



Predators
looking for
new name

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Trail officially opens

The first stage of the restored heritage trail was officially opened today, with manager of parks and recreation Kevin Turcotte, Coun. Allan Bisback, Tony Chisholm, Rick Meloen, MP Tony Baldinelli, Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Regional Coun. Gary Zalepa, MPP Wayne Gates, Dick Coyne, Cheryl Morris, Fran Boot, Fred Sentineal, CAO Marnie Cluckie, director of operations Sheldon Randall, and administrative assistant of operations Bobbie-Jo Talarico, all happy to be part of the ribbon cutting. For story and more photos, please see page 9. (Mike Balsom)

St. Davids businesses
ask for parking spaces
instead of bike lanes

Penny Coles
The Local

Although there has been considerable discussion about a roundabout proposed for what is locally known as the four corners intersection in St. Davids, the loss of parking as part of the project is also an issue that is concern to village businesses.

Paul Lalonde, the co-owner of Twin Power Financial on Four Mile Creek Road near the intersection, is especially worried about the impact a proposed bike lane on Creek Road will have on his business, and others nearby, and the fact that the region doesn't have a good option for those who will lose their parking spaces due to the bike lanes.

He believes the region is "making light" of the predicament of village businesses, including his.

There is absolutely no room on the Twin Power Financial lot for parking, he says. He tried

nine years ago to get a variance for parking behind the lot, but was not successful.

He says his office completely relies on on-street parking for its four employees, two tenants above the office — six spaces required daily — and more for any clients who might visit.

In the time since they moved into the St. Davids location, they have invested in a lot of inside renovations, he says. The company is currently planning an extensive renovation to the outside of the 120-year-old building, with the intention of "bringing it back to its glory as a historic building here."

Instead, they are waiting to see what happens during the months of construction and the removal of parking spaces on the street, and whether the impact of both will drive them to look for another location.

The bike lanes, he says, could kill his business and de-

Continued on page 2

Not illegal to have fun in NOTL, says councillor

Penny Coles
The Local

While Coun. Clare Cameron was unable to convince fellow councillors to give the Pedal Pub their blessing Monday night, the local business has been handed an opportunity to continue operating on Niagara-on-the-Lake roads.

Council had before them a motion that would have banned the 10-passenger bikes from local roads after their licence expires, a de-

cision made at a planning meeting two weeks ago, along with a bylaw to enforce that regulation.

The Pedal Pub's regional licence to operate expires at the end of this month, and they would have a month's grace period after that.

The councillors who had wanted them gone were concerned about safety and noise issues, while others felt those problems have been addressed and the business should be given a clear road ahead.

Councillors actually thought they had put an end to the operation last fall, and were surprised to see it back on local streets this summer. They learned from the region that to ban the operation, the town should have passed a bylaw outlawing it from NOTL streets. That's what brought them to the new bylaw under consideration Monday.

But a presentation last week from general manager Marlo Saganski had enough information in it to

convince some councillors that it should be allowed to continue.

Saganski told councillors the Pedal Pub operation has had no road safety issues or incidents since it has been in operation. Pedal Pub pilots operate in strict adherence to the Highway Traffic Act, she said, and all applicable rules of the road, as well as completing in-house and on-road training.

The company has adjusted its tour routes according to council's request last

year, and to respect regional regulations, and no longer tours on residential streets, she said.

They have been collaborating with many small businesses in the area, including Butler's Bar & Grill, Fournos, The Exchange Brewery, The Budapest Bakeshop, and have been beneficial to the local economy, and contributed more than \$33,000 of revenue to its partners from its two-and-a-half hour tours last year, even during the pandemic. That does not

include what guests spend before and after their ride, while visiting NOTL, Saganski said.

"Pedal Pub NOTL closing will have a ripple effect that will impact the NOTL economy," she said.

The company has addressed all the concerns mentioned to them by the town, she said, offering to continue working on any other issues that might come up.

Continued on page 2



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Region's solution could destroy local businesses

Continued from page 1

stroy the property value. "Who would purchase a 3,600-square-foot building without a single parking spot within 200 metres?"

The region's parking solution, he explains, is around the corner, on Warner Road, which is not only inconvenient but unsafe for those attempting to cross Creek Road, especially families with kids, and with no stop sign or traffic light to allow for a gap in the flow of traffic.

He may as well sell the building to be torn down and used for a parking lot, he says, because there is nowhere else in the village to offer parking for local businesses.

Although others are pushing back about a roundabout in St. Davids, that is not his issue, and he thinks bike lanes on York Road, also part of the regional project, are a great idea.

However, he can see Creek Road through his office window, "and I don't see many people cycling," he adds. "That's just not a route cyclists use."

He suggests instead a wider sidewalk could be combined with a bike lane for the short distance through the village, similar as the Niagara Parkway Recreation Trail, which would allow for biking, pedestrians and parking.

Anne Sachar, a resident and business owner on Creek Road, is also pleading with the region to leave the on-street parking. She and her husband operate the Iron Garden, offering iron and bronze garden decor, beside their house. Although they have two lots, and more than enough parking, "we're all in this together." The proposed widened sidewalk and bike lane will be "a losing proposition to every resident and business in St. Davids," she says.

The project, she adds in her letter to the region, is "an attempt to squeeze in a costly roundabout and having to rethink and retrofit the whole central downtown area to accommodate one."

The region's response, from Maged Elmadhoon, a transportation engineer, is that "improvements are needed to the intersection to accommodate future growth and to make the intersection accessible for all road users. Improvements will also enhance urban design and make the intersection a beautiful gateway in the St. Davids community," he says. The proposed roundabout "will create slow and uniform traffic speeds with no congestion, well into the long future horizon. The raised centre medians and splitter islands should also help manage access near the intersection."

Wider sidewalks, he says, will attract more pedestrians to St. Davids, and make those who do walk there now feel safer.

While it's understood businesses along Four Mile Creek Road may be impacted by the loss of parking, "a number of the businesses have their own off-street parking lots, plus there are on-street parking opportunities available in the area outside of the operational and safety concerns with the intersection."

Norm Miller, a communications consultant with the region, outlined the project for The Local as necessary to deal with increased traffic in the area and provide better pedestrian and cyclist connections.

The project team, including regional staff and consultants, is still working with stakeholders and the town to select the most appropriate cycling facility design, including business and property owners in the area who may be impacted, he says.

Road safety is a top priority for the region, especially with St. Davids School and the Community Safety Zone, and the region removes on-street parking within the right-of-way when there are operational and safety concerns for road users, he says.

There have been two Public Information Centres to date,

the last on June 23, and next steps include finalizing technical studies, meeting with local property owners and stakeholders, and finalizing the design of the project.

A presentation to Niagara-on-the-Lake town council about the project will likely be made in the fourth quarter of 2021, says Miller.

Paul Harber of Ravine Vineyard has been actively involved in discussions about the project from its earliest days.

He references an article in the former Niagara Advance, from March 2004, when the region said, once the sewer project in the village was completed, there would be a need to upgrade the intersection, and would be considering traffic lights or a roundabout. The project manager at the time favoured a roundabout.

It was at that time, says Harber, when work should have begun, at least to look at other ways to redirect traffic and make the area safe for pedestrians. He has suggested the first step should be to look at improving Line 9 as a way in and out of the village, taking traffic around the intersection, with sidewalks and a crosswalk for safety.

He's also very concerned about where traffic will go during the construction phase,



Paul Lalonde is hoping the region will allow on-street parking in St. Davids to remain. (Photo supplied)

and believes the improvement of Line 9 should come first.

Larry Stewart, of the Avondale Convenience Store is concerned about the project. He is expecting property to be expropriated, and will lose a section of his parking. He worries about the roundabout creating a constant traffic flow, eliminating a gap for drivers trying to turn onto Creek Road from the Avondale store.

He was surprised to hear the region was going forward with a project that residents and business owners don't support.

Harber agrees, and wonders why the region, after waiting so long to move forward, now seems to be in a hurry

to get this project underway, when there are so many outstanding issues.

He and his family have another meeting coming up with the region about the expropriation of Harber property at the corner of York Road and Creek Road for the roundabout. He will be listening to what they have to say, and although he's not a huge supporter of the roundabout proposal, his real concern, he says, "is to make sure this village is safe for our residents."

He remembers walking to St. Davids Public School, he says, "and I really hope that when I have kids, there will be a safe way for them to walk to school as we did."

Pedal Pub will be asked to work on new routes



The Pedal Pub will be allowed to continue in town, with staff to work out better routes for it. (File photo)

Continued from page 1

When the discussion resurfaced Monday, Coun. Allan Bisback said he was not aware of any recent complaints or issues, and would not support banning the operation.

"I think it's a punitive bylaw, directed at one operation, and I don't think it's fair," he explained.

Coun. Norm Arsenault was also not in favour of prohibiting the operation, saying it has been in business since 2019, and although there were initially safety and noise concerns, "they've dealt with those successfully.

I don't see it as being any less safe than other businesses, including the caleche."

The Pedal Pub is also a way to attract younger visitors, one of the town's goals, he added.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said she supports the operation, but referred to its original goal of offering winery tours, which, with recent changes in routes, has changed. It now focuses on Queen Street businesses instead, she said, suggesting town staff work out an agreement with Pedal Pub that will get them off the busy streets and back to their original goal, visiting wineries.

When travelling on Mississauga Street, Disero said, the pedal pubs create a line-up of cars trying to go around them. "That's an issue," she added, as are the U-turns it does on Queen Street.

Instead of passing the bylaw, she offered a motion to refer the whole matter to staff to look at a winery route, away from congested areas.

"That's what they really wanted to do when they came here two years ago," she said. "Let's help them to do what they wanted to do originally."

Coun. Clare Cameron was hoping to do something even more positive for the Pedal Pub tours at Monday's meeting, giving them a more certain future in town.

"It does not seem fair to craft legislation with regards to one business that has shown flexibility," she said, noting the contrast between a "near-silent" vehicle powered by humans and the hundreds of motorized vehicles "buzzing around town."

She said she couldn't agree with a referral back to staff, which only delays a final solution, and that she felt uncomfortable with being punitive towards this particular company.

"It's not illegal to have fun, and heaven forbid someone enjoys themselves listening to music in this community," she added. "We pride ourselves on arts and culture, but only when it supports some tastes."

Cameron suggested councillors "put our big boy and big girl pants on, and give this business a final answer tonight."

Coun. Gary Burroughs continued his support of the ban, "regardless of the blasts from social media" he's received.

"I don't think once we're back to thousands of people coming to town that it's going to be an appropriate operation," he said.

The motion by Disero to allow staff to work out an agreement with the operation over new routes met with approval by the majority of councillors, allowing Pedal Pub to continue to operate in the meantime.

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Town trying to avoid appearance of selling insurance

Penny Coles
The Local

This term of council is being a little more cautious about stirring up a controversy from 2017, when some Niagara-on-the-Lake property owners were outraged over letters they received from the town, seemingly endorsing an insurance program for sewer and water lines.

The letters sent at that time were perceived as a sales pitch for Service Line Warranties of Canada — a company headquartered in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania — outlining a program that provides coverage for repairs to outside sewer and water lines on homeowners' property.

It was signed by then Lord Mayor Pat Darte, and had the town logo on the envelope and letterhead. Shortly after the first letter was sent it was followed by a reminder notice, saying "please disregard if you have already enrolled."

The agreement of the day called for either the mayor or clerk of the municipality to sign, and since the town clerk was new to the job, Darte said

at the time he would sign it, in order to fulfill the contract with the warranty company.

The program was seen by staff as a benefit to residents, but they said at the time they did not have control over the aggressive marketing of the program.

A report to councillors in June describes the sewer, water line and in-home warranty program as providing residents with insurance that will "help repair, replace, or restore critical sewer and water line laterals between the mainlines and connections on private residential property. This is the owner's responsibility, but is often perceived as the town's responsibility." In NOTL, the warranty is also offered on grinder pumps.

Letters of renewal are going out to residents soon, and the report was updating councillors on the program.

The partnership originally included a five per cent commission, which some residents considered a kickback, or hidden tax.

The town continues to receive five per cent of the program's revenue, as part of the

agreement with SLWC, which uses the town's name and logo on letterheads, advertising, billing, and marketing.

The warranty is offered through Local Authority Services, described as a not-for-profit provider of business services for Ontario municipalities, created in 1992 by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

The program is endorsed by AMO, and benefits many residents across the province, with more than 60 municipalities participating, the recent information report to councillors says.

The 2017 controversy was revived at a June meeting of the committee of the whole, when Lord Mayor Betty Disero initiated a discussion of the program renewal that was included in the information package.

As a councillor in 2017, she remembers "the bundle of controversy" the town endorsement of the program caused, and doesn't want to revive the "angst" that resulted from the original letters.

She made two requests of staff, that her name as Lord

Mayor not be on the letter, and that there be some communication with residents to explain the program, including a phone number or email address for them to call if they want their name removed from any list the company might have.

"I don't want to be seen as selling insurance," she says. "It doesn't look right. I don't want people to think they have to buy it because it has my name on it."

She says she originally thought the program might be a good idea for those in St. Davids with grinder pumps, who would not have to pay for expensive replacements when their pumps fail, but she didn't want to be seen as endorsing it.

Operations director Sheldon Randall, one of the staff members involved in the original agreement, told councillors recently he believes the letter is appropriate, including having the town logo on it. "It was endorsed by the town, and there is a benefit to the town," he says, adding the warranty provides an option for residents, and one that is purely voluntary.

When the original agreement was signed, Randall said town staff did its due diligence, and supported the program.

CAO Marnie Cluckie says the town is still under an agreement that includes an annual extension of the partnership and the mailout of letters.

A lot of issues in past years have been addressed, she says, including that the letters only go out to property owners who front on those services.

They can contact town staff if they don't want mailouts, she adds.

Although there was some discussion about rewriting the letter or removing the logo so the town wouldn't appear to be endorsing it, councillors agreed the letter could go out as planned, without Disero's name on it.

A letter to The Local recently from Service Line Warranties says NOTL homeowners will soon receive information in the mail about the available optional service plans. "It's been a few years since homeowners received any information from

SLWC, so I hope that sharing this information with you will be useful in informing residents and avoiding any confusion about the mailing," the letter states.

"While it has been some time since NOTL homeowners have received information about the program, homeowners will soon receive updated information in the mail about the available plans; there is no obligation to sign up for a plan. The mailings will include the Niagara-on-the-Lake logo to indicate that the mailing is legitimate, and that there is a partnership in place between the Town and SLWC."

As of May, the town information report says, a total of 293 residents were enrolled in 416 total policies: 233 for sewer service lines, 147 for water service lines and 36 plumbing and drainage policies. A total of 51 repairs have been completed to date, saving Niagara-on-the-Lake residents \$100,517 in retail repair costs.

For more information visit <https://notl.com/content/service-line-warranty-program>.

Royal Oak hopes for permanent location at hospital

But for now the expanding school will be happy with more space

Penny Coles
The Local

From a one-room school in the Queen Street Court House in 2016, with 12 students and two full-time staff, Royal Oak Community School now has 65 students, 11 employees and an enrolment that continues to grow.

In fact, head-of-school Julia Murray told councillors last week, it has outgrown the space it occupied during the last school year in the former

hospital building on Wellington Street.

With a "well-educated and experienced staff," Murray said, the not-for-profit independent school has a diverse socio-economic demographic, and more than 30 per cent of the school's families receiving financial bursaries.

Royal Oak has partnered this past year with Brock University as a chosen educational institution, and trained eight teacher candidates last year.

The school pays rent for the town-owned building, and Murray was asking councillors for more space, to accommodate growth, and so that students can be spread out safely as the pandemic continues.

They would like nothing better than to put down permanent roots, Murray said, and "eagerly await" submitting a plan that would be a "wonderful fit for both the town and our growing school community," she added.

When asked about a long-term plan by Lord Mayor Betty Disero, and where Royal Oak sees itself in the future, including the possibility of looking at being classified an alternative school with the public school board, Murray said they are a "step away" from a dream fulfilled, with 75 students the 10-year target.

"Our hope is to put down roots long-term in NOTL and to continue offering this independent school and high quality education experience for all families," she said.

"Our board has an excellent plan, win-win for the town and the families who depend on us."

Murray told The Local the board "will absolutely be submitting a proposal for the RFEI (the town's request for expressions of interest process),

and it will be based on a full building use and repurpose as an arts and education hub. We have a Location Committee comprised of many skilled experts who have been working on this for the last year, and though we have a number of wonderful sites in mind, we are very excited about this one."

It would give the building back to the community for use, she added, and maintain an important site for community development and engagement."

There are donors who will continue to support them with a permanent location at the hospital or a new build, she said.

The school will continue to focus on JK to Grade 8, with classes capped at 15 students, she added.

"That's the biggest we could

ever become."

But while the town is accepting and working through the process of requesting proposals for possible future uses of the building, she said, it's understood their request for extra space can only be granted in the short-term, and they hope "to go about utilizing it in the least disruptive or expensive way possible, and of course will incur all costs to do so."

When the school opens in September, she said, it will have students from four new families who shared they chose NOTL as their home because Royal Oak was such a good fit for their philosophies and needs.

Councillors agreed that Royal Oak could have the expanded space it needs, with an increase in rent to reflect the extra square footage.

Long-term solution for Balls Beach parking elusive

Penny Coles
The Local

After a lengthy discussion, some disagreement and confusion over the best way to deal with parking and pedestrian safety at Balls Beach, town staff are being asked to have another look at the issue.

A staff recommendation to install a "hammerhead" drop-off and solution, similar to what was removed after council heard from residents in the area last fall that it was a safety concern, was not approved by council, by one vote.

The decision to close the small parking area at Balls Beach was made in October, 2020, due to safety issues, de-

spite a plea from Sheldon Randall, at that time interim CAO, for time to study the situation and report back to council.

Instead, visitors to the beach would have access to parking on River Beach Drive, council decided at that time.

Randall made it clear last week that after having a consultant study the area, opening the small area to provide access to the beach could be done safely.

It would allow those going to the park to get closer, unload a cooler or kayak, and then park elsewhere, he said.

However, Robin Ridesic, who appealed to council last year to close the parking lot, disagreed that it would be a safe option.

She told council last week

that the hammerhead, as proposed by the consultant, would "reinstate the safety issue" that was dealt with last year. Residents in the area, she says, are happy with the situation as it is.

The staff report for council wrongly assumes that there continues to be a safety issue, she says, adding that the staff recommendation also does not address greenspace or preserve the natural assets of the park.

Ridesic asked that council either leave the situation at Balls Beach as is, or ask staff to look at other options.

Although Randall said he wasn't sure what exactly staff is supposed to look at, the report has gone back for another look at alternatives.



Royal Oak has gone to great lengths to keep its students safe, including installing plexiglass between desks, and needs more room to spread out. (File photo)



Heritage Trail

Phase 1 Completion

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Heritage Trail Committee is excited to announce the completion of Phase 1 of the Heritage Trail Rehabilitation. The public is invited to enjoy this beautiful multi-use trail and to see the outstanding rehabilitation work that has been completed from John Street to East West Line.





INSTALLATION OF AN ALL-WAY STOP AT THE INTERSECTION OF QUEEN STREET AND MISSISSAGUA STREET



NOTICE is hereby given that the Council of the Corporation of the Town Niagara-on-the-Lake has amended By-Law 4308-09 to establish an all-way stop at the intersection of Queen Street and Mississagua Street.

Currently, only Mississagua Street traffic is required to stop. Based on the amended By-Law, now drivers on Queen Street are required to stop as well.

Drivers are urged to use extra caution at this intersection as traffic on Queen Street adjusts to the new stop signs.

New stop signs will be erected on the week of August 3rd, 2021, weather permitting, and the intersection will be closed for the day during installation, with detour routes in place. Enforcement of the all-way stop will commence immediately upon installation.

Those with questions are encouraged to contact Mike Komljenovic, Engineering Supervisor for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake by emailing mike.komljenovic@notl.com or calling (905) 468-3266.



Temporary Speed Reduction

Regional Road 55 (Niagara Stone Road)

(600m South of Line 4 Rd. to 70m South of Line 3 Rd.)

The Regional Municipality of Niagara, in collaboration with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, will be reducing the posted speed limit on Regional Road 55 (Niagara Stone Road) between 600m South of Line 4 Road to 70m South of Line 3 Road.

The speed reduction is necessary to facilitate the installation of the watermain on Niagara Stone Road. See the map to the right for location details

The new posted speed limit of 50 km/h will take effect July 26, 2021. The speed reduction will remain in place for the duration of the project.

Emergency Services will have access to the road at all times.

Any inquiries concerning this project may be directed to Rob Andrea, Engineering Technologist for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, at 905-468-3266.

Your co-operation is appreciated.



EDITORIAL

Great news – no new COVID cases in NOTL as of Tuesday

There is great news to celebrate in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Yesterday, there were no new cases of COVID in NOTL, and no active cases.

Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie are the only municipalities in the region with no active cases, although the numbers are low across the region — on Tuesday, there were 51 residents across the other 10 municipalities still suffering from COVID, and only four new cases.

During Monday's council update, CAO Marnie Cluckie congratulated residents on

keeping each other safe, and also for the uptake in vaccinations — because while earlier lockdowns were an important component of controlling COVID, vaccinations are helping us get there as well.

Across the region, we have 69.3 per cent of the eligible population with first doses, and 57.5 fully vaccinated.

Many Niagara clinics, as well as some pharmacies, are offering walk-in options.

Of course, it's the older demographic that has really stepped up to be vaccinated,

for obvious reasons — they believe it could save their lives.

Younger people, in the 20 to 39 age group, are lagging, as are those 12 to 19.

It's a difficult decision for some parents to make for their children, and that's understandable, but as we're hearing in the news, this is when that age group needs to get the first dose, to be fully vaccinated by the start of school.

And although the number of new cases may be low, we're not out of the woods yet.

We're still being warned of the increasing number of Delta variant cases, which

could be responsible for as much as 95 per cent of new cases, and also of a reproduction rate of greater than one, which is not good news.

A few weeks ago, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, acting chief medical officer of health, said Public Health would have to start looking at ways to entice younger people to be vaccinated. The solution so far is to offer walk-in clinics to make it more convenient, but that is not attracting that

age group as much as hoped.

People wanting to travel and attend certain events may be required to be fully vaccinated, and in the future, that may also be the solution to having those who are hesitant step up.

It's great to see more businesses open, and residents are loving being able to eat out, go to fitness centres, and most of all, see more of their families. We're all feeling more optimistic about the

future. But vaccinations will remain key, and we're not there yet.

There is another vaccination clinic at the NOTL community centre July 30.

For more information, or to book, visit <http://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/vaccination/clinic-schedule.aspx>.

Penny Coles
The Local

Local LETTERS

How about a rainbow garden?

We are writing to express our thoughts around what we read in the local paper some months ago about a Rainbow crosswalk in Old Town.

We understand that this is a contentious issue. As Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, we want to present a fresh idea to possibly replace the rainbow crosswalk that is currently being considered.

Our proposal is a Rainbow Garden (of some kind), that would help celebrate

diversity, equity and inclusion. Including a rainbow of colours, in the garden where people can appreciate and admire the beauty of colours which would represent the LGBTQ+ community and diversity as a whole. Perhaps a small plaque with an explanation of the garden and what it represents.

To keep costs low (for the town and our taxpayer dollars), the garden could be incorporated into an existing or

future public garden.

We feel this idea is one that would unite people as opposed to divide them. Anyone can appreciate the beauty and harmony of a garden. This garden will help to better represent the diversity of the Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Karen Brown & Shirley Edwards

Local VOICES:

Conservancy president weighs in on Mississauga/Queen project

Gracia Janes
NOTL Conservancy
Special to The Local

Regarding the proposed gateway feature "concept," the Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy regrets that in the rush to modernize and popularize the Queen Street/Mississauga entranceway to the Old Town, the role of the broader public in protecting the unique built and natural heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake, over very many years, has been forgotten.

This particular area overlooks the historic 200-year-old Fort Niagara, lies next to the National Heritage District, and may become part of an expanded Queen-Picton Heritage District, and even a cultur-

al heritage landscape district if the town-contracted Bray Heritage report is carried forward.

It is the town's history that volunteers, such as former Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy president Laura Dodson, and heritage expert Peter Stokes, Friends of Fort George representatives Erika and Jim Alexander and others, drew upon to put together the required voice of the people, i.e. Vox Populi, in order to attain a National Heritage District status for its built heritage in 2003 — the first in Ontario.

It is in dramatic contrast to the current Town process of accepting a well-meaning, generous, monetary gift, assigning the approval process to a single committee, and limiting pub-

lic involvement to a four-week discussion over the summer on a town website that is not easy to use.

In the case of national heritage status, the public, in the past, with no outside help or cost to the town, achieved public recognition of Niagara-on-the-Lake's historic importance to Canadians.

Therefore, we urge the council to adopt the Municipal Heritage Committee's most important recommendations: elimination of physical structures like a wall and obelisk, and more of a natural set of features be used; not doing a structure or wall or the addition of trees unless they are deciduous trees, because of the negative impact to the cultural heritage; retention of the current celebration sign within the plantings to retain for cultural heritage purposes; and that plantings relative to the fruit trees in the rural areas, be considered.

The Local invites submissions to our Local Voices, which we hope to offer as a regular column. Submissions can be on any topic that would be of interest to NOTL readers, and can be up to 1,000 words. Please email ideas or submissions to penny@notllocal.com.

Racing to help children



Freddie Carleton visited Niagara Motors in Virgil last week to help support this year's Tim Horton Camp Days campaign. A NOTL native, Carleton is enjoying his 40th season in the 358 modified division. The Tim Horton 'Bones Mobile' is at Merrittville Speedway on a weekly basis, as the popular local racetrack celebrates its 70th season. Carleton expressed his gratitude to all those who helped send kids to camp. (Photo supplied)



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Just watched 84 Charing Cross Road (Netflix) for a second time. Long, long ago I read this book and long ago first watched this beautiful film. The story covers the pe-

riod when I was a student in London, so it is a walk down memory lane. Ann Bancroft and Anthony Perkins, along with a young Judy Dench, give touchingly beautiful performances. It is a story about books, the joy of letter writing and connections.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for The Local.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake
Local
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Individual opinion doesn't represent majority

I refer specifically to Time for Canada to do what is right (The Local, July 21).

As a resident of NOTL, I would like to know exactly who Jordon Williams is representing, and on whose authority he was given the mandate to speak to Queen's Park regarding bringing a Pride Festival parade to our town next year? Was he there on behalf of the Inclusivity Committee, and if so, what mandate do they have to represent the Town and its residents?

An individual may be passionate about their particular beliefs, but not to the extent of imposing events upon residents, who have yet still to be asked for their input.

I'm all in favour of initiative, but only in conjunction with consensus. It could place our elected officials in an embarrassing position, if a consensus has not been reached.

The suggestion was put to a member of NOTL Chamber of commerce, Eduardo Laforgue, who stated he personally would welcome an inclusive Pride Festival, as did Amanda Hansen, manager of Queen 124.

NOTL's appeal speaks for itself, as evidenced by the thousands of tourists, of all diversities, who visit each year and who are all crucial in contributing to our post pandemic recovery.

That \$12 billion is spent on travel and hospitality, by over a 100,000 of the LGBGT community, each year, works out to something approaching \$120,000 per person, per year, which I find very difficult to accept.

The LGBGT community has never been deterred from visiting or residing in our heritage town due to a lack of the attributes that are being pro-

posed.

People choose NOTL simply because it is welcoming and has unique characteristics, which to the majority of residents and visitors alike, is its overriding appeal.

Some months ago, it was stated that the installation of a rainbow crosswalk at Queen and King Streets, would be a "first step" in demonstrating our diversity and inclusiveness.

Until our elected members of council give their community of taxpayers an opportunity to speak freely on this matter, to establish whether they would be in favour of current suggestions, no further commitments should be given to any group, if it impacts on the residents, who have cherished this town for what it is, a welcoming and diverse community.

Jean O'Malley
NOTL

Local LETTERS

Minority agenda on public property not acceptable, reader says

Re: Time for Canada to do what is right (The Local, July 21):

This speaks at length on the need for diversity and inclusivity and this is certainly not a matter for argument. It refers several times in passing to unidentified minorities and even once to Indigenous people. However, regardless of the above, it is clearly an exclusive article that focuses largely on the LGBTQ community and its supposed agenda, and while there is nothing wrong with this, it shows little regard for the rights or opinion of any others, including those who are part of the majority group.

It calls for a number of LGBTQ-related activities, seemingly with entitlement, but without indicating the amount of support from the community itself or any basis of authority beyond a personal agenda.

However, I have an opinion and this opinion is of equal validity to others that may be expressed.

I disagree with this agenda as outlined for several reasons.

a) No effective effort has been made to gauge the opinion of the majority of residents (beyond a failed survey with a 1 per cent response) whose voice is equally important and must be heard.

b) Every visitor to NOTL, regardless of who they are, comes for its historical and cultural assets and its natural beauty. Many with small children come from different countries with different cultures and religions (the Muslim community is an example of this). They do not come to witness a political agenda of one community, and the proposed activities may well seem an affront to them and to many others who are not even considered.

c) I do not believe that any resident or visitor to NOTL, regardless of who they are, has any reasonable grounds to feel excluded or unsafe. Visitors come in very large numbers anyway but all are welcomed here and in my opinion there is no obligation for the town to provide visible inclusivity for any group.

d) Using public property (permanently) to endorse a minority agenda (through a Pride crosswalk) without majority approval is not acceptable, and may also be seen as a visible distraction by many to the character of a historically important town.

This exclusive article is not a good illustration of inclusivity as claimed, and as such it is an obvious source of criticism.

Derek Collins
NOTL

Seniors fitness in Virgil

The seniors in my class and I would like to give a very big thank you to Coun. Erwin Wiens and parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte who worked to find an alternative venue for our tai chi (taiji) classes. We appreciated the support from the Lord Mayor and all those who assisted us as well. Prior to this resolution, the concern that we had is described below.

According to Step 3 reopening on July 16, gyms and fitness centres are allowed to open with limitations. In our NOTL Community Centre, the upper level gym is open, but not the ground floor rooms for fitness classes, which will open in September. This delay of classes affects the seniors in our community unfairly. I am a senior myself. Most seniors need specific exercise classes for balance to prevent falls. Unable to recover from injuries due to falls, they may end up in long-term care homes. This is a situation most

seniors want to avoid.

There have been numerous studies done to find the best exercise modality for seniors to prevent falls. Harvard Health Publishing (part of Harvard Medical School) and Consumer Reports referred to an analysis of 10 studies involving 2,600 patients published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society in 2017. It "found that older adults who participated in one to three hour-long tai chi sessions each week for up to 26 weeks lowered their fall risk by 43 per cent and cut in half their likelihood of injuring themselves as a result of a fall."

Most surprising: the analysis also suggested that tai chi worked better to prevent falls than other approaches such as physical therapy, balance training, resistance exercises, stretching, or yoga. For more information visit <https://www.health.harvard.edu/womens-health/protect-your->

[bones-with-tai-chi](https://www.consumerreports.org/exercise-fitness/to-prevent-falls-try-tai-chi/) or <https://www.consumerreports.org/exercise-fitness/to-prevent-falls-try-tai-chi/>.

Although we were allowed to practise taiji outdoors in the park this summer, many seniors in my group have balance issues and problems with heat. Speaking for the seniors in my group, I presented our situation to the town. At our ages, we do not have the luxury of time to keep waiting.

We were thrilled when we were offered the air-conditioned Mary Snider Room in the Virgil arena to practise our Taiji-Flow right now. We greatly appreciate the compassion shown to seniors in this community by our town representatives, who found a resolution to our problem.

For more information about Taiji-Flow email yly.notl@outlook.com.

Yimlei Molly Yep, Instructor
Autumn Leaf Taiji

Misquoting stats leads to vaccine hesitancy

The reprimand quoting the Provisional Death Counts and Excess Mortality, March, 2020-April, 2021, released by StatsCan (More deaths than lives saved from lockdowns, The Local, July 21) is exactly the kind of misinformation and innuendo peddled widely on the internet which has led to vaccine hesitancy and anti-masking rallies.

The suggestion that lockdowns have led to five times more deaths than COVID is patently untrue. The reason for the StatsCan release quoted is to

identify excess mortality, which the report does, and specifies there were "5,535 more deaths than expected were there no pandemic."

The last time I looked there were over 26,000 COVID deaths in Canada, almost exactly the opposite of the ratio claimed in the letter. Furthermore, to suggest it was lockdowns which caused the excess deaths is ludicrous. In fact the two jurisdictions with appreciably higher deaths from accidental poisonings and overdoses were Ontario

and Alberta, which are about as far apart in their lockdown approaches as any two provinces could be.

Kudos to both of our local newspapers for encouraging an attitude of responsible caring for our fellow citizens. As for this reprimand, try <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210202/dq210202c-eng.htm> for a good article on hoaxes and misinformation spread during COVID-19.

Bob Bader
NOTL

Reader disturbed by 'erroneous headline'

I was most surprised to see a letter to the editor (More deaths than lives saved from lockdowns) July 21), so I looked up the website that the writer cited as well as asking a physician to read it.

It is a voluminous report issued on July 12 by Statistics Canada called, Provisional Death Counts and Excess Mortality, January 2020 to April 2021. The word "lockdown" does not appear once in the report and its conclusion is that there were nine per cent


more deaths than would have normally been expected in the time period and these deaths were mainly due to drug overdoses and alcohol consumption.

I fear that other readers of The Local may not have verified the information given in the letter and actually believe the erroneous headline that there were more deaths than lives saved during recent provincial lockdowns. I feel the editor of The Local owes her readers an apology for having

published the letter.

Elizabeth Masson
NOTL

Editor's note: Editors routinely publish letters we don't agree with. When we say we're the voice of the community, we can't pick and choose whose voice we represent. I do apologize for the headline, which does sound as if I'm endorsing the letter and the information in it, which was not my intention.



Letters! We want letters!

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



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It's time to put an end to conservation hesitancy



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

The past year and a half has revealed to me why our species struggles to actively engage with the conservation of nature.

All of the clues and observations I am about to list have previously existed in our time. There are signs all around us which represent the barriers of humans needing to properly care about the environment.

Protecting the environment has always seemed to be a supplementary conversation in politics and decision-making. I am not taking aim at any specific tier of government or demographic, but rather, I am proposing that this is a depraved global problem.

We are too distracted by things unique to our species. When you go to the vast world of YouTube, you are presented with scores of videos and their view counts. The videos that rise to the top are not nature documentaries, educational, or promotional of any harmonious living with

our only planet. Instead, and with genuine kudos to their success, they are typically music videos filled with pop-culture figures or young tweens living in abhorrently large California mansions. It appears people really like to watch other people.

Millions and billions of minds getting their quick four minute fix on a top-rated video aren't adding fuel to a more conservation focused society. Equally as accessible in the search bar are videos about how to grow a home garden, awareness on freshwater scarcity, or how biodiversity protects the very fabric of our civilization.

It's not too often I have life epiphanies while standing in line at Walmart, but when I do, it has to do with our relationship with nature. During the COVID lockdown, items deemed non-essential were literally barricaded into their aisles. What quietly riled me up was seeing books for children about animals and nature, books about gardening, and other outdoor-related material cordoned off, but you could bet on picking up one of those many tabloid magazines about celebrity gossip on the way out the door.

Is it a stretch to say that the accepted narrative has us being steered into a world of small talk and insignificant details about people we will never meet? I watch athletes and rock stars on YouTube, too. However, what I'm getting at here is that it would be nice to see Canadian Geographic, planting guides, or a magazine about living eco-friendly at the check-out line. Behold, a subtle but undeniably preset barrier to prevent more minds from thinking about nature and our connection to it.

Humans jump and rally for inter-human causes because it is part of the very condition that makes us just that — human. Inherently, I believe our species always desires to help its neighbour, to grow and prosper as a group, and to look out for one another. We are capable of creating extraordinary acts of decency in quick time when it comes to helping others, which in turn, helps ourselves. Like a forest, different trees cooperate and compete together to ensure the entire system remains healthy. Can we do that for the natural world when it counts, too?

Right now, I go out on a limb to say our species is not healthy. We are undeni-

ably and nonchalantly more focused on the he-said she-said of the world versus the world beneath our feet.

You can only dance on rotten floorboards for so long before they give in.

When the next election season rolls around, perhaps we should look at options where the environment isn't just a secondary conversation. I think the giant swath of society is hyper-focused on health and economy, as I am too, but let's not forget that you don't have either without a healthy, respected environment.

I wonder if when people hear the term Green Party, for example, they automatically compartmentalize the whole party into a group of people who are only capable of focusing on the environment. We must acknowl-

edge by human condition, and our interpretation of language, that mindsets exist where the term "green" automatically implies that the economy won't matter as much. I politely challenge any political party to address the environment as a focal point, without detracting from our working lives. It's almost like it could benefit from a sweeping name change, such as The Sustainability Party, because really, who can argue with wanting to sustain our environment and the very livelihoods it protects?

So be it in a current state of affairs, but it appears that political will and the media are vectors of information and opportunity alike. The overarching message is simply not environmentally heavy enough. Protecting the environment should

not be reserved as a soft and secondary conversation.

Because nature doesn't visually or obviously make us money, it can often get painted as a burden, an obstacle, or something unworthy of serious conversation.

One thing we always notice about history is how it took someone, or a group, that was bold and ahead of their time. What seems absurd in the present will be celebrated later in the future. When the state of our environment comes back to bite us in a big way one day, we will look back over the decades and say, "wow, that group at least tried."

Or, were we just staying inside and watching YouTube's newest and hottest video?

To that I say, it's time to cut it out with conservation hesitancy.



Milkweed, monarch caterpillars, and planted trees are the sorts of topics that should be more at the forefront in daily life. (Owen Bjorgan)



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Heritage Trail opens with high praise for volunteers

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The first phase of rehabilitation and improvements to the Upper Canada Heritage Trail has been completed. A group of volunteers, town staff and council members gathered at the Charlotte Street entrance Tuesday to celebrate the reopening of the stretch from Charlotte to East West Line.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero kicked off the proceedings, recognizing the efforts of the volunteer committee as well as town staff for what she termed the “extraordinary work” on the trail completed to date.

Disero acknowledged that there was some concern about the removal of trees along the trail, but a motion brought forth that no healthy trees would be cut down by Coun. Allan Bisback, the town’s representative on the committee, was a gesture of good will to the concerned public.

“This particular area was a very sensitive one,” she

said, “and I want to thank the committee for taking the extra time to listen to the concerns of the residents, and hearing them on a number of occasions. I’d like to thank them and the staff for ensuring that the trees that were a concern to those residents were maintained and left in good order.”

Future plans include planting new trees to replace the ash trees and others that were removed, funded by Canopy Growth and the Tree Fund, administered by the town.

The Lord Mayor remains impressed by the great work of the committee in terms of fundraising, and spearheading the initiative to make the trail more accessible.

“Look at the whole committee,” Disero told The Local. “Look at Cheryl Morris and the work she does with the Ambassador program and the Shaw Guild. There’s Fran Boot with Rotary and the Farm Workers. Fred Sentineal with the Equestrian Association. Everyone on the committee has always gone above and beyond to assist in

whatever they can through their volunteerism.”

Headed by Rick Meloen and Tony Chisholm, the Heritage Trail Committee formed out of the Canada 150, or Sesquicentennial Committee, of which both were members. Improvements to the Heritage Trail to make it a proper, multi-use recreational trail from the northern part of the town to the southern part in St. Davids, were chosen as a legacy project of the town’s Canada 150 celebrations.

The next item on the agenda is to install a plaque at the John Street entrance to the trail to recognize those who contributed via the successful Trail Blazers fundraising initiative that helped fund the improvements.

“The Trans Canada Trail sold a metre at a time about 20 years ago,” Meloen said. “We thought we could do the same thing, so we encouraged people to give \$100. That would enable one metre of the trail to be constructed. We estimated that the entire 10 kilometres would cost



Heritage Trail committee chair warns he is determined to see the restoration project through to the end. (Mike Balsom)

about a million dollars, and that’s how we came up with the \$100 figure.”

Keeping the momentum going to extend the improvements all the way to York Road is important to Meloen and the others. They will launch another Trail Blazers program for the next phase, most likely after the installation of the John Street plaque some time in August.

MP Tony Baldinelli and MPP Wayne Gates both spoke about the trail’s history as a former rail line that linked Niagara-on-the-Lake to Buffalo. Eventually the trail will connect with the remnants of the rail line at the town’s dock area to draw railroad enthusiasts for an immersive experience.

Chisholm, an avid cyclist whose right leg was sporting

a few sores from a wipeout on the exact same trail, spoke highly of the contributors to the Trail Blazer program, as well as the corporate sponsors who stepped up.

“I have to thank, particularly, the people who live in the neighbourhood,” Chisholm said, “and the families that have contributed. Some put

Continued on page 17

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St Davids Ratepayers Association

Celebrating our Heritage and Shaping our Future

Residents of St Davids - HAVE YOUR SAY!

The Region of Niagara has been conducting a Municipal Class Environmental for intersection improvements at York Road and Four Mile Creek Road in St Davids.

To date two on-line Public Information Center (PIC) sessions have been held.

The first PIC was on March 25, 2021

This session focused on the study process and the benefits of roundabouts over signalized intersections.

Pedestrian safety was a concern even highlighted in the presentation which stated:

- Not everyone is comfortable finding or creating a gap in traffic in order to cross at a roundabout
 - Seniors can find this difficult
 - Children may not have the experience or confidence
- Pedestrians with vision loss can find roundabouts even more difficult to navigate.

In addition to the above, which is troubling for a growing community with many seniors and young families, major concerns were raised about:

- the very small study area excluding the school and firehall;
- the Line 9 connection not being considered; and,
- the very small consultation area with mailings not going to the entire urban area of St Davids or even all post office box holders.

It should be noted that not all concerns raised at the first PIC were contained in the summary report, nor was any mention of the formal letter the St Davids Ratepayers Association submitted to the project team in advance of the session (March 22, 2021).

The second PIC was on June 23, 2021

This session focused on justifying the selection of the roundabout option. A new criteria was added about accommodating large trucks. Do we have a problem today with large trucks getting stuck in the intersection? Do we want to encourage large trucks to go through St Davids?

See recent coverage in The Local here: <https://notllocal.com/2021/07/07/some-fear-roundabout-a-done-deal-for-st-davids/>

What about the Line 9 Connection option?

Currently Line 9 is not open to traffic between Four Mile Creek Road and Tanbark Road. Opening of this road allowance and paving Line 9 between Four Mile Creek Road and Tanbark could provide a bypass of the intersection and most of the urbanized area of St Davids for some traffic. This paired with minor improvements to the existing four-way stop and proper crosswalks and cycling facilities would serve St Davids well for many years to come.

Expanded Evaluation of Options

The following is a version of the study evaluation of design concepts to include the Line 9 options.

Criteria	Alt 0: Do Nothing (All-Way Stop Control)	Alt 1: Signalized Intersection	Alt 2: Roundabout	Alt 3: Line 9 Improvements & Minor Improvements to All-Way Stop
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peak hour delays for motorists will continue to increase• No pedestrian crosswalk on north leg and no tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI's)• No dedicated facilities for cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low delays, but potential for turning movement collisions• Longer crossing distances for pedestrians, but have TWSI's and audible signals• Dedicated facilities for cyclists, but higher traffic speeds for turning movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low delays, and statistically the safest type of intersection for all road users• Shortest crossing distances, TWSI's pedestrians only have to look in one direction at a time• Pedestrians with vision loss and children can't navigate• Dedicated facilities for cyclists, but crossings are via crosswalks as pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor delays in some peak hours for motorists• Short crossing distances and TWSI's for pedestrians• Dedicated facilities for cyclists, crossings protected by stop conditions• Continues to calm speeds in village with stop condition• Line 9 provides peak hour and alternate route bypass of village center
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not affect Four Mile Creek, species at risk (SAR) or vegetation• Vehicle idling will affect air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will impact Four Mile Creek structure (Note: this is disputable, impact seems to be driven by unnecessary right turn lane into Paxton Lane, which is not needed with signals)• Potential impact to vegetation• Vehicle idling will affect air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will not impact Four Mile Creek structure but may affect nearby vegetation• Smoother and more uniform traffic flow will reduce emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not affect Four Mile Creek, species at risk (SAR) or vegetation• Reduced vehicle idling will lower effect on air quality
Socio-Economic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No property or parking/access impacts• Good speed control unless a driver ignores the stop sign• No change in vehicle noise• No opportunity for streetscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will require some property and restrict access near intersection to right turns only• May encourage speeding to beat red signal• Similar vehicle noise to stop control• Some opportunity for streetscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will require moderate property and restrict access near intersection to right turns only• Geometry of roundabout controls vehicle speeds• Vehicle noise lower due to smooth uniform traffic flow• Most opportunity for streetscaping with central island	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No property or parking/access impacts• Good speed control unless a driver ignores the stop sign• No change in vehicle noise• Minor opportunity for streetscaping• Bypass of St Davids core beneficial in Emergency Situations
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In close proximity to the old barn in the northwest corner; however, no direct impact to building. Building in southeast corner of the intersection will be directly impacted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In close proximity to the old barn in the northwest corner and building on the southeast corner of the intersection; however, no direct impact to buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No impact
Engineering/Constructability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not accommodate large trucks (Note: this is disputable if it is even a problem in St Davids)• No issues with existing utilities or construction• Status quo for maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will accommodate large trucks• Major utility impact• Minor lane closures during construction• Will require signal maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will accommodate large trucks• Smaller utility conflicts• Significant lane closures during construction• Will require landscaping maintenance• Complex winter maintenance• Complex and difficult construction staging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can make minor changes to accommodate large trucks if this is really needed• Minimal issues with existing utilities• No issues with existing buildings or construction• Status quo for maintenance at intersection, small additional maintenance on new Line 9• Line 9 construction does not involve staging for traffic, minor staging at intersection for small improvements
OVERALL (Revised)	Although retaining the existing all-way stop is the lowest-cost alternative, it will not address peak hour delays and queues at the intersection, improve conditions for pedestrians, nor mitigate existing geometric issues with large trucks.	The signalized intersection alternative will address peak hour delays and queues and improve conditions for pedestrians, but will have some significant socioeconomic and cost impacts.	The roundabout alternative will address peak hour delays and queues and improve conditions for some pedestrians, will have socio-economic impacts to businesses, and could be as costly as a signalized intersection or more when property costs are factored in. Major construction staging issues.	This alternative will be lower cost than either the signals or the roundabout. There will be minor construction staging issues and minor property impacts. There is the added advantage of creating another bypass alternative of the intersection to reduce traffic through the village.

VOICE YOUR OPINION

Contact your representatives below:

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Lord Mayor, Niagara-on-the-Lake

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- Gary Zalepa

Regional Councillor, Niagara-on-the-Lake

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Niagara-on-the-Lake

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We need to move quickly to make our schools safe

**Wayne Gates, MPP
Special to The Local**

Tuesday marks six weeks until the first day of school for most children and youth in Ontario. Simply put, it is unacceptable that parents still do not have a plan that ensures their kids will have an uninterrupted and in-person school year.

Parents have gone for months at their wits' end trying to work and provide an education for their kids during often challenging virtual learning. Last week, the Science Table – Ontario's COVID-19 advisory panel – could not have been clearer when they said the lack of access to in-person learning and extracurriculars was taking a severe toll on our kids' mental and emotional well-being. We know it's bad for kids mental health and academic outcomes to be out of school, and we know it's placed an enormous burden on parents —then why on earth won't Doug Ford's Minister of Education give us a proper plan to get kids safely back in school in September?

Some erroneously chalk this up to education advocates being stand-offish, but their frustration is merited, as this isn't the first time they've seen opportunities squandered leading to disaster. In November and December of 2020, before the depths of the second wave, education advocates and parents were begging Stephen Lecce, the Minister of Education, to take action and make schools safe while kids were home for the holiday break. The Ford government's response? They shut down parliament for the holidays and ignored the issue. Classes were not made smaller, ventilation systems were not installed, extra custodians were not hired and schools went on to be a major factor in the community spread that ravaged our province during the second wave. We can't go back in time and fix those mistakes, but this Government can learn from them. An opportunity to avoid this was squandered once before – that opportunity presents itself again.

We have six weeks before kids go back to school and the province is unprepared. Less than 40 percent of kids aged 12 to 17 are fully vaccinated, and our Premier and his Minister of Education are simply hoping more kids will get the shot on their own. That's their strategy.



Wayne Gates

So, what does a proper plan for education look like? How do we tell parents we have a plan that we can confidently say will get kids in schools and keep them there? First, we begin with preventative measures that should've been in place eight months ago. Classroom sizes must be capped to allow for distancing and reduce transmission. At the same time, students need access to one-on-one mental health and academic support. Minimum ventilation standards must be drafted and then met. Those standards exist in other provincial buildings and they must exist in spaces where teachers work and kids learn. Paid sick days must be allowed for parents to be able to keep their kids at home if they have symptoms. Lastly, the province needs to reconvene the experts and ask them to draft a specific vaccination strategy for students with full input from parents and educators. Simply hoping families will fix this themselves is not leadership, and it's not proactive.

Fixing this problem can be done without having to raise new capital. As Ontario's Financial Accountability Office (FAO) released last week, the Ford government failed to spend \$10.3 billion dollars they had allocated during the pandemic, including almost \$1 billion

that was earmarked for long-term care and public health measures during the height of the second and third waves. Ford promised to spare no expense to tackle COVID-19, and yet in reality he was cutting every corner he could. The province has the money to make schools safe and then some. This money could be allocated to ensuring that our school year is not cancelled as schools begin to fill with children unable to get the vaccine but still able to spread the virus in our communities. As the Science Table and just about every parent I've spoken to has clearly said, this last year has left kids struggling with their mental and emotional health. Students have struggled with credit accumulation, especially those with unique learning needs. Some kids, especially those without proper internet access, are on the cusp of losing some of the most valuable years of their education. Our children's future depends on getting this right, and ensuring they don't fall behind.

These are children, and their futures are in our hands. Negligence by our Minister of Education meant that an opportunity was missed once to stamp out outbreaks in schools and keep communities safe – I am not sure what you call it if that opportunity is missed a second time. Let's hope we don't have to find out.



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Submitted by
ReMax Greg Sykes

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Museum treasure sale, pig roast this Monday

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's newly dedicated Community Courtyard will be the site of its popular Treasure Sale and Pig Roast on the holiday Monday.

The Civic Holiday weekend is usually reserved for the museum's Heritage Festival, with vendors, displays, and entertainment, all taking place on the museum grounds. For the second straight year, COVID-19 has made it impossible for that event to occur.

But the Treasure Sale is returning after a year off. Assistant curator Shawna Butts says it couldn't happen at a better time.

"I'm sure during COVID a lot of people have been looking through what they have at home, cleaning out their attics and boxes, and trying to get rid of it," Butts explains. "It's almost like an extended spring cleaning, giving them an opportunity to donate to us and help us raise money."

The response has been phenomenal. Butts says in the five years that she has worked at the museum she has never seen this many donations.

Among the treasures gathered for Monday are a slew of books, as well as lamps, jewelry, and a hobby horse. Butts adds that vintage shoe forms, a weighing scale, and nesting tables will be for sale, as well as

plates, teacups, Limoges china and a print of the Battle of Cut Knife Creek. There will be silverware and photography as well. All proceeds, of course, will support the NOTL Museum.

Amy Klassen, the museum's director of finance and marketing, says the treasure sale has been increasingly popular since it debuted with the Heritage Festival eight years ago. Over that time she estimates it has brought in an average of \$1,500 per year, with the exception of 2020, when it was cancelled.

Klassen told The Local that the funds raised go toward the day to day operations of the museum. Like Butts, she is expecting even bigger success for 2021, as other similar sales in

town at local churches did not run this year.

Monday also provides the museum with an opportunity to unveil its new Tiny Museum.

Put together with a grant from the Trillium Foundation, the mobile facility is especially exciting for Butts.

"It was an idea that was conceived by Faith Bell, who at the time was the president of the Niagara Historical Society," Butts says. "She wanted a way for us to expand our reach beyond the museum's walls. It was at that time when the whole tiny homes craze was at its peak."

Riffing off the tiny homes idea, they applied for and received a \$125,000 grant, and topped that up with private donations. The structure is built, mounted to a trailer, and ready to hit the road outfitted with museum artifacts.

Designed to cleverly present exhibits in enclosed but easily viewable display cases, the Tiny Museum will be able to transport some of its unique collection away from the museum grounds. It's a great example of modern, 'out of the box' thinking that takes history to the people.

"It's a way for us to bring the museum to the community," she says, "to community festivals as well as to schools in the area."

Butts explains that further Trillium funding through the provincial organization's Seed Program has gone toward developing school programs and exhibits. The Niagara Community Foundation has also contributed funds toward exhibits.

Butts and other museum staff will be busy through to Monday outfitting the pint-sized museum with its first

travelling collection.

"It's an exhibit that we're doing for our kids' program," Butts explains. "It will be a brief history of Niagara-on-the-Lake and its people. We'll be talking about the Loyalists, Indigenous peoples, recent settlers, like the Polish soldiers and the Mennonites. And we'll showcase our artifacts to go along with that as well."

The Tiny Museum is truly tiny. Butts warns that following current protocols only one or possibly two people at a time will be allowed inside.

The Tiny Museum will be set up on the lawn alongside PigOut Catering, who will be offering roast pork on a bun to visitors.

The Treasure Sale and Pig Roast will be on this Monday, Aug. 2, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the museum at 43 Castlereagh Street. For information, visit NOTLMuseum.ca.

Learn about women of Niagara

Shawna Butts
Special to The Local

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Digweed came to Niagara-on-the-Lake as a British Home child, and was indentured as a domestic on a local farm.

Lizzie decided to put roots down in Queenston, where she dedicated herself to her family and to her community. She was involved with the Queenston Women's Institute, the Queenston United Church Women and volunteered at the Laura Secord Memorial School. During the Second World War, her service and kindness towards the military men training at Camp Niagara earned her a well-known British Honour.

To learn more about Lizzie and the other amazing women from Niagara-on-the-Lake's history, con-

sider picking up a copy of the Niagara Historical Society's book, *Making Her Mark: The Women of Niagara-on-the-Lake*. Copies can

be purchased at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum or on their online giftshop (<https://notlmuseumshop.square.site/s/shop>).



Elizabeth Digweed



Louie the dog loves finding a treasure. (Photos by Barbara Worthy)



Museum assistant curator Shawna Butts displays a classic tea set that is part of Monday's treasure sale.

Museum kids camp coming up

Shawna Butts
Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum will be hosting their Kid Curator summer camp from August 9 to 13 for kids ages six to 12, Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Museum will be following both local guide-

lines and public health protocols.

"This action-packed and historically engaging camp is something your child does not want to miss out on" says Emma Facca the museum's education summer student.

This year's theme is Summer Extravaganza, and will feature a different

theme each day.

Spots are filling up quickly and pre-registration is required. To register your child for Kid Curators, please email efacca@nhsm.ca. For more information on the museum and its special events and exhibitions, please visit www.notlmuseum.ca or call 905-468-3912.



Kids enjoy past years at the Kid Curator Camp, and will again in August. (Photo supplied)



Photographic prints of sailing ships in a misty harbour will be available to purchase.

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All-Star Big Band concert in memory of fan

Recorded at Chateau des Charmes, available on Music Niagara website and on YouTube Thursday

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Musicians from the Toronto All-Star Big Band return for the next instalment of the Music Niagara Festival At Home Concert Series this Thursday, July 29.

Jesse Whiteley, pianist and band director, relished the opportunity to return to Niagara following a December, 2020 show for Music Niagara recorded at Willowbank School of Restoration.

Like that appearance, this week's concert features a pared-down version of the 17-piece combo, running through a number of both instrumental and vocal classics. Their set features songs made famous by Dean Martin, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald and others.

"A lot of these are based on arrangements that we would have done with the big band," Whiteley explained. "In this kind of setting, in a small group,

it's fun. It's kind of a challenge to create the illusion of a big band with a smaller band, with only one horn, a rhythm section and vocals."

Whiteley says the full big band has not played together in all its glory since the pandemic began in March, 2020.

In fact, Whiteley admitted that these days, it feels great, but a little odd, to even have a chance to get out and play live.

"Just the process of going to a gig again, it feels weird to put equipment in the car again," he laughed. "To put the nice clothes on again, too, the basics of going to a show. We all felt so removed from the routine. I had to look at my suit to be sure it would still fit and was clean enough."

Visiting Niagara is always a highlight for Whiteley and the other musicians.

"We've been coming here for years, usually with the whole big band," he said. "It's always a treat to come down

here for the location factor, and the crowds are always great, too."

Though the recording took place just before the province moved into Step 3 of its reopening plan, a small crowd of about 35 was able to take in the performance under the marquee at Chateau des Charmes Winery.

Of that 35, about 20 happened to have lucked into the live performance, as visitors to the winery were moved off the patio and under the tent due to some inclement weather.

The other 15 concertgoers comprised the family and friends of David Waller, a volunteer and supporter of Music Niagara who lost his battle with cancer last June.

Barbara Waller, David's wife of 50 years, said music was always a part of her husband's life.

"He loved music, he always had music playing in the house," she told The Local. "If I was in the kitchen cooking on my own, with no



In memory of David Waller, shown with his ukulele, the big band concert was sponsored by members of the book club he belonged to. He was a huge Music Niagara fan. (Photo supplied)

music, he would come and turn some on."

David sang with the Evergreen Singers, a community choir based out of Grace United Church on Victoria Street. He also sang in the Grace United choir.

Waller was also a member of the Niagara Men's Book Club for more than 10 years. The book club sponsored this Thursday's performance in memory of David.

"When a member passes," Barbara said, "they usually give money to a library. He would read the books, but he really, really loved music, and he loved Music Niagara a lot. So they agreed to sponsor the concert instead."

Book club member Tony Gambarotto referred to David as the historian and administrator of the club. He kept the records of what they read, and would send out the schedule of the meetings, which were held about nine times a year before COVID-19.

"David had a great, terrific wit," Gambarotto

said. "Smart, knowledgeable about everyday events, strong opinions, quiet, but when he said something we all listened. He was very respected in the group."

Gambarotto and the other members of the book club, including Music Niagara board chair Richard Baker, all got together last spring to visit David just before he passed, joining together on a chorus of *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*.

"He was a marvellously civilized, polite, wonderful man," Baker said. "I'm glad we've been able to use this event to celebrate his life."

Members of the book club sat and tapped their toes to the music of the Toronto All-Star Big Band, alongside Barbara and David's children and grandchildren.

Music Niagara will continue offering its At Home Concert Series as planned this summer, but has begun selling tickets to future live performances as well. Tickets are currently available for the Aug. 5 performance

of *Being Lost at Pondview*, at Bella Terra Vineyards, featuring Tom Allen, Jeff Reilly, Patricia O'Callaghan, and Peter and Lori Gemmell.

"We'd love to get back to live performances in real venues, with more people," Baker said, "and use the online stuff as supplementary, as extra. We've got to get back to people and places and sitting side by side."

But Baker admitted that at this point, moving full steam ahead into pre-pandemic business as usual is not in the cards yet.

"We don't know what the future brings," Baker explained. "We've seen some places that had success fighting the virus being thrown back into where they were a year ago. We just can't do that yet. So we will carry on until happier days."

The Toronto All-Star Big Band performance in honour of David Waller premieres on the "Watch Live" page at musicniagara.org, and on the Music Niagara YouTube channel, Thursday June 29 at 4 p.m.



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A smaller version of the All-Star Big Band recorded songs made famous by Dean Martin, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald and others. (Mike Balsom)

Cyclist still riding and loving it at 80

Penny Coles
The Local

With his 80th birthday in his rear view mirror, local cyclist Don Smith decided recently he wanted to do at least one more ride to Fort Erie and back.

A cycling enthusiast for most of his adult life, he continues to ride regularly through town and further, going out at least three times a week, with many of those trips about 25 miles. Other days he does short trips through Niagara-on-the-Lake, the town where he grew up, and that has given him many good memories.

On July 16, a cloudy day with no humidity, he decided it was the right time for a long bike ride, and set out along the Niagara River Parkway toward Fort Erie. "I just woke up and felt good enough to do it," he says.

When he returned, he had completed the 124-kilometre trip in five hours and 43 minutes cycling time, plus three short breaks — 15 minutes for coffee at Tim Hortons in Chippewa, lunch in Fort Erie at Burger King, and on the way home, and another 15 minutes at a Niagara Parks Commission rest stop for a short break, and to refill his water bottles.

"I felt great on the return leg, and made good time. My body felt good, with no stiffness except a sore right shoulder which was cleared up by the next day."

Smith says he had a hip replacement in 2016, "which was no trouble at all. I hardly know it's there."

It was his third round-trip ride to Fort Erie, the first two accomplished when he was 78 and 79.

Smith's been riding for 45 years, has made many long trips, including to Windsor and Toronto, and has great memories of the rides and the people he met along the way. He's also cycled to the Finger Lakes, through Letchworth Park and back home, he says.

He has completed two Hairshirt rides, from Toronto to Niagara and back to Toronto, called a double century because it's a 200-mile ride. He did that in 1981 and 1985. He participated in the Canada Classic Rally, in Paris, Ont., in 1983 and 1984. And he won't ever forget the one-day event through Halton Hills — he refers to it as the Halton Hilly — but he has forgotten the year he did it. "That was a good ride. It was maybe 20 years ago, and I loved it."

Smith explains his interest in cycling began when he was riding to work at C&C Yachts with a friend. He also worked at the Pillar and Post part-time, repairing the fleet of bikes they kept for those staying at the hotel.

He was enjoying cycling to work so much he decided to join the St. Catharines Cycling Club, and when he started riding with more experienced cyclists, he became more serious about the sport.

When C&C Yachts closed, he needed to find a way to support his growing family, and built a workshop for himself behind his Lakeshore Road home. He did a bit of home renovation work, and then, with five kids all needing bicycles, and his own interest in cycling, he decided his next career would be The Bike Shop, which he operated for 35 years, finally deciding to close up shop and retire in 2015. His wife Joan helped him, taking phone calls, and looking after customers when he wasn't home.

When he wasn't at the shop, he was likely spending time with his kids, and then grandkids.

In addition to supporting his family, his bike shop, along with his riding, has allowed him to meet many interesting people, he says.

Over the years, he's only used three different bikes, the most recent, purchased in 2017, a carbon fibre bike with 22 gears, weighing only 17 pounds, equipped with strobe lights front and back. His mirror is on his helmet, so he doesn't have to turn to look behind him. He says he needed something to make it easier to get up and down hills, especially the one to Queenston Heights, and this bike does that for him.

On the way home, he stops in to visit with his brother Jim, known around town for being a local historian, and a collector of old photos. Not surprising, as boys who grew



Don Smith decided to celebrate his 80th birthday by riding to Fort Erie and back, and picked a perfect day to make the trip. (Photo supplied)

up in the family home on Regent Street, Jim and Don both have watched history unfold around them.

"We do a lot of reminiscing, going back over the old days in town," says Don.

"There are only a few of us still living in NOTL from those days. We go over the names of people we remember, most of them not here anymore, and we sit around solving all the town problems. It blows my mind how much the town has changed. The subdivisions, the

infilling, it's overwhelming. I guess I'm old-fashioned. I was brought up in a small town, so different from today. I loved that town. Jim would say, 'you could shoot a cannon down main street and not hit anybody.'"

Smith will ride as long as he's able, and at the moment, he's in good enough health that he hopes that's a long time. "I woke up this morning, and felt terrific. Cycling is a wonderful sport. I wouldn't be in the health I am if I didn't

ride," he says.

"In the winter I ride on a turbo trainer, all computerized. You can ride with a group of cyclists if you want to. The technology today is amazing."

But any day he can get out on his bike is a good day. "I always have fun. It's a blessing to me. The best thing I ever did was start that bike shop, and this is where it led me. I've met so many people along the way, so many wonderful people."

Legion supports native centre



Mo Pam and Lori Beak, volunteering for the Legion's Canada Day fish and chips dinner sales, coordinated their outfits to recognize Canada Day and Indigenous peoples. (Penny Coles)



Legion members Rhys Beak, president, Victor Packard and Stan Harrington hand a cheque from their fish and chips dinner sales on Canada Day to Karl Dockstader of the Niagara Regional Native Centre. (Photo supplied)

Volunteers Emily and Dylan, with Royal Canadian Legion members Stan Harrington, Chris Toye, Paul Dolby, Rhys Beak, Barb Cole and Elizabeth Richards prepared and delivered fish and chips curbside on Canada Day, with a portion of sales from each dinner donated to the Niagara Regional Native Centre. (Penny Coles)

Yellow Door continues with theatre projects during COVID

Penny Coles
The Local

The Yellow Door Theatre Project for kids has continued to move forward with online activities, classes, workshops and performances during the pandemic, says artistic director Andorlie Hillstrom.

She is really looking forward to the return of her fall program, and to offering performances inside their beautiful space in Virgil.

Zoom classes, although not ideal, have been necessary to keep the school going, says Hillstrom. "We didn't want to disappear. Our parents have been amazing. None of this would have been possible without some private funding."

Recreational Classes will start up in September, with reduced class sizes and the ability to switch to online as required by Ontario's reopening plan, with musical theatre classes for kids ages five to 14, and monologue and scene study for ages 10 to 14.

This summer, kids recently recorded Disney's classic *The Little Mermaid JR.*, the story of Princess Ariel, "a curious and free-spirited mermaid who courageously follows her dreams and embarks on life-changing adventures to find what she truly treasures."

It had been adapted for an outdoor space, and with classes being virtual, Hillstrom said she was looking forward to the outdoor experience.

But the rules changed, and it was performed and filmed indoors, with the space set up similar to a TV studio, she says.

It was a great experience for the kids, both to learn about recording live, with no opportunity for second takes, and also to have the opportunity to learn about the recording process. It was also a benefit not to have to rely on unpredictable weather, she added. The show was livestreamed to the public, and is still available on YouTube.

"We have had amazing support from the community, including the Niagara Community Foundation, which has provided bursaries for the kids. We're so thankful, so grateful for all the organizations and individuals who have kept us afloat. We're all doing it all for the kids. We're passionate about the kids, and what they've been receiving during the pandemic. It's been inspiring for me and all the professionals who are helping out." The NOTL Rotary Club has also been generous, she says.

Coming up next is a production called *Red Letter Day*, which will be filmed



Simeon Seiling as Prince Eric, Hannah Otta as Ariel, Ryan Kirchofer as King Triton, and Diego Rivera as Flounder in *The Little Mermaid JR.*, now available online. (Sarah Jamal Photography)

in various locations across Niagara over about 10 days, beginning this week. About 30 teens from across the region auditioned, she says, for 14 parts.

"These kids are remarkable. I'm truly hoping all these projects will provide hope for the children and teens who are involved."

This new film project aimed specifically at teens is a musical film, written by Lezlie Wade, with music composed by Scott Christian, says Hillstrom.

Originally titled *Misfits*, it has been changed recently to *Red Letter Day*, and is being produced with generous funding provided by the Lauren and Vaughn Goettler Family Foundation.

"I am pleased to announce that they will be the production sponsor for this new endeavour," says Hillstrom, who says the show wouldn't go on without their support.

"I'm excited to be able to offer this new arts project to our remarkable teen performers. Our teens, in particular, have suffered from the effects of COVID-19 and the lack of peer activities and support groups.

I believe that this film will motivate, provide a strong education and mentoring component, and be a positive mental wellness arts activity for teen performers."

Hillstrom mentions her gratitude toward the James A. Burton Foundation. A native of Orillia who now lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Burton has been generous toward Yellow Door's summer program, helping out with the cost of livestreaming equipment and technical support.

"Like the Goettlers, who suddenly appeared with support for this project. They've been instrumental in helping us move forward. This is for our teens, many of whom have been lost during the pandemic. We need to do something for them."

Yellow Door is a local charitable organization dedicated to changing the lives of young students. This musical theatre school and production company is led by a team of theatre professionals, including music directors, designers and technicians devoted to providing skill training and live theatre performance opportuni-

ties to young people from across the Niagara Region. Yellow Door is located in the new Redekopp Creative and Performing Arts Centre on Line 2 in Virgil.

The theatre company has come a long way since Hillstrom arrived in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and presented her first Christmas production, *Peter Pan*, in 2015. Her goal has been to provide stage experience for budding actors, and an opportunity for youngsters in the audience to identify with the kids performing their favourite stories.

Since then, she has built up a company of professionals to help them through every step of her productions, for kids to witness and learn from.

She came to NOTL from Regina, where she had operated a theatre school, to retire.

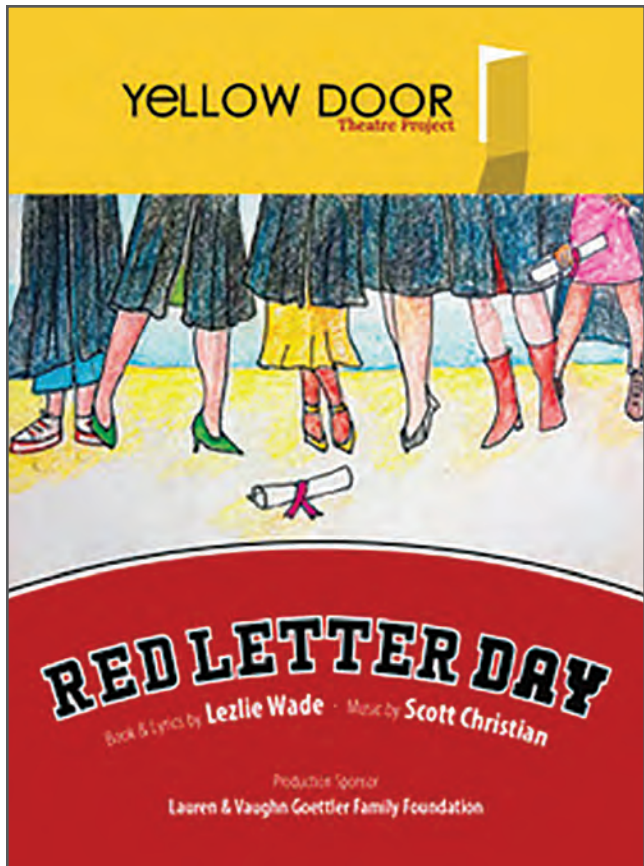
Once here, she saw a need in the community for kids' theatre, and thus the Yellow Door Project was formed.

The theatre company has staged several high-caliber productions, and introduced the world of theatre to many kids since then,

from *Peter Pan* to *The Little Prince*, *Hansel & Gretel* and *Robin Hood* (also by Lezlie Wade and Scott Christian), *Wind in the Willows*, and others.

Hansel and Gretel, the fall performance company production, will be performed at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Nov. 17 to 19.

In addition to the Goettler Family Foundation and the James A. Burton and Family Foundation, and the Niagara Community Foundation, which assisted with the purchase of new equipment for online co-ordination, recording and livestreaming; Hillstrom mentions Floravida Investments, the music sponsor for *Hansel & Gretel*; the Rotary Club of NOTL, which contributed \$3,000 toward the purchase of a new sound system; Call to Action, a club that assisted with fundraising by matching donations; and the Rotary Club of St. Catharines, which was a bursary sponsor for *Hansel & Gretel*, and many other individuals and organizations which helped to make the work of the theatre project possible.



The Yellow Door Theatre Project is filming *Red Letter Day* around Niagara this week and next. (Graphic supplied)

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Great blue heron almost looks prehistoric

Approach carefully and you will find them in our neighbourhood

David Gilchrist
Special to The Local

One of the more interesting bird species spotted in the wetland areas of the town has to be the great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*).

These birds, with an ungainly, almost prehistoric look, have a distinct presence as they are seen standing quietly or wading in the shallow water along the edges of waterways. The great blue heron is the largest heron in North America and is widespread. It stands almost a metre or more high, and an adult can weigh in at 2.5 kilograms. Its population appears to be in good shape, with the only threat being gradual loss of suitable habitat.

I recently spotted one in the Four Mile Pond area of the Niagara Shores Park and had the opportunity to take a few photos. I had seen one earlier, far across the pond and was able to get some wobbly video footage of it as it 'walked'

in the water, almost giving the appearance that it was ice skating. Although I could see it had a fish in its mouth, it was too far for a good still photo. Last week, though, as I walked along the woodland path at the edge of the pond area, I spotted a large one standing in the now shallow waters. I approached it quietly to take a few photos. As it was quite early in the morning it was in the shaded area of the pond and the photos were, therefore, quite muted. Not wanting to disturb it, I continued to the beach area to walk along the shore.

As I returned to the pond area, I noticed that the heron had changed its location to a sunnier spot. I therefore began to creep closer along the path, once again hoping not to disturb it, and was successful at a few shots. It seemed aware of my presence, however, and did eventually take flight to land further away. A look at the photos re-

veals more about its appearance. The head, mostly white with a black stripe, is quite long and narrow, ending with an almost spearhead like beak. It has yellow beady eyes. The neck is quite long and often held in an S shape. This S shape is also seen when the heron flies. Its feathers appear mostly greyish and the ones at the front of the neck are quite long. Its body is the same greyish colour, with a touch of brown at the front of the wings. Two long legs allow it to stand above the water, and sometimes they can be seen resting on one leg.

Its build, high out of the water, allows it an ideal opportunity to watch quietly for passing prey. They are known to eat fish, frogs and turtles along the waterways that they frequent using that long beak to capture prey.

Approach carefully and you will be able to get a good look at these interesting birds in our neighbourhood.



Locals interested in seeing a great blue heron might find one in Niagara Shores Park. (Photos by David Gilchrist)

Completion could take five years

Continued from page 9

in \$500, others put in \$1,000. That's what made this trail possible. We owe a lot to them, and will continue to work with them in the future."

Chisholm recognized Canopy Growth, CN Rail, Zoom Bicycles, NOTL Realty, Bosley Realty, Grape Escapes and Upper Canada Mechanical as a few of the local companies that went out of their way to help out.

Following the ceremony, this NOTL Local reporter had a chance to ride his bicycle from Charlotte Street to East West Line.

Having often trekked through the unfinished version of that stretch, the expansive trail width and smooth pebble surface made

the journey much more pleasurable than in the past. As well, there was very little loss, if any, of the forest feel of riding on the trail.

And unlike Chisholm, this reporter did not end up falling off his bicycle.

Chisholm stresses how important it is to connect the Old Town with the villages of Queenston and St. Davids. He also sees an improved Heritage Trail as a much safer cycling route for wine tours alongside Concession 1, on which drivers often exceed the speed limit of 80 kilometres per hour.

In the future, the committee would like to see a second trail connecting along Line 4 to the Niagara River Parkway Recreational Trail, forming a circle route. As well,

Chisholm looks forward to that day when the Heritage Trail will connect with the Bruce Trail through an area that is elevated, opening up that final phase from Line 9 through York Road.

"We know it's going to take years," Chisholm said. "If we can get it all done in another five years that would be an amazing accomplishment."

With eight more kilometres of trail left to work on, Meloen wrapped up his comments with a warning.

"We have a ways to go," Meloen said.

"Are you listening, Wayne and Tony? We'll be knocking on the doors in Toronto and Ottawa. Well, we have been, and we'll continue to. I am confident in the success of this endeavour."



The view of the completed trail from East and West Line, which Mike Balsom says makes for a good cycle. (Mike Balsom)



LocalSPORTS

Predators looking for local name, logo

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

When the Greater Metro Junior Hockey League's (GMHL) Toronto Predators announced their move to Niagara-on-the-Lake back in May, general manager Johan Eriksson expressed a commitment that the team would become part of the community.

To that end, they have begun taking suggestions for a new team name in an effort to reflect the local fabric.

"This is almost a completely new organization," Eriksson explains. "We have no returning players, we have the new location, so for us it makes sense to change the team name and colours."

For this fresh new start, Eriksson and his board are opening it up as a competition, hoping to take as many submissions as possible up to Aug. 8. After collecting the suggestions, he will meet with owner Robert Turnbull and head coach Andrew Whalen to make the final choice.

The winner will get a season pass to the new team's home games at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil and will also receive the very first jersey with the new name and logo.

Eriksson is quick to ex-

plain that entrants in the competition do not need to design a new logo. That will be left to the organization's graphic design team, who will also consult with the board on the optimal colours to go with the name.

It all has to be chosen, designed and printed before October, which is when the GMHL plans to kick off its season.

"We know we're playing, we've got the go-ahead for Oct. 1," Eriksson tells The Local. "And it's not confirmed yet, but I'm pretty sure we're going to follow the OHL (Ontario Hockey League) when it comes to COVID protocols, which would mean all our players, staff and even our billets will need to be double-vaccinated."

In early September, Eriksson says the team will hold a prospect camp for local players born between 2000 and 2006. The team is willing to consider overage players (born in 2000 or 2001) as well as midget-age players (born in 2006) to build a development relationship with them for the future. He says he is anticipating being impressed by some young NOTL talent.

Eriksson, who also works as a European liaison, player advisor, amateur representative and consultant for Pursuit Hockey Development, is hoping that as many as 20

or more hopeful Junior A players, with experience at the AA and AAA levels, will attend that camp.

"We have dates chosen that we want (for the prospect camp)," he says, "but we're waiting for confirmation from the arena. It may change by a day or two, but we just need to make sure the ice is good enough to go on, as it gets put in fairly late."

Once the roster is finalized, the team's main camp will be held closer to the middle of September.

The Predators have so far signed two players from the Niagara region. One is 21-year-old Dante Massi of Niagara Falls, who split the 2019-2020 season between the Niagara Riverhawks of the Provincial Junior Hockey League, and the Welland Jr. Canadians of the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL).

As well, their 2021 first round draft choice, Noah Caperchione, hails from Port Colborne. In 2019-2020, Caperchione notched 25 points in 39 games with the GOJHL's Caledonia Corvairs.

Other players who are under contract with the Predators include Sweden's Jesper Eriksson, Georgy Kholmovsky from St. Petersburg, Russia, and Swedish forward Alexander Insulander.

To accommodate those international and out-of-region Predators, Eriksson is looking for billet families in town. He is hoping to find spots for about 15 players.

"Borders are opening," he says. "We know our Swedish players are ready to come, and are fully vaccinated. They may be able to come as early as late August. It's getting close for us, and we need to line up those host families."

Billet families are expected to provide the players with housing, utilities, food and Wi-Fi. The com-

pensation for the billet host is \$550 per month as well as family passes for regular season and the playoffs.

Whatever the team ends up being called, they will be playing a 42-game regular season, with half of the games taking place in Virgil. The other 21 games are to be played on the road, mostly visiting their Southern Division opponents in towns such as Kingsville, Tottenham, Colborne, Oshtawa and Durham.

For information and to discuss billeting a player, Eriksson invites interested families to contact him by phone at 365-323-5789 or via email at j.eriksson1984@gmail.com.

The NOTL Local has agreed to assist the team with the search for a new name. The competition is open to all residents of the region. All entrants must agree to appear on the team website and social media if their entry is chosen as the

winner.

If multiple people send in the same name suggestion and that name is chosen by the board, the entrant who sent the first email with that team name will receive the prize.

Please send an email with your name, team name, suggested team colours, and your phone number to balsomm@gmail.com. Submissions will be accepted up to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 8.



Predator Johan Eriksson is looking for help from the community to find a new team name and logo that reflects the community. (Photo supplied)

LocalHAPPENINGS

FISH FRY

Thursday, July 29th
4 - 7 p.m.

CASH ONLY
1 or 2 piece dinner
with fries
and coleslaw

We're back! Join us! Returning to indoor dining
Royal Canadian Legion Br. 124 | 410 King St.,
905-468-2353 | legion124@gmail.com

ST. DAVIDS LIONS DRIVE-THRU BBQ

Friday, July 30th • 4 to 7 pm
1462 YORK RD. ST. DAVIDS

PLEASE WEAR A MASK WHEN ORDERING/PICKING UP

COMBO MEALS:	Lions Burger & Fries \$10
	Lions CDN Burger & Fries \$12 (topped with peameal bacon)
	Lions Peameal Bacon & Fries \$10
	Leo's Hot Dog & Fries \$6

All meals come with bottled water. Add a soft drink for \$1

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With or without a border, colour graphics optional.
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or email: classified@notllocal.com

LocalWORSHIP

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Sunday, August 1st

10:00 a.m.
Worship Gathering -
In-Person & Online

Message:
Kevin Bayne -
Business Ethics

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streamed online Sunday's
at 10 AM. Visit our website
for more information!

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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61						62					63			
64						65					66			

- Across:**

1 Cagney's partner

6 Poker variant

10 Nipper

14 Got up

15 W L A N

16 "I'm --- here!"

17 Identifies

18 Papal

20 Slow-witted

21 The Tiffany network

22 --- quarters: precedes Taps

23 Symbol of disgrace

26 Earth

27 Drawn tight

28 "Idylls of the King" writer

32 The blink of an eye

34 Harangue

35 Computer brain

36 Ice skating jump

37 Put back into service

39 St. Paul's Cathedral designer

40 Follows why, by the sound of it

41 Iridescent gem

42 Scrubs

44 Mental illness

46 Waterproofed canvas (Abbr.)
- 47 Measure of sound intensity

48 Swellings

51 Music for voices

54 It means "central"

56 Globally calamitous happening

57 Home to Everest

59 Release

61 First lady's partner

62 Wander about

63 Understand

64 Lairs

65 Simple arithmetic

66 Terminates
- 13 Texas siege city

19 Sully

21 Butterfly larvae

24 Winner of three Olympic golds, --- Devers

25 Perform in a pantomime

26 Large bodies of salt water partially enclosed by land

28 Sincerely

29 Can be recycled?

30 Exposed

31 Convent inmates

32 E.g. Speer, Himmler

33 Draft cattle

38 Dines

39 Used to be

41 Oscar winner Tatum ---

43 Youth

45 Tank type

49 Top celebrities

50 Percolates

51 Large African lake

52 Conceal

53 Persian Gulf monarchy

54 Courteous address to a lady

55 Sets of beliefs

58 Not me

59 Expression of disgust

60 Gun owners' grp.

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IN MEMORIAM

Michael Vriens



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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from
July 21, 2021

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

Across: 1 Lacey, 6 Stud, 10 Claw, 14 Awake, 15 Wi-Fi, 16 Outa, 17 Names, 18 Apostolic, 20 Dim, 21 C B S, 22 Call to, 23 Stigma, 26 Soil, 27 Taut, 28 Tennyson, 32 No time, 34 Rant, 35 C P U, 36 Axel, 37 Reuse, 39 When, 40 Zee, 41 Opal, 42 Cleans, 44 Insanity, 46 Tarp, 47 Bels, 48 Edemas, 51 Choral, 54 Mild, 56 E-L E, 57 Himalayas, 59 Untie, 61 Adam, 62 Roam, 63 Grasp, 64 Dens, 65 Sums, 66 Halts.

Down: 1 Lands, 2 Await, 3 Committees, 4 Eke, 5 Yes, 6 Swab, 7 Tips, 8 U F O, 9 Disconnected, 10 Coolly, 11 Lull, 12 At it, 13 Waco, 19 Taint, 21 Caterpillars, 24 Gail, 25 Mum, 26 Seas, 28 Truly, 29 Scrap metal, 30 Open, 31 Nuns, 32 Nazi, 33 Oxen, 38 Eats, 39 Were, 41 O'Neal, 43 Lad, 45 Abrams, 49 A-list, 50 Seeps, 51 Chad, 52 Hide, 53 Oman, 54 Mar'am, 55 Isms, 58 You, 59 Ugh, 60 N R A.

PLEASE RECYCLE
THIS NEWSPAPER

The Niagara-on-the-Lake
LOCAL
The trusted voice of our community.

Sailing club racing resumes with COVID restrictions

Local Staff

“COVID kind of reminds me of a bad tooth ache, as in once it’s gone you hardly ever remember that you had it,” says John

Vanderperk, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club fleet vice-commodore. He compares that to the club racing. “Seeing the enthusiasm and excitement on the course, it’s hard to remember that just a few weeks ago, Canadian Lake Ontario competitive sports, including sailboat racing, was not permitted.”

On Wednesday June 30, with COVID restrictions

eased, the NOLSC racing season started with the commencing of the Clan MacLeod series, and because the NOTL Sailing Club committee boat, the Empress, may not yet set an anchor

in U.S. waters, the decision was made for only the Shark class to race in Canadian waters off of Ryerson Park, says Vanderperk, while the rest of the NOLSC Fleet joined Youngstown Yacht Club friends on the Olympic Circle off of Fort Niagara.

“So far this series has seen near perfect racing conditions, with not any one particular boat dominating the fleet,” he says.



Wednesday night racing gets sailboats out on the water again. (Photos supplied)

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