay to proceed

Penny Coles
The Local

Councillors are supporting a proposal for the Dock Area that would restore the footprint of a historic engine house service pit, just south of Turntable Way.

Volunteers have designed and ordered two interpretive bronze plaques, one for the railway turntable in the Dock Area, and the other to mark the site of the old engine house nearby.

In addition, Dock Area resident Ron Simkus is leading an initiative to restore the top of the rectangular outline of the repair bay on the engine house site, where access was provided to a pit for mechanics to work on the underside of engines from below.

The project received council support Monday, but with a caveat.

Simkus was worried councillors might ask for

public consultation during an October review of the Dock Area Master Plan, which would cause substantial delay, but they were convinced that the 98 emails received in support of the project were sufficient to show the public approves of his plans.

However, CAO Marnie Cluckie told council stage one and stage two archaeological studies of the area where surface digging will occur is required under provincial legislation. She said work can begin as soon as a consultant can be engaged to do it.

Simkus had been forewarned that Cluckie was following provincial legislation to the letter, calling for the archaeological sifting and report on the seven inches of soil that will be removed.

The digging should take only a few hours, and the sifting, he hopes, done concurrently, not too much

longer.

He is expecting the whole project, including the installation of the plaques, to be completed this summer.

The project, Simkus told councillors and heritage committee members, will be entirely carried out by volunteers, at no cost to the town. The repair pit itself won't be excavated — volunteers want to restore the rails on the surface, using railroad ties, cut in 24-inch lengths, to fill in the recesses in the pit walls. The end result would be two rails on top of the engine house repair pit, with the plaque explaining the work that was carried out there.

The volunteers will simply be reinstalling the surface features as they were in 1856, without disturbing any of the archaeologically significant material on the site, Simkus said.

PGM Rail Services in Niagara Falls, which specializes in restoring old rail

stations, is donating the material needed, and the labour, which means professionals are doing the work, Simkus said.

He was concerned any delay of the project could put off PGM, which is ready to proceed, but was relieved to obtain permis-

sion from Cluckie to at least have materials delivered to the site, without waiting for the archeological study to be completed.



Ron Simkus indicates the footprint of the service bay south of Turntable Way in the Dock Area, where railway ties will be used to restore the service of the historic site. (Mike Balsom)

Virtual open house reveals strong public opposition to John Street subdivision

Penny Coles
The Local

A virtual open house last week couldn't match the intensity of an oft-discussed community centre meeting that filled the auditorium in 2018 to discuss Benny Marotta's John Street East development proposal, but the sentiments expressed were similar in opposition to his current subdivision proposal.

Both meetings showed strong objections to two large developments proposed by companies owned by Marotta. It was at that first meeting in 2018, intended as an opportunity for the public to speak out about a proposal to turn the historic Randwood Estate on John Street East into a hotel and conference centre, that the public heard about a subdivision to be built next door to it.

That was the topic of last week's virtual meeting, the first opportunity for the public to address Solmar's completed application for a subdivision on John and Charlotte Streets, bordering the Rand Estate

property.

Members of SORE (Save Our Rand Estate), which has been involved in legal challenges regarding the hotel development proposal — now apparently dropped, at least temporarily, by Marotta's Two Sisters Resorts — and others spoke in opposition to the subdivision proposal, chiefly based on the density of the project as inappropriate for the neighbourhood, and the destruction of environmental and heritage assets on the properties.

Paul Lowes of SGL Planning and Design, representing Marotta, defended the proposed density, citing regional and provincial policies regarding mixed types of housing and density requirements, with the application proposing 125 single family homes and 66 semi-detached.

Plans for the two properties are still to be reviewed by the Conservation Review Board, which will offer an opinion on the impact the development will have on heritage assets, scheduled to be held July 19.

Several residents expressed distrust for Solmar's heritage preservation promises, after witnessing the cutting of trees, and the destruction of significant landscape and other heritage assets on the Randwood Estate property.

Also of concern is the height of the subdivision, with the proposal to raise the grade of the site in some areas. Solmar representatives explained that will be necessary for storm and sewage drainage, but residents say it will result in some of the new dwellings being substantially higher than neighbouring homes.

Other issues expressed by residents involve concern of increased traffic, including what will come from construction and the trucking-in of fill, the narrow width of roads in the subdivision, the destruction of more trees, and the underground water management system that is being proposed.

The next opportunity for public input will be another virtual meeting to be held Wednesday, July 14, at 5 p.m.

NiagaraLake
-on-the-Lake
EST. 1781

PUBLIC NOTICE

INSTALLATION OF AN ALL-WAY STOP AT THE INTERSECTION OF GARRISON VILLAGE DRIVE AND JORDAN STREET/PEREZ ROAD



NOTICE is hereby given that the Council of the Corporation of the Town Niagara-on-the-Lake has amended By-Law 4308-09 to establish an all-way stop at the intersection of Garrison Village Drive and Jordan Street/Perez Road.

Currently, only Jordan Street and Perez Road traffic is required to stop. Based on the amended By-Law, now drivers on Garrison Village Drive are required to stop as well.

Drivers are urged to use extra caution at this intersection as traffic on Garrison Village Drive adjusts to the new stop signs.

New stop signs will be erected on June 28, 2021, and enforcement of the all-way stop will commence immediately upon installation.

Those with questions are encouraged to contact Mike Komljenovic, Engineering Supervisor for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake by emailing mike.komljenovic@notl.com or calling (905) 468-3061.



Community engagement priority for St. Mark's rector

Penny Coles
The Local

The new rector of St. Mark's Church is "slowly but surely" settling in at the rectory, and cautiously doing what he can to meet members of the church community during the challenging time of a pandemic.

Rev. Leighton Lee started at St. Mark's on June 1, having arrived from Alberta, where he was rector of the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in downtown Calgary, and dean of the Calgary diocese.

The move has been "quite daunting," but the work is getting done, he says, while relaxing on the back porch of the Byron Street rectory, a

"huge, formidable space" for one man to rattle around in. He's surrounded himself with his beloved antiques — collecting them is one of his passions — in a space that, while large, he admits "is a better fit for all of my stuff, and it's fun to be in a place that's old, historic and filled with character."

Lee, 48, says he was

familiar with Niagara-on-the-Lake, but just as a visitor, when he was considering the move.

His first experience in NOTL was visiting a musician who had been his cello teacher in school, and remained a friend who later moved to town. When he reconnected with her recently, she reminded him

of a lunch they'd had with Bob Wright, the long-time minister of St. Mark's who retired and moved from the area in 2015.

Although since then Lee's only visited the area a few times, "it seems a town of wonderful, eccentric people — and I don't mean that disparagingly, I'm eccentric too. It's full of colourful and interesting people, in a place steeped in history. It's a good fit for me."

In addition to getting used to the rectory, he's learning about the downtown of NOTL on weekends during the tourism season. The intersection at King and Queen Streets is to be avoided, he's discovered, and he doesn't understand why horse-drawn carriages are being protested, when it seems the horses are perfectly safe on the Old Town streets.

He was drawn to take the position at St. Mark's because he was ready for something new. He'd been feeling he'd done all he could do in Calgary, and didn't want to just tread water — that's not healthy, he added. And life was drawing him east. "I always envisioned myself coming back to this part of the world, and this

isn't a bad place to be. It has a great, healthy parish, it's a place with marvellous history, and it's a fantastic town. It was a place I would resonate with, with people that would resonate with me."

He thinks his theological view and world view will be a good fit with the St. Mark's community, he says. "It's difficult to explain, but it feels right. I get a good feeling."

He learned years ago, during that first visit to NOTL, about the acoustics in St. Mark's and its hosting of an annual music festival, and admits that music is his passion. "I'm a huge music lover," he says, "especially of really good sacred music," but also of music in general. Lee says he can't wait until it can once again be part of the church, giving the church one more avenue to be part of the community.

Lee's interest in expanding St. Mark's community engagement is one of the reasons he was a good candidate for the position of rector, says parishioner Gary Zalepa, who was part of the selection committee. While it's the Anglican diocese and Bishop that ultimately make the decision, he and two



Rev. Leighton Lee is settling in at St. Mark's, and anxious to get back to in-person church services. (Photo supplied)

Continued from page 13

OPEN FOR DINE IN

BARREL HEAD

THIS WEEKEND

THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY

11:30AM - 9PM

SUNDAY

11:30AM - 6PM

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Music will return to church when restrictions are lifted

Continued from page 12

other parishioners were involved in the process.

Although the Rev. William Roberts left early in 2020, the church waited until last fall to begin the search for his replacement, with two interim pastors serving the parish for the last 16 months. COVID was not a great time to interview people, or to look for someone who was interested in moving, says Zalepa. "We were in a pandemic, so we put a break on things. We were

worried about availability, and people who wouldn't be able to make a move. We decided to wait until things seemed more back on track. In the meantime we had two experienced and excellent interim pastors, Lynne Marchant and then Peter Wall. And we're lucky to have such great volunteers, who have been really engaged with our parishioners. They really reached out, making phone calls, supporting the community and connecting with the community."

The pandemic demonstrated the need for engag-

ing the community in other ways, and reaffirming the role of St. Mark's in town, he says. The church is now in a good position to grow that role, and getting people interested in the church, when there are so many other organizations, is a challenge.

"That isn't just about growing the number of parishioners on a list, it's about engaging people who are not on the list, who are members of the community at large," says Zalepa. "We're looking at ways to engage the community in a meaningful way."

Lee, he says, seems the

perfect person for the position of rector, with his determination that a church should be about much more than opening for a few hours on Sunday mornings. It's crucial, he says, for churches to serve other functions in their communities.

One of his hopes, is the continuation and even expansion of music and other outreach programs at St. Mark's. Music is Lee's passion, but so, he explains, is growing the role of the church in the community. The church, he says, "can bring people together for all

kinds of reasons."

He and St. Mark's parishioners are struggling with the church closure due to COVID and not being able to meet in person, but "Zoom has become a wonderful tool," as have backyards, the church grounds and even the cemetery, where a small number of people can meet, masked, physical distancing and obeying all the restrictions, he says.

"We've had various Zoom meetings, but we're certainly looking forward to a celebration in the fall. So we all need to be good, play

our part, get vaccinated and don't blow it," he cautions.

Because what he is most looking forward to is having people back in church, where they can interact and participate in Sunday services. "I can't wait to get back in there. We all can't wait."

Lee is a graduate of the University of Calgary with a bachelor's degree in art history, and of general theological seminary in New York, where he earned his master of divinity degree. He was ordained deacon and priest in the Diocese of Calgary in 2003.

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Adorable donkeys charm wine country visitors

Colaneri offers wine tours with photogenic mini donkeys as part of a VIP experience

Penny Coles
The Local

Chris Colaneri says one of his father's last memories of Italy is of donkeys with pack saddles carrying newly-harvested grapes up the slope of the family vineyard.

With the Colaneri family's Italian heritage and history in the wine industry, when Chris learned of the possibility of incorporating the animals into Niagara-on-the-Lake's Colaneri Estate Winery, he was on-board pretty quickly.

Melina Morsch, owner of Fox Den Goat Yoga, had sought out some mini Mediterranean donkeys she planned to use for weddings, to entertain guests while photos are being taken, and to appear in photos with the bridal party. Her first purchase was Jenny, a friendly female. However, as Jenny began to put on weight, she discovered the donkey was going to give birth after about 13 months of pregnancy, and Morsch again began to search out donkeys, knowing Jenny would be on maternity leave for a while. She then purchased Phyllis and Earl from a breeder, but with weddings of any size cancelled, she had to find a plan B. After some investigation, she discovered a European sport called donkey trekking, competitions that involve an athlete and a donkey navigating obstacle courses together, and was thinking that she could turn that into something fun to do in Niagara. But then she came across some descriptions of donkeys being used in Italy to transport harvested grapes, and had a light-bulb moment, picturing her adorable, friendly and even cuddly donkeys charming visitors to a local winery —

and Colaneri, with its Italian connection, seemed the obvious choice. After emailing Chris to share her idea, he emailed back and said, 'let's make this happen,' and the two began planning a one-hour VIP experience for Colaneri to offer on their wine tours, which began last weekend.

Earl and Phyllis are doing the tours now, and love it — on Sunday, they were happy to get into the trailer to be transported to the winery, and Phyllis didn't want to leave at the end of the day, says Morsch. Once Jenny's baby, Aires, is weaned, the two of them will also become part of the experience.

It's like a normal day for the donkeys, only they're in vineyards instead of their paddock, "snacking and walking, snacking and walking," and enjoying foraging with a different menu of weeds and grass to munch on, says Morsch.

"Plus, they love the attention they're getting."

Chris has set up a donkey pavilion by the winery with picnic tables, where the tours begin and end, and there is a pizza oven close by. Each tour has two components — lessons from Morsch about donkeys and their connections to wineries, and the more traditional component, with visitors learning from Chris and Colaneri staff about vineyards, grapes and wine production.

Photos are an important part of the tour, and there is plenty of time for those, along with tastings of four Colaneri wines, one sparkling that's offered at the beginning of the tour, and two reds (including their top of the line), and one white at the end. There are also opportunities along the tour, with a maximum of 10 people, to lead and pet the

donkeys as visitors are able to stroll leisurely through the vineyards. It's very welcoming, says Morsch, and completely hosted, with lots of individual attention.

"It's all about Instagram and the photos," says Chris.

"This is something really unique, and the donkeys are very photogenic."

They learned after this weekend's tours that most of the women come prepared, dressed up for the photos, adds Morsch.

"Everyone left really, really happy," she says, with some of the tours fully booked.

Chris's parents, Mike and Betty, love having the donkeys around as well, and Betty, says Morsch, keeps suggesting they create a special place for them at the winery so they can live there permanently.

"There is something very calming about the donkeys," says Morsch. "They really bring something different to the tours."



Phyllis poses during a photoshoot in the vineyards. (Photos supplied)



Niagara couple Chris and Tereza Guglielmi celebrate their anniversary with a Colaneri wine tour, accompanied by Earl and Phyllis.



Melina Morsch with one of her donkeys. All three adults have bonded with her, she says.

Bags to go



Rachel DeBoer, Samantha Fretz, Julia King, Mateo Grusso and Janvi Ganatra were at the community centre Saturday to give away about 100 You Got This bags, filled with gifts for teens to encourage them through the pandemic. The gifts for the bags, an initiative of the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, were donated by local businesses. (Photos submitted)

Gallery to bridge gap between native artists, collectors

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Tom Chapman was busy Monday at the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, visiting artists in their studios, gathering and sharing information.

It's Chapman's mission behind his new Queen Street gallery, Upper Canada Native Art, to bridge the gap between artists and collectors through his stunning new space.

Stepping inside the gallery at the corner of Victoria Street is like encountering a feast for the senses. The gentle scent of incense fills the air, while calming Indigenous music greets the visitor. Eyes are drawn toward expert sculptures displayed on pedestals and behind softly-lit glass cases. Indigenous prints and originals decorate the walls above intricate metal works and hand-made dream catchers from Southern Ontario's Haudenosaunee artists and craftspeople.

A 20-year veteran of the arts sector in the NorthWest Territories and Nunavut, Chapman brings with him a wealth of experience, as well as connections with more than 40 Indigenous artists from all corners of Canada to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"What we're trying to do is to demonstrate the beauty and ability of the Indigenous cultures throughout Canada," Chapman says. "This gives us the opportunity to demonstrate that what is being made is beautiful, and to bring it to the world."

Besides the incredible collection of art at the gallery, Upper Canada also sells an assortment of giftware, including red cedar bent wood boxes, silverware, ceramics and jewellery. All are sourced with authenticity and support in mind. You won't find mass produced, mainstream products imported from overseas here.

"For instance, our SheN-ative Elk skin leather handbags," Chapman explains, "are a line owned by a group of Indigenous women from

Saskatchewan. We're the first retailer to offer them for sale in Ontario. Our soaps and candle lines are from Akwesasne in Quebec. The metal works come from Anvil Island, incorporating a west coast Salish design. It's about lending support where we can help. It's very mutually beneficial."

When he is not out visiting artists, Chapman, a Metis by birth, has been spending every day at the store. Stocking the gallery took plenty of time early on, and he does a fair bit of online sales out of the new location.

On the day The Local visited, his excitement was contagious as he unpacked a shipment from Derrald Taylor, an Inuvialuit carver and jeweller originally from Tuktoyaktuk. The package arrived as the interview was in progress, and Chapman couldn't wait to get the box open.

Under layers of insulation and bubble wrap, Chapman unveils a beautiful sculpture of a polar bear, with inlays for the eyes and nose. It's his first time seeing the piece of art.

"I had a snippet of what it is," he tells The Local, "but, oh, that's a beautiful job. It's alabaster. It was supposed to be done five months ago. But this particular block of stone was frozen into the permafrost, and they had to wait for months to get it out. It's exciting to see it."

He explains the trials and tribulations another northern artist, sculptor Etidloie Adla, would have gone through to even begin working on his dancing bear sculpture.

"Before he could even consider, in his home of Cape Dorset, to carve that, he had to leave home for several days," explains Chapman. "He would go out to the deposit of serpentine, in minus 40 or minus 60 degree weather, harvest the stone himself, get it on the back of his sled or snowmobile, or onto an aluminum boat, and get it back to his community to begin to carve."

The artists from Six Nations, such as Todd Long-

boat, Eric Silver and Cyril Henry, he says, usually work in steatite, most of which is imported into Canada from North Carolina, as well as local materials, such as antler.

In the gallery, original paintings by Algonquin artist Frank Polson bring to mind the well-known woodland style of Norval Morrisseau. Chapman is also excited about the recent addition of the work of another Algonquin artist, Kim Height, who lives in Pelham. Two of her paintings recently sold at the gallery.

Since opening the doors in March, Chapman is pleased with its reception in town.

"We're beyond pleasantly surprised," he raves. "In March when we were open, the activity and the support we saw far exceeded all expectations, especially for that time of year. At that time, it was a lot of people from outside of Niagara, but it was the comments and the positive responses that blew us away."

"The last eight days that we've been open," he goes on, "that's continued. It's more on an even keel, no line-ups at the door. The real silver lining is we've gotten to meet a lot of locals. The positive feedback with what they're seeing, and they're bringing friends back. That's key to us, that the local folks really appreciate what they're seeing when they come into the place."

Chapman doesn't approach visitors with a hard sell. He prefers to let people roam and to answer questions as they arise. He says he gets as many queries from visitors about the \$50 dream catchers, each one different from the other, as he does for the \$10,000 sculptures on display.

"Things here are touching people emotionally," he tells The Local. "People have to gravitate toward something, and we'll provide whatever information we can once they have attached themselves to something."

Chapman has gathered a group of three employees at Upper Canada, all with



Tom Chapman unwraps a beautiful alabaster sculpture of a polar bear, by Inuvialuit carver Derrald Taylor, at Upper Canada Native Art. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

a like-minded interest in native art. One of his new charges worked at the location's previous incarnation offering period photography to tourists. Another employee is a retired pilot who spent most of his career flying in the northern regions of the country, experiencing what life is like for many of the artists whose work is featured at Upper Canada.

Chapman looks forward to the loosening of COVID restrictions, when his gallery can become an even more visible focal point for Indigenous art.

"We're planning to have

artists on site every weekend," he promises. "We'll start outside, but we've left a space here, where they can come in and paint. It will open the door for these folks (the artists) to sell directly as well."

The member of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre would like to see a bigger emphasis on art in NOTL. He welcomes more galleries along Queen Street and says he is working with the Pumphouse on future initiatives, such as an "art walk" in town.

In the long run, he's hoping that he can continue to provide that bridge between artist and collector, encour-

aging Indigenous artists to continue spreading their culture through their creations.

"The last year-and-a-half has caused a lot of artists to step away from their trade," he laments. "I'm spending as much of my time right now trying to attract those folks back, to create a little bit more of the excitement that used to be there. Inviting them to get back into the fold, and letting them know that we're willing to work with them."

Upper Canada Native Art is located at 109 Queen Street, at the corner of Victoria Street.



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LocalSPORTS

Minor sports back in action



Lifting of some provincial restrictions means some minor sports activities can take place, such as skills training, but not games, yet. The Virgil Sports Park was busy Monday evening with kids practising lacrosse and soccer. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Young soccer players, all in the under-six age division, were on the field for the first time Monday.



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Beautiful Baltimore orioles like sweet treats

David Gilchrist
Special to The Local

One of the most beautiful summer ‘visitors’ to our region would undoubtedly be the Baltimore oriole (*Icterus galbula* — not the baseball team).

Its name was derived from the heraldic colours of Lord Baltimore, who was the governor of the Maryland Colony. In fact it is the state bird of Maryland. The male’s beautiful and bright orange and black plumage, in addition to its clear and distinct call, is both a blessing to see and to hear.

For a period of time, it was believed that this oriole had interbred with another species, and together they were referred to as northern orioles. This, however, was corrected after more research and, once again, they are called Baltimore orioles.

As a newcomer to the birding community, I first became aware of this beauty when I spotted one on our hummingbird feeder.

Realizing that it was not a hummingbird (I’m a keen observer), I grabbed a quick photo, which was not too good as the bird was on the opposite side of the feeder, and a bird ID book. After realizing that it could be a Baltimore oriole, I investigated it further. This species is known to have a sweet ‘beak’ and, as I had noticed, visits hummingbird feeders regularly. I learned that people also put out grape jelly and half-oranges for these orioles to feed on.

Enough of these sweet treats will ensure you of frequent summer visits, and they may, with a regular supply, set up shop, or nest in the area. They also eat lots of insects, which helps to control them.

The nest is a unique construction in the form of a hanging pouch, built at the end of hanging branches in deciduous trees. The pouch is woven together with strong fibres, and lined with softer material. It is built with such sturdiness that it

can be sometimes reused in following years.

Baltimore orioles, like so many of our summer birds, winter in the south in the southern states and Central America. Their southern migration, beginning in July and August, is earlier than most migratory species.

Last year, we had greater

fortune, spotting both male and females at the hummingbird feeder.

This year, it has been pleasant to hear the distinct call in the neighbourhood as one, at least, flies around the immediate block. I have assumed it was a male, probably trying to attract a female to the area. I’ve been able

to get a few photos of this one at our feeder, and have spotted one in the Paradise Grove area, and several along the walking trail at east Port Weller, a great birding location for many species.

Two factors seem to be affecting the range and distribution of these birds. One is climate change, which


has reduced their presence in western areas. The other factor is the loss of elm trees from Dutch elm disease in our area. The elm trees were once the preferred nesting tree for the oriole.


All in all, a most interesting and colourful bird to see in our backyards and in the neighbourhood.




As with most birds, the brighter-coloured Baltimore orioles are the males of the species. (David Gilchrist)

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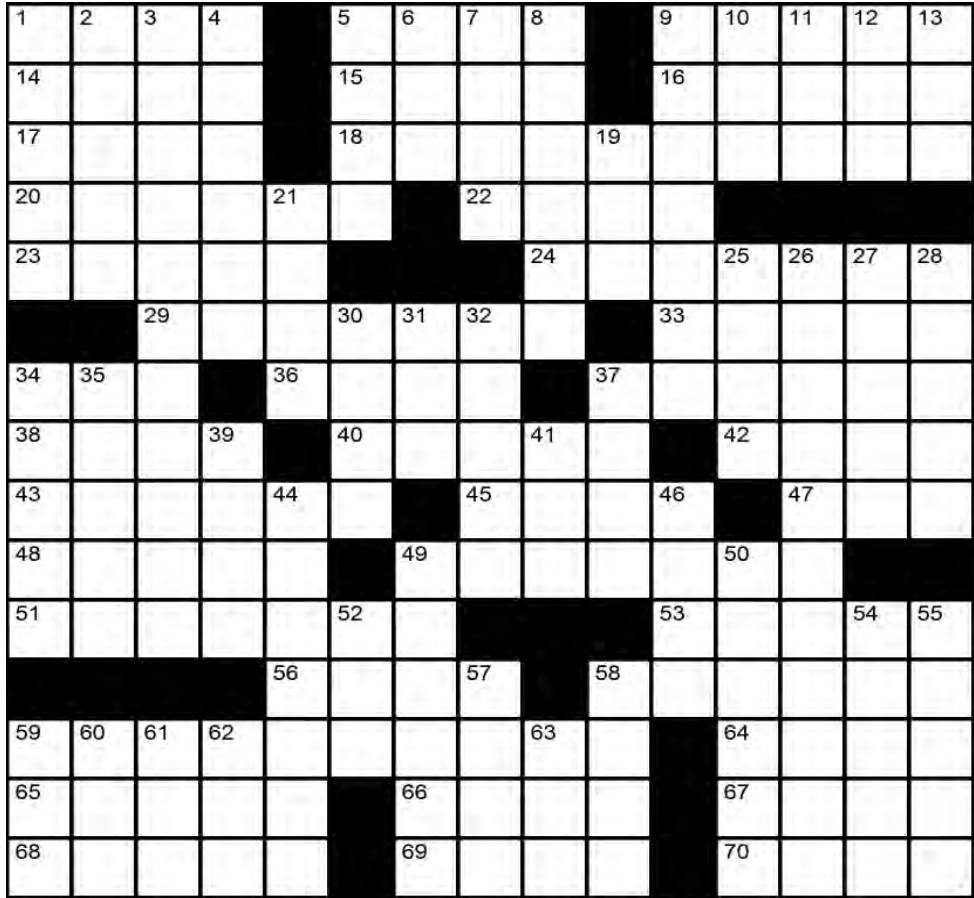
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 - 5 Baghdad's --- City
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 - 14 Spoken
 - 15 U N nuclear watchdog
 - 16 Reproduced sound
 - 17 Thin coating
 - 18 Theoretical birth of the Universe
 - 20 In the offspring
 - 22 Desperate
 - 23 Yarn
 - 24 Before this
 - 29 Business disappointment
 - 33 Yorba ---, R M H's birthplace
 - 34 Saturated
 - 36 Injure
 - 37 Methodology
 - 38 Once again
 - 40 Exchange
 - 42 Sepulcher
 - 43 Congenital
 - 45 Genuine
 - 47 Chinese ultimate reality
 - 48 Not entirely natural, if born in this
 - 49 Beaten by the Continental Army
 - 51 Gist
 - 53 Flared dress type
- Down:**

 - 1 Attics
 - 2 Hilarious
 - 3 Troublemakers, often
 - 4 "Get Shorty" author --- Leonard
 - 5 Place
 - 6 Expression of relief
 - 7 Property document
 - 8 Hydrophobia
 - 9 Enthusiastically
 - 10 Name
 - 11 Former name of Psiloritis, Cretan mountain
 - 12 Can plating
 - 13 Harley, often
 - 19 Retirement arrangement
 - 21 Legend
- 25 Itemize
 - 26 A way to disappear
 - 27 Watery swelling
 - 28 Sly fighter?
 - 30 Pear-shaped stringed instrument
 - 31 Ice hockey player Bobby ---
 - 32 Beatle married to Bach
 - 34 Forego
 - 35 Bill Cosby's late son
 - 37 Candidate's aim
 - 39 Merchandise
 - 41 Agnus ---
 - 44 Lymphatic tissues often removed after infection
 - 46 "Taken" star --- Neeson
 - 49 Strait west of Wales, AK
 - 50 Slender
 - 52 Stocky horse
 - 54 "Lorenzo's Oil" actor Nick ---
 - 55 Rub out
 - 57 Implement
 - 58 Arthur --- stadium, Queens, N Y C
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June 16, 2021

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

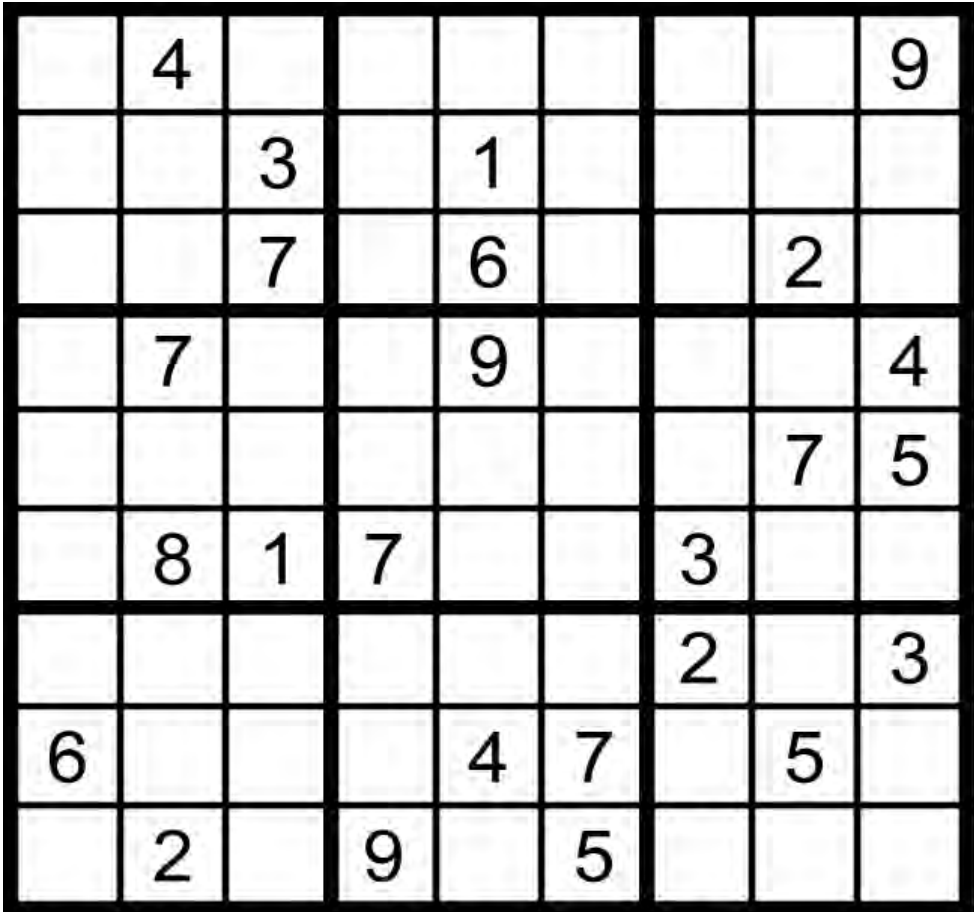
Across: 1 Lame, 5 Sadr, 9 Edith, 14 Oral, 15 I A E A, 16 Audio, 17 Film, 18 The big bang, 20 To come, 22 Dire, 23 Story, 24 Earlier, 29 Net loss, 33 Linda, 34 Wet, 36 Hurt, 37 System, 38 Anew, 40 Trade, 42 Tomb, 43 Innate, 45 Real, 47 Tao, 48 Vitro, 49 British, 51 Essence, 53 A-line, 56 Sort, 58 A minor, 59 Amphibious, 64 Gala, 65 Nasal, 66 Noah, 67 Hits, 68 Crag, 69 Glee, 70 Tree.

Down: 1 Lot's, 2 A riot, 3 Malcontents, 4 Elmore, 5 Site, 6 Aah, 7 Deed, 8 Rabies, 9 Eagerly, 10 Dub, 11 Ida, 12 Tin, 13 Hog, 19 I R A, 21 Myth, 25 List, 26 Into thin air, 27 Edema, 28 Rambo, 30 Lute, 31 Orr, 32 Starr, 34 Waive, 35 Ennis, 37 Seat, 39 Ware, 41 Dei, 44 Tonsils, 46 Liam, 49 Bering, 50 Slight, 52 Cob, 54 Nolle, 55 Erase, 57 Tool, 58 Ashe, 59 A N C, 60 Mar, 61 P S A, 62 Hag, 63 U A E.



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