

Enjoy a shoot-out with NHLer Ben Harpur at Lions Carnival Wednesday.

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The beautiful wrought iron fence is gone, and the flag pole that proudly flew the Ukrainian flag broken, having been in the path of devastation caused by an out-of-control car on Lakeshore Road.

Hub serves dinner to 200-plus hungry workers

Mike Balsom
The Local

Dozens of volunteers mobilized on Sunday afternoon to put on a barbecue for almost 300 farmworkers in the parking lot at Cornerstone Community Church in Virgil.

What's known as the Farmworker Hub became more of a hive of activity as volunteers, including Niagara-on-the-Lake Lions, were busy flipping burgers and serving homemade cookies and treats to employees from about 40 local farms.

Workers gathered at tables to enjoy their meal and play dominoes. Some got up to play a game of cornhole in the parking lot, while others spent some time inside the church building.

"The church was really involved in getting all of this organized," said town councillor and NOTL Lions member Erwin Wiens.

"When they reached out to the Lions we were more than happy to help."

"Because of how many people we wanted to serve, and how many people we needed to serve them," added his wife, Dorothy Soo-Wiens, "we approached them to help with some of the food costs and with volunteering and serving."

Cornerstone's outreach pastor and operations director Jeff Martens planned the barbecue to coincide with the bi-weekly seasonal agricultural worker health clinic that was scheduled Sunday for 4 to 6:30 p.m.

"We are already partnering with Quest Community Health Centre for the clinic," explained Martens. "So having a barbecue here really fits naturally. And the workers are here for the hub as well. It was just a way to

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Car flies from road, lands on Lakeshore Road lawn

Penny Coles
The Local

Shirley Madsen has been advocating for changes to make Lakeshore Road, between Four Mile Creek Road and the Old Town, safer for drivers — she has witnessed too many collisions involving serious injuries and fatalities along the stretch near her home, which borders Lakeshore Cemetery.

On Saturday night, it was Shirley and her husband Finn whose property became the victim of a collision — this time, a car heading from Chautauqua toward St. Catharines spun out, became airborne, and landed on their front lawn beside their home, doing extensive damage along the way.

A Niagara Regional Police report confirmed that at 11:42 p.m. Saturday, a man driving a 2000 Audi sedan westbound along Lakeshore Road lost control of his vehicle, skidded across the oncoming lane, entered the south ditch, went airborne and finally came to rest within the front yard of a home.

The Audi, the police report says, "caused significant damage to the property, including trees, grass, and a fire hydrant."

The report doesn't adequately describe the scene of devastation, including the damage to a beautiful wrought iron fence along the front of the Madsen's property, or the flag pole that has flown

the Ukrainian flag since that country came under attack from Russia. Shirley, of Ukrainian heritage, has become well-known in Niagara-on-the-Lake and across the region for her efforts to send aid to Ukraine, and to help

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St. Davids residents want drivers to slow down

Penny Coles

The Local

Residents of St. Davids are hoping for a Community Safety Zone along a portion of Four Mile Creek Road, hoping for enhanced safety measures that could include reduced speed limits, improved signage and the installation of pedestrian crossings.

The St. Davids Ratepayers Association is circulating a petition, hoping for residents' signatures to support their request to Niagara Region, which has already instituted safety zones on York Road as it passes by St. Davids Public School, and Niagara Stone Road from the traffic circle past Crossroads School.

The region considers community safety zones as measures that help change driver behaviour, including speeding and distracted driving, "on certain sections of road where public safety is of special concern."

"These zones let motorists know they are within an area where fines have increased through a special designation under the Highway Traffic Act," the region's website explains.

Don Segal, president of the St. Davids Ratepayers

Association, says speeding on Four Mile Creek Road has long been a concern with residents, and there have been discussions with the region about how to calm traffic and make the road safer, especially for seniors and kids.

He refers to the school-aged children from Canney Park and some of the new subdivisions, residents of Creekside Senior Estates, and many others who find crossing Four Mile Creek Road challenging, given vehicles speeding along the regional road through the village, on both sides of York Road.

The subject of a community safety zone on Four Mile Creek came up in 2017 when it was first discussed, and then installed in 2019 in front of St. Davids School, and has continued to be part of the discussion about safety with the region, says Segal.

As a result of those conversations, “we had those massive bollards,” that came and went, when residents made it clear that wasn’t what they wanted, “and then the sign that tracks speed.”

The goal of the petition, Segal says, "is to take a comprehensive approach, and look at a more holis-

tic way to reduce speeding throughout the community, for residents of all ages.”

And it's not just about speeding. The petition in the email being circulated states residents have also witnessed an increase in traffic congestion, and disregard for traffic regulations in their neighbourhood.

"These issues pose a significant threat to the safety

of our residents," it goes on to say, "particularly our children, senior citizens and pedestrians."

Typically, sites that are considered by the region for safety zones include locations which have concerns or complaints near sensitive areas such as schools, retirement homes and daycares.

In considering school areas, the region looks at the number of safety and

the number of safety and speeding complaints and violations at specific locations, collision history and the number of students and families walking to school.

"I think we have fulfilled the criteria of the region,"

says Segal. "Students would like to walk to school but some parents are uncom-

fortable with that.”

They choose to send their children on school buses, he adds, "and we want to make sure they are able to walk. We want our community to be as liveable as possible."

The petition has been sent by email to a list of residents, but Segal plans to distribute it to the wider community to garner more support for the initiative.

Regional staff are likely to be looking at future sites for community safety zones in the fall, he suggests, and he'd like to ensure Four Mile Creek Road is on their radar.

He expects there will be further discussion required about the details of



The region tried bollards as a pilot project last fall, hoping they would be effective at slowing down drivers through St. Davids, but residents weren't impressed. *(File photo)*

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Poilievre talks housing, slams Trudeau during Niagara trip

Mike Balsom
The Local

Passersby within earshot of Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre's recent Niagara Falls visit could be excused for thinking that a federal election had been called.

With the roar of the Horseshoe and the American Falls as his backdrop, however, only the gathered media heard Poilievre's speech that was chock-full of ready-made platform slogans as well as frequent criticisms of the current Liberal Prime Minister.

At a podium emblazoned with blue and white lettering saying 'Bring it Home,' Poilievre ditched his glasses and wore a black T-shirt under his Conservative-blue jacket. His talk focused primarily on housing affordability during his visit to the Queen Victoria Place Restaurant.

"After eight years of Trudeau," Poilievre said, "an adult looking for an affordable apartment with one bedroom has to wait 21 years. A senior waiting for an affordable apartment has to wait 12 years. A family looking for a four-bedroom housing unit has to wait eight years. Justin Trudeau likes to blame everybody but himself, but housing was affordable when he took office."

To drive home his point, Poilievre pointed out a real estate listing for a \$550,000 "tiny little shack" at 3047 Saint Patrick Avenue in Niagara

Falls (realtor.ca actually lists the property at \$539,900). He compared that listing to one for a larger home across the U.S. border advertised for \$217,000 in Canadian funds.

"Why is it you pay twice as much for a quarter of a home on the Canadian side of the border?" queried Poilievre. "The answer is that Justin Trudeau's policies have inflated the cost of everything."

Offering an alternative to the current Liberal government, Poilievre promised to incentivize municipalities to speed up and lower the cost of building permits.

"I would require every municipality in Canada to commit to 15 per cent more housing per year as a condition of getting federal infrastructure money," he said. "I'll give building bonuses to those cities that build more. And I'll sell off 6,000 federal buildings and thousands of acres of federal lands so we can build, build, build."

He went on to say food prices have risen substantially as a direct result of the carbon tax imposed on farmers and truckers.

"Justin Trudeau's policies have inflated the cost of everything," Poilievre said. "Rent has doubled, mortgage payments have doubled, needed down-payments have all doubled. It's double-trouble with Trudeau on housing."

'Double-trouble' was only one of the turns-of-phrase that he dropped during the session.



Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party, toured Niagara last week. With him is Niagara Falls riding MP Tony Baldinelli. (Mike Balsom)

His next came when he promised that a Conservative government would make daily life more affordable.

"A Poilievre government will 'axe the tax,'" said the sloganeering Conservative leader, "to lower gas, heat and grocery bills. And we'll cap government spending to balance the budget and bring down inflation and interest rates."

'Jail not bail' was another catchphrase thrown out by Poilievre in contrast to what he referred to as Trudeau's 'catch and release' policy on crime. He also lauded Niagara Falls Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli, standing to Poilievre's left, for introducing a bill to keep mass murderers in maximum security prisons in the wake of serial killer Paul Bernardo's

recent transfer to a medium security facility.

"Trudeau's law C-83 requires public servants to put prisoners in the least restrictive conditions, including mass murderers like Bernardo," Poilievre claimed. "I'm calling on the government to repeal C-83."

When the floor was opened to questions from the media, Poilievre continued to slam Trudeau on the Bank of Canada's infusion of currency into the economy, driving up inflation rates and interest rates, as well as what he called Trudeau's bungling of the British Columbia port strike situation.

After it seemed that a solution had been reached, the strike by the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) resumed last

Tuesday. Labour minister Seamus O'Regan has called the current job action illegal. Last Wednesday, the Prime Minister formed a response group consisting of cabinet ministers and senior officials, treating the issue as a 'national crisis.'

"This strike is another example of Justin Trudeau's total incompetence," said Poilievre. "He caused the strike by raising the cost of living. His mediator and his minister have failed to get the parties to the table to secure a deal. His labour minister raised his hand in the air saying the strike was over. We learned now the strike is not over."

Poilievre also visited Port Colborne and Thorold Tuesday. His sojourn in Niagara wrapped up later that evening with a meet and greet with

his supporters at the Parkway Convention Centre in St. Catharines, where he delivered a lengthy campaign-style speech to rousing applause.

The following day, Poilievre was forced to issue an apology to Asha Letourneau, the current tenant of the Saint Patrick Avenue home to which he referred during his visit to Niagara Falls. News outlets were able to contact Letourneau, who expressed her disdain that the Conservative leader had called her three-bedroom home a shack.

Poilievre admitted that the 1.5-storey house wasn't much different than the one he himself had grown up in, and reiterated that his point was that houses such as Letourneau's should be affordable to the average Canadian.



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Region delays decision on downgrading state of emergency to crisis

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

There is no need to rush to downgrade the regional government's homelessness, mental health and addiction state of emergency to a crisis, says Niagara-on-the-Lake's regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser.

And the majority of regional councillors agree with her, having decided last week to send a

recommendation back to staff for more information to be provided.

Last Thursday, staff asked council to move the state of emergency declared in March down a notch, but this was met with criticism from regional politicians.

Welland regional Coun. Pat Chiochio raised questions about the reasoning behind pushing the state of emergency to a crisis, citing a lack of data as to why he couldn't support moving forward with the change.

Fort Erie Mayor Wayne Re-

dekop later made a motion that the matter be referred to public health and social services committee before staff comes back with more information.

Kaiser agrees with the direction council ended up taking on this matter.

"If we're going to change it, we need to understand why we're changing it," Kaiser told The Local.

She believes addressing Niagara's issues with addiction and homelessness as a state of

emergency will "shine more of a light" on the situation and create "more urgency."

Data explaining whether "the needle has moved at all" since the state of emergency was declared earlier this year is necessary, she said.

St. Catharines Mayor Mat Siscoe suggested a friendly amendment to Redekop's motion to table — that the word "changed" be used, rather than downgraded. Redekop accepted this idea.

Steven Soos, a Welland

resident who petitioned the regional government to declare an emergency, wrote to regional council about their discussion of downgrading its status.

"It simply makes no sense to end the emergency," he wrote in his letter, which was included as part of last Thursday's agenda.

He said "until there are actual indicators" that Niagara's problems with homelessness and addiction are improving, the state of emergency should remain in place.

In Soos' letter, he claims there were 259 "suspected" opioid deaths between May and June of this year in Niagara.

He also wrote that Niagara's suicide rate is "higher than the provincial average."

Soos thanked regional staff for their work on this issue, but questioned why putting it in the rearview mirror is being considered at this time.

"We have all gone above and beyond, so why quit after all that hard work?"

Kaiser asking for more provincial support for wine industry

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

Niagara-on-the-Lake regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser has uncorked a motion asking the provincial government to create better support for Ontario's wine industry.

At last week's regional council meeting, Kaiser's motion received unanimous support — a step in lobbying the province to make a number of changes to how it does business with winemakers.

At the top of the glass is a request that the government eliminate a 6.1 per cent basic tax to Ontario producers. This "extra tax" applies to sales at wineries, not at LCBO stores, Kaiser told The Local following

last Thursday's meeting.

What makes this fee to the government even more difficult to swallow is that there is nothing similar in any other part of the world where wine is a major part of the economy.

"There's no other country or province who has this tax," said Kaiser, who has worked in Niagara's wine industry for about 20 years.

How numbers are crunched through sales at LCBO stores is also "quite a bit of a struggle," she said, noting that the provincial control board's share equates to 73 per cent — after taxes and markup.

In British Columbia, VQA winemakers have a 19-per-cent share in the industry, while those in Ontario only have a share of 7.5 per cent, said Kaiser at the region's council meeting.

Another obstacle in Ontario, unique to the industry when compared to other places, is that Ontario-produced wines are treated as imports, cutting into what local wineries bring in.

Governments in other parts of the world give their producers "home advantage," but not in Ontario, Kaiser told The Local.

In 2021 and 2022, the province received similar letters and requests from the local industry.

How will it be different this time around?

Kaiser said a recent Deloitte study about the Ontario wine industry, called Uncork Ontario, determined that "under the proper conditions, the future economic uplift could amount to \$8 billion in Niagara's GDP in a generation," if the province agrees to the requested changes.

"It's like investing in ourselves," said Kaiser.

Her motion also includes an expression of thanks for the province's "ongoing support of Niagara's wine industry and the meaningful difference it has made."

It asks the province "create an environment that supports Ontario's wine industry and its farmers, providing more opportunities for investment in innovation and job creation while providing consumer choice and convenience for the purchase of Ontario wines."

A request to "establish a permanent uncapped VQA wine support program that remedies the treatment of lo-

cal wines like imports at the LCBO, through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs," is also part of her motion.

A number of fellow regional councillors expressed support of Kaiser's effort to keep the conversation going with the province.

Thorold Mayor Terry Ugolini pointed to the Deloitte report as well.

"When you have concrete evidence like that, it's critical," he said.

Regional chair Jim Bradley also called the report "compelling."

Niagara is Ontario's largest wine growing region, responsi-

ble for over 90 per cent of Ontario's grape production and is home to the only specialty crop area in the province, Kaiser explained in her motion.

Her recommendations will be sent to area municipalities, the premier of Ontario, minister of finance, minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs, Wine Marketing Association of Ontario, Ontario Craft Winery Association, Wine Growers of Ontario, Grape Growers of Ontario, and Ontario Wine Appellation Authority.

MPs and MPPs in Niagara's four ridings will also be copied on the region's efforts to petition the province.

Blue box recycling to be turned over to provincial agency

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

Niagara region staff are suggesting an annual cost savings of about \$3 million once a full transition of how recycling is collected in all 12 lower-tier municipalities is in full swing in about two years.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, however, says there will be issues when a new program starts going to the curb next year.

In mid-July, the region's public works committee chose to opt out of continuing to provide curbside collection of recycling from residences, facilities and public spaces when a new Producer Responsibility Blue Box Program is enacted on Jan. 1.

Regional council rubber-stamped this move at last Thursday's council meeting.

This means the responsibility of residential recycling collection is set to be removed from the region and placed solely in the hands of Circular Materials Ontario, an organization responsible for setting up contracts to collect and receive recycling materials across the province, on behalf of producers.

"The decision was made due to potential risks with the agreements being offered by Circular Materials Ontario that would have seen the region maintain responsibility as

a recycling collection provider, on Circular Materials Ontario's behalf, until Dec. 31, 2025," reads a news release from the region following the decision of the public works committee on July 11.

The decision results in discontinuing the collection of materials that are not part of the new provincial producer responsibility program, such as books and flexible plastics used for food containment, which are currently collected in Niagara but are not included in the new Blue Box program, the region said in its release.

But the region will continue recycling collection for special events during the two-year transition period.

Zalepa said he's pleased the region will still accommodate special events, but that he is "concerned for the future."

Certain items no longer being collected and what this means for volumes at local landfills is one of his concerns.

"I'm going to suspect this is going to impact them negatively," said Zalepa during the July 12 public works committee meeting. "I'm very disappointed with how this is unfolding."

Zalepa also asked staff to provide council with further information in a future report about Circular Materials Ontario, a not-for-profit organization.

He wants to know who sits on its board and "what corporate entities they're represent-

ing."

Staff has also been directed to implement a communication strategy to advise residents of the upcoming changes, which Niagara-on-the-Lake regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser said will be important during the transition.

She understands there will be a "learning curve" for residents, but hopes the regional government isn't "taking a step back" by taking on the provincial program.

"When it comes to people's behaviours, that's never a good thing — especially if we're talking about something like environmental impacts," Kaiser told The Local.

A decision about whether the region will continue to collect materials from industrial, commercial and institutional properties, a service not covered under the new Blue Box regulation, will also be up for consideration at a future meeting, said the region in its release.

Niagara Region will continue to be responsible for green bin, yard waste and garbage collection from residential properties as well as management of its landfills and other diversion programs.

Catherine Habermehl, the region's director of waste management services, said staff will be collecting data as the program rolls out.

"We'll definitely be monitoring this over time to see the impacts," she said.



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Homeowner continuing advocacy for road safety

Continued from page 1

those newly settled in Niagara. The report also does not mention the gardens along the front of the Madsen home, also destroyed. Madsen says when she was getting ready for bed

and heard the loud crash outside, she went out to investigate, and was astounded by what she saw — headlights pointing at her house, a badly damaged car on their front lawn, and the devastation to their property. “It looked like a bomb went off. There were car parts everywhere, all over

our front lawn and on the road.” She was even more astounded when the driver of the car stumbled toward her, she says, and said he wasn’t hurt. When she asked him what had happened, he said he didn’t know, and told the police the same. The Audi was heavily

damaged, believed to be written off, the police report said. And the driver, the only occupant, “was arrested at the scene when the responding officers found grounds to believe he was impaired by alcohol.” Mitchell Wiebe, 35 years old, of Pelham was arrested and charged with

impaired driving with a blood alcohol level in excess of 80 mgs per 100 ml. He was later released on notice to appear in court at a future date. And the Madsens are left dealing with contractors, insurance adjustors and the insurance company. Shirley, who began

her advocacy for safety improvements to Lakeshore Road after Jennifer Jackson, a 49-year-old mother of two, was killed when she crashed into a tree across the street from the Madsens last June, says she will continue her letter-writing, hoping someone will take up her cause.



The car spun around, flew through the air and landed facing the Madsen’s home on Lakeshore Road.



The police say the Audi sedan is likely a write-off.



The badly damaged Audi left parts strewn across the lawn where it landed, and on Lakeshore Road.



Gardens, gates and a fence were destroyed in the wake of the car’s trajectory.



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EDITORIAL

Producers will foot blue box bill, but recycling targets up in air

While it is supposed to be a benefit to taxpayers, and hopefully to the environment, that producers of plastics and packaging are going to be responsible for picking up blue box recycling materials and paying for it, the impact is uncertain.

Are environmental organizations saying “well done. This is a great move?”

No, at least not yet. There is support for making producers responsible for the full cost, but also concern.

And to be fair, we don’t know. Impact on the environment doesn’t seem to be much of a consideration in how this has been rolled out.

Circular Materials, the not-for-profit in charge of operating this new system, is reported to be founded by food and beverage companies, including some of the giants such as McDonald’s, Loblaw’s, and Costco.

The benefit of this new model of collecting blue box materials is that the companies producing those materials will be required to fully fund and operate the recycling system, sourcing companies across the province to do the pick-ups, and hopefully incentivizing producers to reduce the packaging they create.

Another benefit should be that the rules of what is recycled through blue box collection will be standard across the province. At the moment that’s the jurisdiction of municipalities, and some do a better job than others.

The risk, of course is that with the industry accountable for recycling, who decides the targets for what and how much is recycled, and will this change in responsibility reduce the amount of recyclables collected or actually increase the amount going to landfill?

It seems this new model could benefit the producers by lowering the target of collection, rather than stepping up recycling to the benefit of the environment.

The problem is, we won’t know what impact this will have until it’s in effect and there is time to study it, although already it seems in Niagara there will be less material recycled, instead of more. When collection is turned over to Circular Materials, some items, such as books and flexible plastics used for food containment, which are currently allowed in blue boxes in Niagara, will not be included in the new program.

Circular Materials will also not collect from industrial, commercial and institutional properties, which Niagara does, and whether the region continues that service will be considered at some point in the future.

The region says it will keep a watch over the results once the new collection system is in place, but if the impact is negative, what will be done to change it? The deed will be done, with recycling blue box materials in the hands of the province and the producers. That’s a scary thought.

Penny Coles
The Local

Tumbles and toenails can be disastrous on Bruce Trail



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

In my many hours accumulated in local forests, northern realms and foreign jungles, there is an element of self-care that always rears its inevitable and sometimes ugly head.

Exploring ecosystems and submitting yourself to multi-day treks and paddles often comes with a physical price. To be clear, the price is always right. We can overcome injuries and bodily grievances with ingenuity and determination. I’ve always been a firm believer that the power of will is a unique human trait, and one of the more positive ones at that.

While guiding a three-day hike over nearly 65 kilometres this weekend, I witnessed a tumble for the books. The man who took the fall was not only inspiring, but he also unknowingly inspired me to write this article.

Some parts of the Bruce Trail, Canada’s longest and oldest marked hiking path, contain small pockets of little forgiveness to human error. Although the forces of nature and gravity have been initiating the dehiscing of boulders over thousands of years, sometimes those very forces take our human bodies for a merciless ride. Without sugarcoating it, there are areas along the Niagara Escarpment where an inopportune stumble can lead to a fall that could change or end your life.

This man’s foot and hiking pole sunk into a washed-out void along the edge of the trail.

Due to the surprise of no hard support, he tipped, he fell, and he began tumbling down a 75 degree pitch. His backward somersault was only the start, and thankfully, the end of the downward journey to the land hundreds of feet below. A tree snagged him by the leg, and saved him from a situation that could have been mercilessly worse.

Pinned against the tree, he let out a laugh. It was the first sound I heard from him. Not a nervous one, either. His attitude and that tree were the most positive things on the 890-kilometre Bruce Trail that day.

I clambered down the cliff to help him up and get him back on the trail. He then hiked another 60-plus kilometres over the course of three days as if it never happened. The only first aid I performed was concussion protocol, and he was totally fine.

However, this reminds me of other times that southern Ontario’s most grandiose trail beckoned myself and others to jump to the occasion in order to complete the mission.


When I through-hiked the trail over 37 days in 2014, something sinister started to slow me down. An ingrown toenail was slicing into the flesh of my big toe, therefore thwarting my potential plans to finish the expedition as early as day 14. It hurt to put a sock on in the morning. I knew something had to be done, or else I wouldn’t be able to bear the pain and hobble any further.

Enter whiskey, a cloth, a pocket knife and tweezers.

I was sitting at the foothills of a ski resort near Beaver Valley, a 12,000-year-old glacial valley situated between Owen Sound and Collingwood. The pain was psychologically insurmountable, and I knew I had to get this toenail out of my skin if I were to complete the task at hand. Mentally, I had been working my way up to this moment for days, and it was time. However, I didn’t have time for a doctor or an appointment off the trail.

I skulled a decent amount of whiskey from my flask, and then bit into the folded bandana. I then meticulously went to work on my toe. I pulled the skin back and uprooted the nail from its subduction zone. I bit the bandana like an animal, as the pain was appreciably astounding. I remember looking past my red and bloodied toe at the green ski hills while spring peeper frogs sang their nonchalant chorus. It was an odd contrast, but I was proud of my surgical work. It hurt for nearly a week afterwards, but it kept me going a total of two weeks longer.

Besides the exposure to nature and its interesting spaces and species, I am forever humbled by how the natural world challenges us to challenge ourselves. Minus the scare of a fall or the pain of a toenail, I believe we as a society deserve a good humbling these days.



Natural beauty, like a weekend hike, can deliver harsh realities that can be overcome. (Owen Bjorgan)

NEED HELP? MAKE THE CALL

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| DISTRESS CENTRE
For depression, distress and crisis.
24 hour help line:
905-688-3711 | KIDS HELP PHONE
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416-586-5437
1-800-668-6868
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Mobile calls to:
#SAFE (#7233)
1-866-863-0511
(Toll Free) |
| MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACCESS
(Toll Free)
1-866-550-5205 | ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Meetings every Wednesday evening 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.
St. Mark's Parish Hall
41 Byron St., NOTL
or find a meeting
905-682-2140 | CRIME STOPPERS
1-800-222-8477 (TIPS)
niagaratips.com
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Local LETTERS

Virgil construction necessary, yes, but aggravating

The reconstruction through Virgil is necessary and welcome and will take time. That is understood. However how that reconstruction is happening is unexpected and very aggravating for drivers passing through. The state of the temporary roads is unconscionable. The potholes and bumps and changes in elevation that one has to drive through is a disgrace. No grading of these roads appears to be done, nor supply of gravel provided while the work is proceeding. Passage needs to be slow, carefully going off track, and damaging to some cars.

Can that grading requirement somehow be imposed on the contractor as soon as possible? Please!

Peter Rand
NOTL



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Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Linda Slee was first to tell us that last week, Ben was in front of the water tower in Virgil.

COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Local LETTERS

Thank you, John Kormos

On behalf of Willowbank School of Restoration Arts in Queenston, and myself, I wish to pay tribute to John Kormos. We offer condolences to his dear wife, Elizabeth, and relatives. He was an amazing man — a teacher, school principal and antique dealer. John bought and restored the house built in 1808 for Robert Hamilton and Catherine Askin's first son, Robert and Mary Biggar. It is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

As a member of the Queenston Community Association, he fought alongside Laura Dodson and the NOTL Conservancy and then-Coun. Rob Copeland and his wife Helena, and then-Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs, to save Willowbank and its 12-plus acres from being a country inn, winery, convention centre, or demolished.

Laura recruited him to the founding board of Willowbank in 2002, and he gave lec-

tures to our students.

John inaugurated and led jazz festival fundraisers at Willowbank for many years.

Most of Willowbank's early furniture and rugs came from his clients' estates as donations for tax credits, and he did the school's appraisals for many years.

Thank you John, for your friendship and all your good works — truly a life well-lived.

Elizabeth Oliver-Malone
NOTL

More crashes on Lakeshore Rd.

On Sunday, July 23, I started to write to the NOTL Local about another collision that happened on Tuesday, July 18, at 6:45 a.m. on Lakeshore Road near Firelane 1. A vehicle going east on Lakeshore Road was stopped waiting to turn left into Niagara Shores Park when it was hit from behind. The impact pushed the stopped vehicle to enter the westbound lane on Lakeshore Road where another collision took place involving a westbound vehicle. Drivers of these cars were taken to a local hospital and released.

Almost six weeks ago a 49-year-old lady named Jennifer was headed westbound on Lakeshore Road just past Firelane 1 across from the Lakeshore cemetery when she hit a tree and died. That same tree was hit just a few weeks before that. Last week Jennifer's mother came to my house to introduce herself and to thank me for writing the letter I submitted to the NOTL local on June 14, calling on the region to put safely measures in place after years of collisions on Lakeshore Road. She asked me if the day after the accident I had taken flowers to the spot, which I had, and thanked me. She shared some information with me about Jennifer as we both cried and hugged. What a tragic loss of a young daughter and mother of two! Life cut too short.

Fast forward to 11:41 p.m. this past Saturday. I had just turned the TV off to go to bed when I heard a loud bang, and saw headlights of a car on the west side of our property line facing our house. As I ran outside, I saw a car sitting on top of our seven-foot tall grasses. I saw a person getting out of the car. I was thankful the person was alive. I asked him "what happened," and he said he didn't know. I asked him if he had a car accident and he said yes. I asked him if he was hurt and he replied no. I asked him if there was anyone else in the

car that might be hurt, and he said no.

I ran back in the house to call 911 and woke up my husband. We then proceeded to inspect further with a flashlight and were in complete shock and disbelief. It looked like a tornado had gone through our front yard. It was like something you might see in the movies.

This young man, who I later found out is 35, was standing with my husband and me looking at all the destruction. I kept saying "how did this happen" his reply "I have no idea, I have no f'n idea, I was just driving down a straight road."

Police arrived at 11:50 p.m. and within minutes handcuffed and arrested him. Prior to their arrival he made a cell call and shortly thereafter a young lady showed up on the scene who said she was his wife and was obviously distraught. She told me he was coming home to St. Catharines after visiting his mother in Chautauqua. Soon after that the mother and stepdad arrived.

The driver was travelling westbound on Lakeshore Road, the police report saying approximately 120 kilometres an hour, and from the skid marks on the road, he went into the oncoming lane and into a ditch (which was about 150 feet from our house). From there the car went airborne for about 70 feet before landing at the east side of our property line taking out the fire hydrant, our flag pole, fence, steel gate, 20-year-old trees and bushes, landscaping stones bordering the driveway, our front lawn and another garden bed on the west side of our property line.

Several car parts and one of the tires were on Lakeshore Road and other parts of the car were scattered everywhere on our property. We are still finding parts. I was surprised the police did not close off the road. Other cars kept driving over the broken car parts and I was afraid of another accident.

The tow truck showed up a couple of hours after the accident and the town came out at 4 a.m. to turn off the water to the fire hydrant the car had hit.

I went out to survey the damage the next morning and take more pictures. It felt surreal. I felt numb and still do.

The letter I wrote on June 14 to the NOTL Local chronicled six collisions on Lakeshore Road since 2008, people severely injured, and some fatalities.

This is only on Lakeshore Road, and there have been many others I am sure of that we have not read of, or heard of . . . why? This evening I was speaking to another neighbour on Lakeshore Road closer to town. He told me a year ago a cyclist was hit by a car and was thrown onto his front lawn. A police report was taken and that was that.

My understanding is that there are injuries every day and one fatality every 40 days. Average cost to our region for collisions between 2015-2019 was \$350 million per year!

I have heard many of Facebook talk about tourists and cyclists going to wineries, however, let us stop and look at these accidents . . . they are locals!

How can these cars continue to speed and nobody does anything about it? Why do we not hear more about what caused some of these collisions? This should be front and centre in everyone's mind. We never think that this could happen to our parents, children, or spouses . . . but it can. I do not have the answers to what should be done, but I do challenge our community, our Lord Mayor, our councillors in town and at the regional level . . . let us get something done now! We have many great minds around. We need action today, not tomorrow. Who is going to get the ball rolling?

Shirley Madsen
Lakeshore Road

Camping, hiking on east side of Cape Breton

David Gilchrist
The Local

After a stay at the Cheticamp area of Cape Breton and some hiking in the area, we decided to continue to the east side of Cape Breton down around Ingonish and beach campsites.

For a lot of visitors to Cape Breton, the entire drive on the Cabot Trail can be done in several hours, but we had wanted to stop, camp and hike. The scenery and the winding roads most associated with the Cabot Trail continued to be quite interesting and I reminded my wife, Claudia, of an earlier trip with our kids. We had stopped at one time to get our cooler out of the hard-top tent trailer that we had at the time. Continuing on down the road, we were passed by a car with people shouting at us and motioning back to our trailer. When we pulled over to see what the problem was, Claudia realized she had left her purse on top of the trailer when we stopped. It was amazing that it hadn't fallen off along the way, and we were thankful for the folks that spotted it and let us know.

One area I had wanted to stop near was at a bluff near Black Brook Beach. Back in the day, before children, we had been there with several others to do some scuba diving. We had found, during a hike, a lovely little cove, or what locally is referred to as a 'gut' off the ocean called Squeeker's Hole. We took turns, over two days, hauling dive gear out to the area and doing a dive in this cove. It had felt like being submerged in a saltwater aquarium with the numbers of small fish, and kelp, crabs and lobsters along the bottom. We even surprised some canoeists who had spotted our bubbles just before we popped our heads out of the water.

The rugged rocks along the shore and the blue water with waves crashing onshore is something that always holds my attention. We stopped close to the Black Brook area at a cob-

ble beach, and another memory from that past trip surfaced. While snorkelling along the shore, toward where the brook entered the sea, we observed that the bottom appeared to be moving. Then we realized it was eels migrating from the sea up the brook. Claudia let out a scream and climbed on my back at that point!

As we drove the Cabot Trail we observed a lot of boats along the shore. A closer look and we could spot floats marking the location of pots. It was crab season, and the folks on board the boats were busy lifting pots, checking them, setting them again and dropping them back in.

As we continued along the trail, we were able to pull over several times at the scenic overlooks that have been added. Many businesses didn't seem to be open quite yet but, after spotting an OPEN sign, we managed to stop for a break at a delightful bakery and cafe called The Clucking Hen at Englishtown. Home-cooked

bread, muffins, oat cakes, scones and other delightful baked goods are all available with fresh coffee. A lot of locals pulled in for breakfast, to take advantage of the seating outside on the side and back porch. We left with an armful of baked goods ourselves.

We finished our Cape Breton and Cabot Trail experience at Baddeck with a visit to the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site. This is one great museum! It is well laid out, and the displays certainly expand one's knowledge of this great man. He was much more complex in his achievements and his collaborations than we generally know.

The museum also describes how his wife, Mabel, his closest "collaborator and confidante," played an important part in bringing his ideas to life. We learned that she was also an accomplished gardener who, as I suggested, developed this pastime because her husband was always on the phone.



A great little cafe along the route. (Photos by David Gilchrist)



A crab boat in action in the waters along the shore.

A difference of opinion over future of Parliament Oak

On July 13, an opinion was expressed in another newspaper stating that council should approve a monstrous hotel because it's the only way to justify the price the developer paid for the land. Certainly, council and the community have no responsibility to ensure that the developer will maximize the profitability of his investments. Changing the laws might be in Benny Marotta's best interests but it would definitely not be in the community's best interests.

As an aside, the editorial waxes poetically about the public greenspace but, as the proposed hotel has insufficient parking, the

pretty little parkette on Regent Street would soon be paved over.

The most environmentally unfriendly act in development is to tear down existing useable buildings, taking huge piles of debris to the landfill and then manufacturing new materials for the new construction which creates more pollution and destroys our natural resources.

I think that the developer should consider selling the existing school building to a community group to be re-used as a badly needed community hub and a school. He could then retain the balance of the land facing Regent, Gage and King Streets and develop

it into single-family residential lots.

An existing community group had offered the same \$8 million to purchase the property from the previous owner but he sold it to Marotta, probably just to spite the town for not approving his proposal. I think this community group might still be interested in acquiring the west side of the site leaving the other three streets available for Marotta to develop as housing. This would yield a suitable amount of profit for the developer who would get credit for giving the town what it needs.

Wayne Murray
NOTL

Dog show a first-time event at St. Davids Lions Carnival

Penny Coles
The Local

When the 60th annual St. Davids Lions Carnival opens Wednesday at 5 p.m., it will offer four days of popular food and activities, an extra day of music, and, completely new, a chance for dog-lovers to show off their four-legged family members.

The dog show will be held Saturday afternoon, July 29. It's a family-friendly event, with the only rules being that "dogs must be on a leash," says Kelly, organizer of the event, "and come prepared to scoop your dog's poop."

Kelly says she was a St. Davids Lion, moved away, and is back. She is a dog-lover herself — she recently lost one of her two beloved pets, a whoodle (a wheaten terrier and poodle mix, she explains) but will have Eleanor, a wheaten terrier cross, by her side at the show.

"I won't be entering her in the show," she says, "but she'll be my little sidekick."

She presented the idea of holding a dog show to Lions president Susan Snider, she says, after attending one that was held as part of an event similar to the carnival.

"I had entered my dog, and I just really enjoyed it. It seemed everyone who entered had a great time, even the dogs that were there. I told Susan about it, and she said 'okay, let's do it. You can organize it.' I took some of the ideas from the dog show I had attended and ran with it."

Kelly encourages people to pre-register, and is advertising the dog show around Niagara-on-the-Lake and at pet stores in other areas. She's received very positive feedback so far, and is ex-

pecting a good turnout. But for those who plan to enter a dog without registering ahead of time, she asks for arrival at least half an hour before the 1:30 p.m. show start.

Register for the show, which is sponsored by Pet Valu in Virgil, at stdavidslions.ca or email dogs-how2023@stdavidslions.ca

There are 10 categories to enter, with a \$10 donation for entry in each category.

They include best costume, so come prepared for that; most handsome, prettiest, funniest, oldest, youngest, smartest (your dog will be asked to show off a trick), sweetest, biggest and smallest.

There will be prizes for each category, including a gift certificate for best of show.

All entrance fees will be donated to Lions of Canada Foundation for dog guides, says Kelly.

"I've also invited the two humane societies from Niagara Falls and St. Catharines to bring some of their shelter dogs, along with their staff or volunteers. We can help promote dogs for adoption. I'm hoping people will fall in love with these rescue dogs and they will find their forever home."

The event is meant to be family-friendly and fun for those who enter their dogs and those who come to watch.

It's meant to make everyone smile, laugh and have a good time, including the dogs," she says.

"Everyone who has a dog loves them. Bring them out to socialize with other dogs, and have a fun afternoon. And hopefully this will become an annual event."

Virgil's Pet Valu is do-



St. Davids resident Andy Tymoszewicz will be entering Tucker in the St. Davids Lions Carnival dog show, in the categories of sweetest and most handsome. (Supplied)

minating some of the prizes, and Minor Brothers is sponsoring a water station.

Much of the carnival remains the same as previous years, with what the locals like to call "the world-famous Lions burgers" and other great food, some outside vendors, ac-

tivities such as the grocery wheel, bingo, rides, the fish pond and birthday games, and St. Davids-Queenston United Church with the delicious, traditional selection of homemade pies made by parishioners.

Raffle tickets will be on sale at the carnival for a trailer, with a second prize

of \$1,000.

There is also a full lineup of music organized by Ken Lamb for Friday and Saturday with a wine and beer tent, and for the first time, as a special 60th anniversary event, Lions will open the park Sunday from 3 to 11 p.m. The rides and games will be shut down, but the stage will be drawing a crowd for a fabulous country music event.

Also to mark the 60th anniversary of the carnival, Lamb will be presenting six decades of music to celebrate 60 years of Lions' service to the community.

Friday starts with the Repeatles, with music of the Beatles era, followed by the popular Angela Seeger. The evening ends with It's All Been Done, a tribute to the Barenaked Ladies.

Saturday's entertainment starts at noon with The Hitmen, followed by Turntable Rock with its 'smooth classics,' then the Niagara Rhythm Section with a mixture of country, pop, folk and jazz across the decades. They will be followed by Hungry Hearts, a Springsteen re-

vival, with Cottage Brew promising timeless favourites to close the concert.

Country at the Carnival begins Sunday with four bands performing, beginning at 3 p.m. The line-up starts with Silverado, followed by Brad Battle Band from 5 to 7 p.m., Aldershot from 7 to 9 p.m., and Country Junkies from 9 to 11 p.m.

Lions food, beer and wine will continue to be served, says Lamb.

The tickets are a \$20 donation to the Lions — payable at countryatthecarnival@stdavidslions.ca.

The carnival runs Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, July 26 to 28, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, July 29, from noon to 11 p.m.; and Sunday, July 30, 3 to 11 p.m.

In the July 12 edition of the Local, it was reported in error that the trailer to be raffled off is donated by Niagara Trailers. While the local business supplies the trailer, the St. Davids Lions purchased it. The Local apologizes for the error and any inconvenience it may have caused.



Country Junkies will be one of the bands playing at Country at the Carnival Sunday, a special music event celebrating the event's 60th anniversary. (Supplied)

NHLer Ben Harpur signing autographs at carnival Wednesday

Harpur disappointed he can't stay longer

Mike Balsom
The Local

New York Rangers defenceman Ben Harpur has fond memories of attending the St. Davids Lions Club Carnival while growing up in the village.

"It was always a highlight of the summer for us as young kids living here," Harpur tells *The Local*. "My siblings (Katie and Chris) and I used to love checking out the rides and trying a few of the desserts. It was such a great atmosphere."

That's why, when Ken Lamb, his former Grade 8 teacher from his days attending St. Davids Public School, asked him to appear at this year's carnival to pose with fans and talk to kids, he didn't hesitate.

Harpur will be at the carnival's opening night on Wednesday, July 26, beginning at 7 p.m. He wanted to stick around a bit longer but has to fly out to British Columbia to stand up for his longtime friend and former Niagara Falls hockey teammate Kyle Marino at his wedding this weekend.

"Ken reached out and said he wanted to do something special for the carnival's 60th year," Harpur tells *The Local*. "I've kept in touch with him through the years and I'm really good friends with his son Greg. I'm really happy that he wanted me to be a part of it."

The 28-year-old defenceman grew up in St. Davids, attending first Laura Secord Elementary and then St. Davids Public School.

When it was time for high school, Niagara District had just closed, so Harpur and his friends moved on to A.N. Myer

Secondary in Niagara Falls. Now standing 6'6", Harpur remembers going through his biggest growth spurt during Grade 10.

"My mom (Margery) was from Australia," he explains. "I remember the gap between our two times we went for a visit. The first time I was about 5'7". A year later I was 6'2" or 6'3". The following year was my OHL draft year. That gave me a lot more confidence, especially after I switched back to defence."

Harpur left A.N. Myer when he was drafted by the Guelph Storm, but returned a year later to graduate after the Ontario Hockey League season concluded.

The Ottawa Senators took Harpur with the 17th pick in the fourth round of the 2013 NHL draft. He continued with the Storm that year, however, helping them to the Memorial Cup, where they lost in the championship game to the Edmonton Oil Kings.

After closing out his OHL tenure with the Barrie Colts in 2014-2015, Harpur got the call from the Sens for five games, spending most of the 2015-2016 season with the team's American Hockey League and East Coast Hockey League affiliates.

There were three more years in the Senators' system, averaging 42 games a season in the nation's capital city. Two years in the Nashville Predators' system followed, before he was finally picked up by the Rangers in October last year.

"Last summer was really stressful," Harpur explains. "I didn't have a contract, so I ended up going on a PTO (professional tryout contract). I ended up getting hurt, and I came home not

knowing if I was even going to have a chance to play anywhere again."

He ended up in Hartford, playing for the American Hockey League's Wolf Pack for four games, before the Rangers called him up. Harpur went on to play in 42 games for New York, the team finishing third in the Metropolitan Division, and lost to the New Jersey Devils in the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

In February, Harpur signed a two-year, \$1.575 million contract with New York.

"It gives me and my family such great peace of mind," he says of the new deal. "It was a crazy year, but I'm so happy to have those two years in place."

And he says he actually thrives on the pressure of playing in the Big Apple's Madison Square Garden.

"I love the atmosphere there," he says. "It's probably the most famous arena in the world. Getting to play there for the Rangers is such an honour. Playing for that home crowd is something special. Hopefully there will be many more years I'll get to play there in the future."

Harpur anticipates some big changes to the Rangers' lineup this season. After their swift exit from the playoffs in the spring, the team fired head coach Gerard Gallant and brought in Peter Laviolette from the Washington Capitals to take his place. Harpur is sure some players will follow Gallant out the door before the season opener.

He's home in Niagara-on-the-Lake training hard and skating with some friends from the professional and junior hockey ranks to be prepared for whatever comes his way.



Ben Harpur, a homegrown St. Davids boy, plays for the New York Rangers. He will be at the carnival Wednesday evening for photos and to sign autographs. (Photos supplied)

Harpur, who held his own charity ball hockey tournament at the Gale Centre in Niagara Falls during the 2019 off-season, says he's always looking for ways to give back to the community.

"It's really important for me to do that," he says. "The friendships that I made growing up playing sports are really valuable, still today. When we did that tournament we partnered with Canadian Tire Jumpstart to help give

kids access to sport. There shouldn't be a financial barrier for anyone who wants to play."

Though Harpur's ball hockey tournament was mothballed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he's hoping to bring it back some time in the future. In the meantime, Canadian Tire is helping him out at the carnival this week, supplying some nets, sticks, a simulated ice pad and targets for Harpur's appearance.

Visitors will be invited to take a shot and hit a corner target to win a prize.

"I'm looking forward to seeing lots of families making some of those same memories we had," says Harpur.

The carnival runs Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, July 26 to 28, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, July 29, from noon to 11 p.m.; and Sunday, July 30, 3 to 11 p.m. Harpur will be on site Wednesday evening only.



Ben Harpur on the ice, thanking his Rangers fans.

19632023

60

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The Music Lineup

Friday, July 28"

80's and 90's - Ya Baby!

4-6PM REPEATLES

6-8PM Angela Seeger

8-11PM Barenaked Ladies Tribute

Saturday, July 29"

12-2PM The Hitmen

2-4PM Turntable Rock

The Smooth Classics

4-6PM Niagara Rhythm Country,

Folk, Jazz across the decades!

6-8PM Hungry Hearts

Springsteen Revival

8-11PM Cottage Brew

Timeless favourites, past and present

YEE HA! FIRST TIME EVER

COUNTRY AT THE CARNIVAL

4 GREAT COUNTRY BANDS

60th Annual Carnival

St. Davids Lions

Celebrating the 60's

July 26-27-28-29

Lions Club Grounds, 1462 York Rd, St. Davids

Wednesday thru Friday, 5pm to 10pm

Saturday, Noon to 11pm

Main Draw will take place on site at 11pm

Win Me!!

18 Foot Sportsmen Classic Trailer from Niagara Trailers

GRAND PRIZE

Tickets \$5 each

4 tickets for \$10

10 tickets for \$20

SECOND PRIZE \$1,000 CASH

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 3-11PM Food and Beverages available

Purchase Tickets/Donation to the Lions: \$20.00 at EVENTBRITE

GROCERY BASKETS

Magic with Hai

LEOs SALE OF TULIP BULBS

50/50 Draw

Music by DJ Papa Kev

Many prizes under the tent at the Nickel Booth

CARNIVAL BINGO - Nightly 7 to 10

Email: mail@stdavidslions.ca

TOWNSEND AMUSEMENTS

BURGERS

HOTDOGS-FRIES-POP

Fish Pond

Basketball Shoot

Pony Rides

Birthday Game

Pie Booth

Chamber Peach Festival and Shades of Rose Dinner coming up



Trevor Dempsey, Blake Lepp, Brittany Lepp and Jorga Lepp were on Queen Street last year with fresh peaches. (File photo)

ANNUAL PEACH FESTIVAL

Come join us in the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake as we celebrate our Peach Festival!

Featuring live music, peach displays, peach-themed food, fun and lots of Niagara-grown peaches.

It's a Peach of a Celebration!

10am - 6pm

Saturday, August 12th 2023

Queen Street,

Niagara-on-the-Lake

Learn more at:

www.niagaraonthelake.com/peachfestival2023

Local Staff

Niagara-on-the-Lake is gearing up for the annual Chamber of Commerce Peach Festival, set to take place on Queen Street Saturday, Aug. 12.

It promises to be a celebration of all the fun experiences that make NOTL truly special, says a news release from the chamber, which organizes the event.

“The annual Peach Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake is a delightful celebration of our town’s agriculture base and the vibrant spirit of our community,” says Minerva Ward, president and CEO of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“Join us for a day filled with unforgettable experiences, delicious peach-inspired food and the celebration of our peach harvest.”

Returning this year by popular demand, the Toronto All-Star Big Band will grace the stage, “offering a nostalgic soundtrack to the festivities,” the news release says.

An addition to this year’s lineup will be the talented Soul Jam, “bringing their soulful rock melodies to the chamber’s Peach Festival, captivating audiences and infusing the event with an extra dose of musical magic.”

Chamber members will have the opportunity to showcase their wares along Queen Street, turning it into a marketplace visitors can explore, along with shops, boutiques and galleries.

Local restaurant/food vendors will offer a variety of peach jams, delicacies and refreshing drinks. “Whether you’re craving a sweet treat or a savoury delight, there will be something to satisfy every palate. As well as our local peach pie tasting contest to find the best local peach pie.”

This year’s Peach Festival also introduces the Sips of Summer drink patio, dedicated to showcasing NOTL’s emerging craft breweries and distilleries. Local breweries, cideries and distilleries will be serving up their peach-infused craft beverages.

“Mark your calendars for Aug. 12 and join us in Niagara-on-the-Lake for a day of unparalleled fun, delicious food, and memorable moments,” the news release says. For more information, visit niagaraonthelake.com/peachfestival2023.

On Sunday, Aug. 13, Queen Street will be turned into shades of pink, with a new twist on the popular Shades of Summer event.

This year, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL are launching the Shades of Rose Dinner, promising the allure of rose wines, says a chamber news release.

Inspired by the desire to unite the region’s thriving wine industry with the vibrancy of the summer season, the Shades of Rose Dinner will transform Queen Street, in front of the Court House, into a wave of pink, with guests seated at

tables with pink decorations while indulging in their favourite summer picnics, immersing themselves in the delightful ambiance, the news release says. Guests are also encouraged to adorn themselves in pink.

Guests will be invited to dance the night away to the enchanting sounds of the George St. Kitts band, with live music and pink surroundings creating “an experience that is as visually stunning as it is immersive.”

“Join us for an unforgettable evening celebrating the allure of rose wines, the beauty of summer and the enchantment of all things pink. Embrace the shades of pink and indulge in a truly magical experience that builds upon the legacy of our beloved summer celebration,” says Ward.

The Shades of Rose Dinner introduces a new feature that allows guests to pre-purchase a wide selection of high-quality wines, with a special focus on rose, from more than 18 participating wineries, breweries and cideries. Additionally, Spirit In Niagara Distillery will present a cocktail lounge, where guests can savour pink cocktails crafted with their award-winning spirits, artfully infused with locally grown garnishes and juices, the news release says.

The event is being held Aug. 13, from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., on Queen Street.

For more information and ticket purchases, please visit niagaraonthelake.com/shadesofrose2023.

St. Vincent de Paul celebrates 34th annual Peach Festival

Local Staff

St. Vincent de Paul Church, the originator of the Peach Festival, will hold its 34th annual event Sunday, Aug. 13.

Terry Choules and his wife Sharyn have been organizing the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church fundraiser for about seven years. With a two-year gap due to COVID, this year they will again offer the popular traditions, including fresh peaches for sale, donated by local growers.

Choules says not enough recognition is given to local peach growers, many of them now second generation farmers donating peaches.

“We have about 20 farmers who have been donation fresh peaches since the beginning of the Peach Festival. Some of them are parishioners but most are not. They just want to support their community. The parish is very thankful for their support over all these years.”

Last year, 500 peach pies disappeared, and this year there will be 600 for sale, says Choules. He explained they cut back for the first event post-COVID, thinking there would be still some regulars hesitating to attend, but having seen how quickly the pies went, they aren’t concerned about that this year. As in recent years, with volunteers getting older and not having enough hands to bake pies, they are relying on a St. Catharines bakery to deliver the same great quality fresh-baked pies as in the past.

But they are fortunate, he says, to have a small committee of people organizing the event, and more than 100 volunteers to look after all the booths, including pies cut into slices with ice cream, and all the peach treats of the past, including peach crepes and sundaes.

Guitarist and singer Jon Libera will be back to entertain, there will face-painting and balloons for the kids, and the white elephant, jewelry and used books tables will be available.

The barbecue will feature hot dogs and burgers, and PigOut will offer pork on a bun.

Although the event is popular with locals, Choules says it attracts visitors as well, especially those who come on bus tours and walk past the church from the Fort George parking lot to Queen Street. “They come in droves, and many stop by. They might buy something and ask us to hold it for them, so they can pick it up on their way back, and we do.”

This year the annual raffle has three terrific prizes, including two nights at a Vintage Hotel, with two breakfasts and dinners included; second prize is a spa treatment at 124 on Queen, a hydrotherapy and dinner or lunch; and the third prize is a Niagara Helicopter ride over Niagara Falls for two.

There will also be some smaller prizes, says Choules.

Something new this year is that the festival will be offering the opportunity to pay for food purchases with debit and credit cards, as well as cash.

All that is needed now to make the festival a success is good weather, and Choules says it’s usually a perfect, hot summer day.

“Our priest always says a prayer beforehand, and he jokes that ‘the Lord is on our side.’ And he is.”

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 13 at the St. Vincent de Paul Church, at 73 Picton Street.

Kids popping up all over town



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library is into the third week of its pop-up summer program for kids. Despite the weather Monday, they headed out to the Newark Park Community Gardens on Niven Road for activities, story time, rock painting and a garden tour. Brothers Mark, William and Robert decorate rocks that will help brighten up the garden. (Supplied)



Library staff member Tess Roberts-Ramos reads a story to a captive audience at the community garden.

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Health clinic, shopping at hub store also offered Sunday

Continued from page 1

create an interaction between them and the community and our church.”

“One of the primary reasons we wanted to do this,” added Soo-Wiens, “is we wanted the workers to know that they are appreciated, that we want to develop relationships with them. More than just ‘here’s the hub, here’s Quest.’ We want it to be a little more personal.”

The Quest health clinic offers free and confidential medical services from volunteer doctors and nurses with no appointment or health card required. The Farmworker Hub was also open Sunday afternoon, with many workers lined up to do some shopping at the store.

“We try to max out at 15 in the store at a time,” said hub director Julia Buxton-Cox. “It just makes for a nicer shopping experience. From there, some like to head upstairs and hang out in the lounge, play some pool and ping pong, or enjoy some free snacks and drinks.”

However, she adds, men are desperate for pants and jeans, sizes 32 to 36, which

can be dropped off at the donation bin any time, or stop in when the Hub is open Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Martens says he was relieved with the timing of Sunday’s gathering. Just an hour prior to the 3:30 p.m. start a torrential downpour that saw chunks of hail falling from the sky threatened to put a damper on all of the plans.

“We were all studying the radar,” Martens said. “This morning it looked like clear skies all day. Then we took another look at the radar and there was some red, but it moved north and it all worked out.”

Organizers had hoped to serve as many as 400 workers Sunday, but with the peach harvest currently in progress some were too busy to get to the church.

Martens and the church are in the early stages of planning a similar event in August. It’s the return of a popular gathering that became one of the victims of the pandemic.

“We’re planning to bring back our Peaches Cafe in August,” Martens said. “We’re going to open it up to the entire community. We’ll serve peaches and ice cream, and maybe have



The line-up for food was long, but worth the wait. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

some peach pies for sale, too. We hope to have some live music for that as well.”

“We hope that we can do that one as an evening event,” added Buxton-Cox. “That way hopefully everyone who wants to attend will be able to.”



A large group of hungry workers showed up for the Farmworker Hub barbecue Sunday.

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Lebert Dawson, well-known for the popular asparagus he helps produce on Thwaites Farms, with Jodie Goodwin, a long-time advocate for those who work on local farms.

Plaque changed on Mississagua Street cemetery

Penny Coles
The Local

The Negro Burial Ground, much in the news recently for the quest to have its buried stones unearthed and restored, has a new plaque with a different name.

Although the Ontario Heritage Trust announced a new name for the Mississagua Street cemetery, the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground, in Toronto in April 2022, it wasn't until last week that a new plaque arrived in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was installed jointly, and quietly, by Ontario Heritage Trust July 20, with the help of town staff.

"A ribbon-cutting and photo-op event to commemorate its installation is planned for September 19 or 20," says an email from town spokesperson Marah Minor, sent Friday, with details to be provided when they're finalized.

However, in an exchange with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario to advise them of the plaque replacement, the town email says, "The installation of the new OHT plaque at the Negro Burial Grounds does not officially change the cemetery's name, as that would require a separate process through the BAO."

At the time the new plaque was announced, the Ontario Heritage Trust said it would be installed in the next month or two.

There were four replacement plaques announced at the time, including two in NOTL — the one at the cemetery and another at the Niagara Court House and Gaol at Rye and Cottage streets, which was to be changed to the Solomon



There is more local Black history on the new plaque, which references that there was an "influx of freedom seekers" after the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act was passed. "By the late 1840s, the church's membership was predominantly Black and from 1849-56 was led by Black Baptist minister Francis Lacy. There are at least 15 burials in the churchyard," it says. (Mike Balsom)

Moseby Affair 1837.

"These plaques pay tribute to the resilience and fortitude of Black communities, celebrating the contributions of Black settlers and freedom seekers," the Ontario Heritage Trust said in its 2022 announcement.

"The Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground plaque recognizes the significant Black community and congregation that was formed in Niagara," it continued. "The original plaques were created between 1957 and 1966 and may have reflected the biases and terminology of that time. To provide a more comprehensive interpretation of historical events, the Trust engaged prominent historians Natasha Henry and Adrienne Shadd to conduct new research.

The rewritten plaques now offer an expanded understanding of the local Black history, centering the experiences and voices of formerly marginalized Black individuals. The unveiling of these plaques is part of the Ontario Heritage Trust's broader effort to diversify, include, respect, and ensure accuracy and authenticity in its Provincial Plaque Program."

The new plaque reads: "The Niagara Baptist Church congregation was established in 1829. A meeting house was erected at this site in 1831 through the efforts of John Oakley, a white former British soldier turned teacher and minister. Initially, the church congregation mainly consisted of colonists, with a small number of Black

members. The Black population of the Town of Niagara grew to about 100 due to the influx of freedom seekers after Britain passed the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act and the United States enacted the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. By the late 1840s, the church's membership was predominantly Black

and from 1849-56 was led by Black Baptist minister Francis Lacy. There are at least 15 burials in the churchyard, including Herbert Holmes and Jacob Green, who were killed in the Solomon Moseby Affair that took place at the Niagara jail in 1837. Holmes and Green were among Niagara

community members who prevented Moseby from being returned to slavery in the United States. After the 1860s, the population declined, and the church closed in 1878. The burial ground is a reminder of the church and the significant Black community in Niagara."



The former plaque notes of the burial ground: "A long tradition of tolerance attracted refugee slaves, many of whom are buried here." (File photo)

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Shaw's genius on display in two current plays

Mike Balsom
The Local

Among the many luxuries in which theatre-lovers, whether as a visitor to or a resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, can indulge, the ability to compare and contrast multiple works of the great playwright George Bernard Shaw within days of each other has to be near the top of the list.

Anyone so inclined could opt to experience *The Apple Cart*, on now at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre, and *Village Wooing*, a lunch-time one-act play at the Royal George, on the same day for a self-directed Shaw marathon.

The theatre-goer would likely end the day thoroughly entertained and pondering the ability of one man to have written such very different plays within five years of each other.

Admittedly, though, there are similarities.

Both are wordy works, non-stop conversations between characters with rare pauses and little movement around the stage. And both feature a sufficient amount of the playwright's trademark wit, sarcasm and subtle critique of early 20th century British life to mark them as truly Shavian.

And, for some reason, both plays feature green apples as props. Due to the title, it's an obvious choice in *The Apple Cart*, where a bowl of Granny Smiths sits on set, and two characters actually bite down on the tasty treats. Perhaps it's not as obvious in *Village Wooing*, where an apple is first seen on the deck of a ship. Perhaps there was a sale at Hendrik's Your Independent Grocer.

The political cat and mouse game of *The Apple Cart* is a nearly three-hour showcase of some of the best acting ever seen on a Shaw Festival stage, actually the floor of the Maxwell Theatre in this case.

When he wrote the play in 1928, Shaw set *The Apple Cart* almost 40 years in the future, in 1967. Many of the ideas he put forth then would have still been relevant in those times, as they are today, with the state of the British monarchy as it is and political chaos reigning across

the globe in 2023.

At the centre of *The Apple Cart* is a sparring match of sorts between British King Magnus, portrayed brilliantly and acerbically by the great Tom Rooney, and his adversary, Prime Minister Proteus, played by a blustery Graeme Somerville.

Subtitled *A Political Extravaganza*, it is exactly that. Proteus rounds up his cabinet to mount an attempt to wrest power away from the king. With much gravitas, Somerville imbues the prime minister with palpable disdain for everything that Magnus stands for.

In return, Magnus' disdain for his adversary is much more clever and subtle.

"My opinion of you is that no man knows better than you when to speak and when to let others speak for you," says the king to Proteus, "when to make scenes and threaten resignation; and when to be as cool as a cucumber."

Rooney delivers Magnus' lines with a sly nonchalance. The audience can feel the frustration rising up in Somerville's Proteus as the king continuously outwits him.

The Apple Cart is full of lengthy, intricate monologues delivered flawlessly by almost half of the 14 actors involved in

the Eda Holmes production.

There is Rooney's King Magnus, of course, with multiple soliloquies. His performance in the role is beyond comparison. And Somerville as the prime minister spits out his long sections of dialogue with much emotion.

"One man that has a mind and knows it," warns Proteus to his cabinet, "can always beat 10 men who haven't and don't."

Equally as entertaining are the monologues from Martin Happert as the dim-witted, bumbling trade unionist Bonanerges, and the wonderful Sharry Flett as Lysistrata, one of Magnus' two female supporters.

And first-year ensemble member Sochi Fried is comically brilliant as she pressures King Magnus to leave the queen and instead make her his wife.

In contrast to *The Apple Cart*, *Village Wooing*, written by Shaw in 1933 during the first weeks of a months-long voyage aboard the Empress of Britain, looks instead at the personal politics between a man, identified simply as A, and a woman, Z.

The much friendlier cat and mouse game in *Village Wooing* begins somewhat autobiographically on the cruise ship. One can imagine the playwright himself sitting on the

deck chair as A does, scribbling away in his notebook, while the rest of the travellers spend their time playing games of deck quots.

A is a travel writer, a contributor to the 'Marco Polo Series of Chatty Guide Books.' All he wants is to be left alone to submit his 500 words about the cruise. But Z is looking for conversation and, perhaps, companionship. The rapid-fire back and forth instigated by the interloper eventually wears down the writer's guard.

Shaw's trip lasted four months, and perhaps during that time he was wistfully missing his country retreat in the small village of Ayot St. Lawrence. The second and third 'conversations' of the play, as

opposed to acts, take place in a similar small village, where the dialogue between the only two characters in *Village Wooing* continues.

There, A walks into a village shop, seemingly searching for the woman who interrupted his work on the ship. A and Z spend the rest of the play skirting around the issue of whether or not a romance is forming between them.

Selma Dimitrijevic's production expands the cast to six, the other four actors becoming a silent ensemble, watching the romance between A and Z develop as fellow passengers on the ship and, later, as villagers in the shop where Z works.

On the day The Local attended the Royal George, Kyle

Blair and Donna Soares were both wonderful and charismatic as A and Z. On any given day, though, Blair and Soares could instead be part of the ensemble, stepping back while either Michael Man and Julia Course or David Adams and Kiera Sangster take over the roles.

It's certainly worth a second or third visit to experience what the other pairs bring to the play.

Like *The Apple Cart*, *Village Wooing* also has a subtitle, *A Comedietta for Two Voices*. Again, that's a fitting description, as there are many laughs to be had over the play's 50 minutes.

The Apple Cart and *Village Wooing* are on now until Sept. 2. Visit shawfest.com for information and tickets.



Donna Soares and Kyle Blair in *Village Wooing*.



Donna Soares as Z, Kyle Blair as A with ensemble members Kiera Sangster and David Adams, in *Village Wooing*.



The Apple Cart's Tom Rooney as King Magnus and Sharry Flett as Lysistrata. (Photos by David Cooper)



Sochi Fried as Orinthia and Tom Rooney as King Magnus in *The Apple Cart*.



Graeme Somerville as Joe Proteus (right) with Richard Lam as Balbus and Kelly Wong as Pliny in *The Apple Cart*.

Shaw town preview program assists six non-profits

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Shaw Festival's town preview program committee meets only once a year, but it has a significant impact on Niagara-on-the-Lake's non-profit community-based organizations.

Representatives from six local organizations gathered at the Festival Theatre lobby Wednesday to receive their shares of almost \$5,000 in donations divvied out by the committee for this year. The funds are generated annually through sales of discounted tickets to local residents. Local charitable organizations are invited to apply for funding to the committee.

"This program has been running for close to 30 years, supporting well-deserving charitable organizations," said Shaw director of community engagement and outreach Pragna Desai. "It connects the Shaw Festival to other groups who are our friends and our colleagues. Through these connections we all thrive."

This year the committee — Desai, executive assistant Janet Hanna, associate music director Ryan deSouza, senior ensemble member Kiera Sangster, Shaw Guild president Mary Mizzen and Jenniff-



The group shot includes Tim Jennings, CEO of the Shaw Festival Theatre (centre, in black shirt), and representatives of organizations which received money from the preview program. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

er Annand, senior manager of communications — directed between \$500 and \$1,300 each to non-profits in the arts, athletics, childcare and cancer patient support.

"We have a really good time going over all the applications," Hanna told The Local. "We really enjoy learning about all the different projects people have going on. We try to match the amount of funds we have available with the number of applicants."

"It doesn't take us too long to do it," added Sangster, "maybe an hour and a half."

"We have a lot of organi-

zations that apply every year or every second year," Hanna continued. "This year, we did not say no to anybody, and typically that's the case. We do our best to make sure we can help all the applicants because they are always running good projects."

Among the recipients for the first time this year is the Niagara Nursery School and Child Care Centre. Board president Olivia Fabiani says the \$1,000 in Shaw support will be used to outfit the nursery school's outdoor play spaces.

"Our goal is to have a very

naturalized playground," Fabiani said Wednesday, "something that works on gross motor skills for the kids. We really try to emphasize outdoor play. We have a specific set that we have our eyes on. The toddler area is the space that really needs our attention right now."

As a sign of appreciation, Fabiani handed Shaw executive director and CEO Tim Jennings, who presented the six cheques Wednesday, a thank you card made by the children of the nursery school.

Three arts-oriented non-

profits were on this year's list of recipients. Rima Boles was there to accept a \$1,000 donation to the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre. The funds are earmarked to support their family-friendly summer program.

Two musical events also received \$500 each in support. Music Niagara Festival's upcoming Glory to Ukraine concert on July 30 received a boost from the preview program. And last Saturday's TD Niagara Jazz Festival's event at Simcoe Park also benefited by the same amount.

The money the Jazz Fes-

tival received went toward paying the musicians who play in the Music in the Park in Simcoe Park, said jazz festival co-creator and executive artistic producer of the \$500 in Shaw support. "It's always nice to put this toward the artist fees because that's what it's all about, the artists."

Those artists included Cuban trumpeter Bobby Carcasses, the Poland-based Wojtek Justyna TreeOh!, South African-born singer Lorraine Klaasen and drummer Ernesto Cervini's TurboProp, all appeared at Simcoe Park this weekend.

In addition, Walter Weaver accepted a \$1,300 cheque on behalf of the NOTL branch of the Canadian Cancer Society to go toward their Wheels of Hope program that provides cancer patients with rides to their treatment appointments. As well, Jennings handed a \$500 cheque to Paul Staz for sponsorship for a NOTL Soccer Club house league team.

"It's about charities helping charities, that's what I love about this program," said Jennings. "We hope to do more of this in the future as we continue to rebuild. I suspect our numbers will go back up again and we'll have even more money to share."



Olivia Fabiani hands Tim Jennings a thank you card from Niagara Nursery School children, who will receive new playground equipment.



Juliet Dunn of the TD Jazz Festival accepts a cheque that will help pay musicians for their performances.

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NOTL author's new book brings chilling true story to life

Mike Balsom
The Local

When former Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Lew Lipsit passed away last spring at 87 years old, he had survived a heart attack, a battle with diabetes that claimed one of his legs, cancer and multiple surgeries. But all of those challenges paled in comparison with the 47 hours he spent floating freely in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast

with his son Bill and friend Neal Obendorf in March 2001. Niagara-on-the-Lake author and realtor Christopher Bowron's new book, *Waiting for Morning Time*, captures the harrowing incident in all of its chilling detail. It's a tale of faith, courage, family, friendship and conviction that, like his previous fiction novels, is hard to put down. Bowron met the Lipsit family through his own parents, Helen and Alan, many

years ago. Like Chris' family, the Lipsits lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake but enjoyed spending much of their time in Florida. Lew and his wife Merry at one time owned the Niagara Stone Road barn that now houses Niagara Oast House Brewers, out of which they sold Lew's woodworking creations. But by 2001, the Lipsits had moved permanently to Fort Myers, Florida, while Lew's son from his first marriage,

Bill, continued to live with his wife Jackie and their children in Niagara Falls. Bill had recently learned to scuba dive. While on vacation from his job with a local trucking company that spring, he took his family to visit his father in Florida. The pair convinced Obendorf to take them out on the gulf with his Scarab boat, which had just been fitted with two new motors, so Obendorf could introduce Bill to diving in the gulf waters. While Obendorf was in the water alone miles from shore, Bill and Lew were on the surface in the Scarab, which inexplicably took on water and went down, stranding the three men with a storm on its way. Lew (66 years old at the time), Bill (37) and Obendorf (38), were at the mercy of the elements, all three of them holding desperately onto a rope, relying on a few attached boat bumpers for buoyancy. Spoiler alert — despite the raging storm, two days without food or fresh water, the fear of a vast, watery nothingness, extremities numb from the cold, hallucinations setting in, potential shark attacks, giant waves submerging them for longer than they could hold their breath, and more — all three survived. It's easy to look that up and find news reports from various publications, such as the Tampa Bay Times. Bowron's first non-fiction book is the result of countless interviews with the three survivors, their family members who fretted back on shore, Obendorf's father-in-law (legendary Florida photographer and artist Clyde Butcher, who was instrumental in the rescue effort), the police and the pilots who searched for the lost men. *Waiting for Morning Time* builds the tension expertly to a point where the reader can convincingly feel the mounting uncertainty of whether that rescue would ever come. The Local met with Bowron and Bill Lipsit recently at Bowron's Niagara-on-the-Lake Realty office. Lipsit repeatedly told the author how grateful he was that he had captured his

family's life-affirming turning point in such great detail. "I know Dad would have loved what you've done with this story," Lipsit said to his long-time friend. He's certain his stepmother would have also liked it, but Merry passed away six months after Lew. Bowron wasn't aware of the story until about a year after it had happened, when he was in the Sunshine State visiting his parents. "They (the Lipsits) were actually telling the story to my son Jack," he laughs. "I wasn't taking it all too seriously that night. The next day the kids told me how long he had been out there, and I went to him to ask him a few more questions." He began writing the tale back in 2017, Bowron says, though it was a very different book back then. And Bill adds that there was much discussion and some disagreement between the three survivors and their spouses as to how the story should be told. "When Dad passed away," Bill said, "Merry asked everyone else for permission to get the book written. We all agreed that it would be a great way to pay tribute to Dad." "Being a writer, I felt that there had to be a narrator," adds Bowron. "When I presented the book to (publisher) Harper Collins back then, they thought it was too difficult to have three different narrators, which is how it was first written. So I rewrote it through Lew's eyes." As Lew narrates the fear and tenacity of the three in the water, Bowron describes in fly-on-the-wall fashion what goes on back on land at the Obendorf's home, as the family members and friends mobilize to try to save the trio. He also follows Butcher in his efforts to guide the rescuers to the most likely spot. "It was hard writing non-fiction for the first time," said Bowron, who had previously released four works of fiction. "I interviewed everybody four or five times, and with the gangrene in his leg at the time, we thought Lew was

going to die during our interviews." Telling the story primarily through Lew's first-hand account demanded that his and Merry's faith in God be a part of the story. The experience of being lost at sea for almost two full days also confirmed Bill's belief in God. Bowron captures that aspect in *Waiting for Morning Time* without attempting to convince the reader to convert to Christianity. "I'm not a Christian," Bowron confessed. "I went to church until I was about 16 years old. I think I understand religion, but I'm not a religious person. Even so, it wasn't too difficult to weave in the Christian element here." After the coast guard called off their search on the second day, a pilot with a privately-owned plane continued on his own mission at the urging of Butcher and the families. When he went off of his flight plan, he was told via his radio to correct his course. Just as he pointed the nose up to redirect his plane, he spotted the trio still bobbing in the water. "I prayed a lot out there, but I wasn't a big believer before it all happened," Bill said. "When the pilot came to visit me in the hospital after, he told me what happened. That's when my life, when my faith, changed." Bowron added that in his rewrite of the book, he combed through it to ensure he omitted all of the swear words that were common in his previous four works. For his part, Lipsit is incredibly grateful to Bowron for putting the story to paper. "You can talk to people about it," says the soft-spoken Lipsit, "but this book actually tells the whole story. In a 20-minute chat you can't really get the idea across. This is the first time that people will actually understand what happened out there and how we were rescued." *Waiting for Morning Time* will be available for purchase on Aug. 5 at Laura McFadden's Old Niagara Bookshop on Regent Street, and through amazon.ca.

Jazz Festival's Music in the Park series wraps up

Mike Balsom
The Local

Hundreds of music lovers gathered in Simcoe Park Saturday for TD Niagara Jazz Festival's Music in the Park. Ten musical acts performed across two stages during the day-long event, with five playing on the Fiesta Stage at the bandshell and another five appearing on the Upper Stage, a portable structure set up facing Picton Street. Popular acts included Jazz FM mainstay Heather Bambrick and her band: Stu

Harrison on piano, Ross MacIntyre on bass, drummer Ben Wittman and Chase Sanborn on trumpet and flugelhorn; and from Holland and Poland, fusion-jazz band The Wojtek Justyna TreeOh! The Festival's recent Jazz 4 the Ages youth winners, Jonah Tredway and Antonio Geregimia, also performed, as did the PK Hummingbird Steel Band, and from Cuba, Bobby Carcasses did a set with Hungarian-Canadian pianist Attila Fias and his Combo. New to the festival Sunday was a series of 'Tent

Talks,' with subjects including mental health and how to play the steel drum, as well as fireside chats with trumpeter Carcasses, singer Lorraine Klaasen and drummer Ernest to Cervino. Later that evening the party moved across the road to the Irish Harp for a jam session led by the Randy Stirtzinger Trio. Sunday capped off an eight-day series of concerts and masterclasses in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the jazz festival, begun by co-creators Juliet Dunn and her late husband Peter Shea.



The Heather Bambrick Band (Photos by Mike Balsom)



TreeOh! in Simcoe Park's bandshell



Bill Lipsit with author Chris Bowron, who is holding up the cover, designed by his daughter Molly, of his new book about Lipsit's 47 hours lost at sea. *Waiting for Morning Time* will be available Aug. 5. (Photo supplied)

From one fort to another, it's all local history

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative reporter

The Friends of Fort George invaded Old Fort Erie recently to learn more about another prominent Niagara site in the War of 1812.

About two dozen of the group's more than 300 members visited Old Fort Erie on Wednesday after departing from a coach bus in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the first stop being a presentation about the Battle of Chippawa by local historian Ron Dale.

At Old Fort Erie, a Niagara Parks site, guests learned about the property and its history of being the bloodiest battlefield during the War of 1812, where there were 3,000 British casualties by the end.

"It was nice to see people ask questions and engage with the tour guide," said Tony Chisholm, president of Friends of Fort George.

One of the primary efforts of the Friends of Fort George is fundraising through various events in the year, which helps to mostly pay for six to eight summer students who work at the fort owned and operated by Parks Canada.

Many years ago, Erin Renfeld started as a summer student at Fort George through this program. She enjoyed a career with Parks Canada for a while, until recently when she became manager at Old Fort Erie.

Fort George executive director Amanda Gamble, who was also along for Wednesday's tour in Fort Erie, said, "it's nice to see people like that who started with the Friends thriving like that in heritage," referring to Renfeld.

The Friends, a group founded 36 years ago, went on a similar bus tour in 2019 to Fort Niagara on the U.S. side of the Niagara River, but hadn't done anything like that since due to COVID-19.

Gamble said it was nice

to hit the road again for a Niagara-focused educational trip — learning about the history of Old Fort Erie, which is "interconnected" to Fort George

through both sites' parts in the War of 1812.

"For us, it's an opportunity to raise awareness about a different site that played a pivotal role in the

War of 1812.

"It's a great way for everyone to get together — and there's lots of camaraderie," she said.

A number of non-

members joined the tour as well, which was a chance to "introduce them to Friends of Fort George and the history of the two areas," said Gamble.



About two dozen members of the Friends of Fort George toured Old Fort Erie last week, learning about the site from guide Grayson DesRoches. (Photos by Kris Dube)

Art show and sale popular with artists and art lovers

Maria H. Klassen
The Local

The upcoming art show and sale on the beautiful grounds of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is a favourite with both artists and art lovers.

On the weekend of Aug. 5 and 6, there will be a celebration of 60 artists and artisans showcasing their work. Included are paintings, photography, sculptures, wood-working, glass, textiles, jewelry and more.

Visitors will be able to view amazing art, talk with the artists and purchase paintings to add to their own art collections.

Talking with the visitors to the show and sale is a highlight for artist Janet

Horne-Cozens.

"Art at the Pumphouse was one of the first shows that I did, and have continued to do every year. It's really my favourite show of the season, not only because of its stunning location on the Niagara River, but because of the wonderful staff and volunteers that make it a pleasant experience," says Horne-Cozens.

"I enjoy chatting with guests that come faithfully every year, as well as those tourists, Canadian and international, that drop in to experience some of the finest products that the Niagara Region has to offer."

The event is organized by a committee that includes Pumphouse board members, staff and volunteers.

Planning starts months in advance.

Artists are asked to bring their own display and easels, and art is hung in the gallery by Pumphouse staff. This event is considered the premier juried art show and sale, now being held for the 16th year.

The jury includes a board member, staff and local artists, all with a visual arts background.

Tim Sullivan is a participating artist at this show. "It is a great pleasure to be able to show my work at Art at the Pumphouse," he says. "They have been so important to the development of my work through their courses and workshops, and the encouragement they have provided to the NOTL

Arts Collective."

This year's event features a silent auction, offering those who attend the chance to bid on unique items generously donated by businesses supporting the arts. Donations include original artwork, gift baskets and gift experiences. Each item will have a starting bid, with increasing increments, and will go to the highest bidder. Money collected through ticket sales and the silent auction is used for funding the programs for seniors, children and families at the Pumphouse.

Live musical performances can be enjoyed from the stage in the rose garden. This year's local talents include the duo Steve Goldberger and Andrew Aldridge, as well as the Niagara-on-the-Lake Ukesters.

Food and refreshments and will be provided by Pig-Out Catering. A major sponsor of the event is Chateau des Charmes. A selection of their wine will be available for sale. A beer tent will also provide drinks for a fee.

Admission for the event is \$5 for adults, and free for children. Hours each day are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets may be purchased in advance online, or at the event. An online version of the show runs from July 17 to Aug. 13. Mark your calendars and don't miss this event on the lovely grounds of the Pumphouse on the Niagara River.



Artist Janet Horne-Cozens says this is her favourite art show.



Tents set up on the beautiful Pumphouse property are a good setting for an art show — these are from 2022. (Photos supplied)



Tim Sullivan displaying his work at last year's show and sale.

NOTL Museum preparing for community heritage festival

Local staff

The Past is Present Heritage, a Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum community festival, returns this year on the annual Civic Holiday, Monday, Aug. 7.

The event is all about tradition, history and community engagement, and will feature historic demonstrations, live music, food, the popular treasures

sale and much more, says Amy Klassen, the museum's marketing and finance director, and organizer of the event.

The event is free to the public, and includes admission to the museum galleries inside.

On site will be blacksmith Neil Blythin, the Niagara Handweavers and Spinners Guild, the St. Catharines Rug Hooking

Guild, representatives from the Mackenzie Printery, a vintage display of firearms, and the Town of Lincoln's Museum staff offering children's activities.

As a special treat, museum volunteer Jan King-Watson will also be running one of her amazing Black History tours on the same day, starting at Voices of Freedom Park at 11 a.m.

Vendors for the day are artist Kathy Thomas with her heritage maps of Queenston and NOTL, Quixotic Minerals with rocks, minerals and fossils from around the world, as well as home-made preserves.

The museum will also have a bake sale and a wonderful selection of treasures, ephemera and used books for those interested in hunting down some-

thing vintage.

For lunch, PigOut will have a delicious pig roast available.

"We are thrilled to have live music throughout the day," says Klassen. "An annual favourite, the Niagara Old Tyme Fiddlers will be performing from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and much-loved Niagara musicians Aaron Berger and Nathaniel Goold will be on from 1 to

3 p.m. There is definitely something for everyone."

The Past is Present Heritage Festival, Monday, Aug. 7, is open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the NOTL Museum, 43 Castlereagh Street.

For more information, visit notlmuseum.ca or call the NOTL Museum at 905-468-3912.

The museum is open seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Blacksmith Neil Blythin will be back at this year's heritage festival at the museum. (Photos supplied)



Barb Cole and Victor Packard will be back with a display of antique firearms at Past is Present at the NOTL Museum.

Shred-it event coming up to fundraise for palliative care

Penny Coles
The Local

Do you have boxes of documents that need to be shredded?

Consider helping out a local charitable organization — the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service is holding its annual Shred-it fundraiser at Simpson's Pharmasave Saturday, Aug. 19.

The fundraiser helps dispose of documents safely, preventing identity theft, while paying for the many programs and support services offered free by the palliative care service.

The annual tradition, a good reminder to residents to go through their documents and dispose of them in a way that is safe and secure, has been made more convenient over time, says Bonnie Bagnulo, the local palliative care service's executive director.

During COVID, the event was moved to the Simpson's Pharmasave parking lot, where cars could line up, and volunteers would take the boxes of documents to the Shred-it trucks — there was no need for anyone to

get out of their cars.

That has continued post-COVID because it's convenient, and provides a better service for those dropping off documents, says Bagnulo.

In its early days, the Meridian Credit Union sponsored the fundraiser, which was held in the credit union parking lot, with its staff volunteering.

Although it's moved to Simpson's, Meridian still pays for the Shred-it trucks as it has from its earliest years, and is still very supportive of the event.

However Simpson's parking lot offers a great set-up, with an entrance and exit, and space for people to stop, and allow their boxes of material to be taken from trunks.

"Volunteers do all the work," says Bagnulo. "Just drive up, and you don't need to get out of your car. Volunteers take care of everything. This is the service we want to provide, making it as easy as we can."

But please don't come early, she adds. The event starts at 9 a.m. and goes until 1 p.m., or until the trucks are full. In past years there have been line-

ups on the road before that — even before the Shred-it trucks arrive, and some years, when they have arrived, cars are already blocking the entrance.

"The trucks don't start shredding until 9 a.m. so there is no need to come any sooner than that."

The cost for shredding is still \$8 per bankers box of documents, and \$20 for three boxes.

Bagnulo says there has been a decline in the number of boxes dropped off in recent years, as businesses and individuals move to paperless documents.

"But there is definitely still a market for this service, and we hope we can continue to offer it for years to come. The Meridian Credit Union still believes strongly that this is important, for security reasons, and it's a great fundraiser for us. It helps us to pay for our programs, which are free, and for the first time we're in a building where we have to pay rent."

The palliative care organization moved out of the former hospital building and into offices in the Niagara Medical Clinic building on Niagara Stone



Boxes of documents to be shredded can be delivered to the parking lot of Simpson's Pharmasave on Niagara Stone Road. The fundraiser helps to pay for the many programs and support services offered free by the NOTL Community Palliative Care Service. (Photo supplied)

Road, a great location which gives them more office space than they had previously.

They have also continued to expand much-needed programming for those requiring palliative care, and to provide a break for caregivers.

"Our program for care-

givers is extremely important," says Bagnulo. "We just started it in the spring and we feel it's really effective."

A variety of workshops are offered Thursday at the community centre, including aromatherapy, yoga, art therapy, mindfulness — they are different every

week, she says.

There is no need for registration — just show up and have an hour respite. "We invite people to come in and open their minds to something new. It's free of charge, as are all our services."

For more information call 905-468-4433.

It's kids' day at the Market Saturday — don't miss out

Sharon Burns
The Local

Kids' Day at the Market is back after a hiatus of three years, and there is plenty to get excited about.

"We will have a bouncy house from Niagara Inflatables, face painting, crafts, Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's Tiny Museum,

scheduled story times with local authors Kathryn Re-court, Diane Martin and the NOTL Library, and more," explained Sharon Brinsmead-Taylor, the coordinator for Kids' Day and for the Farmers' Market, which is held every Saturday morning at 111 Garrison Village Drive.

The Farmers' Market

will be operating as usual, featuring local farmers and food producers offering take-home meal options and "eat-at-market" breakfast and lunch options. Artisans and crafters are also in attendance.

"It's a great way for parents to break up the monotony of the summer time, and give the

kids a chance to blow off some steam," said Brinsmead-Taylor. "And it's also a great way not to spend a ton of money."

Teenage members of the NOTL Youth Collective will be volunteering their time for Kids' Day, and there will be an opportunity to donate towards the Youth Collective.

Kids' Day at the Farmers' Market starts at 8 a.m. and runs until 1 p.m., this Saturday, July 29. A more detailed schedule will be posted at the market's website: market@thevillage.ca.



There will be lots of activities for kids to enjoy this Saturday morning, including a bouncy castle. (File photos supplied)

LocalSPORTS

Davis Cup on tennis tour stopping in NOTL

Mike Balsom
The Local

It's the tennis world's equivalent to a visit by the NHL's Stanley Cup.

The International Tennis Federation's Davis Cup, awarded annually to the men's tennis championship team out of almost 140 countries, will be in Niagara-on-the-Lake for four hours on the afternoon of Thursday, Aug. 3.

Team Canada won the international tournament in 2022, defeating Australia in the final in Malaga, Spain. Felix Auger-Aliassime clinched the victory over Alex de Minaur to give Canada their first Davis Cup win in the cup's 122-year history.

As part of the win, the victors get to hold onto the prize until the following year's tournament, scheduled for this November. The NOTL stop is part of the Sobeys Davis Cup Champions Tour that has seen the cup travel across the country.

Looking into the storied history of the cup itself, the visit to town makes perfect sense. As well, the host site for the event, on the court at the home of Sam and Robin

Ridesic, facing Queen's Royal Park, is another logical choice.

Ridesic and NOTL Tennis Club director Rosemary Goodwin stand on the Ridesic family's own tennis court, where next Thursday's festivities will take place. Queen's Royal Park, on the site of the old hotel that once housed one of the most important tennis courts in Canada, is visible just across Front Street.

"There used to be a hotel, Queen's Royal Hotel there," Robin tells The Local. "They had the first lawn tennis courts in Niagara, if not all of Canada. It was at the Queen's Royal Hotel where the idea for the Davis Cup was conceived."

In fact, it was in 1896 at the seventh annual Canadian Open Tennis Championship at the Queen's Royal Hotel when millionaire tennis player Dwight Davis was presented with the idea of sponsoring a cup.

Four years later, the first international event between the United States and Great Britain was held, and the silver and gold Davis Cup was presented to the winners for the very first time.

The cup itself is impres-

sive. Through its first two decades, it was just the gold and silver cup, with the names of the champions from 1900 to 1919 engraved right on it. In 1921, a silver tray was added, where the winners from the following 13 years are recognized.

Like the Stanley Cup, it kept growing through the years. The champions from 1933 onwards are engraved on mahogany plinths, with Canada now officially part of the bottom tier. According to the Tennis Canada website, the trophy is 110 centimetres tall, 107 centimetres in diameter at its widest point, and weighs 231.5 pounds.

That annual Canadian Open Tennis Tournament in NOTL, where the idea for the Davis Cup was first posited, eventually morphed into what today is known as the National Bank Open. With that tournament happening in Toronto Aug. 4 through 13, the cup making a stop in NOTL just a day before is fitting.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake doesn't receive the credit it should for its place in the tennis world," Goodwin says. "There's a lot more to this town's history than wars.



Robin Ridesic and Rosemary Goodwin have planned an event to welcome the Davis Cup, along with Frank Dancevic, a tennis player from Niagara who is now captain of the Canadian men's national team. (Mike Balsom)

There was huge social change from the 1890s through to the 1920s. Niagara-on-the-Lake was central to that in an amazing way."

Another special connection is that the captain of Team Canada, who will accompany the Davis Cup to Front Street next week, is a Niagara native. Frank Dancevic, born and raised in Niagara Falls, was named captain of the men's national team in 2017. Dancevic represented Canada as a competitor in the Davis Cup for more than a decade, beginning in 2002.

"To have the team captain be from Niagara is incredible," says Goodwin. "We wanted to not only have the trophy, but to also have the captain, so that Niagara could recognize him. There were a lot of local people involved in helping him grow into a national-level tennis player. It's a big thing to have an athlete from Niagara who ends up contributing to a national team effort."

Goodwin says Dancevic's parents, John and Doris, will

be in town for the event, as well as local coaches Doug Carter, Lezlie Murch and Dave Boland, who all contributed to Dancevic's development. Davis Cup players Harry Fauquier and Pierre Lamarche will also be on site, along with Tennis Canada senior vice-president of high performance Hatem McDadi.

"We've applied to the town for a special events permit, and hope to have a small portion of Front Street closed to accommodate a celebration atmosphere," Goodwin adds. "Visitors will have an opportunity to view the trophy up close and have photos taken with the trophy, and with Frank. And we're thinking about adding a couple of nets on the street."

The Ridesics, a self-professed tennis family, couldn't be more happy to host the event.

"My in-laws met on a tennis court, our four kids play tennis, and Sam was a very competitive tennis player," says Robin. "He played all over the U.S. and Canada

when he was a teenager. I play too, though I'm not as good as the rest of them. We appreciate the sport in particular, that's why we're honoured to bring the cup here."

The NOTL visit is one of the final ones on the tour. On Friday, the Davis Cup moves on to Toronto's Sobeys Stadium, where it will be on display during the National Bank Open. From there, it's on to Montreal's Stade IGA for the Omnium Banque Nationale tournament.

Of all the planning that has gone into the celebration, Ridesic deflects the credit to Goodwin.

"Rosemary has put in a tremendous amount of work for this," she says. "And it's going to be lovely for Niagara-on-the-Lake to see the Davis Cup and interact with it, and to celebrate Canada's win."

The Davis Cup will be on the Ridesic tennis court facing Front Street this Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m. A program featuring an address by Dancevic will begin at 4 p.m. There is no cost to attend.



The Davis Cup will be on display in NOTL Aug. 3. (Tennis Canada photo)



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LocalSPORTS

Young soccer goalie invited to prestigious training camp

Mike Balsom
The Local

When Stephanie and Fabian Reis registered their five-year-old son Hugo in a Real Madrid Foundation soccer camp this summer, they weren't totally sure what to expect. One thing they never could have predicted is that Hugo would be invited to Spain next spring to train at the perennial Champions League powerhouse team's Madrid facility.

The owners of Ferox Estate Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake have been splitting their time between the winery and a home in Toronto. Part of that decision was based on their desire to grow the winery's business there. The other part was the opportunity to enrol their son at a German language private school.

Earlier this summer, Hugo participated in a Real Madrid Foundation camp in Toronto, where he caught the eye of the Union of European Football

Associations level coaches involved.

"Since he was three years old, he's wanted to be a goalkeeper," says Stephanie. "He can watch soccer highlights all day long, Premier League, Champions League, the German Bundesliga. He studies all of the goalies and knows the names of the players on every team."

Despite his young age, Stephanie and Fabian enrolled Hugo in soccer goalie training through the Erin Mills Soccer Club over the winter, where he was by far the youngest participant, working with kids between eight and 13 years old.

"I think that really pushed him to do his best, to work really hard," says Stephanie. "The older kids treated him really well, and he formed a real bond with them."

Hugo played soccer with Niagara Falls United last summer, with Fabian as his coach. Because the family is in Toronto this summer and planning a long trip to Europe in August,



Hugo Reis, five, has been invited to Spain next spring to train at the Champions League powerhouse team's Madrid facility. (Photo supplied)

they decided not to register him for a league this year. But he needed his soccer fix, and that's where the Real Madrid Foundation experience came in.

"I didn't really know a lot about it at first," Stephanie says. "They do these camps all over Canada, North America and Europe. It's a real grassroots effort to spread their methodology around. They really focus on how to play as a team."

Hugo's mom was impressed immediately with the

way the camp was run.

"It was very organized," she marvels. "It was very professional. They really teach these kids at a young age how to be disciplined. They come onto the field in a single-file line. It's discipline, structure."

The Real Madrid Foundation camps feature professional European football association coaches trained in the methods of the Spanish club. They promote a healthy and fit environment for kids who want to step up their game to

the next level. The foundation website stresses game vision, teamwork, and effort in an experience where they train like a champion in an environment where they can feel like a professional player for a week.

"They promote their values of leadership, teamwork, respect and effort," says Stephanie.

Following the camp, the family received an email from the foundation inviting Hugo to their training facility in Spain for two separate

one-week training sessions in March and June.

"They said they only choose one or two kids from each location to invite to Spain," says Stephanie. "I think Hugo got chosen partially for how he played, but also because he matches with their all-around values. We're really proud of him."

While in Toronto, Hugo has been attending the private German International School. Both Fabian and Stephanie have German backgrounds, and keeping the language and the culture alive is important to the family.

"We do speak German a lot in the home," Stephanie mentions. "And living here right now gives us the opportunity to send him to this school, to give him that cultural experience."

Of her son's love for playing in goal in soccer, Stephanie is a bit in awe.

"There's so much more in playing that position than either Fabian or I ever knew," Stephanie says. "Hugo's not even six yet and he has already learned so much. The way he stands in the net, it shows he knows his stuff. We love to support his passion."

All three of them plan to be in Madrid for both sessions next spring and summer.

Lacrosse team's Canada Games gold anniversary to be celebrated

Ken Slingerland
Special to The Local

It was 50 years ago this summer that the Niagara Jr. B Kinsmen Warriors won the gold medal at the Ontario games, the gold medal at the Canada Games in British Columbia and also the Ontario Jr. B Lacrosse championship, all in the same year — a feat that has never been repeated.

The Jr. B franchise was started in 1969 by Fred Conradi, Peter Conradi and Stan Ignatczyk, and it only took five years to win the championships. The Jr. B Warriors also later won the Founder's Cup, Canadian Jr. B Championship in 1981.

On Aug. 18 at 7 p.m. there will be a celebration to honour the 50th anniversary at the Kinsmen Hall in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

After winning the gold medal in British Columbia, Jack Gatecliff, sports editor for the St. Catharines Standard, called the Kinsmen Warriors' season a "Rags to Riches" story. The team was rated the underdogs in the Ontario tournament to qualify for the Canada Games but eliminated Whitby and then upset number one seed Hamilton to



The winning Canada Games lacrosse team: front row, John Wiens, Dave Parsons, Howie Vant, George Moses, Bob Taylor; second row, Ontario Mission Member D.L. Minshall, Russ Hodgkinson, Norm Hope, Jodie Engemann, Mike French, Bruce Morgan, Steve Miller, Coach Monty Slingerland; back row, Ralph Hamm, John Floris, Willie Plett, John Skubel, Don Smith, Gary Hill and manager Stan Ignatczyk. (St. Catharines Lacrosse Hall of Fame)

qualify for the trip to B.C.

Co-franchise owners Monty Slingerland (coach) and Stan Ignatczyk (manager) then had to scramble to raise funds to send the team to B.C. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake chipped in to outfit the team with warm-up jackets and T-shirts.

The team won all four games at the Canada Games, including the final game against Nova Scotia to win the gold medal. A newspaper clipping from 50 years ago reported, "On their return home to

the Toronto Airport, the team was met by Lord Mayor Jake Froese, who left a meeting of the Town Council mid-way to greet the boys personally. Accompanying them home to a homecoming reception at the Royal Canadian Legion headquarters, the Lord Mayor and the team were greeted by a few hundred residents who cheered their arrival in King Street."

The team still had to compete in the Ontario Lacrosse Playoffs, following the Canada Games. After almost be-

ing upset in the semi-finals to Oakville, the Warriors defeated Whitby to claim the OLA Championship.

A civic reception was held in late September in 1973 to honour the Jr. B Kinsmen Warriors and other athletes in the community. Goaltender John Skubel was awarded the most valuable player for the year.

On Aug. 18, the Kinsmen welcome all NOTL Jr. B players from all teams over the years to celebrate the 1973 Jr. B Kinsmen Warriors champions.

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10:00 a.m.
Worship Gathering
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LocalSPORTS

Community shows support for boxer McKenzie Wright

Mike Balsom
The Local

Before boarding a flight to Cali, Colombia, Monday for a chance to qualify for the 2023 Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile in October, St. Davids boxer McKenzie Wright received a send-off fit for a future Olympian.

About 40 family members, friends and supporters gathered on the patio at the Sandtrap Pub and Grill last Wednesday afternoon for a fundraiser to help offset the cost for Wright's trip, to the tune of about \$2,700 when it was all over.

Wright won two matches by unanimous decisions at last month's domestic qualifier event for the Pan Am Games, beating Grace Fahnbulleh of New Brunswick and British Columbia's Nyousha Nakhjiri to take the Light Flyweight (50 kg) division and punch her ticket to Cali.

"Things happened really quickly," Wright told The Local. "They sprung it on us in Montreal that we would be leaving for Cali in just three weeks. I had to scramble to find the funding. My mom and dad (Judy and Dow) put this all together. They reached out to the community and secured all these raffle prizes and the Sandtrap to host the fundraiser."

In addition to the Sandtrap fundraiser, a GoFundMe page had raised just over \$10,000 as of press time for the three-time national champion's quest.

Wright says she gets no funding from any government or governing body involved in the sport.

"Other sports get funding, but boxing is very limited," said Wright, a former kickboxer who started in that sport as a 15-year-old Oakville resident but switched to boxing because she was "more of a puncher than a kicker."

In 2010, Wright's gold-medal effort in the 46 kg weight class made her the second Canadian to win both the national boxing and kickboxing titles in the same season.

About seven years later Wright says she had lost the fire for competition. She picked up and moved to South Africa, finding work at a Safari camp. When the pandemic hit, that job was no longer viable, so she moved back home with her parents, who in the meantime had retired to St. Davids.

Then she received a call from a boxing friend going back to her days fighting out of Burlington's Bay Area

Athletic Club. Pan American Games 2015 gold medalist Mandy Bujold of Kitchener invited Wright to spar with her as she was training for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, her second Olympic Games.

"I sparred with her when she was training for the Pan Am Games in 2015," Wright said. "She was getting her sparring ready for Tokyo, and she asked me to be part of her camp. I was thrilled, but I hadn't been in the ring for quite awhile. I wasn't sure if I was going to bring enough to the table for her."

All it took was one sparring session and Wright's desire to get back into the ring for real was once again sparked.

"Her level of competition, just to be in the ring with her, made me want to be better," Wright explained. "It fired me up to get my own training going. This time around, I'm loving training more than ever, and I feel I have the right team behind me."

That team includes her trainer Jesse Sallows, who owns City Boxing Club in Niagara Falls, as well as 11-time Canadian champion Bujold, who was at the fundraiser Wednesday.

"She has all the abilities to beat all of these girls," Bujold insisted. "She has the speed, the footwork, she puts great combinations together. It's all there, it's just a matter of ensuring she knows that and that she feels supported along the way. With the community behind her, she can focus solely on training and not all the other things."

There's at least one other part of her life Wright has felt compelled to focus on the last couple of years. She is just wrapping up her final semester in Niagara College's nursing program.

"I still have to write my licensing exam," said Wright. "I've completed all of my consolidating (clinical) hours. But I can write that exam any time. Right now I'm going to focus on the Pan Am's, and I'll probably write it after that."

Since that first sparring session with Bujold, she's thrown herself into her training. She works out twice a day, hitting the gym with Sallows in the evenings after taking advantage of the hills in St. Davids for her road training. And she's installed a heavy bag in her parents' backyard.

"When she went to work with Mandy I knew she would get the urge back," Dow told The Local. "She likes to compete. She's been doing this a long time, we've been used to seeing her get kicked and punched. I al-

ways joke with her that it's better to give than to receive."

At the Sandtrap fundraiser Wright was meeting her supporters, posing for and signing photographs and talking about her quest to fight at the 2024 Paris Olympics. There were some familiar faces on the patio, but also many whom Wright was meeting for the

first time.

Bud Duerr, visiting a friend in NOTL from his home in Indiana, heard about the fundraiser and decided to attend.

"I'm a boxing fan," said Duerr. "I think it's fantastic, the discipline she's shown in training and every aspect of it is a sheer joy to see."

"It's really overwhelming

to see how our friends, our families and the community as a whole have embraced what we've been asking of them," Dow said. "They're supporting what McKenzie is doing. It's been humbling, to be frank about it."

Wright will participate with 13 other elite Canadian boxers at a training camp in Cali beginning this week to

get ready for the competition in August. Success there will get her a spot at the Pan Am Games in Santiago Oct. 21 to 27.

"It's been amazing how everyone has really pulled through," Wright said about her supporters Wednesday. "They've really joined my team to help me get to these competitions."



McKenzie's father, Dow Wright, standing next to the table full of raffle prizes.



Trainer and coach Jesse Sallows, McKenzie Wright, and two-time Olympian Mandy Bujold at the Sandtrap fundraiser.



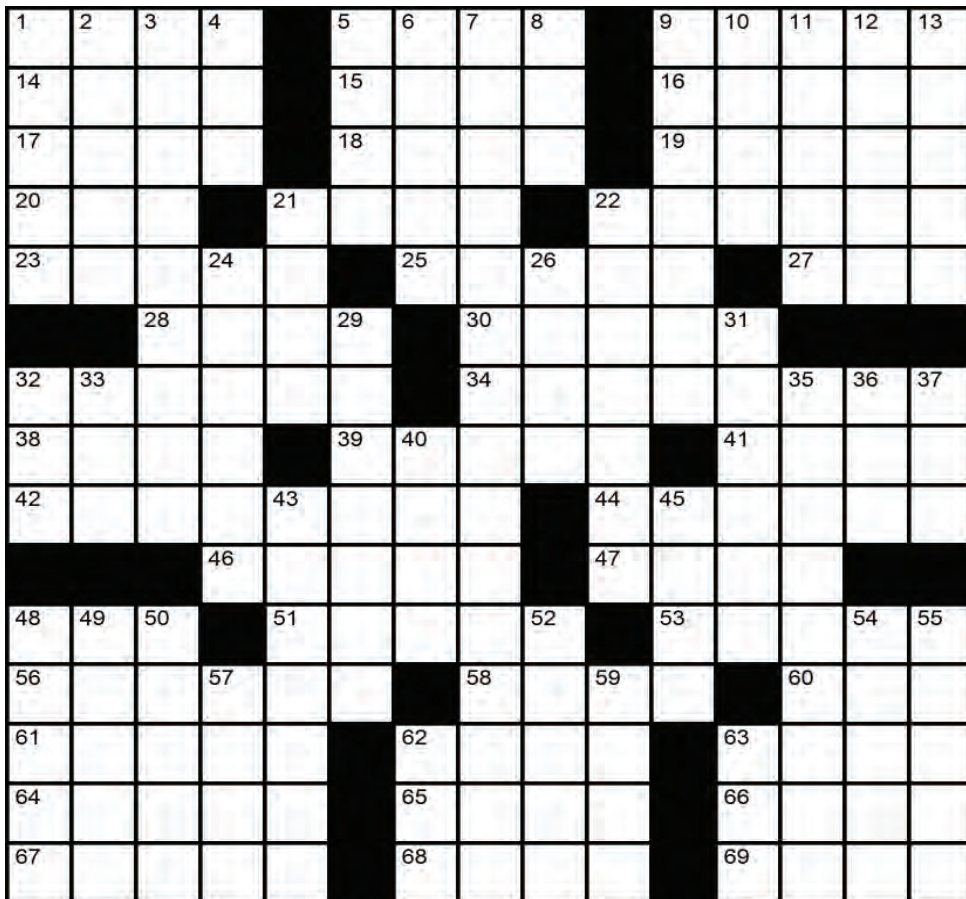
Bud Duerr of Indiana came out to support McKenzie's quest to make it to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

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Across:

1 Pistols
5 Police heavy brigade
9 Unexpected turn of events
14 Long song for one in an
opera
15 Cairo/Pittsburgh river
16 Totaled
17 Of the present month
(Abbr.)
18 Traditional knowledge
19 Cosmetics mogul Elizabeth ---
20 Monk's title
21 Job-discrimination
watchdog (Abbr.)
22 Plumping
23 Moonshine maker
25 Liable
27 Journey's end forecast
28 Swedish aircraft maker
30 Astonish
32 Take for granted
34 Hearth
38 Radiation absorber
39 "I shall not find myself so ---
die" (Antony, in "Julius
Caesar")
41 One up on a deuce
42 Catholic
44 Accuse
46 Wide river mouth

47 Flying toy
48 Batter essential
51 Fashion reminiscent of
the past
53 "What happens in --- stays
in ---"
56 Short stops
58 Decree
60 Web site ID
61 The first Mrs. Trump
62 Singer --- Simone
63 Split
64 Well mannered
65 International trade org.
66 Stripe
67 Breaks
68 Raised
69 E.g. Levin, Gershwin
and others

Down:

- 1 Short attacks
- 2 Ripley's slogan finishers
- 3 Firing
- 4 Posed
- 5 Only
- 6 Cry of exultation
- 7 Battle group main feature
- 8 The very end of a golf club
- 9 Swing in a circus
- 10 Skin blemish

11 Self-published author
12 Surgically implanted tube
13 A k a the Friendly Islands
21 Gunslinger actor Jack ---
22 Duck ---, medieval child's
game
24 Exalted
26 Leave out
29 Fab Four
31 Personal assets
32 Top-fermented beer
33 Moderately dry
35 Unorthodox
36 Angular meas.
37 Peeper
40 British Prime Minister
when the Constitution was
signed
43 Food grasses
45 Honey factory
48 Sagas
49 Singer-songwriter --- DeGraw
50 Yellow tropical fruit with
pink pulp
52 Token amount
54 Center of an amphitheater
55 Snow vehicles
57 Saucy girl
59 "Shane" star Alan ---
62 Toff
63 G-men

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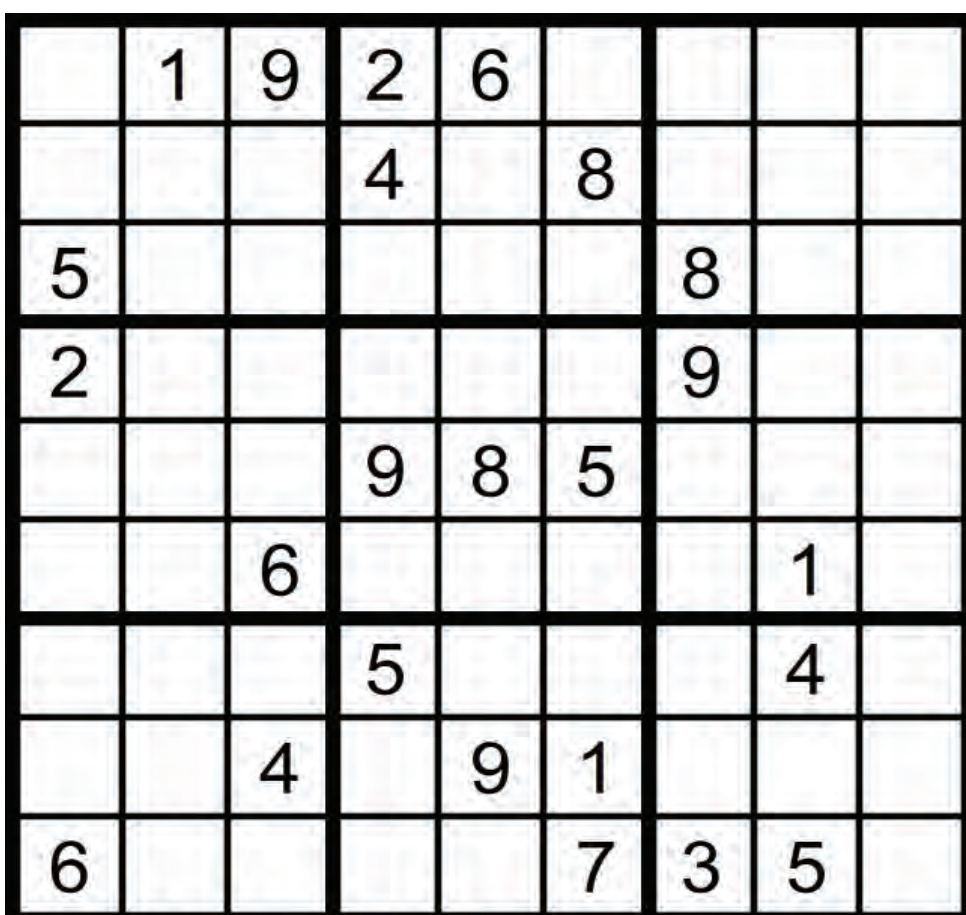
PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Sudoku solution from
July 19, 2023**

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

Across: 1 Rods, 5 S W A 1, 9 Twist, 14 Ara, 15 Ohio, 16 Ran to, 17 Inst, 18 Lore, 19 Arden, 20 Dom, 21 E E O C, 22 Opting, 23 Still, 25 Prome, 28 Lead, 39 Apt to, 44 Tey, 47 Eclectic, Assume, 34 Fireside, 38 Lead, 39 Apt to, 44 Tey, 47 Eclectic, 44 Charge, 46 Delta, 47 Kite, 48 Egg, 51 Retro, 53 Vegas, 56 Pauses, 58 Rule, 60 U R L, 61 Ivana, 62 Nina, 63 Flee, 64 Civil, 65 O E C D, 66 Band, 67 Snaps, 68 Bred, 69 Iras.

Down: 1 Raids, 2 Or not, 3 Dismissal, 4 Sat, 5 Sole, 6 Whoop, 7 Aircraft carrier, 8 Toe, 9 Trapeze, 10 Wart, 11 Indie, 12 Stent, 13 Tonga, 21 Elam, 22 On a rock, 24 Lauded, 26 Omit, 29 Beatles, 31 Estate, 32 Ale, 33 Sec, 35 Irregular, 36 Deg, 37 Eye, 40 Pitt, 43 Cereals, 45 Hive, 48 Epics, 49 Gavin, 50 Guava, 52 Ounce, 54 Arena, 55 Sleds, 57 Ship, 59 Ladd, 62 Nob, 63 F B I.



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