Karl Dockstader of the Niagara Regional Native Centre has been keeping the healing fire burning. People have been stopping by since it was started last Friday, and it will continue until sunrise this Friday. The volunteers at the fire could always use food and water, and wood for the fire, he says. (Penny Coles)

It took just a day’s work to repair damages to the large stone barrier providing shoreline protection to Balls Beach Park, but it’s only a temporary fix to ensure the area is safe for those walking and climbing on the rocks.

Following an “incident that led to an unfortunate groyne (rock structure) failure” at the park, town staff “took immediate action to ensure public safety in the area,” says a town news release issued last Friday, including putting up barricades, caution tape, onsite signage, and hiring a security guard to prevent access into the rock area, which was originally intended to protect the shoreline and to provide a safe area to walk. That was followed by some work at the park Saturday to retrieve the rocks and put them back in place to once again make the area safe, while a permanent solution is designed.

Rankin Construction was able to complete the work of repositioning and flattening the unstable rocks Saturday. The objective, the town news release said, was for the beach to be open and safe for public use before the Canada Day long weekend.

The town’s engineering consultant was going to oversee the works, and town staff onsite “periodically,” said CAO Marnie Glackie, with a report back to staff expected once the area is deemed safe for public use.

“The incident” the town’s statement referred to, that caused the unsafe conditions, took place overnight March 14, when a storm washed away some of the sand the large anchor stones were sitting on, and one of the stones was completely swept away.

It was sitting in deep water, partially buried in sand, says Ron Simkus, a retired mining engineer and Dock Area resident who monitors the water level and wave action at the beach.

Continued on page 2

Sacred healing fire keeps burning

With the approach of Canada Day, there are growing calls from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to cancel celebrations and instead use the time to grieve those who died at residential schools.

Meanwhile, the fire keepers at the Niagara Regional Native Centre on Airport Road, with respect, calm and kindness, are concentrating on their purpose and their responsibilities, offering the community a safe and sacred place to mourn, to remember, and to share their grief with others.

They are keeping a healing fire going for seven days, 24 hours a day, for anyone who needs help working through their grief, and to pay their respects to those who were lost. It began last Friday, at noon, and will continue until sunrise Friday, July 2. When Karl Dockstader, executive director felt the need for the seven-day healing fire, the country was reeling from the news of hundreds of Indigenous children who were taken from their families to attend residential schools, recently found buried in graves on school properties. But while there was surprise and shock expressed over the horrific treatment of young children, and the responsibility of the government and church for what happened, the news was not a surprise to the second and third generation Indigenous people who, all their lives, have heard the stories passed down through their families, says Dockstader.

Canada Day is not a day of celebration for Indigenous people, nor is Canada a country that should be celebrated, he says.

The discovery of the graves, he says, has provided an opportunity to learn more about the truth, and that, he hopes, will provoke the public to push leaders to seek justice. “We saw that with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which was pushed by the Canadian public, who learned about the double standard Indigenous people had to face,” says Dockstader.

“The best hope is that change will come from the Canadian people. That’s how change should come.”

He’d been tending the fire around the clock, refreshed Sunday by a night sleeping outside, “under the stars — a dream come true,” a time of peace, he adds, and reflects on what he considers the surprising traction for cancelling Canada Day activities.

“The movement has created these kinds of conversations. This is what we hoped for.”

That includes the non-First Nations people who have come to the healing fire, he adds, which has created a safe space for people to talk.

Continued on page 4
Park open now, stones safe for walking on

Continued from page 1

He said more than a year ago that the scenario at Balls Beach is very different from all but a very few other locations, with issues that result from a river and lake meeting. “There are a number of things that come into play here,” he says, and they create a much larger challenge than would be encountered when designing shoreline protection for either a lakfront or a river, rather than the meeting of both.

He recalls being quoted on the front page of The Local in February, 2020, warning of just such an outcome, when engineers were deciding what to do with the waterfront. He said then the groyne appeared to be collapsing into the lake, and that there was likely a drop-off in the lake bottom. The concept of the groyne was outdated and enormously expensive, he said, and suggested the town look at other alternatives. “I didn’t want to be right,” he says now.

The problem is there are solutions that can be designed for a lakshore, or for a riverbank. But the solution the experts determined was suitable for Balls Beach turned out not to be, as Simkus warned.

He refers to the area of the beach as a hybrid situation, with a large river — one of the largest in the world — meeting a large lake, and creating the back eddy that kayakers and sailors have long recognized as the place where the current reverses direction and flows upstream. “There are only a handful of places like that in the world,” he says, creating a box for the shoreline or a river, rather than a lakeshore, or for a river—lakeshore meeting.

He says more than a year ago that the scenario at Balls Beach turned out not to be, as Simkus warned. “There will be a lot of people demanding a guarantee, assurances that it will not happen again,” he says, “and there will be meetings of all parties to explore what has happened and how to go forward. But nobody is standing with their hand on their heart promising to have the solution.” He suggests what might be necessary is “a line in the sand, beyond which you can’t go.”

The town should be looking for a solution that is pragmatic, not outrageously expensive, and that accepts them will always be wave action “more powerful than we can defend against.” There will always be waves coming over the top of the rocks during high water, he says, and what is pragmatic “may be a deterrent, not a solution.”

Who doesn’t love cupcakes?

Sean O’Donnell of Willow Cakes & Pastries, with Nicole McAnulty and Carol Giang, took a quick break Tuesday morning, with the task of icing 1,600 Canada Day cupcakes ahead of them. (David Gilchrist)

An excavator reaches deep out into the water to retrieve an anchor stone that was washed away in a storm. The work that was done Saturday was to put some of the large anchor stones back in place and stabilize the groyne to make it safe for walking, and protect the shoreline. (Photos by Ron Simkus)

Outdoors @ The Shaw: a fresh air summer fete

After a long wait, it’s time for the Shaw season to get underway, with a series of concerts and events beginning July 10 on the grounds of the Festival Theatre and the Royal George Theatre.

The performances will be outdoors, on the Festival theatre grounds, and at venues described as the BMO Stage, the Humenuik Foundation Stage, the Royal George Theatre’s Gallery Patio and the Nona Macdonald Stage, affectionately known as Nona Tent.

“It’s thrilling to feel the buzz of activity and anticipations. If these 15- plus months have taught us anything, it’s that we all dearly miss real human encounters and shared experiences,” says artistic director Tim Carroll.

“With this in mind, especially produced performances, concerts and curated events have been created for our audience. It’s been a long and enduring journey and now it’s time to say: Welcome back.”

Outdoors @ The Shaw is presented in addition to the open air performances of The Devil’s Disciple at the Nona Macdonald Stage, Flush at the Humenuik Foundation Stage, Charles’ aunt at the BMO Stage and the Shaw Festival’s presentation of A Short History of Niagara at both the Humenuik Foundation Stage and the BMO Stage.

However, performances will only take place if deemed safe to do so, with audience numbers to all performances under capacity limits, and will continue to follow and exceed all government COVID-19 health regulations.

The Shaw has also implemented a robust Duty of Care initiative. These measures include significant infrastructure improvements and a commitment to ensuring the safety of audiences, company members and communities.

COMMUNITY NOTICE

ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Every year, CN is required to clear its right-of-way of any vegetation that may pose a safety hazard. Vegetation on railway right-of-way (ROW) can cause: - Obstructions to the rail corridor, creating a potential safety risk for rail operations - Impairment of track infrastructure. The spray program is not being done for aesthetic reasons.

For safe railway operations, CN will conduct its annual spray program on its rail properties in the province of Ontario. A certified professional will be applying herbicides on and around the railway right-of-way. These herbicides are non-toxic to humans and wildlife. A product requirement for safety is that CN’s employees will be wearing approved Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The herbicides used will be of the non-toxic, non-fumigant type.

Please be advised that the spraying activity may cause some inconvenience. CN will notify residents and members of communities via email when spraying is to occur.

CN is committed to maintaining safe and reliable rail assets that provide economic benefits and enable local businesses to transport their goods and reach new markets. CN is also an active participant in the local communities in which it operates.

For more information about CN’s vegetation management program, please visit www.cn.ca/vegetation. For information about the latest spraying activities, please call 1-888-702-1068.

Verifly, the on-demand aerial drone service.

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Happy Canada Day!

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When I was eight years old, my parents split up. I don't have many memories of my dad before then. He was always either at work or out with friends. He drank a lot and I guess my mom finally had enough. I do remember hearing them argue at night when they thought I was asleep. After my dad left, I didn't hear from him much until eventually he stopped coming around altogether.

My mom picked up more shifts at work and wasn't home much after that. She started drinking too and once she met Doug, things happened fast. We moved in with him when I was 11 and the fighting started all over again. Doug was worse than I remember my dad being. He was violent and by the time I turned 13 he was hitting me almost daily. I thought anything was better than being there so I left. I stayed at friends houses but that didn't last long either. I turned to alcohol too, to numb the pain of feeling so alone and unwanted. I ended up on the street before my 14th birthday.

I spent 10 years homeless, living in constant anxiety and fear. I was exposed to the violence of street life and witnessed too many horrible things. There were times I didn't think I would make it one more day. One of the lowest points was when I remember being caught digging through the garbage outside a coffee shop, just to find something to eat. It had been days since I had any food in my stomach and I was in so much pain.

Stepping through the doors of the youth shelter was life-changing. I was welcomed with open arms where the staff made me feel safe for the first time in my life. In my four month stay at the emergency shelter, I learned so many valuable skills. Having a roof over my head and food in my stomach was no longer my only concern. I took advantage of every program they had and credit my success to all the support I received in transitional housing where I was encouraged to follow my passion for photography. Today, I am no longer homeless. I am sober, I have a career I love, an apartment to call my own and a healthy vision for the future.

I learned that the place I stayed was funded by United Way Niagara – so were all the programs I attended while staying there. Without this support, I would never have been able to get off the street and be as successful as I am today. It is because of donors, like you, that these programs are able to exist. Thank you for saving my life.

"I was welcomed with open arms where the staff made me feel safe for the first time in my life."

United Way Niagara programs are life-changing
These children are immediate kin, they are all our kin'
Right in the hub of Niagara-on-the-Lake, there is a quaint little tea shop serving custom blended drinks ranging from hot or iced teas, lattes, and boba tea. Tealise, Niagara-on-the-Lake’s hot spot for organic loose-leaf tea has been serving over 150 different kinds of quality loose-leaf tea grown from international tea gardens. Tealise selects over 75 estate grown specialty teas such as; white, green, oolong, rooibos, herbal, fruit, and more. Plus, we serve over 20 different Boba Tea flavors that are customizable with different toppings and combinations.

After serving specialty tea drinks for 5 years, we moved our operations online during the covid-19 pandemic. We continue to sell our quality organic loose-leaf teas online but we also expanded our product line to include boba tea kits, milk tea kits, Japanese sweets, Cream Cheese topping, and more. Our expansion of our product line to include kits allows customers to safely re-create their Boba Tea or other specialty drinks safely at home. It is an enjoyable way to DIY authentic boba tea drinks at home to pass the time while in lockdown. If you follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, we have tons of easy recipes and tutorials on how to make your drink at home.

Every month, we release blog posts on new recipes and product launches to keep you up to date with Tealise. Pre-covid, Tealise was a relaxing tea café where locals can enjoy their drink in a homely atmosphere. Tourists also popped by for tea tastings and immersing in Niagara-on-the-Lake’s history. Luckily, we have sorted our opening protocols and are ready to re-open just in time for Canada Day’s weekend on July 2nd 2021. Our hours of operation are Fridays and Saturdays 12 to 4 pm. In the meantime, locals can enjoy free 2-day local delivery on orders over $35CAD at tealise.com. At Tealise’s online site, customers can shop their favourite organic loose-leaf teas and customize their boba tea kits for themselves or as a gift (includes gift wrapping).

Be a part of our Tealise club for fun surprises and discounts by subscribing to our newsletter at tealise.com. Don’t forget to follow us @TealiseTea on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube for new recipes every week. Visit us every Friday and Saturday at 1503 Niagara Stone Rd, Niagara-on-the-Lake. As we always say at Tealise: The remarkable world of healthy and invigorating teas has never been so accessible... even during a pandemic.
Canada Day a good time for quiet reflection

Donald Combe Special To The Local

A British couple (Tryong, Apple TV 2020) wants desperately to have a baby, and when that proves impossible, they decide to adopt. Nothing about the adoption process is simple, especially for this couple, whose eccentricities make them unlikely candidates. The strength of the stories the two families have to each other. Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he returns going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.

Trying to put into words what an inclusive Niagara-on-the-Lake would mean to me, my childhood was spent with a foot in two different cultures. As a child of immigrant parents, only recently have I come to realize I had an English-as-a-second-language household. Being Canadian, I am a large urban area, I was able to see the world from countries around the globe, and cultures that were different to the ones my parents brought to the Greater Toronto Area. As a boy, my entire life experience has been walking a tightrope of both cultures. I had my Filipino family, blended into Canadian society. Yet I belong to both worlds. Although we've only lived in NOTL for eight years, I can see there are distinct communities in this amazing and proud town, each with their own unique characteristics. There are the historical sites of the War of 1812 and Old Town, the farming community and more recently theatre and wineries. And here we are, in this pretty-as-a-picture town we call home!

Some residents live here part-time, but are of no lesser value than the families who live full-time. We have the snowbirds, farm workers, the Meno-rite community who farm elsewhere during the winter months, people who have secondary homes here. All living beside families who live and work in the Niagara Region. Such a broad swath of diversity means to me Canada. It's been a tumultuous year. No doubt about it. Voices have been screaming to be heard, rallies have filled the air, change demanded. More recently there have been heart-wrenching discoveries of souls long buried. We all care deeply how to push for change in the way.

I am reminded of a time I still lived in Toronto. It was in 1998, in Little Italy and there was a large celebratory parade for the FIFA World Cup. Some young men were slowly driving along St. Clair West waving an Italian flag, fans from the rival French team walked by waving their flags, and the young man in the car pulled out a French flag and cheerfully waved it in greeting. That’s the spirit I’d like to see in NOTL. Whatever flag you want to fly, wave it proudly!

The Local invites submissions to our Local Voices, which we plan 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.

Lara Osias-Davidson Special To The Local

It’s hard to put into words what an inclusive Niagara-on-the-Lake would mean to me. I have grown as a second language household. Being Canadian, I am a large urban area, I was able to see the world from countries around the globe, and cultures that were different to the ones my parents brought to the Greater Toronto Area. As a boy, my entire life experience has been walking a tightrope of both cultures. I had my Filipino family, blended into Canadian society. Yet I belong to both worlds. Although we've only lived in NOTL for eight years, I can see there are distinct communities in this amazing and proud town, each with their own unique characteristics. There are the historical sites of the War of 1812 and Old Town, the farming community and more recently theatre and wineries. And here we are, in this pretty-as-a-picture town we call home!

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In some centuries of their colourful history, bulbs have been used for fancy and medicine, and they've been featured on the earliest banners, but mainly, they're grown for their beauty.

Bulbs bring the first welcome burst of colour, signalling the end of winter.

To begin gardeners, spring bulbs mean crocus, daffodils, tulips, but there are more than a dozen other kinds of bulbs. Although bulbs like fall sun, they can be planted among deciduous trees that haven't leafed out yet.

To extend bloom time, plant a single variety in different locations. The sunniest spots produce the earliest flowers, shade the latest.

Planting different varieties can yield blooms in the early, mid and late season.

For spring bulbs, the sooner you plant in the fall, the better. It's much nicer to plan on a sunny Spot the day than in chilly November.

The more time the bulbs have to put out their roots before the ground freezes, the stronger they will be.

If your earth is heavy and clayey, add one or two inches of coarse sand in the bottom of the bulb hole you've dug, to assure fast growth and strong roots. Soil thoroughly to wash the soil in around the bulbs, eliminate air spaces and start the bulbs rooting.

After the bulbs have finished, cut off the flower head and leave the leaves to yellow and wither before cutting back. This will build up energy for next year's cycle.

Planting bulbs in groups of five or more will give you the most impressive impact.

Many bulbs such as snowdrops (winter aconite), the earliest yellow flowers), scilla, daffodils, crocus, muscari (grape hyacinth), lilys of the valley, anemones, leucojum (spring snowflake), daffodils, camassulas, (star of Bethlehem), will naturalize or multiply over the years to create larger clumps, making a good re- turn on your initial investment.

The narcissus (daffodil family) have countless varieties and from the earliest to the latest will give eight weeks or more of continuous bloom.

Tulips can also have an extended bloom time by planting early, mid and late varieties.

Treat yourself to a fall teaser by planting autumn crocuses, especially the doubles that resemble water lil- ies.

Plant late August or early September, and three weeks before the first frost.

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

The opinions expressed in submitted commentary, and letters to the editor, are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the 
notllocal.com.

I read with great interest your article on the woman at- tacked by a neighbour's dog in St. Davids.

I'm the guy in the black car who came to her aid. My name is Louis Hayes and I live on An- gela Crescent, around the bend from the house where the inci- dent occurred.

On the day in question, my wife and I were returning home from a shopping trip and as we turned the corner, I couldn't believe my eyes. I saw a frail, petrified, elderly woman being attacked by a large, heavily muscled rott- weiler on the steps of a house, while an elderly couple, evident- ly the dog's owners, were com- pletely incapable of controlling the dog. The poor woman was screaming and crying "Help me, help me!" I hesitated to get involved, but there was no one around to help. I did think I saw one or two people run into their homes and lock the doors. Not that this really helped them. Both the dog and the elderly woman were hurting and needed help. I called the NOTL guy back to this house, and the two of us progressed to the scene.

This is a rescue dog from Toronto. He thinks it was proba- bly a child who frequently got excited over things similar scenario. Whatever the case, this is a powerful, vi- cious and extremely dangerous dog. It could easily kill a child, which is what really concerns me. There are families with young children who frequently play outside just up the street from this house.

I have been trying to find out what is going to be done with this dog, and I'm hearing different things from different people. Apparently, the own- ers are considering various options. I want to take this op- portunity to appeal to the dog's owner to understand it, the power, the Hu- mane Society and the NOTL guy all showed up at the scene at about the same time.

The next day, a police offi- cer called me and asked me to give a brief statement, which I did. He suggested I call the Hu- mane Society to give them my account, which I did. I also called the NOTL guy back to get his comments.

The police officer told me that this was a rescue dog from Toronto. He thinks it probably belonged to a drug deal- er who was arrested or some similar scenario. Whatever the case, this is a powerful, vi- cious and extremely dangerous dog. It could easily kill a child, which is what really concerns me. There are families with young children who frequently play outside just up the street from this house.
**PUBLIC NOTICE OF HEARING**

**PROCEEDING COMMENCED UNDER Subsection 29(5) of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended**

**Owner:** Solmar (Niagara 2) Inc.

**Objector:** Two Sisters Resorts Corp.

**Property Address:** 588 Charlotte Street

**Legal Description:** Lot 156 RCP 692 Niagara; Part Lot 145 RCP 692 Niagara Part 1 to 9, 30R8436; S/T RO413742, T/W RO413742 (PT 13, 30R1792)

**Municipality:** Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

**OLT Case No.:** CRB1824

**OLT Case Name:** Two Sisters Resorts Corp. v. Niagara-on-the-Lake (Town)

The Ontario Land Tribunal (“Tribunal”) will conduct a Hearing by Video Conference for this matter. The event will be held:

- **at:** 10:00 am
- **on:** July 19, 2021

The Tribunal has set aside 4 days for this matter.

A livestream of the hearing will be available to the public on the Tribunal’s YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxDacq6BDDWqOJUSV-yGVR

If you do not attend the event, the Tribunal may proceed in your absence and you will not be entitled to any further notice of these proceedings.

**PARTY OR PARTICIPANT STATUS REQUESTS:**

Persons who wish to participate in the hearing, either as a party or as a participant, must file a written status request with the Tribunal to outline their interest in the proceeding. Party and Participant Status Requests Forms (available at: https://olt.gov.on.ca/appeals-process/forms/) must be filed in advance of the hearing with the Case Coordinator, Paul De Medeiros: paul.demedeiros@ontario.ca

Status requests will be reviewed and considered by the presiding Member at the hearing. Attendance by the requestor, or their representative, at the hearing is required for all status requests.

Connection details for the video conference will be provided by the Case Coordinator upon receipt of the status request form.

We are committed to providing accessible services as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. If you have any accessibility needs, please contact our Accessibility Coordinator as soon as possible by emailing OLT.COORDINATOR@ontario.ca. If you require documents in formats other than conventional print, or if you have specific accommodation needs, please let us know so we can make arrangements in advance.

For general information concerning the Tribunal, visit our website at https://olt.gov.on.ca or you may contact the Tribunal’s offices at 1-866-448-2248 or local (416) 212-6349.

DATED at Toronto, this 21st day of June 2021.

Becky Fong
Registrar
Hayes says he was hoping, for the safety of the children on the street, the owners would do the right thing and get rid of the dog.

Reid, who has been the town’s canine control officer for more than 20 years, says his job is often one of mediation, trying to do what’s best for all involved.

In this case, all he could do was ensure the dog was no longer at large. The owners have been fined by the town, and the police and humane society have both been involved, as has the public health department, Reid says, checking to see that the dog was vaccinated. The owners were also informed by police that Jiang can initiate a civil suit for damages.

They have had other issues with large dogs, and this is the first time they’ve had a problem, they would consider rehoming the dog,” but we won’t get another big dog. We’re getting older ourselves.”

She’s annoyed that she and her husband are being portrayed as irresponsible dog owners, which they’re not, she says, and they are doing what is right for their neighbours by giving him up.

They will likely get another dog, “but we won’t get another big dog. We’re getting older ourselves.”

Ming Jiang and her husband Paul recently met Louis Hayes and his wife Toni for the first time. Ming was anxious to thank Louis for his bravery when she was attacked by a neighbour’s dog. (Photo submitted)
Women suffering postpartum depression are not alone

Jessica Gale Friesen aims to help women dealing with mental illness

Penny Coles
The Local

Jessica Gale Friesen considers herself a strong woman. She is not quite 40 yet, but is already the third-generation owner and CEO of Gale’s Gas Bars. She is also a registered nurse, having worked in acute and long-term care, and a person accustomed to feeling in control of her life, of “having everything covered.” She is now also a published author, with the release of This Will Not Break Me, the story of her very private journey through a time when there were aspects of her life she couldn’t control.

Fourteen years ago, she and her husband, Ed Friesen had their first child. When she was in labour with her son, she was given demerol, which had a negative effect on her and her baby. He had to spend some time in the neonatal intensive care unit, a “scary, isolating and difficult time” for her.

She felt guilty, that it was her fault for taking the drug, and as the days went on, when she also had trouble breast-feeding, she began to view herself as inadequate as a mother.

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She felt guilty, that it was her fault for taking the drug, and as the days went on, when she also had trouble breast-feeding, she began to view herself as inadequate as a mother.

With her background in nursing, “I thought I was more than prepared, perfectly capable of having a baby. But things didn’t go as planned.”

Once home with her newborn, she found she could barely get herself dressed in the mornings. Some morning she couldn’t. She felt all she could manage was giving her son the basic necessities, feeding him and changing his diapers. The days of having a meticulously clean and tidy home were behind her. Usually a social person, she didn’t want to leave the house, or see family or friends.

This was before the blossoming of social media, before you could connect with friends and find any information you needed from others going through something similar, and she had lost touch with her high school friends. “The friends I did have, didn’t have children,” she says. the programs that existed didn’t deal with what she was feeling, and she hadn’t had a lot of experience being around babies, or taking care of them.

She knew she was being withdrawn from people, even family, because, she says, she was sure they would see what a terrible mother she was.

When she did try to talk to others about how she felt, or asked for advice, they would tell her she was fine, all new moms feel the same way, she’d figure it out, it would get better, easier. But it didn’t. “Nobody was helping me figure it out.”

She felt a lot of pressure about breast-feeding, which made things worse, not better, and believes “there is still a lot of pressure to do things a certain way.”

Friesen says over the years she has thought a lot about that time in her life, and decided to write her feelings down, in a book for her own other.

“All new moms struggle,” she says, “but I didn’t realize the time how badly I was struggling. I didn’t realize my feelings then were extreme.”

She eventually found Baby Talk, a group for young mothers who met weekly, and shared their challenges.

It is a program put on by the Ontario Early Years Centre – niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/early-years/ for more information.

“Nobody said ‘you’ll figure it out’. Instead, everybody said, ‘this is what I tried. That was when things started to change for me.'”

It happened in a way that was “very organic,” she says, and helped her once again feel in control of her life.

“I was finally able to wrap my head around what I needed, and to look back and realize how extreme my situation was. I had come from working as a nurse in a hospital with a multidisciplinary team, to not being able to look after one baby, and not realizing it shouldn’t be that way,” says Friesen.

When she looked back on that period in her life, and it became obvious she was suffering from postpartum depression and she could see it for what it was, she decided to share that very personal journey

Continued on page 11

Thank you to our wonderful community for your support over the past 2 years!

My team and I are so grateful for the relationships we’ve been able to make and opportunities to serve you.

Last year we celebrated our anniversary with hand sanitizer sales. This year, we will celebrate with syringes filled with Pfizer vaccines.

We could have never imagined all that would happen when we first opened our doors in July 2019, and we will continue to adapt to continue to care for our community.

Many things have changed, yet our slogan that hangs above our door remains unchanged – perhaps even stronger than ever. Many things have changed, yet our slogan that hangs above our door remains unchanged – perhaps even stronger than ever.

We look forward to caring for you and serving you for many more years to come!

Julie and the Stone Road Pharmacy team

STONE ROAD Pharmacy

caring beyond the prescription

1630 Niagara Stone Road, Virgil • 905.468.3000
stoneroadpharmacy.com

Continued on page 11

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REAL ESTATE WILLS BUSINESS
Jessica Gale Friesen, with her husband Ed Friesen and Eddie, 14, and Camryn, 12, has come a long way from her postpartum days, and has found writing a book about her experiences cathartic.

“Postpartum depression is not something you can easily describe. It affects everyone in a different way, but when I looked at the signs, I realized I had all of them,” she says.

“I thought a lot about it over the years, and started to write about it, putting all the dots together. It was really cathartic, and I thought that if I can put this on paper, it might help others like me. It (postpartum depression) is still not always recognized, and a lot of women don't want to talk about it. The last thing you want is for people to think you can't take care of your baby. When my mind was going to extremes, I was having nightmares about people taking my son from me.’

There has to be someone to start that conversation, and there are not a lot of people willing to be that person, she adds.

“It is no longer acceptable to assume new parents will ‘figure it out,’ when people are suffering and, sometimes, dying, because they can’t see a way out.”

Friesen is a busy woman, now a business professional as well as a mom of two teens, Eddie, 14, and Camryn, 12. She and Ed are bringing up the next generation in St. Davids, where she and her two siblings were raised and went to school. But she is about to become even busier, with the virtual launch of This Will Not Break Me, Wednesday, June 30, at 5 p.m. Published by Ownera Media, the book will be available for purchase through retail channels, including Amazon, and at www.jessicagalefriesen.com.

Friesen will be featured in a Lunch and Learn event being presented by United Way Niagara on July 21, to discuss her book. A portion of the proceeds for the Lunch and Learn are going directly to United Way Niagara.

To purchase tickets, contact United Way, or visit her website.

Jessica Gale Friesen, with her husband Ed Friesen and Eddie, 14, and Camryn, 12, has come a long way from her postpartum days, and has found writing a book about her experiences cathartic. (Photo supplied)
Jenna Cowan
Laura Secord
First Laura Secord grad to be valedictorian and also receive excellence in education award

Lereeza Bautista
Niagara College - Recreation Therapy

Ella Burns - Eden High School
Fanshawe for Police Foundations this fall

Victoria Balsom
Laura Secord

Tyler Cullen
Holy Cross

Janvi Ganatra
A. N. Myer Secondary School

Ayden Hillis
Laura Secord Honour Grad

Abby Hollemans
Eden High School

Ben Janzen
Eden High School
Sara Leboudec  
Laura Secord Secondary School

Meggan McConnell - Brock University  
Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) Concentration in Human Resource Management (Co-op Option)

Felicia Miele - A. N. Myer  
Fall 2021 University of Toronto Political Science followed by Law School.

Matthew Quinn, LPCI  
Attending University of Western Ontario Fall, 2021

Lauren Skeoch  
Niagara College - Educational Assistant

Liam Cadeau  
Dalewood French Immersion - Grade 8

Jack Clarke - St. Davids School  
DSBN Student Success Award winner

Hannah Gilchrist  
St. Davids Public School

Austin Leboudec  
Crossroads Public School
Penny Coles
The Local

The project to redesign the entrance to the Old Town has run into some complications.

After approval from the town’s Communities in Bloom Committee, which has been spearheading the project, the Municipal Heritage Commit-
tee was the next stop for input before sending the proposal to council, which occurred Mon-
day night.

Councillors also supported the concept project, requesting input from town staff, before it goes to the committee of the whole for a decision.

While MHC members voted to move it forward, there was far from agreement about what the entranceway should look like, with about 20 different aspects of the design that require dis-
cussion. There were also sugges-
tions that the public should be in
on the discussion, as should the town’s urban design committee.

Resident Gerry Kowalchuk has donated $250,000 to create an entrance to the Old Town, wanting a legacy project that will
anchor the Old Town, an entranceway should look like, from agreement about what the whole for a decision.

This concept for the Mississauga/Queen Street intersection has been discussed and moved for-
ward by the Communities in Bloom committee, the Municipal Heritage Committee and at the last town council meeting. It is just a conceptual drawing, and still has a long way to go for final approval, with a much more detailed design. (Screenshot from Communities in Bloom committee meeting)

Haig Sefarian, founder of the
design group, says the architects
were interested in the heritage of
Niagara-on-the-Lake. He described the design, based on it obscuring
the view of Fort Mississauga, as superinten-
dent as natural history. He said
the idea is to be a focal point of the
area.

The effectiveness of the street redesign, its impact on traffic
flow, the placement of stop signs and the safety of pedestrians, all
to be determined during a pi-
lot project to be conducted this
summer, were issues discussed
by heritage committee mem-
ers. Specific design features,
including a limestone wall, an
obelisk structure at one end, the
removal of the event sign on
Queen Street, and the type of
trees that might be chosen were also issues considered during the
virtual meeting.

The drawing they were looking
at, they told, is just conceptual, as provided by the architects, with details still to be
worked out.

The obelisk, which was de-
scribed as possibly an homage to the first lighthouse that was once
at the water’s edge, even before Fort Mississauga, seemed to be
the biggest sticking point — its
height, its placement on one side
of the project, what it represents, whether it looks too much like
a gravestone or memorial, and whether it is appropriate at all,
were all points mentioned by committee members.

Despite many references to
corries of a redesign the town
has recently been discussing for
the intersection to control and
slow down traffic, hopefully also
directing vehicles away from Niagra Boulevard and the Chantauqua neighbourhood. It would include a bump-out at
the intersection, with a three-
way stop, and the elimination of
the left-turn lane, although vehi-
cles could still turn left.

The preferred concept incor-
porates gardens, a lawn, Queen-
ston’s Quarry limestone wall, the
town crest and town name both on it, with an obelisk structure of granite, representing the first
lighthouse on the Great Lakes. The intention is for it to be easily seen coming into town, creating a striking first impression, and would include a strong, intricate lighting plan to make sure its just as striking at night.

The sign that now advertises events in town, just off to the side of the existing gateway, will be relocated.

The intention is not to have
a sidewalk, or bringing people
across, where it wouldn’t be
safe,” said Turocze. Sefarian addressed the font, saying they have been in touch with the town to talk about branding, and there will be fur-
ther discussion about it.

MHC member Ron Dale, retired from a long career with Parks Canada as superintendent of heritage sites and now a member of the MHC, said both the limestone wall and the obel-
isk detract from the heritage of the area.

Jim and Erika Alexander, now retired but founders of the Friends of Fort George, wrote a letter to the town opposing the design, based on it obscuring the view of Fort Mississauga, as does the current landscaping. NOTL Conservancy presi-
dent Gracisa Janes is also oppos-
ing the project.

Whatever is done at that site
should open up the view of the
distinctive of the town. She told the MHC members what visitors to town will really like a selfie in front of the wall,
“with some beautiful lettering behind them,” but was told by Turocze the street bump-out is being designed to discourage people crossing the road for photos, due to safety issues.

The "intention is not to have
a sidewalk, or bringing people
across, where it wouldn’t be
conceived notions of what it would look like. He was firm about "not second-guessing" the architects, he added, rather al-
lowing them to "bring their best foot forward."

He acknowledged there will be a mix of people who will love it, and those that don’t. "You're never going get 100 per cent approval.

He told the committee he
hopes at the end of the day those involved in the decision-mak-
ing, and the public, “will be somewhat flexible. “It’s impossi-
ble to have everything unless of course you have a million dollar budget.”

With the exception of Bis-
back, who chose to abstain because he felt he didn’t have enough facts to move forward with the proposal, the commit-
tee voted to send it to council to look for comments from the public and make a decision on the project.

Council also voted to move it ahead, after discussion about thanking the donor and the Communities in Bloom com-
mitee for their hard work and input, and agreeing that the committee of the whole should be the decision-making body, with input from Kowalchuk and the public.
The winners of the Friends of Fort George Colouring Contest were Mae Montgomery, 5, who received her prize from Kris Koldenhof of Maple Leaf Fudge, and Jack Clattenburg, 6, with his prize from Phil Leboudec of Phil’s valu-mart. Thanks to both Maple Leaf Fudge and Phil’s valu-mart for providing the gift baskets. Amanda Gamble of the Friends of Fort George is with them.
Clearing the way for construction in the area around the Glendale overpass began just a few weeks ago, and a lot of dirt has been added and packed down since.

(Penny Coles)

June 30, 2021

THE NOTL

Work progressing quickly on Glendale interchange

If you only use the Glen-dale overpass occasionally, you might be surprised by the changes you see.

Clearing the area for construction in preparation for the huge, $53.8 million project over the QEW now underway to build a new in-terchange began just a few weeks ago. The speed of the work and the amount that has been accomplished since is surprising, says Steve Hardaker, a Niagara-on-the-Green resident who has been follow-ing it with interest.

As a member of the Glen-dale Community Task Force, he has followed the progress from the early discussion stages with interest.

“There was a lot of stuff cleared at first, and now there is a lot of dirt. I was surprised how much, and how high it is — higher than the road. I don’t know where it’s all com-ing from, “ he says.

Although a lot is happen-ing, and quickly, it’s also sur-prising how little disruption there has been to traffic, Har-daker says.

There is a new set of stop lights on the south side of the interchange, and one left turn lane has been removed, but other than that, the overpass is unchanged. The plan is for it to remain that way until the new diverging diamond in-terchange is completed.

Although traffic isn’t be-ing interrupted, there is a lot going on to watch, he says, and to distract drivers, in-cluding him.

He and his wife walk a lot in the area, both of them usually with cameras, and al-though they chat with neigh-bours, he says nobody is com-plaining about the work.

“I don’t get any sense that the residents are impacted at all. So many are working from home anyway due to COVID, there just isn’t as much traffic as there normally would be”,

With a home backing on to Taylor Road, he hears noisy trucks and heavy equipment vehicles, making it impossible to sit outside, but although the traffic has increased, it’s not really new, he says.

Although the town was asked and agreed to lift the noise bylaw for construction, allowing work to continue around the clock, including Sundays, so the aggressive timeline for construction could be met, that hasn’t oc-curred yet, he says.

There is a lot of curiosity about the new diverging di-amond interchange that will replace the overpass over the QEW, he says.

He’s never driven on one, nor have many others, with this one the first in Ontario, and only two others, both out west.

There are about 150 in the U.S., although some of them may still be under construction.

The most unusual feature is that traffic crosses to the opposite sides of the road at some point, while the other side is stopped, to allow better traffic flow, allowing drivers to make left turns without crossing traffic, thereby cut-ting down on opportunities for collisions.

The Glendale interchange has been an area of town with a high number of collisions, although not serious or fatal ones.

Hardaker says Glendale residents have been assured there will be an opportuni-ty to learn about navigating through a diverging diamond before the interchange is ready to open.

While that’s the major part of the project, expected to be completed and open for traffic in November, 2022, there is more to come.

The region and the prov-ince are together working on a five-stage project that also includes:

• Reconstructing the Glen-dale Avenue/York Road intersection to a sin-gle-lane roundabout

• Constructing a new Air-port Road loop ramp and connection road from Glendale Avenue to York Road/Airport Road inter-section

• Constructing a new com-muter carpool lot north-west of the interchange

• Rehabilitating the pave-ment on the QEW east-bound and westbound lanes between the east end of the Garden City Skyway bridge and QEW / Hwy. 405 split

• Extending the right turn-ing lane of Glendale Avenue between Taylor Road and Niagara-on-the-Green Boulevard Completion of all stages is anticipated for 2023.

Penny Coles
The Local
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club will be holding its second annual pandemic pop-up barbecue Canada Day.

The club’s longstanding tradition has been a large community barbecue at Simcoe Park, but for the second time, they’ve had to adjust their July 1 plans.

Gary Hatton, Rotary member and Canada Day committee co-chair, says “we took it on the chin last year,” having to organize a drive-through event in a short amount of time.

So it was simple this year to repeat the activities of 2020, he says. While there have been recent discussions about cancelling some Canada Day activities, the Rotary Club has been keeping its eye on what’s going on in the community, and planning to go ahead with the fundraiser, which helps them to offer much-needed support in the community.

The Rotary Club, like other organizations, has had to look at alternative ways to fundraise, with their large annual events cancelled, and has been fairly successful at doing that, says Hatton.

The drive-through barbecue will take place place July 1 at the Niagara United Men’sonnic Church on Niagara Stone Road. Meals will be served between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

There are four menu options: a pig roast sandwich, a quarter-pound steak burger, two hot dogs, or a veggie burger. Each option includes a bag of chips and a choice of bottle of water, or pop, for $10.

There is the option of ordering on site the day of the event by cash-only, and the Rotary Club is also taking pre-orders through its website at www.niagaraontherotary.ca.
Lots to do at the library for kids this summer

Kasia Dupuis Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library is ready for another summer of exciting and engaging programming for kids of all ages. This year, as we see an increase back into in-person and outdoor programming, we are able to offer programs at the library in our outdoor spaces, complete with outdoor hand-washing stations and physical-distance-based activities, as well as continuing to offer virtual programs to participate in from the comfort of your own home.

No summer would be complete without registering for our annual Summer Reading Program. Tuesdays and Thursdays is this year’s program for children ages three to 13 to set their own personal reading goals, track their progress, and earn their way toward a medal made in The Makey at the end of the summer. Summer Reading Passports are available at the library or by emailing notlbrary@gmail.com.

This year’s Summer Reading Program team has expanded. Kasia Dupuis, children’s library services associate, will be joined by Rachel Wilculas, preschool programmer, as well as two enthusiastic and creative summer students. The library is proud to welcome Colin Fellows and Shaantih Sukhai to the Summer Reading Program team. The team has been working tirelessly to develop engaging, exciting, and creative programming to not only keep the learning happening during summer break but also to help foster the connections and feelings of community that may have been missing these last few months. We have an outdoor, in-person children’s program happening almost every day of the week, as well as virtual programs complete with free kids to keep the hands-on engagement going at home.

We’re kicking off this summer on Friday, July 2 with some virtual fun and games. Our popular virtual trivia is back each Friday with topics such as All Things Disney, Pokemon, Frozens, and Lego, among others. Each week the winner will have a chance to win a themed prize pack, based on the week’s topic.

We’re also excited to introduce virtual Bingo games for kids on Friday mornings, too. Using the same platform as our trivia games, children are invited to play a classic game of Bingo from the comfort of your own home.

For those who love to compete without registering for our annual Summer Reading Program themes and highlights a different section of NOTL such as St. Davids, Willowbank at Queenston and Niagara Shores Park.

Colin Fellows and Shaantih Sukhai will be helping out with children’s programming at the NOTL Public Library this summer. (Photo supplied)

Colin Fellows and Kasia Dupuis enjoy their day off with a presentation at the library.

July 5, and learn how to paint a mystical Narwhal — known as the unicorn of the sea — on Aug. 16. We have also added day workshops into this summer’s Monday Makers line-up, including a Mira Flower Pot on July 19, and a pair of Crazy Clay Cats on July 26. These projects include a free kit containing all the materials you will need for hand-building with clay, as well as instructions to return your project to the library to be fired in a kiln. We are very excited about these workshops.

Creativity knows no age limit, so for the youngest creators in your household, we have Mini Makers with Kasia for ages four to six. This new program has been specially designed for a younger audience, and includes a kit with all the materials to create virtually with Kasia on Zoom. Create a Summer Garden Sculpture on July 12 and then build a colour- ful owl complete with a tree house backdrop on Aug. 9.

Getting crafty is one of our favourite things to do at the library, and Tuesdays are home to the second of our Crafternoon Programs for ages seven to 12, July 6 through Aug. 17. Join Shaantih in this outdoor, in-person program where we will build a sparkly jellyfish, create a glow-in-the-dark di-no-saur jar and more.

Wednesdays is all about exploring, discovering and connecting out-and-about in our community. Explorers aged three to six can take part in Wild Reads with Rachel, our preschool programmer, to enjoy outdoor story time, play fun games, and explore the local parks as a small group at offsite locations in the villages of NOTL such as St. Davids, Willowbank at Queenston and Niagara Shores Park.

Kids aged seven-plus who enjoy a good scavenger hunt can join Shaantih in Clarke Square. This weekly program takes place at offsite locations throughout NOTL. Get outdoors and become an expert clue seeker as you find the clues, seek the solutions and solve the puzzle in this outdoor scavenger hunt program.

Kids aged four to 10 can join Colin on Thursdays for Make & Explore, a new outdoor, in-person program where kids can explore the wonderful world we live in, through fun activities complete with a little something to take home each week. Colin has prepared a different project or activity that speaks to the weekly Summer Reading Program themes and highlights a different section of NOTL such as St. Davids, Willowbank at Queenston and Niagara Shores Park.

If you Can: Family Scavenger Hunt. Christine Regatt, the library’s IT and Makey assistant, has hidden geocaches in secret locations throughout NOTL.

To find them, register your team on our website and you will be emailed the coordinates to find on your hunt. Each time you find a hidden cache and write your team name in the log book, you will be entered to win one of two family prize packs which include books, skateboards, treats and more.

Serious and for the kids who love to tinker and investigate, we have the popular Tinker Thinker Thursdays program happening this summer with Kasia for kids aged seven to 13. This July, we will explore rai building and make our own marble maze and in August, we will create a cranky contraption and learn about circuits as we build a light-up sculpture. Both sessions include kits that contain all the materials needed to take part and “tinker thinker” with us from home.

Spent some quality family time together this summer by taking part in our Cache Me If You Can: Family Scavenger Hunt. Christine Regatt, the library’s IT and Makey assistant, has hidden geocaches in secret locations throughout NOTL. To find them, register your team on our website and you will be emailed the coordinates to find on your hunt. Each time you find a hidden cache and write your team name in the log book, you will be entered to win one of two family prize packs which include books, skateboards, treats and more.

July’s caches are already hidden and waiting to be found before July 29, and the locations will be reset for August. Visit the library website to register your team and start searching.

For the kids who love to read, you all this summer at the library’s TikTok dream team, creating fresh and funny content weekly. Visit @notlbrary on Instagram and @TikTok to check out some of their reels.

We look forward to seeing you all this summer at the library. For more on the program or virtually Additional program details, dates and registration are available on our website: www.notlpubliclibrary.org

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Owen Bjorgan, Dave Tebbutt, and Kirstyn Smith enjoy a tubing adventure on Four Mile Creek. (Owen Bjorgan)

Creek tubing offers wildlife and wild times

Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

On our private property on the outskirts of Virgil, a tributary of Four Mile Creek transitions from a glorified ditch and back into its original state.

When the creek crosses our property line, it is no longer linear. A meandering world of serpentine bends is guiding me through the wooded area, and there's no walking required.

I'm sitting on a giant black tire tube, courtesy of Enns Battery and Tire up the road. Two years in a row now, and usually during our first heat wave of the season, Enns gets a very excited phone call from me looking for tire tubes so I can float the daylight's out of this creek.

It's not only an impossible amount of fun, but also a trip down an aqua avenue to observe local wildlife from angles and habitats rarely visited.

We started tubing as early as the middle of May this year. That's when our first unseasonally hot and dry spell settled over southern Ontario. When these conditions prevail, the creek naturally begins to desiccate.

This is precisely the time where more water is pumped into these creeks to rejuvenate their levels, allowing farmers to suck water out so they can properly irrigate the orchards and vineyards. The water typically comes from the Niagara River or the Sir Adam Beck Hydroelectric Station Reservoir.

That means that even on a toasty Niagara day, the water is surprisingly high. I plunk my bottom into the tire tube, I kick back, and what happens next is my new favourite downtime activity.

You're weightless body passes under the shady boughs of a pine tree stand. Exiting the cool alcove, you float under the first bridge of the property, which then gives way to a sunny, grassy corner of the creek. You round the first tight corner of many, admiring the steep banks and tree roots tumbling down to the water's edge. The trickle behind you disappears, and you find yourself on a deep and ultra-relaxing straight-away before the next bend.

On this property, the creek runs its natural course with curves and turns. This allows a series of invaluable microhabitats to form. Where the creek makes a sharp kink in the land, it typically changes the shape of the embankment, resulting in deeper pockets of water in between sections of shallow ripples.

Continued on page 21
Celebrations of Canada are underway. With the nation slowly reopening as mass vaccinations roll out, many Canadians born here or those who have chosen to call Canada home are contemplating celebrating with backyard barbecues and picnics at parks. Many communities have declared red and white dollar store regalia. Cheap flag-laden cowboy hats and maps on which the province bands serve as the patriotic uniform to ring in the 153rd anniversary of this federation.

The same British Empire that on July 1, 1867, appointed John A. Macdonald as the first prime minister of this new nation, MacDonald, our "founding father," deserves our attention as the father of this country, and residents across the country, and around the world, as well approach by Canadians, our "founding father," along with his government, institutionalized a system of discrimination against the original inhabitants of this land that has brought shame to our nation. Shame, despair, anger and disgust are a few of the emotions felt by citizens and residents across the country. This truth-telling isn't finished, and absolutely we are not going to see the end of it in our generation, so people also need to see that too.

Recently, Henry has been approached by Canadian students, such as Facca, looking for clarification, guidance, direction and resources on this issue. He says that he has been asked mainly one reoccurring question: What can I do? To answer this question, he outlined six steps in his hour-long presentation, Path to Moving Forward, that was hosted by the NOTL Museum last Thursday.

1. "Recognize your voice and support matters." Henry advocates for people to support the revitalization of Indigenous languages through speaking out to politicians. Ask for a change in policies, or even take an Indigenous language course yourself.

2. "Know that this history is everyone's history, not just Indigenous peoples." Educate yourself about the history. Read the stories of the experiences of Indigenous peoples, such as Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese. Read They Come for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools, by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is available through publications.gc.ca. Henry suggests just "go online and search," he says, quoting Justice Murray Sinclair. "Education goes in one ear and education will get us out." Henry suggests people to talk about your thoughts and feelings about residential schools. Talk about which reconciliations means to you. Open these conversations with family and friends. Share your learning with others. Conversations are key to also enabling meaningful change," he advises. Almost 153 years later, our current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said of the Marieval grave site, that he was "terribly saddened," and that it was "a shameful reminder of the systemic racism, discrimination, and injustice that Indigenous peoples have faced."

Henry and Facca want this reminder to be a lesson. A lesson that will spark the pursuit of an education. An education, through opening conversations, creating a dialogue, learning about Indigenous peoples' cultures, language and history.

"I believe that we should do one thing, educate ourselves by reading books and talking to Indigenous people that would be the first step in our reconciliation," says Facca. Henry reminds us that "reconciliation is a process, not an event." We need to educate ourselves about the past in order to move forward into the future together.

While the presentation was not recorded, a great place to start your education is through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report at http://www.trc.ca/ or the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba https://ntrc-ca/.

Henry also encourages people to contact their local Indigenous Friendship Centres that are located across the province. They are a great resource especially for Indigenous people in the area that want to reconnect with their culture and language. The Niagara Regional Native Centre is located at 382 Airport Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON. https://nrnc.ca/.

The NOTL Museum is also providing an opportunity to show your support to residential school survivors by organizing a bulk order of T-shirts and hoodies to support the Woodland Cultural Centre – Save the Evidence Project. Proceeds from these shirts will benefit the Save the Evidence Campaign, helping Woodland Cultural Centre restore and open the former Mokwah Institute as a space of Cultural Interpretation and Indigenous Resilience. Uni-sex T-Shirts are $20 and hoodies are $40. Money will be due upon pick-up of your order at the Museum and will be delivered in time for you to proudly wear on Orange Shirt Day on Sept. 30.

Please contact the museum for further information and how to order. https://www.notlmuseum.ca/ or by calling 905-468-3912.
Exciting new format moves lacrosse outside

New league formed combines players from across Niagara

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Minor lacrosse players across Niagara who usually compete against each other will be playing side-by-side this summer.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Thunderhawks Minor Lacrosse Club has joined forces with organizations in Fort Erie, Lincoln, Pelham and St. Catharines to form the Niagra-ra Lacrosse League (NLL). Club President Chris Williams says the decision was made to unite the associations in an effort to get kids playing again, after a summer away from Canada’s national summer sport.

“The club presidents got together and we came up with this format,” Williams explains. “It allows us to have four teams at each age division, and we’re mixing the teams. For the next two weeks, we’re looking at the players and well separate them by talent, so each team is balanced. That means each team will have kids from all five clubs.”

Williams says there was zero difficulty in getting the five associations to work together. “The focus all along has been to get the youth back on the field after almost two years off.”

It’s a huge change in the way local lacrosse is usually run. In addition with COVID-19 still in the picture, for the first time the action will all take place outdoors this year.

Next week the players from all the clubs will move to the turf fields at A.N. Myer and Westlane Secondary Schools in Niagara Falls. But visitors to the fields at the Virgil sports park the past two weeks would have 14 scores of kids aged three to 18 packing the fields there.

Williams says the DSBN wouldn’t allow more than 10 people on the turf until Stage 2 of the province’s current reopen- ing plan. But he was able to make an agreement with NOTL Parks and Recreation department to get the kids onto the local fields.

Niagara Falls as the home base makes more sense to the other clubs, as it is a bit more central for parents travelling from Fort Erie, Lincoln and Pelham.

According to Williams, the 80 NOTL players involved this year don’t care where they play, they’re just happy to have a stick in their hands again.

“Because they are playing outdoors doesn’t mean they’ll be playing field lacrosse, though. The clubs have agreed to use a hybrid set of rules, while dividing the playing field into two, with the sidelines becoming the goal lines.”

“It uses some box lacrosse rules, and some field lacrosse rules,” says Williams. “Box lacrosse is usually five players plus a goalie, field is usually nine and a goaliekeeper. What we’re doing is seven-on-seven, with two attackers, two midfielders, two defenders and a goaliekeeper. Box lacrosse is the fastest game on two feet. This hybrid game continues to be very fast because we’re playing side-to-side, allow- ing for lots of ball movement.”

Williams is pleased with the turnout from the local kids. Thunderhawks Minor Lacrosse usually can rely on about 110 registrations per year. Williams speculates that the slightly lower number is due to the border closure, as the club can only count on a number of American kids registering each summer. Amongst the five clubs involved, though, only St. Catharines has more kids playing.

Members from each assoc- iation are involved in running the new NLL. As well, an effort has been made to ensure at least one coach from each club is part of the coaching staff at each age level. It means coaches who are usually rivals are working together and learning from each other this summer.

“These are all lacrosse players who have played the game for years,” Williams says. “We came together quickly, with one goal in mind, and that was to provide the best lacrosse available in the Niagara region, from kids just starting out to kids who have been playing since they were three or four or older. It’s been a pleasure to work with all these associations.”

Pandemic-era rules are still in force, of course. Hand sanitizer is available at check-in tables upon entry and exit.

The two-metre rule is still being enforced, and online screening before each practice is required. Each age group is capped at 50 participants, including coaches, and as of this week, following the move to Stage 2, scrimmages, not full on games, are being allowed.

“I haven’t heard one nega- tive comment,” Williams says. “Everyone was just dying to get out. There’s no other op- tion, with the arenas closed.”

This is what’s available, this is what COVID is allowing us to do. It’s great to see them back on the fields, laughing, and playing again. It’s about their friendships, their communication skills, and their mental health.”

Williams has to hold back his excitement about an up- coming announcement of the names of the teams this summer. “We’ve come up with some really good Niagara region names, some really, really nice uniforms and colours. It’s kind of like a secret right now. But once they come up, you’ll experience the Niagara region feel. Each team will be named after something in the Niagara region.”

Though registration is currently full, Williams says the club is still taking names for a waiting list of sorts. As well, they are considering starting a one-a-day-week session on the Virgil fields to introduce newcomers from NOTL to the game.

Despite his excitement for this summer, Williams does believe next summer will see a return to the arenas and business as usual. “Next year should go back to normal,” he speculates, “where Niagara-on-the-Lake does their stuff. St. Catharines does their stuff, and so on. For now, though, we’re just happy we’ve gotten together to do this, and we’re just happy to make it happen. We’re not looking at the future of what lacrosse could be or should be.”

“I guess the biggest word this year is adapting,” Wil- liams concludes. “We’ve had to adapt, we’ve had to bounce ideas around. It’s a new league, and you know, we had to wait for the government to make their decisions. It’s been challenging, but we’re happy with the way it has worked out.”

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Logs and rocks tumble into the water and settle for a new life, where they create water dynamics which shape the back to your tubing team to prepare for “the gauntlet,” a fast section of creek that pushes you through a tunnel of vegetation at high speed. Of course, we’re not talking about Niagara River rapids, but this is the relative excitement you get for a NOTL creek.

The creek is primari- ly lined with willows, their roots creating a blood red fringe along the banks while their branches close you in from above. It just adds to the aesthetics of the situation, as you end up spinning in cir- cles and cruising through a tube while on a tube.

While you’re laughing and cruising to the next bend, frogs and toads hop in from the edge with a clas- sikerplunk salute. A musk- rat swims ahead of you as if to say, “I do this every day.”

Recently, my girlfriend and I followed a mother mallard duck and her seven ducklings for the slightly longer distance of tubing. Last year, my brother and I tubed by a gar- ganous snapping turtle, who appeared to be a rock with legs at a first glance. I picked the creature up to appreciate her reptilian sturdiness, and proceeded to watch her swim upstream with no effort. A green heron flies above, his view healthy and wholesome, as the creek winds around creating scores of habitat and hunting opportunities.

Essentially, this creek is a habitat corridor for NOTL’s native species to move throughout its watershed. This is also evidenced by the deer tracks leading up and down the banks, and our oc- casional sightings of coyotes on the property.

An idea I’ve had for years is to have a creel to capture the fish, but I never knew how to get fish safely and humanely in a creel.

After the gauntlet, I’m floating under a natural log bridge which we call sport bridge, where we sometimes tie up drinks for our thirsty friends as a halfway point surprise. After that, I’m float- ing through a sunny and slow area of the creek, filled with yellow water lilies and soft, grassy edges. Many twists, turns, and moments of relaxation later, I’m crawling up the bank at the other end of the property, which is where the adventure ends.

Several years ago, my friend Will Friesen and I took advantage of a flood situa- tion, which took us past East and West Line and down past Wagg Road.

Since then, I’ve been joined by my mom, my brother, my best buddies, my girlfriend and my dog for tu- bular times. Every time I taste the fresh air and gratitude of this experience, it’s a gentle reminder that we can get cre- ate with our outdoor fun right here in Niagara.

Additionally, it is a re- minder that an area of our human enjoyment is also an area of immense natural im- portance.
Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

General manager Johan Eriksson is adamant that the new Niagara-on-the-Lake Predators Junior A hockey squad will be a community team.

Having moved from Toronto, and scheduled to play in the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League (GMHL), the Predators will be playing half of their 42-game regular season at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil. The other 21 games will take place on the road, mostly visiting their Southern Division opponents in towns such as Kingtonville, Tottenham, Caledon, Oshawa and Durham. Locally, Port Colborne also has a team in the GMHL, the Niagara Whalers.

Eriksson says the move to NOTL was the first priority on his list.

“Our owner really liked the place too,” he tells The Local. “In Niagara, you have so many players coming up in Junior B and Triple-A levels. Niagara is a stronghold for hockey, and Niagara-on-the-Lake didn’t have a Junior A team. For us, it worked out perfectly.”

And they love the facility in Virgil.

“The rink is in good shape, it’s on the newer side,” he says. There are professional-level cameras already set up, a good room for a play-by-play announcer, good locker rooms. It will be one of the better rinks in this division in the league.”

Eriksson says the level of play in the Tier 2 GMHL compares nicely to the well-known Junior B loop, the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League, of which the St. Catharines Falcons and Thorold Old Blackwells are members.

Eriksson feels the GMHL should actually be designated as a Junior A league, which is something the owners of some of the clubs there have been pushing for. Players in the GMHL tend to get noticed by scouts from the American colleges, which is a common goal for many.

Eriksson himself knows the scouting world. He moved to Canada three years ago as a scout for Swedish hockey teams. In that role he visited arenas in the American Hockey League and the East Coast Hockey League to report on players being eyed by teams in his homeland.

He began his affiliation with the GMHL as assistant general manager of the South Muskoka Shield of the league’s Northern Division, where he spent two seasons before moving to the Predators.

Besides managing the Predators, Eriksson also works as a European liaison, player advisor, amateur representative and consultant for Pursuit Hockey Development, a Niagara-based business focused on helping aspiring players reach their goals in the sport.

Eriksson’s Swedish connections mean that the NOTL Predators will most likely have up to eight players from that country, four of whom have already committed to the team. There are also a few players from Russia that are signed.

The rest of the roster will be filled out by elite hockey prospects mostly from Ontario. And Eriksson wants some local hockey players on the team as well.

“We are keeping a number of spots for local players,” he says. “A lot of local kids will get invitations to our prospect camp in August. And if local players born between 2000 and 2005, especially from ’03 to ’05, are interested, they can always reach out to me, night or day.”

The Predators finished their most recent season (2019-2020) in last place in the GMHL’s South Division, with a record of 8-3-2-2. But Eriksson is certain that won’t be the case once the league gets the go-ahead to begin in the fall.

“Every year for the Predators so far they’ve been, we are working on developing a team,” explains Eriksson. “That means they’ve had a roster that was two to three years younger than the other teams. This year we feel that we can go for the Russell Cup. We have some top talent coming in here now, and we’ve managed to raise the age level a little bit too.”

The team will be coached by Andrew Whalen. Hired in April, Whalen had a long career playing professionally in the Swedish pro league Hockeyettan. He also runs his own development program year-round for both junior and pro players.

To accommodate those international and out-of-region Prospects, Eriksson is looking for billet families in town. He is hoping to find spots for about 15 players, depending on whether or not some of them coming from overseas may be barred from leaving due to border closures.

Billet families are expected to provide the players with housing, food, Wi-Fi and utilities. The compensation for the billet host is $550 per month as well as family passes for regular season and the playoffs.

The organization is also hoping to line up volunteers to take on a number of important duties, including coordinating the billets and plan play-by-play announcing. The games will be streamed live on GMHLtv. Adult tickets for the home games are expected to be about $7 to $8.

Barring any further COVID issues, the Predators are expected to start their main camp in the middle of September, which is when the billet families would be welcoming them into their homes. Eriksson remains optimistic that the 2021-2022 season will begin on schedule.

“We are so happy to be here,” enthuses Eriksson. “We really want it to become a community team. Our players are going to be out and about, we really want them to be out there. People have tips as to what we can do in the community, we welcome them to reach out.”

For information about billeting or other volunteer opportunities, contact Eriksson by phone at 365-323-5789 or via email at jeriksson1984@gmail.com.

Johan Eriksson, from Sweden, hopes to have some local players on the team. (Photo supplied)
BRADLEY, LYNN LOUISE—It is with heavy hearts and sadness that we announce the sudden passing of our daughter and sister at the age of 62 at Upper Canada Lodge on Friday, June 25th, 2021.

Lynn is predeceased by her husband Carmen Topping, her father Allen Bradley, and brother Bruce. Survived by her mother Hope Bradley, siblings Robert (Shelagh), Jim (Kathy), Mary (Alvin), Allison (Henry), Paul, and sister-in-law Mary MacDougall.

Also survived by nieces and nephews Zoé, Leah and Stephan, Bradley and Courtney, Erica and Cameron, Michael and Tyler, and Abby and Allenah.

Lynn worked for the Niagara Health System for 37 years and volunteered at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital after her retirement. Lynn was a life long member of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and an avid traveller. A private service will be held Friday, July 2nd at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Interment to follow in the Church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church would be gratefully acknowledged as expressions of sympathy. Arrangements entrusted to George Darte Funeral Home, 585 Carlton St., St. Catharines. Sign our online guestbook at www.georgedartefuneralhome.com

Sell your unwanted items or advertise your garage sale in our CLASSIFIEDS

Deadline: Mondays at 3 p.m.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from June 23, 2021

Across:
1. Able was I ere I saw —
4. The Paris subway
10. 4 qts.
16. The big bang
17. Aural atmospher
20. A riot
22. Cob
24. A Riot
25. List
26. Ear...
The emphasis for NOTL Minor Softball is on developing skills and a love for the game.

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

About 90 boys and girls hit the diamonds at Virgil Sports Park last Wednesday for the relaunch of NOTL Minor Softball.

Club president Peter Flynn explains that the pandemic aftermath forced a couple of changes to the club divisions. The usual offering of four age groups, encompassing ages three to 14, has been pared down to two groups. Unfortunately, the squirt (nine to 11 year olds) and peewee (12 to 14 year olds) divisions will not be running this summer.

“We have the Learn to Play division for three, four and five year olds,” Flynn explains, “but we added six year olds this year, because everyone lost a year last summer. We’ve divided them up, with three and four year olds, and then five and six year olds.”

Those ages run Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m., with kids rotating through different stations, concentrating on learning the skills of the game. Flynn says the goal is to keep them moving at all times, with stations focusing on throwing, hitting and exercising for the full hour.

“We get those little three and four year olds running from home plate all the way out to the big fence on B diamond, and back,” Flynn exclaims. “Then we do a cheer. I’m hearing from the parents about how happy they are to see their kids active again.”

The next division, which takes the field at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, has also been revamped for 2021.

“Coaches Pitch used to be ages six, seven and eight,” he explains, “but now we’re doing seven, eight, nine and 10, to get back that one year that some kids missed. Unfortunately, due to COVID, and moving to a new website, we only had nine older kids sign up.”

Flynn says the organization has become comfortable in its role as a “starter point” for youth interested in baseball and softball. Over the past few years he has seen more of the peewee players (ages 12 to 14) moving on to play hardball in St. Catharines or Niagara Falls, or fastpitch at the Grantham Optimist Club in St. Catharines.

The overall emphasis for NOTL Minor Softball has always been on developing skills and a love for the game. That hasn’t changed with the new revamped age groups.

What has changed is a set of protocols that has required parents to keep their distance on the fields. For Learn to Play kids are reminded to use hand sanitizer at the start of practice. The coaches have a bucket of balls that are regularly disinfected. Kids are handed a ball to use, and that is theirs for the duration of the session. They return it at the end, when the whole bucket is disinfected once again.

Thus far, participants in both age divisions have been organized into groups that are capped at 10. This week provincial regulations loosen up enough to allow up to 25 people together for outdoor activities. Flynn says they will for now stick to the groups of 10, but the larger number may allow for them to soon move into game play for the older kids.

Of the first sessions on the field, Flynn says, “everyone had a really good time. So many parents were commenting about how happy they were to be out there, and to see soccer out there too. And they were happy that we were able to make an agreement on the times with soccer so that some kids could do both.”

Though registration is closed online, Flynn says the club will still accept some last minute registrants depending on space in the age divisions. Interested parents should call him at 905-327-1620, or send an email to info@notlsoftball.org as soon as possible.

The emphasis for NOTL Minor Softball is on developing skills and a love for the game. (Photo supplied)

Benny Bayne is ready to get back on the ball diamond. (Photo supplied)