



**Student wins French film award**  
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Twelve-year-old friends Leila Ridesic, Eliana McManus and Ruby Elltoft, on the steps of the former hospital steps, now used by Royal Oak Community School. The girls, all very knowledgeable, used the occasion to talk about Indigenous children, residential schools, and their feelings about what they have learned. (Penny Coles)

## Local students set up memorial honouring Indigenous children on Canada Day

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

For students of Royal Oak Community School, learning about Indigenous people, including residential schools, is about much more than Orange Shirt Day.

With mixed reactions and emotions leading up to Canada Day, and discussions of cancelling or altering celebrations after discoveries of unmarked graves at residential schools, two Royal Oak students decided they wanted to do something to honour and acknowledge the children who died while at those schools.

Leila Ridesic and Ruby Elltoft, both going into Grade 7 in September, chose Canada Day to set up a memorial on the steps of the former Wellington Street hospital, the current site of their school, with a collec-

tion of shoes, which have become a symbol of mourning and recognition.

Their school recognizes Sept. 30 as a day set aside to wear orange shirts to honour Indigenous children, they say, and the day is also used as a learning tool to teach students, but at Royal Oak, Indigenous education has been an important part of its curriculum for many years.

The girls mention both head of school Julia Murray and teacher Kristen Koyle have backgrounds in Indigenous education, and students are taught regularly their history and culture.

"They are qualified to teach these subjects,

They even have a small, special library dedicated to books about Indigenous people,

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## Roundabout 'preferred option' for St. Davids Village's four corners will disappear

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

As the number of homes and businesses increase in St. Davids, along with its population, infrastructure to accommodate the accompanying spike in traffic has not kept pace.

The need for improved traffic flow at the main intersection, known by locals as the four corners, has become an issue for residents, truckers

and those just passing through, with vehicles on Four Mile Creek crossing York Road creating lengthy back-ups, often blocking driveways, says Greg Dell, past president of the St. Davids Residents Association.

Before the 2003 sewer project opened up property for development in the village, including the Cannery Park subdivision, there were about 250 homes in the community. That has grown to well over 1,600 homes, and a corresponding

growth in population and traffic.

The regional project is looking at solutions to the traffic problem, says Dell, and recently held its second virtual public information meeting, but the residents association is not yet satisfied with the response to local concerns — he sees a lack in communication and in transparency with the way this has been handled.

The two options presented to ease flow of traffic and

reduce back-ups, were traffic lights or a roundabout, but from the start, he believes the region was set on moving forward with a roundabout.

The region is currently undertaking an environmental assessment study to identify an implementation strategy for the transportation infrastructure requirements for the intersection, looking at increased transportation capacity, improved street lighting, more sidewalks, and bike lanes.

Maged Elmadhoon, the region's manager of transportation planning, says the re-

gion has not yet calculated the estimated construction cost of the roundabout. "This will be done at a later stage, once the preliminary design has been finalized," he says.

"Aside from operating and maintenance costs, typically capital costs to construct roundabouts may be higher."

However this might not be the case in St. Davids, he continues, "since there will be significant changes to the geometric design of the intersection for both options."

The option of installing traffic signals at that intersec-

tion will not be a simple one, he explains.

"While the roundabout, for example will have only one lane approaching the intersection, in the case of traffic signals, there will be one through lane and one left turn lane approaching on each direction. In addition, the signalized intersection will require underground infrastructure for the traffic signals, which will not be needed for the roundabout."

Residents' concerns, primarily with a roundabout, were

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# Memorial helps raise awareness for passers-by

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and are encouraged to read them, the girls explain.

Both mention a book called *Fatty Legs*, a true story about an Indigenous girl who faced bullying and cruelty at a residential school, that helped them understand what the schools were like, and how Indigenous children were treated.

The main character in the book had actually wanted to go away to school, knowing it was a five-day journey from her home, but anxious to learn. She soon learned it was not what she expected.

The title of the book, explains Ruby, refers to the beautiful red stockings the girl's mother had made for her, but which she was not allowed to wear.

Leila remembers reading the book as well, and realizing how really awful it was for the children who attended residential schools.

Eliana McManus, a Crossroads Public School student who has been friends with Leila and Ruby since their days at Parliament Oak, before the Old Town school closed, stopped by on her bike to attend the memorial and visit with her friends.

Although her school recognizes Orange Shirt Day, she says, there have been no lessons about residential schools.

"I learned about them from my mom," she says. "It has never been brought up at school. But I knew about the residential schools. I knew they were never good."

The girls also mention *Anne with an E*, a CBC TV spin-off from the *Anne of Green Gables* tales. In its third season, *Anne* becomes friends with a young First Nations girl, and the show becomes an opportunity to teach kids about Indigenous issues, and the dark side of Canadian history.

Eliana's father, actor Patrick McManus, plays a priest in the series. The girls talk about the irony of a "really nice man"

playing a part of someone who is not so nice, but they also found it an eye-opener regarding Canadian history, and an opportunity to discuss it with their parents.

"It's important to know what is going on," says Ruby.

"It wasn't that long ago that this happened," adds Leila, referring to residential schools, "and a lot of people didn't know about them. Residential schools were around for a long time, and people didn't see that they weren't okay, that what was happening there wasn't right. It's very important that we know that now, and that people who don't know can ask questions," she says, explaining why they decided to have their memorial on Canada Day.

Throughout the day they had some students drop off shoes, and some passers-by ask them what they were doing, Leila said. "I'm very glad about that. It feels good that at least some people stopped to look at what we're doing, and to be able to do something for the community."

Leila was also glad to see a number of orange shirts on people who were walking their dogs or cycling by, she said.

Ruby's mom, Kim Elltoft, with the girls on the steps of Parliament Oak, says she's grateful for the school's instruction in Indigenous education, which tailors what it teaches to the appropriate age level of the students.

Parents are informed of lessons weekly, and that gives them an opportunity to know what their kids are learning, and continue discussions with them, she explained.

Hopefully, recent news and an increased awareness of residential schools may encourage the public school board to change their policies on Canadian history and include more Indigenous education in their curriculum, Elltoft added.

As a member of the Landscape of Nations 360 Round-

table, ROCS head of school Julia Murray has helped create curriculum and professional development experiences in Indigenous history for the District School Board of Niagara and independent school teachers across Niagara.

ROCS teacher Kristen Koyle has a masters in education, with a specialty in Indigenous education, and completed a year-long Landscape of Nations educator's course.

Tim Johnson heads the Landscape of Nations 360° Indigenous Education Initiative alongside Michele-Elise Burnett, who works as associate director for the initiative, as well as a team of Indigenous advisors and cultural resource specialists.

The Landscape of Nations 360° Indigenous Education Initiative is a not-for-profit organization that creates, designs and implements programs to teach Niagara students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 about Indigenous people, their culture and their contribution to Canadian history and society.

Murray, a lead educator in that initiative, has ensured Indigenous history, perspectives and truth are a priority in the school's curriculum.

"For too long, children have learned only a partial history, and the experience of Indigenous people in Canada has been purposely excluded from this narrative," she says in a note to parents leading up to Canada Day.

Royal Oak, she says, includes teaching the truths of Canada's policies regarding residential schools and Indigenous policies, including current living conditions in many First Nations communities.

The Grade 6/7/8 class delved into the Truth and Reconciliation report, studied water quality and access in First Nations communities, and as far back as September, she says, included Indigenous experts in their study of the constellations and astronomy.

Younger students learned about the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people, and ways of living in the region, historically and to the present day. Junior grades were active partici-

pants in learning about Autumn Peltier, a Canadian water activist advocating for clean drinking in First Nations.

Murray also shared a book list and other resour-

ces for parents and students, at <https://www.cbc.ca/books/20-canadian-books-for-kids-and-teens-to-read-for-national-indigenous-history-month-1.5597339>.



Leila Ridesic and Ruby Elltoft display the tiny shoes dropped off for their memorial, including a pair of moccasins, but are saddened to think of what they represent. (Penny Coles)





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# Harber family fears roundabout 'a done deal'

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addressed in a regional recap of a March open house.

At that time the St. Davids Residents Association and others primarily were hoping for lights, as the safer and less intrusive option, Dell says, but at the second June 23 virtual public meeting, the region presented the roundabout as their preferred alternative.

"We said whoa, wait a minute. Let's take a look at that. We've had a concern about it all along that there wasn't enough engineering done to ensure it's a safe option. We've asked the region to show us what they've got. We don't want to be a close-minded group. We want to see how this solution is the right one for St. Davids."

Pedestrian safety, especially for the growing number of children walking to and from St. Davids Public School, west of the intersection, remains one of their chief concerns, says Dell.

The response from the region has been that the project team is aware of the pedestrian traffic in the area, and pedestrian safety is a high priority. If a roundabout is constructed, the region will launch an educational campaign for the residents in the area, to ensure the safe use of a roundabout for both pedestrians and drivers.

While traffic signals may be perceived as safer for pedestrians, statistics, the region says, show the opposite — a roundabout is safer than an intersection with traffic lights, for pedestrians and drivers. Most pedestrians hurt at an intersection are from cars turning at a traffic signal.

Traffic lights have lower installation costs, but a roundabout has lower lifetime maintenance costs, the regional report says.

The residents' association is not happy about what they see "as a lack of communication, a lack of transparency, and a lack of listening to what residents are saying," Dell says.

He doesn't feel the region's roundabout design "is addressing the dynamics of pedestrian traffic, both for kids and seniors, and the number of tourists who will use it."

Residents and business owners are also afraid traffic will continue to be backed up on Four Mile Creek Road from Warner Road to Line 9, blocking driveways, he adds.

And there is still no mention of a community safety zone on Four Mile Creek Road, as was originally requested and "forgotten" when the region went ahead with one on York Road, which slows traffic through the school area.

The number of people moving to the village and the associated traffic problems "will only grow in the coming years, and the region is just forgetting about us. The region needs to look at the big picture and plan for the future."

Steve Hardaker's interest in the intersection reconstruction is as a congregation member and board chair of St. Davids-Queenston United Church. His concern is regarding the historic cemetery, with its first grave dating back to 1823. Major David Secord, the founder of the village, is also buried there, he says, and the church is worried that the project, especially new sidewalks, which are supposed to go as far as Concession 3, could encroach on the cemetery property.

"We want to know about the plan if unmarked graves are unearthed," he said. "Who knows what is on the outside edge of the cemetery?"

There is also a mature tree on the edge of the property, and the church has asked the region whether it will need to be removed, and if so, what they will replace it with.

In addition, they are seeking assurances from the region that there will continue to be safe access to the cemetery and the church parking lot through construction, says Hardaker.

He's happy to see that bike lanes are being considered for York Road, and for his purpose, which is strictly to look after the interests of the church, he says the region has been good about communicating, and quick to respond to their concerns.

Paul Harber of Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery says some years ago, his family presented a proposal to the town for a piece of commercial property the family owns at that intersection — the one with the plaque, that the town uses for its annual Christmas tree.

The proposal was for a three-storey building, retail on the bottom, offices on the second storey, apartments on the top, and parking in the back. It would be designed "to pay homage to the streetscape of the village," says Harber, but the family did not intend to move ahead with it until they learned more about the future plans for that intersection.

After a recent conversation with a project manager and roundabout specialist, his father Blair fears the decision in favour of a roundabout is a "done deal."

If the roundabout goes ahead, the region will expropriate almost the entire frontage of their property, and their development, meant as a convenience for St. Davids residents and businesses, "won't be happening," says



The Harber family owns the corner at York Road and Four Mile Creek Road, with the tree the town usually decorates for Christmas. If they are right in their fear the decision has been made in favour of a roundabout, the frontage of their property will be expropriated. (Photo supplied)

Paul. "The property would be rendered useless. And there won't be much community space left for modern conveniences."

Paul was at the virtual meeting to advocate for traffic signals, which would help preserve the traditional look of the historic village, while also providing gaps in traffic for vehicles entering and exiting driveways along York Road and Four Mile Creek Road, including the small post office parking lot, which is always troublesome, he says.

Other roundabouts the region has designed work well, he adds, "but they're not in the middle of a small village, and a working community. It won't be the four corners any more. And I don't know of any roundabout in the middle of a community safety zone."

And what of the large trucks that go through the intersection now, and the trailers being towed by truck from Niagara Trailers — will they all have to find a route other than the small roundabout?

He is also concerned that the all-important traffic study done by the region did not include the school, the area of Tanbark with new homes, and much of Canney Park, all of which put added pressure on the intersection.

St. Davids has grown in the last 15 years, from three per cent of the population of NOTL to almost 18 per cent, and is still growing, says Harber, but none of the roads have been improved. He would like the region to look at improving some of those roads including Line 9, as ways to direct traffic around the village, instead of just concentrating on changes for traffic going through the one main intersection.

And if the roundabout goes ahead without other road improvements, he questions what will happen to traffic during construction.

If the region determines the roundabout is the best solution, and the majority

of people agree, Paul says he and his family will be fine with it, although he would still prefer traffic lights as the more appropriate solution.

Elmadhoon says there will be a summary report of all comments the region has heard from the public, and responses, posted on the project website after the public review period.

A presentation or a report to town council is not required, he says.

There is still an opportunity for the public to provide input, and residents will also

have a chance to review the final Environmental Study Report during the 30-day review period.

"The consultant is still refining the design alignment of the roundabout, and we will be meeting with the owners of the properties that are impacted," he says.

"We are targeting the completion of the EA in the fall," he adds, and the next step, after the ministry's approval of the EA, "will be detailed design, property acquisition, utility relocation, and actual construction,

which is not expected before 2023."

The Harbers were really hoping there would be some opportunity for further discussion about the options, before the decision is made, as well as an expanded traffic study, and a look at improving roads to go around the village.

"I think there is still a need for open dialogue," says Paul. "This will affect 3,600 residents. I don't want to see the decision rushed."

He hopes he's wrong, but he fears it's already too late.



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# Jet boat future at town dock uncertain

## Cross-lake ferry operation still in the works

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Reopening the border to the U.S. can't come soon enough for John Kinney, president of Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours.

But with an operation in Lewiston, "we're one of the lucky ones," he says of his boat tours, knowing he's in a much better situation than most businesses.

"If I had to rely on domestic Ontario business, I'd be really up the creek," he says. "I'm fortunate to be a little more diversified with a U.S. operation. The dichotomy between the two now tells the story."

He can run tours at full capacity from the other side of the border, with every boat full, while the latest stage of reopening is now allowing him to operate his boats from the Queenston dock with just 12 passengers each tour, while all the full fixed charges for insurance, maintenance, staff and other fixed costs continue. Government regulations dictate maintenance is required to be carried out according to the number of hours the boats are operated, and he is running more boats to accommodate fewer people.

He can take advantage of some of the government subsidies, he says, but there are no subsidies for rebuilding engines or jet drivers.

"Last year, we did four times the number of boat tours for one-quarter of the number of passengers," he says.

He's decided not to use the town-owned Melville Street dock this season — the numbers don't justify more than one operation in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In 2019, Kinney says he paid \$175,000, the full cost of his lease to the town, al-

though he didn't use it.

In February, 2020, Kinney asked council for some consideration of that amount, saying high water levels drove his operation completely to Queenston.

He made a proposal to the town for a reduced cost for 2020, offering to pay \$44,000, and at the end of the year, on Dec. 28, he dropped off a cheque for that amount at the town hall.

However, he was later told by his lawyer that council had not ratified that agreement.

All council discussions of lease negotiations have been held in closed session, and recently councillors have been discussing the town dock, but with no information about what was said made public.

Kinney is waiting to hear from his lawyer whether the town is looking for more money from him, if so, how much, and what is expected of him for 2021.

He says he applauds the way the town has stepped up for restaurants, supporting their outdoor patios, but the jet boat business, off the beaten track from tourism traffic, doesn't benefit from that.

Although border openings will improve his business outlook, he expects it will take three or four years for tourism to rebound.

"People think attractions are allowed to reopen, and COVID must be in the rear view mirror. Clearly, it's not, and it will be some time before tourism recovers."

Although he says he hopes his jet boats play a part of the Dock Area scene in the future, it's far from guaranteed his business will have a place in the town's master plan for the waterfront.

The town has done a good job of acquiring waterfront property, "which I applaud," he says, but as soon as there is a suggestion made about



John Kinney will run jet boats from the Queenston dock this summer, although at a very reduced capacity. He has no plans to return to the town-owned Melville Street dock this season. (Photo supplied)

what to do with it, "there is immediate pushback. Residents don't have a bona fide waterfront to go to. It's community owned, but assets like the Melville dock are basically unused."

The town had asked, even before 2019, that some of the jet boat operations be moved upriver to take pressure off the Dock Area, which it did.

He says Whirlpool Jets could be part of the waterfront, and he'd like to engage with the town on how that could look, along with other waterfront activities, but in the meantime, "because of what has happened in 2019, 2020 and 2021, we've had to transform how we do business."

Meanwhile, Bruno Caciagli also has his eye on the future of the town-owned dock.

He's heard rumours that the town might be open to other suggestions for its use, and that there are other tour companies interested.

His plan is for a cross-lake ferry, a concept he has been working on since 2014. In 2019, he made a presentation

to town council, and received support in principle for his proposal, in order to help him move forward with the project. Not a lot has changed since then, and despite some obstacles along the way, he told The Local recently, he hasn't given up.

The president of Ontario Lake Express had hoped to have boats running between Niagara and Toronto for the Canada Summer Games, but even with a year delay to the games due to COVID, the best he can hope for now is a boat, similar to a hydrofoil, at a NOTL dock, "if I can get permission."

He would like it here during the games next summer to demonstrate the technology, and show what he hopes to accomplish when he's ready to start his tours, which, realistically, by the time the boats are built by a U.K. company, would be 2024.

He's looking at a kind of hydrofoil, with wings under the keel, which at a certain speed lifts the hull on top of the water, he explains, with no noise, and no wake.

"I'm not interested in conventional boats. I want to show everybody what the future is like."

Caciagli wants to run two zero-emission boats, 50 or 80-passenger capacity, charging \$25 a ride.

The benefit to a successful water link is chiefly the time it saves for commuters and visitors to Niagara, he says, and also reduces vehicles on the road to protect the environment and reduce climate change, "to do something for our children and grandchildren."

He was asked in 2019 by council whether he has talked to Parks Canada — he was hoping to use the Navy Hall dock. He has not, and is considering the possibility of the Melville Street dock should it become available.

He was also asked by NOTL councillors about the weather, which has plagued other companies with similar ideas, and says he will only run during the tourist season, with boats that are built to operate in lake conditions.

He has made a presentation to the region's economic

development group, which he says was received with enthusiasm. "I met with chair Jim Bradley and some municipal mayors, and everyone was supportive."

He hopes to come to town council to make another presentation soon, he says, and bring them up to date on what he's doing.

"So that's where I'm at now," he says.

Kinney says he has spoken to Caciagli, who has no background in the marine transportation industry, about his plans, and tried to help walk him through the maze of government regulations and licences that will be required.

"I've helped steer him in the right direction," he says, explaining that regulations for operating in Lake Ontario are very different from running a tour in the Niagara River.

"It's extremely difficult just dealing with transportation regulations, never mind the business aspects of a transportation operation," says Kinney, "but I do think at some point in my lifetime, there will be a cross-lake ferry."

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# Cases decreasing, vaccinations need to increase

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

The downward trend of COVID-19 cases across the province is good news, says Niagara's acting chief medical officer of health.

But Dr. Mustafa Hirji says he's less optimistic about what he sees in Niagara, although the spread of the virus is slowing here as well — just not as quickly as he'd like it to.

The number of cases of the Delta variant is the cause of the increase. According to Monday's numbers, it is thought to be responsible for 62.5 of the new cases reported in the last 14 days, but Hirji is estimating it to be less than that — the lag in screening time for that particular variant makes it difficult to pin down.

Delta variant cases remain a concern, because it spreads more quickly, and causes more hospitalizations, said Hirji.

There were eight new cases in total reported in Niagara Monday, with three active cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Hospitalizations are decreasing, with only one person in intensive care due to COVID, Hirji said.

The all-important reproductive number is hovering around 1.0, he added, but is likely higher for the Delta variant, and lower for other

strains of the virus.

If it wasn't for the Delta variant, Hirji said, it would already be safe to reopen without worrying about straining hospital resources.

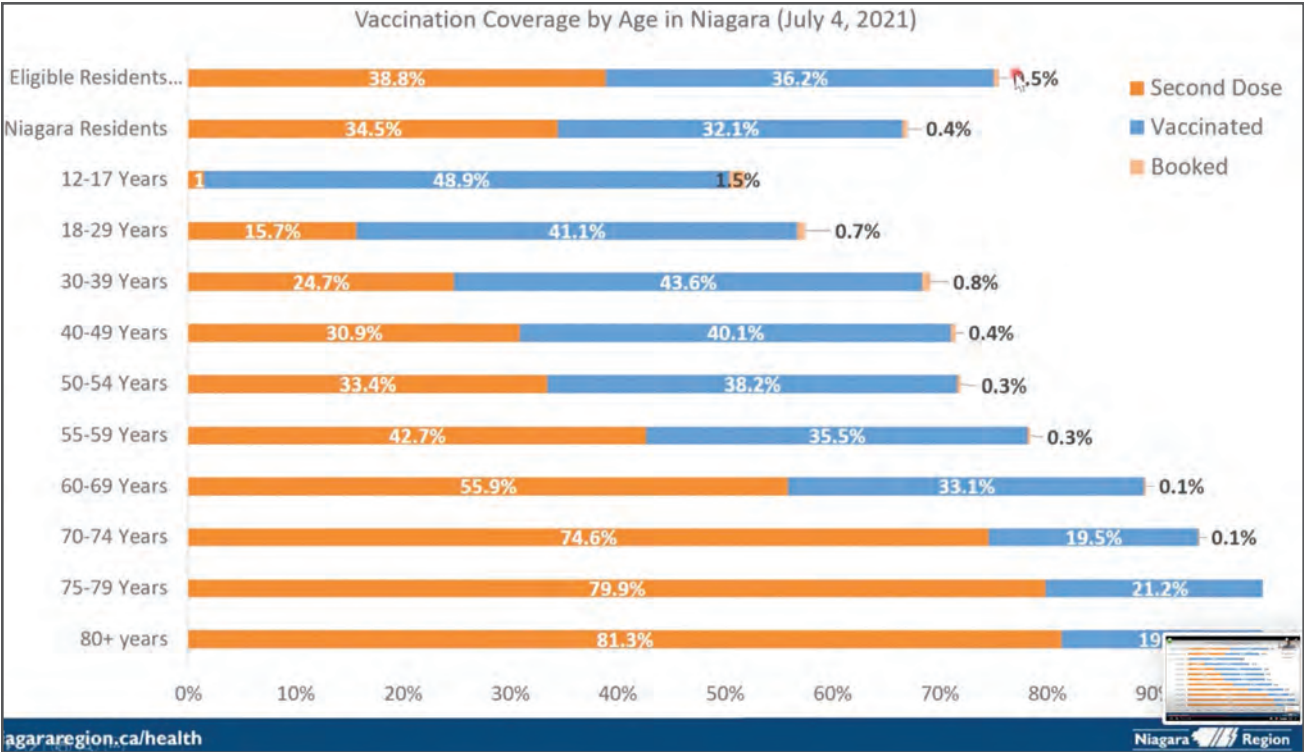
And while the vaccines work against it, "we still need two doses for it to be really effective."

And that is more good news — the number of people in Niagara with their second vaccination is rising quickly, he said, especially among the older age groups, and overall, we've passed the point where more people have had their second dose than those with just one dose.

At the beginning of the week, about 75.5 per cent of those who are eligible have been vaccinated, said Hirji. If we can get over 80 per cent of those eligible fully vaccinated, "we'll be able to reopen without overwhelming our hospital resources."

But he warned that although more social contact is permitted, if we increase our social activity too much, we could see the trajectory of cases begin to rise again.

There are 30,000 to 35,000 people in Niagara who still need to be vaccinated, he said, most of them in the younger age groups. He stressed the importance of convincing young people to be vaccinated, to avoid a fourth wave and



This regional graph shows the number of vaccinations administered in Niagara, by first and second dose, and by age. (Screenshot)

get to the point where everything can be open safely.

The majority of new cases are among the 20 to 39 age group, and they are the ones who need to be vaccinated to reduce the spread of the virus.

It's too early to say if the lifting of Section 22 dining restrictions have had an effect on virus spread, Hirji says, but he's not seeing that yet.

What he is seeing are outbreaks coming from indoor social gatherings, people visiting with family and friends, and then spreading the virus to other family and friends.

"Personal gatherings seem to be at the centre of allowing the spread right now."

For some reason, the younger people spreading the virus are the ones choosing not to be vaccinated. Getting them vaccinated will drive down cases, prevent another wave and allow reopening to continue, Hirji said.

Although it may be partly impatience when booking appointments, having to wait a couple of weeks rather than getting one immediately, there may be other causes for their vaccine hesitancy, and that is something the region is going to have a look at.

Doing more to understand why young people are choosing not to roll up their sleeves, and finding a way to convince them to get their shots, will be a priority for the region's COVID-19 task force, he said.

In response to discussions about opening the U.S./Canada border, Hirji urges caution. There are a rising number of Delta variant cases in most states, and opening the border invites the virus to cross the border as well, he said.

"We've made a lot of sacrifices over the last few months, with another lockdown and slow reopening. Reopening the border might mean losing all we've gained."

The border will open in the next few months, he suggested, "but we shouldn't rush to do it, not in the next few weeks, when a few months will mean we can do it in a way that's safe and sustainable."



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# EDITORIAL

## If ‘support local’ isn’t your mantra, it should be

Leading up to Canada Day there were difficult — but necessary — conversations to be had, and also decisions to be made.

Each of us did what we felt comfortable with, or at least as comfortable as we could be.

For some, it was an opportunity to enjoy a little more leniency, socializing with friends and family on a beautiful summer day, and even while doing that, remembering Indigenous peoples who were here long before us, and continue the discussions about what we can do for them now.

On the streets of NOTL, there were orange shirts, there were red shirts, and there was laughter, people just happy to be out.

It continues to be a difficult time, with so much going on across the country, our thoughts with our Indigenous neighbours, and for each child those empty little shoes have come to represent. Many of us are determined that by next year there

will be real truth, more reconciliation, and our county is doing a little better in its treatment of Indigenous people.

It’s also a confusing COVID time, with stages of businesses reopening, rules about community facilities, outdoor activities, numbers of people gathering, indoors and out, all in flux.

We just sort of figured out the old rules, we’re learning new ones, and anticipating more good news to come.

Normal seems so close, but we’re not there yet.

We can’t overdo it, or become too complacent.

And if we haven’t had two needles in our arm, no excuses. There’s lots of vaccine in Ontario, and appointments available, even if a week or two away. That second shot in the arm is a ticket to more freedom.

While we wait for more vaccinations, we’ve been warned to take a cautious approach to reopening and socializing.

And while we’re doing that,

if ‘support local’ isn’t your new mantra, it’s time to adopt it.

We want our local businesses, restaurants, attractions, all we love about Niagara-on-the-Lake, to be there for us when this reopening is complete. We want our friends and neighbours to still have their jobs.

We are starting to see some light through this dark time, and we need to help each other get there.

If there is anything more you can do to support a local business give it a try, and hope this next reopening, this next step to recovery, is a success.

However, there is a caveat. If we’re tired of this pandemic, think of those working in all the essential businesses that involve the public, day in and day out, all throughout the pandemic, dealing with those of us who are grumpy because the guy in front of us wasn’t wearing his mask properly, or someone went the wrong way down the aisle, or a particular

item we wanted is out of stock.

And then, they have to go home and face whatever problems are waiting for them there.

Let’s dig deep into ourselves and try to find some good cheer, some kindness towards

others as we wait out the remaining days of this pandemic together.

If we can focus on that, on helping each other, as we re-establish our friendships, and build back our economy and

our local businesses, who need local support. They are all our friends and neighbours, and we can all be stronger if we do it together.

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

## *Local* VOICES: Time for Canada to do what is right

**Terry Davis**  
**Special to The Local**

In response to the remains of close to 1,000 First Nations children recently being found buried in unmarked graves on former residential school sites, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised that Canada would do what was “necessary.”

His statement, and the endless stream of platitudes that accompanied it stating that Canada is better than its past history of discrimination against First Nations peoples, people of colour, Japanese Canadians, Jewish people and Chinese labourers, among other groups, concerns me. I would have been much happier if the Prime Minister had said “Canada will do what is right.”

What’s right at this point is open to debate, and clearly First Nations peoples should be consulted and listened to as Canada determines what that is. But there are a couple of road maps that could help steer us in the right direction.

The calls to action from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada set out a clear approach that would help us address past wrongs and take concrete steps to ensure they do not reoccur in the future. In turn, the agreements reached with First Nations in the Kelowna Accord suggest a way forward that has the potential to significantly improve the lives and livelihoods of Canada’s First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Both were reached following extensive consultations with First Nations peoples, and both were endorsed by the govern-

ment of the day.

Unfortunately, the Kelowna Accord, which set out a five-year, \$5-billion plan to improve education, housing, economic development, health and water services in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, was shelved when Paul Martin’s Liberal government fell to Stephen Harper’s Conservatives in 2005. Although the Conservatives committed, in their 2006 budget, to ultimately meeting the spending targets set out in the accord, it never happened.

Instead of dedicated investments to significantly increase high-school and post-secondary graduation rates for Indigenous Canadians, as well as to reduce infant mortality, youth suicide, childhood obesity and diabetes by 20 per cent in five years, and 50 per cent in 10 years, as agreed to in the Kelowna Accord, the Conservative 2006 budget set aside \$450 million for Canada’s Aboriginal peoples.

While some hope was offered by the Trudeau government in 2019, when it “committed to renewing the spirit, intent and framework of the Kelowna Accord to help improve today’s standard of living and quality of life for Indigenous peoples,” subsequent actions have been slow to materialize. Pledges to ensure our First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have access to clean drinking water have not been kept, the treaty negotiation process in B.C. has stalled, crown treaty obligations are not being fully met, and the federal government has gone to court in an effort to limit the compensation it owes to First Nations peoples for past

wrongs. At the provincial level, Indigenous children are still being taken from their parents and placed in foster care.

Have we learned nothing over the years about the lasting harm that our residential schools, the so-called 60s scoop, discriminatory law enforcement and justice, and lack of economic opportunity has done to Indigenous Canadians? Shouldn’t we all be alarmed by the high rates of youth suicide among Indigenous youth?

Not just our governments, but all of us.

How can we be proud to be Canadian and of our place in the world when we collectively have stayed silent for so long?

If nothing else, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated what can be done to address serious concerns when the economic power and commitment of government at all levels, with the support of Canadians, is brought to the table.

It is time to insist on action, not just words, to address the many challenges facing Indigenous Canadians today, as well as the many wrongs they have endured in the past. It is time to do what is right, so that something good comes from the tragedy and travesty that made many Canadians pause to look back at our nation’s history in sorrow and shame.

*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.*



## View from the couch

**Donald Combe**  
**Special to The Local**

*Behind Her Eyes* (Netflix, 2021) is a psychological thriller unlike any other. It is the intriguing story of a single mother who begins

an affair with her psychiatrist boss, while secretly befriending his mysterious wife. This is a world of very twisted mind games, not for everyone.

*Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who*

*loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through “short and sweet” exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.*

## *Local* LETTERS

### Gateway project more suitable for Glendale overpass

I have to agree with the sentiment expressed by Stan Harrington (Please preserve small heritage district, The Local, June 30).

Niagara-on-the-Lake is made up of a large agricultural area with five separate settlement areas. Why

should the proposed gateway be placed at the corner of Mississagua and Queen Streets as you enter the heritage district? Perhaps a more appropriate location for the proposed gateway would be within the Glendale Avenue/QEW diverging diamond

interchange, currently under construction. After all, the vast majority of tourists and visitors will enter Niagara-on-the-Lake via this interchange.

**Steve Hardaker**  
**NOTL**



P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, L0S 1T0

**Editor:**  
**Penny Coles**  
penny@notllocal.com  
905-246-5878

**Publisher:**  
**The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local**

**Graphic Designer:**  
**Rosie Gowsell**  
composing@notllocal.com

**Advertising Sales:**  
**Karen Skeoch**  
karen@notllocal.com • 905-641-5335

**Julia Coles**  
julia@notllocal.com • 905-934-1040

**Helen Arsenault**  
**Local Business Directory,**  
**Local Happenings, Classified Sales**  
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# COMMENT

## Local LETTERS

### Parliament Oak development not appropriate

Re: Parliament Oak Proposal - 325 King Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake (The Local, June 23)

I have spent hours studying the various reports and submissions for this proposal for the Parliament Oak site. Thousands of words, trying to convince me and the town that this proposal is somehow in harmony and compatible with the existing established residential context that surrounds the site. (ER - I should be able to end this letter right here...)

The streetscape study purports that the proposed semi-detached residences are roughly comparable in size to the larger houses in the surrounding contexts. If you look at the diagram included with this study, showing the proposed structure's scale and massing, the semi-detached dwellings are larger in footprint than one of the biggest houses in the neighbourhood, on Gage Street, which sits alone,

on a one-acre lot.

The elevations of the apartment building beside and behind these 'modest' semi-detached dwellings indicate that the development is not even compatible with itself. The semis look like doll houses placed behind and in front of the massive wall of the apartment building. It would be interesting if these elevations continued across the bounding streets to show the existing homes across Regent, Centre and King Streets. Surely an illustration of this sort should be included in the streetscape study.

The application for the apartment building requests a medium density residential designation. According to the Official Plan, intensification sites would have a minimum density of six units per acre and a maximum density of 12 units per acre. This proposal is for 92 units on a four-acre site, or 23 units per acre — almost twice the density noted as maximum.

The parking, servicing and delivery access to all 92 units, including the apartment building, is from the local roads. There are 181 parking spaces provided on the site. That is a large number of cars coming and going and does not include service or delivery vehicles. Local roads are designated in the Official Plan as servicing individual dwelling or semi-detached dwelling units. This is totally unacceptable and will forever change the nature of our neighbourhood. It also impacts directly two single family dwellings, one on Centre Street and one on Gage Street, immeasurably.

Our town is being eroded, bit by bit, one developer at a time. Funny, they all claim to love this place. But what they love is the profit-making potential, not the charming and delightful place to live that will soon be a distant memory.

Connie Tintinalli  
Gage Street

### You can't change history — instead, explain it

This may get me labeled as anti-Indigenous, racist, homophobic or whatever. People who know me know that that is not the case.

I enjoyed reading the Local Voices article by Lara Osias-Davidson. I think she makes some good suggestions as to how we can honour the Indigenous peoples of our country. I don't think that changing park names or university names makes sense.

You can't change history. I would think putting a plaque near the park sign explaining why it is so-named, and explaining the negatives of Ryerson. This would certainly be a learning experience rather than trying to hide history. While I do regret all that happened at the indigenous schools, I do believe that the program was originally de-

signed to integrate Indigenous children into the majority of Canadian society for their future benefit, as opposed to doing so to let them be abused and killed. I do believe the execution of this plan was a disaster for the children, as well as Canada, and those responsible for these horrendous deeds need to be punished. I look at the various empires from the past such as the Roman, Greek, Egyptian, etc., and while learning about the many achievements they produced, we also learn about the atrocities and slavery that they had.

On another issue of inclusivity. I am opposed to the Pride crosswalk being proposed. I do believe that it will just be a matter of time before someone defaces it, making the thousands of dollars to create it a waste. I am also opposed to the various

groups, whether it be Pride, Black or any other group, having a month to celebrate themselves. My understanding that all these groups have in common is that they just want to be considered like every other Canadian. By pushing their interests to the fore, there are people who will react negatively, such as I previously mentioned, defacing Pride sidewalks for example. We only have one day to celebrate Canada, and not a month.

Again, I bear no malice against any group, except maybe the anti-maskers who held a rally at Queenston Heights, but do think inclusivity would be better served by thinking of ourselves as Canadians before all else.

Doug Johnson  
NOTL

### Prayers offered for justice and healing

Thank you for writing such honest, heart-wrenching words about the findings of the graves of so very many children at former residential schools. So many of us were kept in the dark for many years.

Throughout my days in elementary and high school in the 1940s and 1950s, and during my year at teachers' college, not a word was taught about the Indigenous peoples in Canada, let alone the existence of residential schools. Then came my years of teaching. During those years, not a word could be found in the curricula or readers of Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 regarding the Indigenous peoples in Canada, or of residential schools that

were in existence at that time, in the early 1960s.

It was the same in my family at home, and my church family. The people of Mennonite background like myself heard little or nothing about residential schools, although lots was shared about the horrific times as they managed to escape Russia in the 1920s and how Canada opened its arms to welcome these refugees.

However, not until I finally found the Bahá'í Teachings did I come to realize the beauty in other faith traditions, including the Indigenous traditions, and soon found true friends at the Native Centre. That's when my real learning began, at 25 years of age! Through

the years I've finally come to realize much of what went on at those residential schools. I've learned from my friends, from the many books I've read . . . and am still learning.

Many tears have been shed as I imagine my own children being wrenched from my arms to be taken away, to be taken to places far from home where I could not visit or let them know I cared, to learn of the horrific abuses they suffered, and to discover they would never be seen again.

My heart aches as I offer my humble prayers for justice and healing.

Charlotte Letkemann  
NOTL

### Perhaps it's time to keep dogs on leashes

Re: off-leash dog park on Parks Canada property:

We enjoy and have had our very own doggies. Perhaps in the future we might even have another doggie in our family — they are wonderful additions for so many reasons.

However, we can see the growing dilemma taking place on the Commons.

Observations: there is a growing population, and hence more doggies on the Commons, along with more humans.

Yes, many of the dogs roaming about off-leash, some of which are large in size, do cause a bit of concern as they run towards one, and away from their masters.

Yes, we have been approached by many unleashed dogs while we are walking and/or biking in the area.

We sometimes leave the pathways and travel 50 feet off the path so as to avoid big, scary looking unleashed dogs, and the irony is that they follow us.

Many a time we have heard the words from the owner of the dog, 'don't worry, he/she is friendly.'

Summation: no doubt the problem/challenge will enlarge, so one suggestion, and it is a compromise . . . dogs are kept on a leash. One good reason for this is to protect the owners from possible litigation, as a result of their doggies biting or injuring a person.

Keith Bullen  
NOTL

### Truth and reconciliation means accepting truth of genocide

I have read with interest the opinions of several readers in local papers who are upset that statues are being removed at various public sites and institutions.

Cries of "we can't undo history" and "Ryerson did good things too" are key arguments.

I would simply like to remind people that we had no trouble bringing down statues of Hitler or Stalin after the Second World War.

Hitler and Stalin were perceived to have committed genocide against other races and their own people. It could

also be argued Hitler did good things, like building modern infrastructure in Germany.

Did we change our history by removing their statues? No? So what's so different now?

I suppose it all comes down to what we consider genocide. If the residential school system is genocide, and we acknowledge that it was created to "Kill the Indian in every child," then why do we get upset about statues coming down and names being changed?

Before we get on our high horse about statue removal, we

should think about how a Jewish person would feel walking past a statue of Hitler today.

If it would be abhorrent to us to make them do that, why would we accept it for our own Indigenous brothers and sisters?

Truth and reconciliation means accepting the truth of genocide of Canada's Indigenous people, and if reconciliation means taking statues that hurt and offend them down, then down they should come.

Lyndsay Gazzard  
NOTL



#### 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](mailto: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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# Library reopens for in-person book-borrowing

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Cathy Simpson couldn't wait to see the staff and greet the public when the library doors opened for the first time since the start of the last lockdown.

The CEO of the NOTL Public Library has been working from home, and will continue to — her office is being used to help staff spread out, she says. But she planned to be there Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. to see who comes through the door first — she's missed seeing those she works with and the regular library patrons.

In-person library visits restarted after the first lockdown in March, 2021, says Simpson, and were suspended the next month with the provincial stay-at-home-order, "so we've been closed to visitors since April 8 of this year, and are very excited to reopen."

The province moved into step two of reopening last Wednesday, which required 70 per cent of adults with one vaccination dose and 20 per cent with two doses for at least two weeks. Continued improvement in key public health indicators, including reduced hospitalizations, intensive care admissions and weekly case

counts, were also necessary to move forward. This stage of reopening focuses on the renewal of more outdoor activities, and limited indoor services with small numbers of people where face coverings are worn, and other restrictions in place.

With little advance warning from the province of last Wednesday's reopening date, the decision was made to give staff a few days to prepare and open this Tuesday.

"Things are constantly changing, and we're attached to the community centre, which isn't opening. But if we close off those doors and operate as a separate entity, we can open," says Simpson.

There is passive screening with signage, and masks must be worn, she says.

"We were worried we might have to do active screening, which would mean another staff person, but we don't, although we have to actively screen staff. And we can't just open the doors, we have to be ready to meet all the government regulations, including the province, the town, and public health."

When the pandemic began, one of the board members suggested a journal should be kept of what was happening at the library, and it's been

helpful to look back and know exactly what they were doing during previous lockdowns and reopening, says Simpson. It helps to keep track of what has been done in the past, in terms of screening, cleaning, and quarantining of materials. "It's like a COVID diary," she says, and will be something to give to the NOTL Museum for its COVID-19 archives when the pandemic is over.

At 25 per cent capacity, the library can accommodate 30 people, not including staff, says Simpson.

It is not likely to be an issue — they've done this before, without lineups, she says. Patrons will be encouraged not to browse for too long. There will be no seating, or magazines or newspapers to read on the premises, and computers will be available by appointment only, for 45 minutes at a time. Tech tutoring appointments are also available.

Other than that, and plexiglass at the counter, it's business as usual. Curbside pickups continue to be available, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, with book orders placed online or by telephone.

Although there are plans to start a book club, most of the in-person programming at this point is for kids, says Simpson, using the outdoors as much as possible, including the pergola for shade at the back. There are some new staff members to help with the extensive summer kids' programs. They meet the youngsters out front, take them to the back of the library building, and return them to the front when they're done, with parents waiting to pick them up.

The adult programs will likely start up in the fall, with a larger capacity permitted in

step three, but for now, kids are the priority.

"It will be really great to see the kids back," says Simpson. "They've been schooling at home, and missing their friends. This is really important for them."

There will be some revitalization of the community garden when the construction of the nursery school is complete, says Simpson, with non-invasive species planted under the direction of master garden-in-training Betty Knight,

and the addition of irrigation equipment to ensure its low maintenance.

For more information on times and programs, or to order books for curbside pickup, visit <https://notlpubliclibrary.org> or call 905-468-2023.



NOTL Public Library manager Laura Tait prepares for reopening. (Photos provided)



Ruby and Grace Farnell, with staff member Colin Fellows, were having fun learning during Saturday's science program at the library.

Staff member Colin Fellows helps Luciano Monaghan and Ella Shapley during Science Fun Saturdays at the library.



Declan Chow, Nicholas Conte and Addison Mantonakis take advantage of the beautiful outdoor space for the Crafternoon program at the NOTL Public Library.



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# Dividing perennials makes them multiply in your garden



**Joanne Young**  
Garden Coach/Designer

Here's one for the math lovers. Gardening is the only activity where you can multiply by dividing. Let me explain.

Dividing perennials is necessary to keep your garden healthy, thriving and under control.

It rejuvenates older plants. As some perennials age, you may see clumps dying in the centre with new growth only appearing on outer edges. Or the plant may not bloom as heavily and leaves appear stunted. This means the plant is losing vigour, and needs to be dug up and divided in order to thrive again.

It controls plant size. Some perennials grow more aggressively. Plants like black-eyed Susans and shasta daisies can grow into a bigger clump and take over your garden. Di-

viding the clump into smaller sizes can keep size under control.

It propagates more plants. Dividing perennials is an inexpensive way to increase the number of plants in your garden. It's also a great way to share plants with others.

Some perennials don't like to be divided: baptisia, bleeding heart, butterfly weed, Christmas rose, lavender, poppies and peonies, for example.

Divide spring and summer-flowering perennials in

late summer or fall, and late summer and fall-blooming perennials in early spring.

**How to divide perennials:**

- Divide perennials on an overcast day with showers in the forecast. This helps the plant recover from root damage. Thoroughly water plants a day prior to dividing.
- In the spring, wait until new shoots are about an inch tall. In the fall, prune plants back to just a few inches tall.

- Using a spade or garden fork, dig about four to six inches beyond where the shoots emerge. Dig around the clump, then pry up on the root ball. Don't cut through the roots while the plant is still in the ground or you won't know how much root you'll get, and could waste parts of the plant.
- Lift out the entire clump and sit it on the ground or a tarp.
- Using a sharp spade or knife, gently cut through

the roots, dividing the clump into as many pieces as desired. Each division should have at least three to five vigorous shoots, and a healthy root supply. If the centre has died out, divide the living, outer portions into smaller clumps and throw out dead centre portion.

- Enrich the soil in new planting areas with compost, composted manure or triple mix before planting new divisions. Fertilize new plantings

by scattering a handful of bone meal in the bottom of the planting hole. Bone meal is high in phosphorus, which helps stimulate root growth.

- Fill in around the plant roots with triple mix or compost. Make sure the plant is in the soil at the same depth it was previously and water well.

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



Dividing plants such as black-eyed Susans, shasta daisies, and hostas can keep your garden under control. (Shutterstock)



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Bonnie Grimm\* 905-468-1256

Nicole Vanderperk\* 905-941-4585

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# Plantings to be native deciduous, coniferous trees

Continued from page 10

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority plans to clear out nearly 400 ash trees, which are being killed by the invasive emerald ash borer.

Dan Drennan, watershed forester with the NPCA, is supervising the project, which is expected to eventually include planting about 6,000 seedlings on native species to replace the forest canopy.

The operation will also address trail-user safety,

ecosystem diversity, and creek debris, says a NPCA news release, "while preserving the healthy upland forest in other parts of the site."

The shiny emerald-colored beetle was first noticed in North America in 2002, and in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2012, doing extensive damage since.

"A thorough assessment of the Two Mile Creek site indicated that within the treatment areas, the tree composition is dominated by green ash

in the overstory (the highest layer of vegetation in a forest) and Manitoba maple in the understory (the layer of vegetation that lays on the forest floor)," says Drennan.

"There is no significant natural regeneration of non-ash native species that could replace the dying and dead ash trees, and Manitoba maple is not a species the NPCA wants to dominate the site. There are scattered groups of willow that will be retained as much as possible."

The NPCA describes the operation as a stand conversion, where the dominant ash tree forest cover will be removed and replaced with a young forest of mixed tree species, through subsequent reforestation activity.

The ash tree forest cover will be replaced by native deciduous and coniferous trees appropriate to the site conditions and native to the seed zone.

The seedlings are in-

tended to encourage the reestablishment of a healthy, resilient and diverse ecosystem that will support a variety of wildlife, and improve the overall water quality in Two Mile Creek.



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# Grade 6 student takes second place for French video

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

A love for the challenges presented in solving the Rubik's Cube has resulted in a Canada-wide award for Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Mark Abboud.

The Grade 6 French Immersion student at Dalewood recently captured second place at Concours Virtuel, a country-wide competition organized by Canadian Parents for French. His video, entitled *Le cube rubik et moi...histoire de persévérance* (*The Rubik's Cube and Me: A Story of Perseverance*), documents the trials and tribulations he faced in mastering the iconic puzzle.

"You can achieve a lot if you persevere," says the mature 12-year-old. "That's what I found with the Rubik's Cube. I bought it in March but I couldn't solve it."

He put it aside, then four months later he discovered *The Speed Cubers* on Netflix, a documentary which fol-

lows the twists and turns in the journeys of Rubik's Cube champions Max Park and Feliks Zemdegs.

Abboud dug up his own 3-by-3 cube and got back to work. Two days later he had solved it.

Encouraged to enter the video contest by his mother, Mireille Salem, a French teacher at Royal Oak Community School, it was an obvious choice to focus on his puzzle-solving journey.

"When he figured out the cube," explains Mireille, "everywhere he would go people would ask him to teach them how to do it. He would start teaching them, and they were pretty smart, but they didn't have the patience to the end."

She admits that when her son tried to teach her, she got frustrated and gave up. Similar struggles ensued during attempts to teach his father Henry, a jeweller. He had more success with his sister Carla. She mastered the puzzle in three days, after overcoming her suspicions that

Mark was trying to mislead her into failure.

He realized then that the common thread with all who struggled was the same discouraging feeling he had on his first attempts. He wanted to show, via the video, that having the courage to push through is key to getting results.

Mireille and Mark worked together to plan and storyboard the video. It took about two months in total from the original concept through to the final edited version. Mireille shot the footage from behind the camera, and encouraged Mark with some pointers on his French grammar and pronunciation along the way.

Participating in this year's Concours Virtuel was not tied to his studies in French Immersion officially.

"It's an individual competition," explains Mireille. "The aim is to promote French among young students. A good level of fluency in French is a main component of all winning videos. I en-



Mark's mother Mireille Salem didn't have the patience to learn to solve the cube, but she was able to help him with his video.



Mark Abboud has solved the Rubik's Cube, and recently took second place at Concours Virtuel, a country-wide competition organized by Canadian Parents for French. His video, entitled *Le cube rubik et moi...histoire de persévérance* (*The Rubik's Cube and Me: A Story of Perseverance*) (Photos by Mike Balsom)

couraged my students at Royal Oak to submit their videos as well."

One of her students, Violet Yerich, took home first place in the Grade 6 core French category, separate from Abboud's division.

As well, when it comes to languages, one might expect perseverance had a little to do with Abboud's success with the video. French is his third language, after Arabic and English.

His second place finish at Concours Virtuel is just the start of his Rubik's Cube adventures.

Inspired by world champions Park and Zemdegs, Abboud hopes to one day compete for top honours himself. The world's best can solve the cube in five seconds. Currently, Abboud's average time lies between 10 and 15 seconds,

with 10 being his personal best.

"His dream is to take part in the worldwide competition," says Mireille. "So he's saving for that, and he's practising. He wants to realize his dream by December of this year."

That five-second standard is the benchmark he's hoping to reach by then.

"Usually the competition isn't just for the 3-by-3," Abboud explains. "It's for all types of cubes. 2-by-2, 4-by-4, 5-by-5, 7-by-7, and the pyramid. There are 18 events in total. Once I mastered the 3-by-3, I taught myself the 5-by-5, and it wasn't much harder."

Abboud says the secret is to learn the basic method to solve the cube. That involves memorizing the eight basic algorithms in sequence.

"You have to remember all eight in order," Salem adds. "Each algorithm isn't hard, but it takes patience to remember them."

Abboud loves to teach others the Rubik's Cube, and successes with his sister and one of his friends have encouraged him to continue to offer his tutelage. The winning video, now posted on Mireille's YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/U5v13iKz-kn0>) offers inspiration and motivation, in French, of course, to those who may feel like packing it in.

"The two secrets to learning are you have to love it," Abboud sums up. "And the second thing is to just persevere through."

Beyond challenging puzzles, that's good advice for life from a 12-year-old who's been there.

## A different Canada Day



On a bike ride Canada Day, Susan Snider came across an orange knapsack on a mailbox pole, on Concession 1 near East and West Line, along with Canadian flags, a poignant reminder of the day.



Graham and Claire Staz, with some help from their parents, had fun selling freezies on Canada Day, with the money to be donated to help Indigenous children. (Susan Snider)





Ryan and Marisa Sherk are taking a huge step toward a future that will include dancing, in one way or another. (Photo supplied)

# Sherk siblings to appear in *Virtual Reality Concert*

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

Siblings Marisa and Ryan Sherk of St. Catharines say they are joined at the hip. They are that rare brother and sister duo who, despite being about two years apart in age, are each other's best friends. And next week, they will be featured in a virtual concert showcasing some of Canada's potential future pop stars.

The grandchildren of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents Rick and Susan Sherk will be dancing in the second *Virtual Concert Reality* program, to be streamed on July 17. In addition to dancing, the pair worked together on the choreography for one of the featured singers, IZZEE, a Toronto native and former member of the Mini Pops Kids ensemble.

Eighteen-year-old Marisa, a recent graduate of Laura Secord Secondary School, has been dancing since she was three years old. She took to it right away.

"I instantly fell in love with it," she remembers about her first experiences at Dance FX Studios. "My passion for it started growing over the years. I played soccer, and I was kind of into track and field, but dance was always a part of me. It was obvious to me at a young age that this is what I wanted to do."

Starting off with tap and jazz, Marisa later moved into hip hop. Very quickly she joined the Dance FX competitive team, and began to learn lyrical, contemporary, acro, modern, ballet and pointe styles, some with the Niagara Ballet School.

Watching from behind a studio window was younger

brother Ryan, who recently finished Grade 10 at Laura Secord. As soon as he was able to walk, he started to literally follow in her footsteps, emulating Marisa's dance moves.

"I would see him at home, trying to do what I was doing," Marisa says.

"I instantly felt a connection to the music and the movement," adds Ryan. "I would watch her, and when I got home I would move to any music I had around the house."

The pair progressed to putting on shows at home. They choreographed dances together, made costumes, invited their neighbours and put on shows for them. This was all before Ryan had even begun to take dance classes with Marisa once he turned four.

The bond through dance continued to grow deeper between the siblings. At the studio, on stage, in competition, at home and at school, Ryan and Marisa were always together.

When the elder sibling moved on to Laura Secord in Grade 9, leaving Ryan behind in elementary school, the daily separation felt strange to them. Two years ago, when he joined her in high school, their talents quickly resulted in many accolades and first place finishes in dance competitions, as both soloists and as a duo.

Secord dance teacher Haley Penner says their strong relationship is obvious to audiences when they perform duets together.

"They know each other so well that when they create dances together they are able to build on their strengths, and push each other beyond them," Penner ex-

plains. "They are both highly self-motivated students and they are always looking for opportunities to develop their technique and performance quality."

Like the Everly Brothers from the music world, siblings whose harmonies were interchangeable, Ryan and Marisa have a certain way of communicating through dance.

"It's honestly magical," Marisa says. "There's a certain trust there. We just mesh really well together, we naturally move in similar ways, and we get along really well. We're able to dance together, choreograph together. Anything dance-related, everything goes over so well."

"Even though we were two years apart, we were always in the same age group in dance," Ryan adds. "We grew up dancing in the studio together, training together. Dance was always a connecting piece for us."

"When we're on stage, I feel like our eye contact, our connection is strong," says Marisa.

Asked to recall a moment when they may have had one of those knock-down, drag-out fights that can be common between brothers and sisters, they draw a complete blank.

"There's really no moment like that that sticks out to me," Marisa laughs. "Maybe it's unique for a brother and sister, but I think it's just dance that has brought us together."

"The fact that we both have a passion for exactly the same thing," Ryan concurs, "and we've followed it for so long, definitely makes it more special."

Marisa will be following that passion in September in

the Performance Dance program at Ryerson University (which may soon have a new name. Namesake Egerton Ryerson is credited for designing the model for residential schools). That means the teens will most likely be separated for the second time.

"I'll definitely miss being around her all the time," Ryan admits. "But I'll always visit, and I'm very happy for her. She's worked so hard and she has such a strong passion."

He also admits that in two years he may very well follow her into the same program.

Both Ryan and Marisa see themselves making a future life in the dance world, whether it be performing, choreographing or teaching.

"There are so many avenues in dance," says Marisa.

"I can't pinpoint an exact destination. I think I'm going to see where my journey takes me."

"We're so versatile, there are so many open lanes for us," Ryan adds. "We'll definitely just see where our future takes us."

Penner believes they both have the potential to pursue successful careers in dance. Their recent first place win in the virtual Youth America Grand Prix, the world's largest non-profit international student ballet competition, in the pas de deux category, would suggest that the future for both could include ballet.

For the upcoming *Virtual Reality Concert 2*, the pair worked with IZZEE to design routines for her mash-up of her own original songs. Ryan and IZZEE (Izzy Cavaliere) worked together via the

group Mini Pop Kids when they were both 12 years old. The group toured across Canada and Ryan was also featured as a singer on their 2017 CD.

The Sherks dance with IZZEE for her number, but also appear in multiple performances during the hour-long showcase. The show's producers have signed talent to agencies, helped kids to book movie roles, and have been contacted by *America's Got Talent*, who were interested in some of their artists.

*Virtual Concert Reality 2* is a high energy, slick production featuring more than 12 teen solo performers and more than 35 additional teen dancers from across Canada. The show streams worldwide on Saturday July 17th at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$20 and available at [Livacity.tv](http://Livacity.tv)

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# LocalSPORTS



David Klooz and Mary McHoull play on the lawn bowling green when the season opened in June, for the first time since 2019. (Photo supplied)

## Lawn bowling club resumes limited play

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

The NOTL Lawn Bowling Club has opened for the season, but with some confusion over what would be available, as the community centre remains closed.

President Paul McHoull says they've lost some members — people have

moved or passed away — and some are hesitant to come out given the restrictions, and lack of facilities.

But they have had a few new members sign up, and by Monday were up to 50 people interested in playing this season. It's a far cry from the usual 70, 80 or more of past seasons, but not bad for a pandemic summer with restrictions

on the number of people allowed on the bowling green, and no room at the community centre for socializing.

McHoull wasn't even sure until he got to the community centre Monday morning whether there would be washrooms available — fortunately, there were.

He can schedule up to 24 people to play at a time, half the normal number of 48 if all the greens are used.

And the protocols are "mind-boggling," with bowlers unable to touch the jack or the mat, he says, and lots of sanitizing.

"We're all trying to be as safe as possible, and most people are vaccinated or double vaccinated," he says.

There is no room to make a pot of tea, although members can bring snacks of their own.

"But you don't want to be bringing tea or drinks

if you don't have a washroom," he says.

While there is a little shade on the bowling green, there is nowhere for members to meet and chat before or after playing, and they miss the opportunity to cool off inside. "It's certainly not a normal situation."

Weather is always a key factor, but even more so this season with no indoor space. It's been hot and humid, as it was Monday, and McHoull says he looks at the weather forecasts and sends out emails to members, offering them available times when the conditions are best, and asking if they want to sign up. He tends to look at morning time slots, before it gets too hot.

Members might like to bowl in the evening, when the temperature is more bearable, but there would be no community centre staff on hand to even open

a washroom for them, he says.

The centre is closed to the public, and is expected to be until at least August, and maybe the end of the summer, says McHoull. But there are staff there in the day for the kids' summer camps, using the Mori Room, which in the past has been available for the lawn bowlers.

"Kids are a priority, and that's understandable, with the school situation and lack of contact with their friends."

Opening day for the bowlers was June 18, when it was raining lightly. "People were keen to get out, like with the golf course," but it's been complicated.

"We are operating out of the equipment shed on the green," he says.

When the rain stopped, "four brave souls went out and played the first game since October 2019."

Last year, the club re-

mained closed for the season.

Its traditional May opening had to be cancelled, with the community centre completely closed, and eventually, after Zoom meetings and much discussion, the decision was made to "suspend the season."

The risks of opening far outweighed the need to open, the executive decided, and there would have been no social interaction with other members.

"We were hoping we might be able to open in September, but then the second wave hit," says McHoull.

Toward the end of this summer, as the province moves forward, hopefully there will be higher capacities of players permitted on the green, and some indoor space for club members to socialize, he adds.

For more information visit <http://notlbowl.ca>.

### LocalHAPPENINGS

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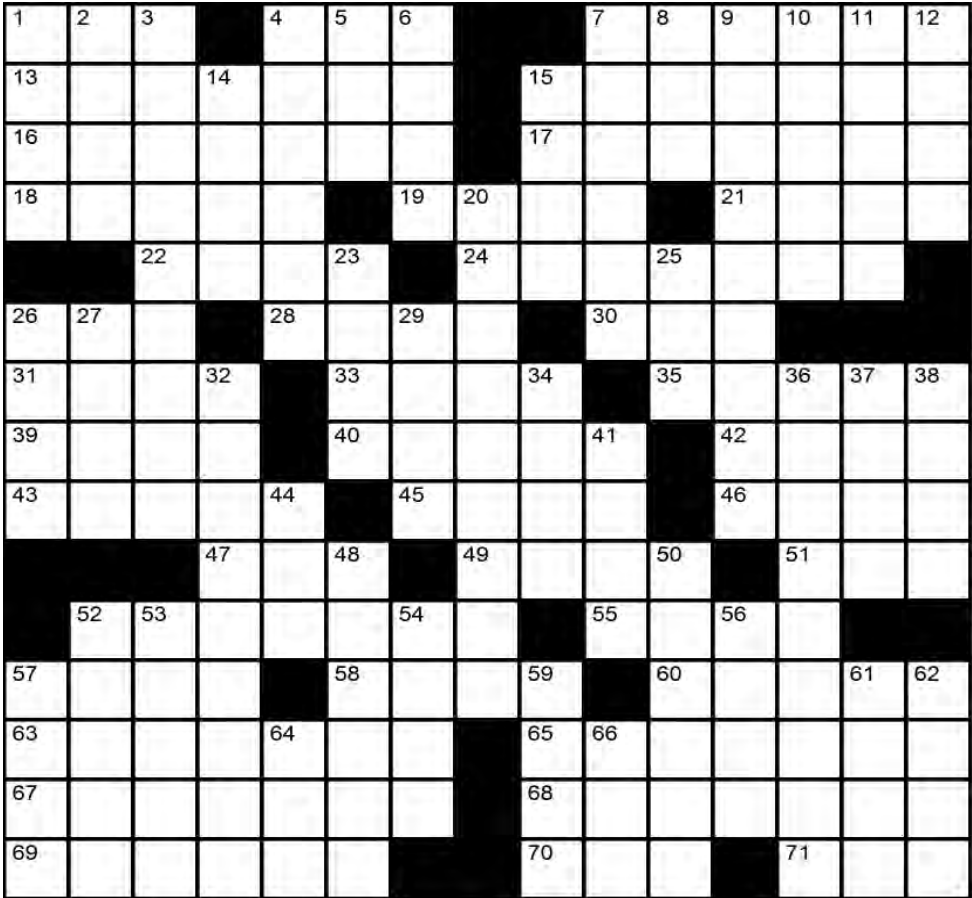


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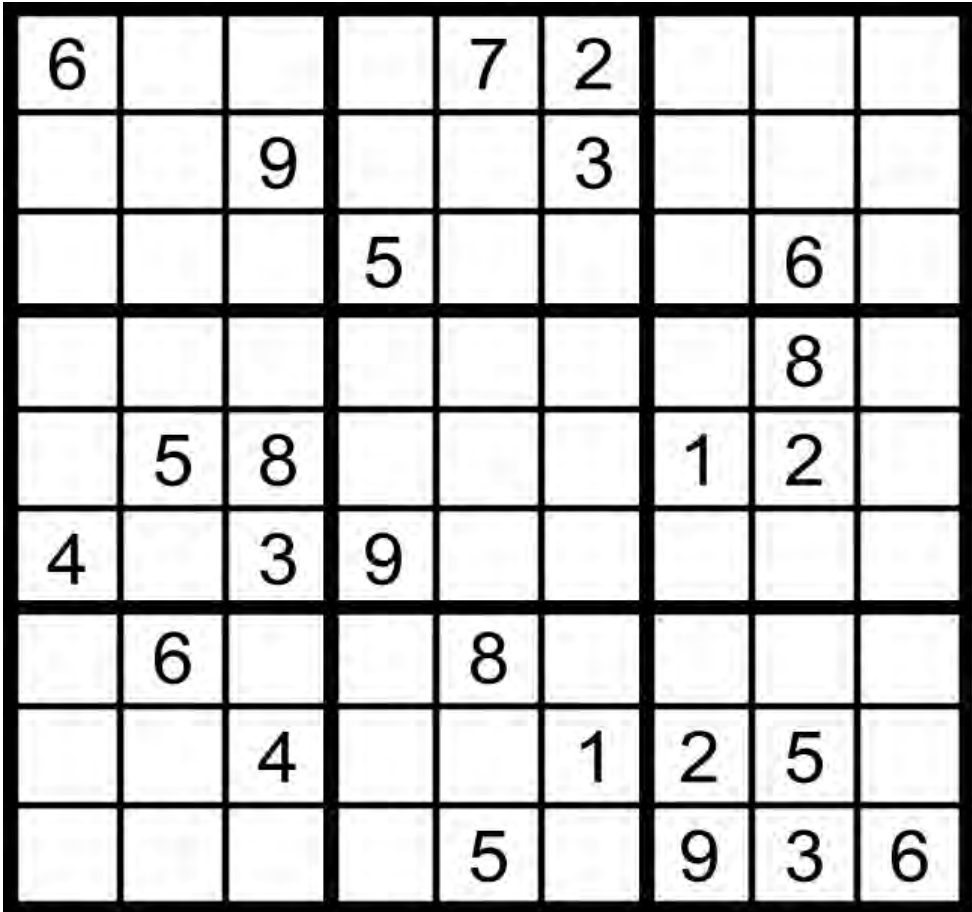


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- Across:**
- 1 Truckers' radio sets
  - 4 Some coins (Abbr.)
  - 7 Chew out
  - 13 Difficult position
  - 15 Singer Patti ---
  - 16 Place in order
  - 17 Enclosed territory
  - 18 Approaches
  - 19 Stop!
  - 21 French part of U S?
  - 22 Christian ---, couturier
  - 24 Stock market measures
  - 26 Advanced in years
  - 28 Turn over
  - 30 Deed
  - 31 Medium for Old Masters
  - 33 Lofty
  - 35 Tales
  - 39 Chirrup
  - 40 Implant
  - 42 High time
  - 43 A lazy one just goes round and round
  - 45 Verdi's Ethiopian princess
  - 46 Dorothy's dog
  - 47 Fleece
  - 49 Statutes
  - 51 Adage
  - 52 Part of concluding
- Down:**
- 1 Martial arts actor Jackie ---
  - 2 Drill
  - 3 Spans
  - 4 Expurgator
  - 5 Label
  - 6 Mulligan, for example
  - 7 Northern neighbor
  - 8 Disney TV network
  - 9 Unwilling
  - 10 Shave
  - 11 Tupelo "King"
  - 12 Course launch pads?
  - 14 Hindu dress
  - 15 "Trinity" author --- Uris
  - 20 Bumpkin
  - 23 Repetitive practice
  - 25 Very cold
  - 26 Oh dear!
  - 27 Place
  - 29 Tibetan priest
  - 32 Middle-age spread
  - 34 Seduced by a swan
  - 36 He started the Teddy Bear story
  - 37 --- bene: pay attention
  - 38 Coke
  - 41 "Delta ---", Tanya Tucker hit
  - 44 And not
  - 48 Bidding
  - 50 Comfort
  - 52 Prongs
  - 53 Facilitates
  - 54 Top-of-the-line
  - 56 Extinct Mauritian native
  - 57 N Y C fashionista --- Wang
  - 59 Checks
  - 61 The "New World" symphony was written in this (Abbr.)
  - 62 Religious faction
  - 64 French wine
  - 66 Signal



OBITUARY



**PROTULIPAC, GEORGE**—George Protulipac, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, passed away peacefully at Upper Canada Lodge with his loving daughter by his side, on July 2, 2021 in his 87th year. Dad fought the long Parkinson's battle but grew tired and is now free from any suffering.

Dearly loved father of Kim Baergen (Mark Hicks) and stepfather of David Mauger (Cindy), Diane Rusert (James) and Darsi Kindron (Jeffrey). Cherished grandfather of Zachary Baergen (Emma), Josh Baergen (Marnie), Alexandra Wiens (Matty) and great-grandson Benson. George is survived by his sister Helen Prince and many nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by his wife Donna, brother Joe Protulipac, and step-siblings Frank Vronick, Michael Vronick, Anne Milner and Katie Avery. He is also predeceased by his parents Helen and Michael Protulipac and stepson Daniel Mauger.

A special thank you goes out to the staff at Radiant Care Pleasant Manor and also the staff at Upper Canada Lodge. I can't thank you enough for everything you did!

Cremation has taken place and family will have a private service at a later date.

Everyone who remembers dad is asked to celebrate George's life in their own way, raising a glass of their favorite drink in his memory would be quite appropriate. Dad was a character full of laughter and jokes. His big laugh will be forever missed.

In lieu of flowers donations to the Parkinson's foundation would be greatly appreciated.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morganfuneral.com](http://www.morganfuneral.com)



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Your heartbroken wife, June

PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Sudoku solution from  
June 30, 2021**

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

**Across:** 1 C Bs, 4 Cts, 7 Carpet, 13 Hot seat, 15 LaBelle, 16 Arrange, 17 Enclave, 18 Nears, 19 Whoa, 21 Units, 22 Dior, 24 Indices, 26 Old, 28 Roll, 30 Act, 31 Oils, 33 Tall, 35 Yarns, 39 Peep, 40 Embed, 42 Noon, 43 Susan, 45 Aida, 46 Toto, 47 Rob, 49 Laws, 51 Saw, 52 The real, 55 Node, 57 Viet, 58 Hoyt, 60 Loves, 63 Enliven, 65 Academe, 67 Reprise, 68 Bucolic, 69 Assent, 70 See, 71 TNT.

**Down:** 1 Chan, 2 Bore, 3 Straddles, 4 Censor, 5 Tag, 6 Stew, 7 Canada, 8 A B C, 9 Reluctant, 10 Plane, 11 Elvis, 12 Tees, 14 Sari, 15 Leon, 20 Hillbilly, 23 Rote, 25 Icy, 26 Ops, 27 Lieu, 29 Lama, 32 Spare tire, 34 Leda, 36 Roosevelt, 37 Nota, 38 Snow, 41 Dawn, 44 Nor, 48 Behest, 50 Solace, 52 Times, 53 Helps, 54 A-one, 56 Dodo, 57 Vera, 59 Tabs, 61 E min, 62 Sect, 64 Vin, 66 Cue.





# Plein air artists paint on grounds of 13th Street Winery

**Kim Wade  
Special to The Local**

Splotches of cerulean blue peeked out from the frothing titanium white clouds on the grounds of the 13th Street Winery in St. Catharines Saturday.

Striped patio umbrellas dotted the expansive property, protecting artists from the sun's cadmium yellow rays. These artists are used to being exposed to the elements, and welcome a bit of fresh air. They prefer to be known as en plein air artists, to be exact.

Cindy Sheridan, the group's founder and organizer, explained that she became interested in painting outdoors after taking a workshop in 2017 with NOTL artist and instructor Julie Ponesse. Sheridan formed Niagara Plein Air Artists in the spring of 2018, after spending a winter in Hawaii, where she enjoyed painting with the local plein air group. When she returned to the region, she looked for a local group to join, and finding one did not exist in the area, she started her own. Three years later, there are about 60 members, with outings that average about a dozen people coming out to paint.

The group communicates through a Facebook page where, along with the dates, times and locations of the next painting session, they share their day's work. Plein air pieces are usually "small, often completed on the spot, or sometimes they are just thumbnail sketches or studies to work out values, colours, composition, etc. to be used as a reference for future art pieces," explained Sheridan.

The group is always looking for new locations, and the grounds of 13th Street Winery, which is also home to the 13th Street Gallery, provided a superb place for some artistic inspiration. After some initial enquiries by member Carol Anne Diguier, Sheridan and the group were invited to the winery to paint on location. The group was supposed to return for an Art in April event, but subsequent lockdowns due to COVID put a stop to that. The 13th Street Gallery manager, Margie Galita, was happy the group was finally able to return for their Expressions Project event. The winery has launched a new line of Expression wines, and a portion of the proceeds from the wines will go toward supporting Canadian artists.

They have also established the 13th Street Winery Expression Award in honour of artist Karoly Veress, whose beautiful and dynamic sculptures grace the grounds of the winery. The winner of the award will be a deserving student in their third or fourth year at OCAD University in Toronto, in the sculpture/installation program.

Galita was pleased to have the artists at the winery, and loved seeing them set up around in various locations around the property. "It's so pretty. It feels like you are in Europe with all the painters out there," she noted. She said she would also like to showcase their work in one of the galleries onsite to promote artists in the Niagara Region.

Ten years after the 13th Street Winery opened, the 13th Street Gallery opened its doors,

and now offers guests the opportunity to view and purchase a variety of paintings and sculptures. Exhibitions change regularly, with each drawing on the stories and the artists represented in their personal collection.

One of the artists on site for the plein air event was Niagara-on-the-Lake's Win Henstock, who was elated to be able to get out with the group. "It's beautiful here. It's perfect, not too hot. The music is good too," she said. "It's a lovely place, and everybody seems to be enjoying themselves. It's filling up. I'm going to have to add more people into my painting." Henstock was dressed seasonally in all white, sitting in her red camp chair under her white umbrella, protected from the sun. She paints on her lap with her art supplies in a case beside her, and a stemmed glass of wine perched precariously in the cup holder, facing the main buildings where people are milling about enjoying wine, food from the bistro, and baked goods from the onsite bakery while listening to live music.

An art instructor with the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, Henstock missed teaching during the lockdowns, but still painted in her studio or garden. "It's just in my blood. It's like a disease. You can't help it. You lose yourself when you paint. You might have a few problems, but when you paint it takes it all away because you focus more on the art."

Henstock recently joined the plein air group, which she learned about through Sheridan, a former student of hers.

"She asked me one time should she start this plein air group. I said sure, go ahead. Because I was busy with the Pumphouse all the time, I didn't really keep up with the group. Then when the pandemic hit, I heard that they were going out in plein air, which is fine to do. I thought I should go out with them because we've been shut in too long, right?"

Henstock continued with the group when safe to do so. "Because you're outside, and we're distanced, it's not like you're on top of one another, so I think it's pretty safe. I've had two shots so I feel a little safer now," she reasoned.

The artist acknowledges

other instructors managed to teach online through the pandemic using the Zoom platform, but she felt she was not up to using the technology. She prefers to teach in person. "I've been getting calls asking if I'm going to start teaching again soon, so I told them as soon as we're allowed to, I'm there," she said enthusiastically. "I know that people have been doing them [workshops] over Zoom but I'm not really techy. My husband is in long-term care and he used to help me before. I have a student that's going to help me with that, so I'm hoping to get more techy. It's never too late to learn."

More information on Hen-

stock and her work can be found at <https://whenstock.fineartstudioonline.com>.

The 13th Street Winery and Gallery will be hosting Niagara's Plein Air artists for the next two Saturdays, July 10 and 17. For more details visit: <https://13thstreetgallery.com/event/art-in-april-niagaras-plein-air-painters/>.

Niagara Plein Air Artists Facebook group is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/294713191510252/>. For more information about the free membership, contact Cindy Sheridan, founder and coordinator through a Facebook message, or at 905-401-1503.



Local artist Win Henstock was painting outdoors on the 13th Street Winery grounds last weekend.



Margie Galita, the Gallery manager, promotes their Expression Project, which donates to local artists. There are a few artists in the gallery at the moment, including Geoff Farnsworth, and the Niagara Plein Air artists. (Photos by Kim Wade)



Plein air artist Carol Anne Diguier was instrumental in securing the winery venue for their current exhibit. Cindy Sheridan, founder of Niagara Plein Air Artists, organized the event, which began last weekend and continues this weekend and next.