Integrity Commissioner exonerates Lord Mayor

Penny Coles / The Local

In an unusual move by the town's integrity commissioner, a complaint made in March and intended to remain confidential has been released to the public.

The report deals with a complaint made by Col-in-Teller in October, 2021, against Lord Mayor Betty Disero. He said he believed there was living space in the garage led to the complaint.

It said that senior staff and the town's lawyer, Terry Hill, believed it was Teller and Elliott's "refusal to comply with a legitimate inspection request about something which appeared, on the surface, to be a potential bylaw compliance issue" that prompted the withholding of the B&B licence.

Typically, Integrity Commissioner reports that find no wrong-doing, such as the investigation into the lord mayor's actions, remain confidential to protect the reputation of the person who has been absolved from committing any violation. Reports are made public when a politician has contravened a bylaw or code of conduct.

In this case, Edward McDermott, Integrity Commissioner for Niagara-on-the-Lake, received a letter from Disero requesting that his report be made public and he agreed, asking it to be included on the agenda for council at the next available opportunity.

"I am aware," he continued, "that these matters have now become the subject of public scrutiny and debate. Instead of the town, as well as Teller's response — he was "vigorously opposed" to making it public.

"I have also reviewed the contents of an open letter to council (by Jennifer Elliott, dated July 15, 2022) which relates to many of the matters which were the subject matter of my investigation and decision." "I am aware," he continued, "that these matters have now become the subject of public scrutiny and debate. Instead of the town, as well as Teller's response — he was "vigorously opposed" to making it public.

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Fundraising swim continues to support Pathstone Mental Health

Mike Balsom / The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Dylan Rumsey crushed two of his goals this weekend.

On a beautiful, still Saturday morning, Rumsey swam against the natural current from the Queenston Docks to Queen’s Royal Park much faster than the four to six hours he had estimated. And the GoFundMe page he set up to raise $12,500 for Pathstone Mental Health Foundation exceeded that total by $340 at press time.

After making it to Navy Hall, where he ran into some stronger current, it was smooth swimming for the 25-year-old, who had jumped off a friend’s boat just after 9:30 a.m. By around 11:15, his friends and family awaiting his arrival at the end of King Street were contacting Rumsey’s team on the boat, asking them to encourage him to take his time.

To a greeting from about 40 supporters, Rumsey emerged from the water onto the beach at about 11:45, completing the swim in just two hours and 15 minutes. Quite an accomplishment for someone who does not consider himself a swimmer.

The diesel mechanic at Metro Truck Group claims he prepared for the swim without really hitting the river. Instead, he had been putting in up to three hours a day in the gym, focusing on fitness and strength, and taking boxing lessons for the 25-year-old, who had jumped off a friend’s boat just after 9:30 a.m. By around 11:15, his friends and family awaiting his arrival at the end of King Street were contacting Rumsey’s team on the boat, asking them to encourage him to take his time.

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Police looking for information on visiting Hamilton couple

Mike Balsom
The Local

There is little information available beyond a Niagara Regional Police Services news release about a couple in their 70s found in medical distress at the intersection of Welland and Wellington Streets in the Old Town early Friday morning.

Just before 1 a.m. uniformed officers from the NRPS responded to a call from the region's ambulance service to assist with an incident in the area.

A man and a woman on vacation from Hamilton were found at the scene. The NRPS are investigating the incident.

There is no update on the couple's status as of press time.

Detectives continue to investigate the matter. Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact 905-688-4111, ext. 1009219.

Police are also asking residents and business owners in the area who may have seen the couple, to come forward with any information.

Police are still investigating what happened to the Hamilton couple found at the corner of Wellington and Byron Street early Friday morning. (Mike Balsom)

Penny Coles
The Local

Irma Goulet, retiring from Phil's Independent after working for the Niagara Stone Road grocery store for 50 years, wanted to go quietly.

When she arrived at the store for her shift late last week and saw the large sign announcing her leaving, she knew that wasn't to be.

"I thought that was a bit of an overkill," she laughed, after having asked if there not be a fuss made of her decision.

She told The Local she has been saying for a year that she was going to retire when she turned 65. "I wanted to give into my self as a birthday present, and it's really happening," she says. "She says she wasn't sure store owner Phil Leboudec believed she was really going, "A lot can change in a year," she said, but with her birthday looming Monday, her last day was Friday.

"I don't feel like I'm 65," she says. "I feel really good. And I'm in good health.

That was a goal of hers, to make sure she retired with her health, so she and her husband, who stopped working four years ago, would have time to spend together -- so many people make retirement plans, and then aren't healthy enough to enjoy them, she says. She didn't want to wait too long. "I want to have time to enjoy life while I still have my health. Not everyone does."

If I wait another five years, I might not," Goulet says they aren't planning on doing anything right away, although they are talking about travelling across Canada, but no decisions have been made about when or how.

"I've been working for 50 years," she says. "It's going to take a lot to get into the retirement mode.

Goulet started working at MB Foods when she was a high school student living in Virgil. Wally Boguski had taken over the store from his father, who was still working in food storage, using the building across the parking lot.

She spent three years as part-time staff, going to school and sometimes

Police store won’t be the same without Irma

Irma Goulet has worked her last day behind Phil’s service counter. (Penny Coles)

"I knit, I read, I like ceramics painting. I'm not concerned about being bored. I've got quite a lot of interests. Now I'll have time to do more of the things I enjoy.

"As much as she's been a fixture at the store for a long time, she says, "I know they'll manage. Phil has good help. That's all he needs." She loved her job, and feels especially fortunate to have worked in this community.

"The people I work with, the people I meet, they're like family to me. I'm very thankful I was able to stay on for so long." Leboudec says Goulet will not be easy to replace. "I know I will learn very quickly how much we perhaps took her for granted," he says.

"I've been reflecting on this day for a while. From day one, when I took over, Irma has always had my back. That is something I will always appreciate. This store has been her baby for a very long time. She's very modest about it, but over the years she has had a profound impact on the community. It's going to be difficult not having her around.

Leboudec says for the 17 years since he took over the store, "we've worked very closely together. She's seen my kids grow up. We have had many good conversations, some about work and some personal. We can sit down and talk, unload to each other. There aren't many people you can do that with.

He agrees the staff feel like family, and sometimes exhibit family dynamics, including the occasional disagreement. But they always get worked out, "and at the end of the day, you've had a good day".

Goulet, he says, deserves a rest, especially after a difficult two years, and he's glad she's going to get it, although she will be missed at the store and in the community.

"I might own the place," Leboudec continues, "but she's been the face of it for a very long time. More people know her than know me. We're going to miss her for a whole lot of reasons."
Disero’s family members ‘have a right to file complaint’

Continued from page 1

Williams, Disero’s husband, behind. But she said she decided to write the letter and post it on social media when she realized councillors had not been made aware of the situation, or given a chance to discuss it.

When Disero saw that and the ensuing articles in the media, knowing she had been exonerated from any code violation she assumed that Telfer and Elliott were aware of that, she asked that the report be made public.

“It was my only defense,” she told The Local.

She had issued a statement to The Local, saying she had never used her office of lord mayor for her personal advantage, and to comment on the allegations “would be to do what I am accused of and what I completely deny doing. I am fully bound not to take advantage of information I have only because of my office of lord mayor to my personal advantage.”

She said she had acted with integrity; had not sought to influence town employees for her personal advantage; and had not acted in a way that would give rise to the perception of bad faith, or undue influence. “I have certainly not acted in a way that is illegal or improper,” she said.

The Integrity Commission’s investigation, and in particular, the 2022 report, confirmed that, but Disero could not divulge to the public that she had not been investigated or what the report said.

Elliott and Telfer had initially said, as the report confirmed, that they originally thought a neighbour’s complaint about their large garage was impeding their application for a 2020 B&B licence renewal, but did not believe it was an investigation or what the report said.

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Early in 2021, David Marshall, the lawyer for Telfer and Elliott, said the town advising that six months had passed without a charge and the town needed to either issue a charge or close the investigation and issue the B&B licence. Several weeks later, their lawyer received correspondence from the town’s solicitor, Terry Hill, saying there was never a “real complaint” and that the inspection by the bylaw officer was part of the B&B licence renewal process.

But Telfer and Elliott had already been informed about a complaint, and said they had been informed by someone who “possessed a great amount of authority” was targeting them.

In April, 2021, Telfer and Elliott began a court application to get the matter resolved, also asking for damages to cover the loss of income from being unable to operate their B&B, and their living costs.

The town’s response was to say there was a complaint, filed by Williams. It was never anonymous, but his name had not been revealed, according to town policy. With no need to claim his name to be revealed, Williams “was quite agreeable to his complaint” and in reply to the complaint, the report said, it was not about anyone living in the garage, but rather that it was being converted into living space, which Williams had taken from comments on social media.

The garage borders the property of Disero and Williams, and Telfer, the report said, believed the lord mayor had interceded and “abused her authority” to have bylaw enforcement improperly involved in investigating a false complaint by her own spouse, and consequently (whether directly or indirectly) resolved the non-renewal of their B&B licence.

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The garage borders the property of Disero and Williams, and Telfer, the report said, believed the lord mayor had interceded and “abused her authority” to have bylaw enforcement improperly involved in investigating a false complaint by her own spouse, and consequently (whether directly or indirectly) resolved the non-renewal of their B&B licence. According to Chuckie, staff would have followed the normal procedure for such a bylaw complaint regardless of who submitted it. She added that entry was denied “such that safety and bylaw compliance cannot be established, the normal result of such a scenario (irrespective of who is involved) would be the withholding of any licence application connected to the property in question.”

Hill noted that the attempted inspection by a bylaw officer (following up on the Facebook post which was submitted to the town in Williams’ bylaw complaint) was a different process from that carried out by the first bylaw officer on her routine inspection. That officer had made the complaint, due to the information he had read on Facebook.

“Lord Mayor ad- vised that she does not have a Facebook account and had no knowledge of this complaint by Mr. Wil- liams prior to this time,” the report said.

Also she said she had not talked to staff about the complaint, which was backed by Hill, who said that staff had not been told of this.

Disero said when she first received the August, 2020 letter from Elliott, “she had no anonymous complaint” and that there was no complaint at all.

She also said in a Febru- ary, 2022 email to Telfer’s lawyer that the town would try to carry out its inspec- tions. “If everything is in order then a licence will be issued. My client is pre- pared to litigate the issue but I hope your client will also pursue this, regardless of whether or not Williams’ “is a complaint.”

Telfer and Disero were met by a hedge (something which the Lord Mayor had discussed with Mrs. Elliott the previous year, but not, she said, that there is “no interference” by the lord mayor. He was not aware that Williams “is a complaint” and that the town would carry out inspections.

Hill expressed his confi- dence that this did not oc- cur. “There was no interfer- ence” by the lord mayor. In his view, town staff handled the matter as they would any other, because Williams “is a complaint” and the town has the same rights as any other resident.

What cannot be per- mitted “is the lord mayor’s attempt to hide the existence of the Williams / Disero’s involve- ment” in the matter. He accordingly asserted his view that Disero “…used her position of authority to in- fluence town employees in the investigation of her hus- band’s complaint against our property.”

Chuckie also indicated she had asked a number of staff members whether they had been contacted by the lord mayor about the issue, and they all advised that they had not been contacted by or spoken to her about it.

Betty Disero was relieved to have the Integrity Commissioner’s report, which exonerated her, made public.

She said Williams had been threatened with the same rights as any other resident in NOTL to make a complaint, and would nev- er do it in such a way as to jeop- ardize her. As far as she knows, “he might have other complaints,” she added.

With the election season upon us, she continued, “the cabal will do what they are doing” referring to those who “want to see her removed.”

There is still a court hear- ing to come as a result of the law suit filed by Telfer and Elliott, a separate issue to the allegations of Disero’s in- terference and the Integrity Commissioner’s report.

Disero became emotional when asked about Telfer’s assertion that she would claim not to be aware of a complaint made by her husband. “I’ve been in politics for 40 years,” she told The Lo- cal. “My family loves me and supports me. They know the rules as well as I do. They know my obligations as a member of council. They would never do, and I would never do anything that jeopard- izes my career.”

She says there was a time when her mother, who lives in the Old Town, com- plained to the region about pot holes on a regional road. Disero didn’t know about it until she read it in the paper.

She said Williams had threatened with the same rights as any other resident in NOTL to make a complaint, and would nev- er do it in such a way as to jeop- ardize her. As far as she knows, “he might have other complaints,” she added.

Elliott says her letter sent to council and posted on social media was written “when we learned that no one on council knew any- thing about all our law- suit, the NRP investigation and most importantly, the mayor’s husband’s involvement.”

She says she and Telfer “were flabbergasted when we had to agree to a non-dis- closure agreement regarding the Integrity Com- missioner’s report.”

When Telfer was contacted recently by the Integrity Commissioner to have the report made pub- lic, she says, “he initially said no, because the report is ex- tremely misleading and we are now very suspicious of her intent . . . but after read- ing it again, we realized that it didn’t contradict my letter, in fact, it confirmed it. Collin will be writing a public letter to the IC-discrediting his in- vestigation.”

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Experience and new ideas both important, says Cheropita

Penny Coles
The Local

With the municipal election looming and her first term on council almost being coming to a close, Penny Cheropita says she has been giving a great deal of thought to running again.

"Rumours about the provincial government's actions and statements have dampened my enthusiasm," she says. "However, my experience and new ideas both important, says Cheropita."

John McCallum has lived across North America, to Europe, Asia and the Middle East, the Ottawa native has settled in Niagara-on-the-Lake with his wife Helen, daughter of an Irish farmer.

"Almost half of my business career has been outside of Canada," he says. "I've worked in every country you can think of and with every ethnic group you can think of."

The foundation of his successful career was hard work, plain speaking, fiscal responsibility and problem solving with facts, rigorous analysis and solid team-building, and he says he will bring this approach to the role of a full time councillor for the communities that make up NOTL.

"My background, and what I've done all my life, is dealing with issues and seeing them successfully resolved," he says. "If I don't see a problem, you fix it, and if you can't, 'find someone who can.'"

The lord mayor and council sits on the regional and municipal irrigation committee, he says, "and we're so close to getting a commitment," from the province, he says.

"It's so important to the agricultural community, he wants to see it through. "If I don't champion it, who will? Who will step forward?"

He also continues to be committed to helping preserve those attributes. "The communities that make up Niagra-on-the-Lake and wants to help preserve those attributes. "The communities that make up the NOTL."

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Richard Mell can offer balanced perspective

Penny Coles
The Local

Richard Mell, co-owner of Grape Escape Winery Tours, and a real estate agent with Sotheby’s, is a busy man. He would like to become even busier.

Mell, 38, is hoping to win one of the eight council seats up for grabs in the October municipal election.

He says he started getting the signatures needed for his paperwork months ago, so the rumours of his running have been “out there.” And in the meantime, he has had many friends reach out to him with a positive response, encouraging him to run.

His decision is not based on issues, although he did make a presentation to council about stand-up e-scooters a while ago, which didn’t go his way.

If anything that showed him his strengths — to see both sides of an issue, from different perspectives, and accept the results.

Mell says he doesn’t have a particular agenda. “I just really think I can contribute, in a way that is reasoned, rational, and respectful, able to look at the pros and cons, work through the process, and understand that the results are the results. That’s what council should be.”

There has been a lot of talk about the transportation master plan, and with his wine tours, that is right up his alley, but his concern is not about his business, it’s about safety, and what’s best for everyone, residents and visitors.

“It’s a big document, and the biggest issue is infrastructure, and safety on the roads.”

Active transportation infrastructure and how it can be funded without major impact on residents — there is a huge tourism sector that needs to be looked after — all need to be an important part of the discussion, he says. “I’d look at the beneficiaries of that.”

Better cycling infrastructure is essential for residents and visitors, he says — the popularity of cycling is not going away.

During the pandemic, the wine tour business really decreased, forcing him to look at a different way to do business. He learned from that, he says. “We have no desire to increase the volume of our business. We actually decreased the number of bikes, and started looking at making what was already happening better. And we really enjoyed that.”

Mell says he has a good group of friends who have “quite good political debates,” both about what is happening in the U.S. and closer to home. “I think one of my strengths is being able to discuss projects, issues, and problems,” he says.

If someone has a problem, but no solution, “then it’s really just a complaint, and it’s not helpful. Come to me with a solution and we can look at it.”

Continued on page 16
We have a municipal election coming up on Oct. 24, and the cut-off for candidates to declare their intention to run is Friday.

Just a week ago, it looked like there might not be enough candidates to fill the eight seats at the council table. A lot has happened since then.

Incumbents Wendy Cherr- pita and Erwin Wims have announced their intention to seek a second term, and some surprise candidates have come forward. Richard Mell of Grape Escape Wine Tours has officially filed his papers, as have Alistair Harlond, who is vacationing with his former fire chief Nick Ruller, and two an-
cially filed his papers, as have Escape Wine Tours has offi-

forward. Richard Mell of Grape

surprise candidates have come seek a second term, and some

decisions when lined up at the
council meetings, and
either of the town commit-
tees they choose to serve on.

The meetings can be long, but
they are important. Council-

ers state their positions, debate
each other and make de-

cisions on behalf of residents

that very directly impact their
investment in their homes and
their quality of life.

Councillors and mayors are
also called on for advocating
and problem-solving; again, on

issues that can have a huge im-

pact on the lives and properties

of residents.

Municipal issues such as

garbage, roads, sewers, devel-
apment, fire and parks and

recreation, are those that most
directly affect taxpayers.

Local municipal council debates and decisions at your

erial council, take a lot of time, and especial-

ly in a small community, un-

happily, critical residents are also

likely friends and neighbours.

The formal component of being

councillor — phone calls at home, at

all hours, the questions and ac-

usations when lined up at the
grocery store or doing some

cleanup the next, leaving little
time for a personal life.

Many in our community are

retired, but everyone gets exci-
ted about seeing young people

interested in running for coun-

cil, and so they should. But bal-

ancing the pressures of a job,

family and position on council

would not be easy, and it is a lot
to expect of someone consid-

ering what they receive in re-

turn — the rewarding feeling of

contributing to their com-

munity, and also the criticism and

enthusiasm from those unhappy

with their decisions.

All this to say, thank you to

all municipal politicians, and

election candidates, who decide

they would like a seat at the lo-
cal council table, whether they

are successful or not. Thanks
to those who have served. And

we should be especially grateful

for those who continue to run,

knowing what is ahead of them. Perhaps in the future,

we are quick to criticize, often

without knowing all the facts.

maybe we should give

some thought for all they do for

us.

Penny Coles

The Local

Lamb’s ears stalwart perennial with velvet texture

Choosing one plant from this garden was difficult be-
cause there is a lot of variety and subtle colour, all blending
very well. As the electric blue Stokes’ aster has just one bloom
so far, I’ve chosen a stalwart perennial, Lamb’s ears (Stachys
byzantina).

This is a plant grown for its

subtle properties, as it provides
soft silvery grey leaves, a calmin-
ging and cohesive back drop to

flashier coloured flowers. Its

velvet texture also adds some
contrast to shiner, green ma-
terial. Children love to touch
them and deer and rabbits don’t like them.

Traditionally, the leaves

were used as bandages for

wounds and bee stings, which

would probably be comfort-

ing. They are perfect for this
garden, which gets ample sun,
as they are drought tolerant

once established. They spread

but are easily kept in control.

They develop tall, spiky purple

flowers which can look ratty,
so they can be cut back, pre-
venting too much spreading from

the seeds. They need little

depot and never from the top. The leaves can get brown and

smelly.

Clear out any damaged

leaves and the plant will fill in
(it’s very amenable). They hold

their colour through the win-
ter, as an added bonus.

The lamb’s ears in this gar-

den are well maintained and

provide a soothing inclusion

as they eye wanders through a

wonderful display of colour.

Garden of the Week

This week’s winners are Colin and Lesley Walsh, on Paffard Street. Their garden wel-
comes you with a variety of pretty perennials anchored by two standard hydrangeas. The
owners’ creativity is displayed by many garden ornaments, with the focal point being a

penny-farthing bike overflowing with many colourful annuals. To nominate a garden of the

week, visit jointheconversationnotl.org/garden-of-the-week. (Photo supplied)
Local LETTERS

Thanks for the public reminders

To the family of Matthew Waller,

I drove down Lakeshore Road every day and have noticed the creative use of an item(s) you can either call me at 905-468-3235 or drop off to the Help Boutique organized by the Niagara UCC (Ukrainian Canadian Congress) at 1 Carmie Street in St. Catharines. The store hours are Thursday, 3 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. They are in need of -sugar, flour, salt, pepper, oatmeal, oil for cooking, rice, tea, coffee, canned and dry goods, hygiene products for men, women and children, shampoo etc; kitchen utensils, including pots and pans, toaster, simple coffee makers, microwaves, sets of dishes and cutlery, glassware, new sheet sets for double and single beds, towels, and even decent looking window curtains and rods. Also back to school supplies - backpacks, rulers, calculators, pens/pencils, notebooks, etc.

Many of the families are now working and getting apartments, so tools are needed as well. Simple medical things for children and adults, like Tylenol, Ibuprofen, vitamins for kids etc. would also be appreciated.

Slava Ukraini

Shirley Madsen

NOTL

Local LETTERS

Items for Ukrainian families still needed

I would like to thank the NOTL Horticultural Society for allowing me to open up my garden to the NOTL Hort Society members for a viewing.

With that invitation I put out a request to members asking if they could donate items for Ukrainian families who have settled and will be setting in to the Niagara Region. It was short notice, however I want to thank the people who did attend and brought some of the items that were requested on the list.

If anyone, whether a NOTL Hort Society member or not, would like to donate

Mary Janzen Virgil

Local LETTERS

Real change in healthcare needed

I remember thinking in early 2020 — at the beginning of the pandemic — if this doesn’t open Canadian eyes to how bad our public healthcare system is, nothing will. Apparently, after all we’ve been through, Canadian continue to keep their eyes firmly shut.

If the problems of our healthcare system have only been exacerbated by COVID, why should we pursue more of the same? Change is needed, absolutely, but real change can only occur under a nimble and adaptive capitalist health-care system.

I just read a letter to the editor (not in this newspaper) dragging up events of 20 years ago in Toronto politics.

Why is it that just before elections people go looking for dirt on politicians? Go back 20 years in anyone’s life and you find skeletons in their closet. First, our mayor was accused of interference in a 289 dispute (of which she was found to be not involved) and now someone wants a 20-year-old event in Toronto to be brought forward. I have had many dealings with the lord mayor and found her to be just very neutral and diligent in matters. If you do not wish to be the lady to tell us what will be the competition will do for us. People are more interested in what is going to be done moving forward not bowing down to people who make them look bad. Politics is a thankless job and those that put themselves forward to take these positions should be treated with respect, win or lose. These types of mudslinging happen before every election. Let’s be left and let the best candidate win on their platform.

Doug King

Queenston

Local LETTERS

Disappointed by cheap politics

We are golden. So shine on!

I was very pleased to learn that the Heads-Smashed-In Buffalo World Heritage Site is worth a visit. (Photos by David Gilchrist)

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Queenston

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November 21, 2019

The Heads-Smashed-In Buffalo World Heritage Site is worth a visit. (Photos by David Gilchrist)

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Great weekend for celebrating peach harvest

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Minerva Ward won’t declare it as such, but she heard from many members that a record may have been set at Saturday’s Peach Celebration.

“I heard that word from several of our merchants,” Ward told The Local Monday. “We had a fantastic turnout, and the weather was so good. This year is the 30th anniversary of the Peach Celebration. Everyone was happy to see it back: the vendors, the merchants, the bands. We’re having a very strong August tourism-wise.”

Indeed, many locals who walked the three blocks to enjoy the music and the street performers and to sample some of the peach delicacies were amazed at the size of the crowd. The Toronto All-Star Big Band, The Tropical Steel Band and Melodie Italiano provided the soundtrack while stilt walker Paulino Pavliuk and juggler Ben Burfind wowed children and adults alike.

A number of farms were selling baskets full of the fuzzy fruit which were being scooped up quickly.

Domenico Orcolan dances to the beat of the steel drums on Queen Street Saturday. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Leon Martin stokes the steam engine that cooks the best ever corn on the cob for the Peach Celebration.

Second generation farmer Michael Kauzlaric of Kauzlaric Farms agreed.

“We had the big rainfall in July,” Kauzlaric explained, “that really helped with sizing. Then the heat came on and helped with colouring and sugar. We’re really excited with the fruit quality this year.”

Kauzlaric was somewhat surprised to see how many people came for the celebration.

“There are so many from outside of Niagara,” he told The Local. “Lots of US bus trips it seems, too. We’ve participated in years past, when we’ve seen visitors from all over. It’s good to see them coming back after COVID.”

Lepp added, “people are wanting to get out to these festivals. It’s great to see people out enjoying life again. I’m loving it.”

The harvest celebration continued with the Peach Festival Sunday at St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church.

Volunteer organizer Terry Choules said the church had more than 100 volunteers helping out, the most ever for the 32nd annual Peach Festival.

The church’s location at the corner of Picton and Wellington Streets serves to attract a lot of those bus tours that Kauzlaric spoke about Saturday.

“We draw so many of them,” Choules said, “because the buses have to come by here before parking at Fort George. And people walk right in front of the church on their way to Queen Street.”

Peach pies were flying out of the back of the trailer about as fast as volunteer Sandra VanderKaay could...
Peach Festival welcomes returning U.S. visitors

Continued from page 8

Choules added that the white elephant table had more items on it than ever. “People during COVID were cleaning out their houses when there was nothing else to do,” he explained. “So now, we’re getting all that stuff. I can’t believe how many racks of artwork we have this year.” According to Choules, the Peach Festival typically brings in about $15,000 in revenue to the church, but looking around at the turn-out just past noon Sunday, he was pretty sure they were going to exceed that number. “We already sold over $3,500 in raffle tickets,” he said, “and all the great prizes have been donated this year. This is the first year we asked the wineries for donations, and they really stepped up.”

Choules was also excited to see the return of American tourists. And it certainly helped the church earn a healthy profit Sunday. “We can tell we’re seeing an abundance of tourists from the States, just by looking at the money,” he said. “And we’re not giving any exchange rate on the American money, we’re taking it at par. We’ve always had a lot of support from our American friends.”

Alice and Alex Bradnam of St. Catharines enjoy a burger and some fresh peach juice at Sunday’s Peach Festival at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

Trevor Dempsey, Blake Lepp, Britany Lepp and Jorga Lepp sell peaches on Queen Street Saturday. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

There were lots of activities for kids planned to keep them busy at St. Vincent de Paul Church Sunday.

Coun. Gary Buroughs, Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Prince of Wales chef Chris Smythe tally up the peach pie scores.

Freshly picked corn on the cob is a treat at the St. Vincent de Paul Peach Festival.
St. Davids Lions, Lioness bring back car show

This Sunday, a joint venture between the St. Davids Lions and Lioness will bring about 100 classic cars to the Lions Park for a car show and shine, in support of St. Catharines Special Olympics. It’s been about 15 years since the popular car show has been held, says Lioness Jo-Anne Skinner-Brytwak, with other events taking place in the intervening years, and the Lions and Lioness are happy to be bringing it back to St. Davids. “It seemed like the right time to resurrect it,” she said.

The Lions will be offering their famous burgers and peameal bacon on a bun, there will be a beer tent, music by D.J. Ryan Williams, and craft vendors to make it a day for everyone, running from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. “We’ve had an excellent response from drivers,” she said. He’ve really enjoyed the at with the food, the beautiful park setting, and the family-time setting.

There is no admission fee and parking is free. The clubs are asking for donations of food or cash to Project SHARE, a Niagara Falls organization which provides emergency food and support services to those in need. The entry fee is $15 per car, with one people’s choice prize. There will also be a 50/50 draw and a raffle for prizes.

Penny Coles
The Local

The NPCA is updating its Planning and Permitting Policy Document—used to guide NPCA staff in making decisions on NPCA permits and providing comments on planning applications. We are interested in your feedback and invite you to get involved in this important project.

Virtual Public Information Session
NPCA Planning and Permitting Policy Review

The NPCA is updating its Planning and Permitting Policy Document—used to guide NPCA staff in making decisions on NPCA permits and providing comments on planning applications. We are interested in your feedback and invite you to get involved in this important project.

Virtual Information Session
Wednesday, August 24
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Register to attend!

HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK:
1. Visit getinvolved.npca.ca to learn more and submit questions and comments online.
2. Feedback can also be emailed to policy_review@npca.ca.
3. Attend the virtual information session.

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250 Thorold Road West; 3rd Floor, Welland, ON L3C 3W2
YWCA holding food drive for shelter meals

Mike Balsom
The Local

YWCA Niagara kicks off its very first food drive this Friday, a region-wide initiative to support the organization's shelters.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Catherine Leniarsky, the YWCA’s new community engagement director, is organizing the collection.

"There has always been a great need in our region," she tells The Local. "With the pandemic, that need was made even greater. More men, women and children are now seeking shelter. Five of our shelters serve three meals a day. That’s almost 120 people that we serve three times a day every day."

Leniarsky goes on to explain that the YWCA does receive support from area food banks. But the need is increasing and they are conducting this drive to stock the shelves for those locations where they serve meals.

"Food is such a big part of our budget," she points out. "We’re looking to ease that strain and to use our resources as best as we can."

Leniarsky says the organization serves a diverse group of people, and they make every effort to meet the ethnic and dietary needs of many of their clients.

"We try to make it feel like home as much as possible," says Leniarsky. "We try to make it an environment that best serves them. That can be a challenge when you only have so much food on the shelves."

New to her role after leaving a job at Royal Oak Community School in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Leniarsky works out of the Oakdale Avenue emergency family shelter in St. Catharines. In three months in her position she’s already seen a huge impact on many people.

"I get to see families together, I get to see children catching the bus and interacting," she recounts. "One of the most impactful things I’ve seen is probably a U-Haul showing up to move out a family. The looks on their faces, the excitement about going to their own place that the YWCA provided the resources to find, it was a really rewarding feeling."

The YWCA runs a number of shelters across Niagara. Leniarsky explained that there are traditional locations in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls that provide shelter, food and assistance to women and their families. They also recently opened one in Niagara Falls that is specifically for families led by men.

"We also have a few shelters in undisclosed locations for safety reasons," she added.

The average length of stay in their emergency homeless shelters is approximately one month. Following that, the organization helps to transition the families into one of its three transitional housing programs.

Other programs offered by the YWCA include their skills development program run out of their women’s resource centre, their women’s addiction recovery mediation (WARM) program and workshops for youth. They also participate in anti-human trafficking advocacy.

The non-profit relies on government funding as well as funding from United Way and donations from individuals and businesses.

Items needed for the food drive include granola bars, apple sauce, crackers, cereal, juice boxes, pasta, pasta sauce and peanut butter. Bins are located at F-45 on Niagara Stone Road, at Ravine Vineyard in St. Davids, and at Corks Wine Bar and Eatery on Queen Street, all during regular business hours.

"If you can't make it to these locations," adds Leniarsky, "you can always donate directly to the YW to support women and children and families in our community currently experiencing homelessness."

To donate financially and to see a complete list of needed food items, visit ywcaniagararegion.ca. The food drive is on until Aug. 26.

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Based on statistics as reported internally. Has extended to solicit parties currently under contract.
At 72 years old, actor and director Philip Akin says these days he has to discipline himself to turn down offers for work to keep himself from getting too busy.

A chance to direct August Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean, opening this Friday, Aug. 19 at Shaw Festival’s Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre, is one of those offers that made the cut.

“Shaw treats me really well,” he says. “They give me a parking spot right near the theatre. In Toronto, I have to pay $30 to park, and either drive through rush hour or take the TTC. It becomes physically harder there.”

The offers have been coming Akin’s way steadily since he became the first acting graduate of Ryerson’s (now Metropolitan Toronto University) Theatre School in 1975.

He’s had roles in more than 60 films and 20 television series, including John Byner’s Bizarre in the 1980s.

For 15 years he was artistic director at Toronto’s Obsidian Theatre Company, focusing primarily on the works of highly acclaimed Black playwrights. In addition, Akin played the title character in Shakespeare’s Othello at Stratford, and at Shaw he directed Topdog/Underdog, Trouble in Mind and Of Marriage and Men, among many others.

One of 10 plays in Pittsburgh-born Wilson’s American Century Series, Gem of the Ocean kicks off the cycle that documents the African-American experience in the twentieth century. The play makes its Canadian premiere at Shaw this week.

“This is only the fourth play of Wilson’s that has been done in Canada,” Akin says on the line from his Leslieville-area home. “His work is not well-known here. Many of the top tier of black playwrights are not known here.”

Akin considers Wilson’s plays right up there with Shakespeare and Shaw themselves because of the way they ask the same difficult questions in a different way.

“He comes at big ideas,” he explains. “I’ve always wanted to see in the exploration of not just big ideas but huge ones, and not just race, from a Black perspective. And he does that.”

Akin recalls discussing taking on Gem with former Shaw artistic director Jackie Maxwell years ago.

“We were looking at bringing some people up from the States, but it just didn’t work,” he remembers. “We spent about three years trying to get it to work. Every artistic director has a growing list of plays that they want to do. And it became part of Tim Carroll’s list, and it just kind of worked out.”

Set in Pittsburgh’s Hill District, a group of historically Black neighbourhoods where Wilson was born, Gem of the Ocean takes on the very nature of freedom. Unrest at a local steel mill leads to suicide and rioting. As the turbulence rolls around the
Continued from page 12

house at 1839 Wylie Avenue, the 285-year-old former slave Aunt Ester takes Citizen Barlow, a young man visiting from Alabama, on a spiritual journey to cleanse his soul of a crime he committed back home.

The journey finds Citizen at the bottom of the ocean, where the ship that shares the play's title resides. There, he comes across the city of bones; bodies of the enslaved Africans who died on their forced journey across the sea. He comes face to face with his history in the process.

It's deep, meaningful and masterfully written, which is why Akin loves this play. "What sets Wilson apart is the density of his text and the musculature of his plays," he posits. "They have strong women's parts, and they also have strong men's parts. Frankly, that's been lacking in a lot of new writing. I find that the Black man's voice is often small and subdued."

Akin adds that if there's a theme to the 10 plays in the American Century Cycle, it's the inequities that continue to this day based on the refusal to actively deal with the results of slavery right from the start.

"The capitalist argument is laid out very clearly by one of the characters," Akin says. "You can be a success, you just have to take it. But that didn't happen. They said things were going to be settled up after the Civil War, but that didn't happen. There is a real disconnect."

The cast, including Monica Parks as Aunt Ester, Nathaniel Judah as Citizen Barlow and David Alan Anderson playing Solly Two Kings, appreciated hearing those thoughts brought forward in a clear, powerful and theatrical way, adds Akin. Performing Gem of the Ocean in the round at the Maxwell Theatre presents some interesting challenges for the 2012 Dora Mavor Moore Award winner.

"Wilson's plays are very much naturalistic in a sense," he explains. "They're proscenium arch plays, with a room, a window, a door. I don't have any of those things. You have to come at it in a different way, and it gets abstracted in hopefully a very powerfully visual way."

One could imagine Akin taking on the rest of Wilson's cycle in order, perhaps a play a year for another nine years. That would be in keeping with his status as a leader in the Black theatre community across Canada.

When Akin left Obsidian in 2020, the theatre established the Black Shoulders Award in his honour. Each year, he contributes to the decision-making as the prize is awarded to Black artists to assist them in pursuing their craft.

"It has an educational component, and I believe that people learn by taking advantage of opportunities," Akin says. "We want to give out money to help people improve their craft, whether it be in props or whatever. It's not about 'here's a play I want to produce.' Most awards are structured for performers. This one has a much wider range."

Akin will be at the opening night Friday for the 6 pm performance of Gem of the Ocean, where he will talk about the Black Shoulders Award and the importance of the evening's performance. Tickets are available at shawfest.com.

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Phil Akin directs Gem of the Ocean, opening this Friday, Aug. 19 at Shaw Festival's Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre. (Shaw Festival)

Monica Parks as Aunt Ester Tyler, with David Alan Anderson as Solly Two Kings and Nathaniel Judah as Citizen Barlow, in August Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean. (Emily Cooper)
Doctor’s Dilemma production ‘radically topical’

Mike Balsom  The Local

Sometimes current events conspire to encourage a director to update a George Bernard Shaw classic to present times. When Diana Donnelly took on The Doctor’s Dilemma at the Shaw Festival this season, there was this little thing called the COVID-19 pandemic that made the decision to do that a no-brainer. “I knew I was going to set the play in the here and now, in 2022,” Donnelly says. “I saw (former Shaw artistic director) Christopher Newton’s wonderful period production years ago (in 2000). That was really definitive. I wanted to approach it from a whole other angle to make the ideas sing out in a contemporary context.”

One of Shaw’s most loved and controversial plays, The Doctor’s Dilemma has popped up once every decade since 1991 at the Shaw Festival. Following Newton’s production, Morris Panych directed the play in 2010. “This is the fifth time the company has presented the play in its 60-year history. The Doctor’s Dilemma deals with questions of ethics and the value judgments made by the medical profession. At the onset of the pandemic in 2020, often the question had to be asked: who gets the ventilator and who doesn’t? Sudden, questions of human value were topical in the media,” says Donnelly. “This play was written in 1906, when it was still okay to decide whose life has value, who should be saved. Those questions aren’t overt today, but actions show values. The fact that not every country got the vaccine as quickly as others showed who the world truly values.”

After meditating for the last two and a half years on sickness and death, Donnelly adds that The Doctor’s Dilemma dares to be joyful in the face of that focus. “There hasn’t been enough dialogue about how we all have to die some time,” she says, “whether from COVID or something else. So how are we going to live, who do we want to be today? I love that question that the play proposes.”

Donnelly’s production, which opens this Saturday, Aug. 20, dresses the cast in high-fashion contemporary clothing designed by Rachel Forbes, on a lush, minimalist set created by award-winner Gillian Gallow, and with contemporary music from the likes of Drake, Elton John and Dua Lipa for its soundtrack.

Shaw’s original script is updated in other ways as well. Since Donnelly’s version is not set in England, instead of a knighthood, one character is awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine at the start of the play. The doctors themselves reflect the current reality of the medical profession, too, with many of the actors representing segments of the BIPOC population. The oldest doctor, Sir Patrick in Shaw’s script, becomes Patricia, played by Shayri Flett.

“All the characters are people you could bump into on the street,” says Donnelly, who moved to British Columbia from Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2020 to be closer to her husband, actor Jeff Meadows and his family. “All the actors really embody them so believably.”

Because of the move, 2019 was the last season Donnelly spent at Shaw when she directed Helen Moscovitch’s The Russian Play and played Maryjo in Sex, by Mae West. She jumped at the chance to direct her first Shaw play and brought the family back to NOTL this summer to reconnect with friends.

“I walked to rehearsal every day with a bounce in my step,” she raves. “The rehearsal process was incredibly joyous with the group of talented actors that I was collaborating with. And it felt really good to bring my experience as an actor with the Festival stage to my work as a director. To me it’s a really sacred space.”

Sanjay Tarwar plays Dr. Colenso Ridgeon, the medical professional who faces the moral and ethical dilemma. Jennifer Dubedat, portrayed by Alexa Gordon, wants Ridgeon to save her husband Louis, played by Johnathan Sousa. But Ridgeon’s clinic is already full. How can he save Dubedat without denying treatment to someone already in his care? Throw in a love triangle, and the question becomes even more complicated.

“The play deals with doctors being treated like gods,” says Donnelly. “There’s so much pressure for them to make the right decisions every day. In this play we see that one doctor sweat through this impossible choice, but real-life is something that people in the medical profession do every day.”

There is so much complexity in the relationships between the characters in The Doctor’s Dilemma, as there is in many of the playwright’s works. It’s suggested that in addition to the way Shaw asks the big questions, that complexity might be the thing that truly sets him apart from others.

“He was such an original thinker,” the director agrees. “He was like a one-man podcast with 10 points of view. That’s why he’s so important to us in 2022, when there is so much polarization in our thinking. He is always able to point out hypocrisy and grey zones.”

Shaw says in his preface to The Doctor’s Dilemma, “don’t try to live forever, you won’t succeed.” Donnelly insists that is the spirit of her production of the play.

“In the end,” she concludes, “Shaw puts forward the idea that if you really want to be immortal, you need to both love and be loved. The people you loved well will remember you, and so you live on.”

“This production is radically topical,” she adds. “It’s fresh and it’s funny and it’s sexy and it’s wild. The actors are incredible, the design is stunning. There’s such warmth and such laughter, and it feels good to be laughing in the dark. It’s a show I’m really proud of.”
Economic data would draw grants

Continued from page 4

“Economic data would draw grants,” says Cheropita. “We’ve taken steps to ensure the data is available, including collaborating with partners like the Niagara Region and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. We’ve also engaged in research through a study that includes data on growth and development in the town.”

Cheropita notes that the town has initiated an economic information system and a tourism strategy to increase the town’s visibility and competitiveness. She believes that these efforts will attract new businesses and investment, which will contribute to the town’s economic growth.

Listening to a priority

Continued from page 4

“Increased traffic has brought out road safety issues, and there is an opportunity to make the town safer for everyone,” says McCallum. “We’ve heard a lot of feedback about the need for better bike lanes and sidewalks, and we are working on implementing these changes.”

McCallum emphasizes the importance of community involvement in decision-making. He believes that by listening to the needs and concerns of the citizens, the council can make informed decisions that benefit the town as a whole.

“The transportation master plan must be re-imagined and re-worked to ensure it serves all residents,” he says. “We are committed to ensuring that the plan is inclusive and responsive to the needs of our community.”

McCallum also notes that the town is committed to promoting and preserving agriculture and the local economy. He believes that by working with stakeholders in the agricultural sector, the town can create a sustainable future for the community.

‘What are you going to do about taxes’ heard often

Continued from page 4

“‘What are you going to do about taxes’ is a question that is often heard,” says Wiens. “We understand the need to balance the budget and allocate resources effectively.”

Wiens acknowledges the challenges faced by the town in terms of financial management. He notes that the town is working on improving its financial controls and procedures to ensure responsible spending.

“We need to address financial shortfalls in capital and recreational facilities,” Wiens says. “An economic impact study that includes data on tourism and its economic impact on the province is essential, says Cheropita. ‘Other municipalities do better when they work together to address financial challenges, and it is essential that we do the same.’

Wiens says that the town is working on implementing new by-laws and ensuring the revenues generated from them are used to improve tourism and recreation. He notes that the town is committed to ensuring that new developments are in keeping with the town’s overall vision and goals.

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Mell believes in action

Harlond an avid historian

Continued from page 5

how to move it forward. Then it’s constructive.”

What he is hoping for more than anything is representation on council to “truly represent the community. I have so much respect for people willing to put themselves out there.”

As a member of the town’s equity, diversity and inclusion committee since its inception, he believes residents like to see themselves represented on the council, and people who are talking about what’s important to them.

“I’ve always been a doer, so I thought I’d put myself out there and do the best I can. I’m all about action. If you are going to look at issues and gather information, then you have to act on it.”

As a person with two jobs, the winery tours and selling real estate, it took Mell some time and careful consideration to decide whether he has the time to do what will be asked of him, and do it well.

“I’ve done my research about what’s involved,” he says, including the sometimes six-hour council meetings.

“I sleep about four hours a night, that’s how I do what I do, and I have a good team. Being busy is what drives me. And I manage to fit in what I need to do.”

Mell says he’s watched council work on a number of issues they weren’t able to tackle during the pandemic, and sees them trying to wrap up those issues now. He sees council mostly driven by issues as they pop up, and the next council will have its own issues. “I want to bring my perspective to the table, and do the most good for the most people.”

Continued from page 5

However, there is one absolutist about a job on council — preserving the town’s history.

“I’m passionate about that. I know development is inevitable, but maybe we can be putting our foot on the brake a little, taking a few steps back, helping to bring about community involvement and community engagement.”

There seems to be such a divide, he says, with some of the new people coming to town who love it, but could learn more about it, he says, using the volunteer fire department as an example of what they may not understand, and that could be improved by communication, talking, listening, allowing them to have a voice and their own valid opinions.

A Glendale firefighter, he joined for the opportunity to give “100 per cent to the fire department.” He has loved it for the last eight years, and now, at this stage of his life, he feels he’s at a point when it seems serving on council “is a calling for me. I love people, I’m engaged in the community, and I’m passionate about it. I feel like that’s a good candidate for the town to have.”

Flavours of the Week

Peach White Balsamic
50% off
August 15th - 19th
(Limit 2 per customer)

Chili Dark Balsamic
Free
with $65 purchase Aug 20th & 21st

50% off
Aug 22nd - 26th (Limit 2 per customer)

THE FARMHOUSE CAFE
Open For Lunch Daily
Reservations Strongly Suggested
Online Booking Now Available!
Or give us a call to book
905-468-8814
Bring this ad in for 10% off lunch on any Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday in August
Music Niagara wraps up season this weekend

Mike Balsom 
The Local

Music Niagara Festival's 2022 season winds down this weekend with performances at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Friday and Saturday. The ebullient and entertaining Juno-nominated jazz vocalist Heather Bambrick brings her band to town for a performance ranging from Cole Porter tunes to music from a one-hit wonder Stealers Wheel, and from 1970s sitcom theme music to Newfoundland folk songs.

When asked if the audience will hear her belt out a version of The Jeffersons' theme song Movin' On Up, she chuckles. "You're close," she says on the phone from her Etobicoke home. "The same creator. I'm doing a little bit of a Norman Lear kind of thing." Originally from the Rock, Bambrick has been weaned on music from her home province into her repertoire since her days studying vocal jazz at the University of Toronto. "(Canadian composer) Keith Power and I worked on an arrangement of a beautiful Newfoundland folk song when we were there," remembers Bambrick. "It was the first one I did, and I performed it while I was at U of T!"

She says even back then, when she admitted she admired as singers, she would answer with Ella Fitzgerald and Sting, or Sarah Vaughan and Janet Jackson. "At first I was worried I'd get to be known as Pop-Girl," she adds with a laugh. "But people embraced that idea of diversity of influence. And you certainly see it now in the jazz idiom. You just have to go into it with an open mind and an open heart, and a good work ethic and sense of creativity."

The in-demand voice actor (Daniel Tiger's Neighbourhood, Blue's Clues, numerous commer- cials) and Newman FM radio host refers to her mix of styles as a modern form of jazz fusion. "That term always meant jazz and rock," she explains. "But jazz is now so interwoven with so many different genres. Back at university, yes, we improvised over (John Coltrane's) Giant Steps, we analyzed (Miles Da vis') So What, and we looked at different ways to arrange How High the Moon. But people were pretty open-minded to other things coming into the mix. That set the tone for me that I'm really grateful for."

When it comes to the TV theme songs, she points out that many great composers worked on those programs. "Charles Strauss and Lee Adams did stuff for All in the Family," says Bambrick. "Joe Raposo wrote the theme song to Three's Company and wrote for Sesame Street. They hired these musicians whose job it was to write tunes for various labels or bands. They wrote some pretty solid material for those shows."

As for her accompa- nists Friday, she says her band, heard on her 2019 album Fine State, is out- standing. Pianist Adrean Farruggia, Chase Sanborn on trumpet and flugel- horn, drummer Ben Wit- man and NOTL resident Ross McIntyre on bass will be backing her up at St. Mark's.

Music Niagara Festi- val founder and artistic director Atis Bankas has booked Bambrick for shows in other parts of the province, and he is happy to finally be able to present her and her band for the festival.

"She's fantastic, she has great humour, and she's a wonderful singer," he says. "She is such a fabulously natural talent on the radio, as well, like she was born to do that. I love listening to her sing."

Bambrick's penul- timate Music Niagara performance is followed Saturday by a program featuring Ukrainian-born American violinist Solomiya Ivakhiv's 2016 album, Glory to Ukraine. Bankas fears a return to the days of the USSR when all culture, including mu- sic, art and even language, from the 15 Soviet repub- lics was officially consid- ered Russian.

"I was invited back to Curtis to deliver the commence- ment address to the class of 2022, which included frequent Music Niagara performer Emma Mein- renken. On Friday morning at 11.30, violinist Meirenken will be performing at Addison Hall at St. Mark's followed by an Ivakhiv masterclass for the young musicians under the um- brella of the Music Niagara Performance Acad- emy. Saturday's Glory to Ukraine program begins at 4 p.m. Information and tick- ets for all three events can be found at musicnagara.org.

"Even when I came here in 1981," the Lithu- anian-born violinist says, "it didn't matter if you were from Ukraine, Geor- gia, Azerbaijan, you were considered to be Russian. That's exactly what the Russians always wanted, and what this cur- rent fight is all about."

As Ukraine continues to defend its borders from Russian attacks, Bankas fears that unless the rest of the world steps in to help out, the conflict may con- tinue for decades. "I expected this to still be going on," he says, "but this can be stopped right now. Other countries need to respond but they are not. This is the most important issue in today's world in my opinion."

Ivakhiv's 2016 album, featuring duets between her and pianist Angelina Gadeiya, was titled Ukraine: Journey to Free- dom. In a review in World Music Report, critic Raul da Gama says today that even though it was record- ed long before the cur- rent war, "prophetically, Miss Ivakhiv's violin wails out for injustice; cries for freedom."

Ivakhiv holds music degrees from Stony Brook University, the Lysenko State Academy of Music in Ukraine, and Philadel- phia's Curtis Institute of Music. She is a member of the faculty at the Univer- sity of Connecticut School of Fine Arts. This year, she was invited back to Curtis to deliver the commence- ment address to the class of 2022, which included frequent Music Niagara performer Emma Mein- renken.

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Announcements

The Gazette would like to make an edit to the last issue. The Strong Museum write up was by Maansi Gandhi-Malhotra not Maanak Gandhi-Malhotra. Our sincerest apologies to Maansi! Thank you for the fantastic travel blog!

Poet’s Corner: Summer Swim

By: Taleah Bucci, 12

When I go swimming at my neighbour Dave’s pool,
The water feels perfectly cool.
It is really nice of him,
To invite me over for a swim.
When Dad says all my swim lessons are done,
Then it’s time for cannonball fun.
He also keeps the bugs and leaves at bay,
With a big net to scoop them away.
When it’s hot, just look around,
Splash pads, sprinklers, and pools are easily found.
So take out your floats and pool noodles too,
Because lots of summer fun is waiting for you.

WORD SEARCH: SUMMER TIME

L B U T T E R F L Y
J N E V H O A P L Y
S K H F U M J L I X
W A T E R M E L O N
P H I C N I C W W
E A P K Y H U S A A
A P A R W W C D L R
C P R K F R Y K K M
H Y T R I E N D S
V V Y G B R E E Z E

WATERMELON
BREEZE
PEACH
BUTTERFLY
PICNIC
PARTY
FRIENDS
HAPPY
WARM
WALK

Family-Friendly August project courtesy of The Niagara Pumphouse

Use your cellphone camera to scan the code to get started!

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ONLINE ART STUDIO

VINEGAR + BAKING SODA = ABSTRACT ART

View the video starting August 1st
pumphouseartonline.abstract

Presented by
Niagara Pumphouse
Arts Centre

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

AUGUST PROJECT

SUBMISSION INFO

The hope for this page is to get kids involved and interacting with the community in a positive way. We welcome submissions for all categories from kids of any age. Please keep the reviews positive and all submitted content appropriate for kids of all ages. Please send all submissions to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com and in the subject line please put the category for which you are submitting. Thank you.

Interview with Emily

Emily Ferguson, 9

Q. What is your favourite thing about NOTL?
A. My home, friends and family.

Q. What do you want to be when you grow up?
A. Work at the post office like my mom or be a teacher.

Q. How would you change the world if you could?
A. Make there be no COVID.

Q. How did you keep yourself busy during COVID lockdowns?
A. I made a COVID book, read, watched movies, went lots of walks with the doggies and mama made a backyard Virgil stampede.

Q. What is your ideal day in NOTL?
A. Walking the dogs in Old Town is the best.

Q. What is your favourite book?
A. I like any book you give me!

Q. What do you do to help others?
A. I hold the door for people.

Q. What is a fun family tradition you have at home?
A. We play board games together.

Q. What’s that certain something that makes you special?
A. I am special because I’m really smart and I have really great friends and family.

Q. If you could do something for charity what charity would you want to help?
A. I would do something for kids in the hospital.

Q. If you could piece the perfect day in NOTL together, what would it be?
A. We would go for breakfast at Silks, then swim at our pool, then go fishing at the lake and have lunch at Sunset Grill.

Q. If you could do something for charity what charity would you want to help?
A. I would do something for kids in the hospital.

Artist’s Corner

By: Evelyn, 5

CHARITY

We are looking for charities in which kids can participate. If you would like your organization to be highlighted here, please send your information to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com.
Zubin Gatta helps win wrestling gold for team

Local teen also takes home bronze in individual event

Mike Balsom
The Local

After being a big part of Team Ontario's wrestling gold medal win at the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games, and adding a bronze in the individual 52 kg weight class, Zubin Gatta is reassessing where last week's competition fits into his accomplishments in the sport.

Before the Canada Games began, the 16-year-old told The Local that though he was excited to compete for his province, he didn't think the experience would match up with his OFSAA (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations) title at 38 kg in 2020.

"That definitely changed," he said this weekend after the wrestling competition wrapped up. "Especially the team aspect of it. Getting first with this team was a really cool experience. There's a lot of guys on this team that I used to look up to at tournaments. I feel like I'm one of them now!"

Gatta started out the team competition last Tuesday with a win by forfeit over Team Yukon. The territory did not have a wrestler in the 52 kg weight class to go up against Gatta so he was awarded a victory. Later that day he notched a 10-0 victory over Nova Scotia's Josh Bissett.

"I had never seen him before," Gatta said. "I didn't know anything about him. I just went in and wrestled the way I normally do. It was a pretty quick match. I won on tech (technical superiority)."

Zubin Gatta is congratulated by his mom Farah. (Neel Bhujannavar)

Gatta then had a front row seat for one of the biggest feel-good moments of the games. After capturing third place he was mat-side as "Eckie" beat Alberta's Fred Calingay to win the gold medal, the first ever Canada Games gold won by Nunavut. Immediately after the win, Gatta was there when the 18-year-old from Cambridge Bay raced around the mat to celebrate then jumped into the arms of his coach Chris Crooks.

"I was really happy for him," Gatta says. "I know him really well. He and his whole team stayed at our school for the week. We're all really close forward. He's setting his sights on the next provincial, and hopes to capture another OFSAA gold medal to add to the one he earned in 2020 when he was in Grade-9.

There's no doubt he will be the one to beat at both tournaments this coming school year.

Zubin Gatta wrestles an opponent at the summer games. (Leah Parker)
NIAGARA 2022 CANADA SUMMER GAMES

Bartel ready to compete in the Canada Games

Mike Balsom
The Local

Kai Bartel feels ready heading into this week’s rowing competition at the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games. That’s not surprising, as the 19-year-old just wrapped up a week of competition at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta in St. Catharines on Aug. 7.

The Eden High and Crossroads Public School graduate is representing Team Ontario in the seven-seat of the Men’s Eight and, with Shane Keagan of the Ridley Graduate Boat Club, competing in the Men’s Pair as well.

Bartel’s interest in the Canada Summer Games was piqued when he heard Niagara had won the opportunity to host in 2021. When the pandemic pushed the games back a year, he kept his sights on earning a spot to compete for Ontario.

“I had two goals for this summer,” The East and West Line resident tells The Local. “One was to make it to the Henley Royal Regatta in England, and the other was to row for Team Ontario.”

Bartel can check both of those goals off his list.

In early July he competed for the St. Catharines Rowing Club in an eight on the River Thames, though his crew did not make it to the final of the Thames Challenge Cup. The following weekend he tried out for Team Ontario.

“We submitted our 2-kilometre ergometer scores,” Bartel explains, “and they cut anyone who was over 6:30. Over two days they put us in two different fours to race over 1,000 metres. Then they switched the combinations about six to eight times, and totalled up our times. They took the fastest guys. I finished in the top half, to get on to the team.”

His cousin Owen, a St. Catharines resident, also earned a spot on Team Ontario.

He’s excited to hit the water this Wednesday, knowing that many members of Canada’s Olympic rowing team have come through these games in the past. Bartel points to Trevor Jones, who won gold in single sculls in the 2017 Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg and competed at the Tokyo Olympics, as someone whose path he would like to follow.

Bartel was an extreme-ally quite small. I’ve known all these guys for a number of years already. I’ve rowed with some of them before, and against some of them, too,” Bartel’s coach for Team Ontario is Grant Boyd, who for 18 years was the head coach at Upper Canada College in Toronto. After being guided by the St. Catharines Rowing Club’s Tom Kent for the race in England, he quickly had to adjust to Boyd’s style. “Each coach obviously has their own coaching styles,” he says, “but when you look at it from an outside perspective, it’s basically all the same. Some are really hard, giving you super intense workouts, while others give you longer, lower intensity workouts. But other than that, they’re all the same.”

At 6’4” tall and 190 pounds, Bartel is adept at both sculling (two oars) and sweeping (one oar), and says he enjoys both equally.

In high school, he concentrated on single sculling, earning a bronze medal in the 72 kg event at the 2019 Canadian Secondary Schools Rowing Association Regatta. Paul, who rowed for both Niagara District and Laura Secord Secondary Schools during his own high school days, coached his son at Eden.

His high school rowing results, and his grades, of course, got him noticed by the University of Victoria (UVic). Bartel just completed his first year at UVic studying commerce and rowing for the Vikings varsity team.

Competing for the Vikings, his highlights this season included finishing second in the single sculls A Final at the Elk Lake Spring Regatta in March and a second place finish in the Brown Cup reserve race in April.

To get ready for his first race Wednesday, Bartel has been training with Team Ontario from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. daily. Those sessions include a great deal of time on the water. He hasn’t really had any time yet to watch any of the other sports in the 2022 Canada Summer Games.

This week, when we’re staying at the Athlete’s Village (at Brock University), I’ll actually go see some of the sports in my free time,” he says. “And I’m really looking forward to being in the closing ceremony (Sunday, Aug. 21). They’ve been hyping it up for the past three years.”

Of course, he admits it will be that much more exciting if he’s wearing a medal or two around his neck that night. And with his 20th birthday coming less than a week after the Canada Summer Games wrap-up, what a great present that would be.
Quebec edges B.C. for tennis gold in NOTL

Tents, bleachers gone, courts back to pre-Games

Mike Balsom
The Local

It took nearly eight hours Saturday to crown a winner in the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games tennis competition at Memorial Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake. After seven matches, Team Quebec edged Team British Columbia for the gold medal 4-3.

There was a chance to end things much, much earlier, as they won three of the first four matches, known in the team competition as ties.

Team Quebec’s Qing Xu Wang, 16, and 14-year-old Mélodie Collard outlasted British Columbia’s Denny Bao and Leena Benetto respectively in their singles matches, which began at 3 p.m.

Following those matches, Maxime St-Hilaire and Annabelle Xu of Quebec split their singles matches with Team BC’s 18-year-old Aram Noroozian and 17-year-old Reece Carter, leaving the score 3-1 for Quebec. All they had to do was win one of the doubles matches to take the gold medal.

Team B.C., however, had something else in mind. Connor Church and Henry Ren dropped Quebec’s Ange Kevin Koua and Junhee You in the men’s doubles match, while BC’s Alessia Cau and Emma Dong beat Josie Userau and Naomi Xu to knot things up at 3-3 and force a third set.

Dow was impressed by the quality of tennis on display over the six days of competition. Impressed, but not really surprised. “I’ve seen some of them play before at some of the junior tournaments at White Oaks,” he says. “I was anticipating a pretty high level. The older group was really playing like you wouldn’t believe. There was a particular sound you don’t hear that often on our courts, the sound of a tennis ball being hit really hard in the middle of the racquet on a consistent basis. And there were rallies that went on for minutes on end.”

Dow, who was at the facility daily during the first week of the Canada Summer Games, says there is a bit of aittersweet feeling now that the tents are packed up, the temporary fencing is gone and the bleachers on the north side have been removed. “It’s a bit of an anticlimax seeing the club back the way it was before the games,” he says. “I have mixed feelings. It was a wonderful experience and I think everyone that is involved was absolutely thrilled and delighted with how everything went.”

The tennis club had many members volunteering their time each day of the competition. Dow says they and non-member volunteers who gave their time worked very hard to make sure everything came off without a hitch. Many athletes Dow spoke with commented on how nice the volunteers were and how well they were treated by them.

The weather cooperated for the most part, with rain delaying play on Tuesday, forcing some matches to be rescheduled. But they were able to catch up and get everything completed on time. He gives organizers Rosemary Goodwin, Marilyn Francis and Sharna Macfarlane all the credit for ensuring everything ran smoothly.

Besides seeing the high quality of tennis and being able to watch it in the infield, Dow marvels. “She’s tiny, just about to turn 11. Boy, was she a delight to watch. Through the Canada Games staff have packed up and taken away all of the official regalia, there is at least one thing that will elicit misty memories of Aug. 7 to 12 for many club members who were involved.

Actually, make that 13 things, as the flags representing Canada’s 13 provinces and territories continue to fly courtside and will be staying put. “I was playing there yesterday,” Dow says, “and I was thinking about how nice they look. It’s kind of a nice memory of a wonderful week.”

A highlight of the tennis matches at Memorial Park was watching 10-year-old Team Saskatchewan member Isabella Yan compete. (Miranda Langguth)
### CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

**Across:**
1. Name which sounds like a name
7. WiFi access enabling
14. Agreeable colors
15. Akhenaten’s son, briefly
16. Rich Little, for example
17. Rinder imbecilous
18. & Evelyn (body-product brand)
20. Fish eggs
21. Have a soak
22. Long
24. Touchdown turf
26. “Cogito, ergo --- ”
27. Young lice
28. Pizzas of ancient Persia
30. Funds for the golden years
32. Put down
34. Rich Little, for example
35. “The buck stops here”
36. Musburger or Scowcroft
37. Round at the bar
39. Causes of personality disorders
40. By mail
41. Oprah
42. Beers
43. State with more corporations than people
45. First Bible book after the Gospels
46. Annie Oakley’s employer
47. Big rip brand
48. Egos
49. Cannot
50. Servo
51. Official state dish of Texas
52. Sunnyside Max
53. Untouchable
54. Monogram
55. Egos
56. Eagle
57. Onto
58. Egos
59. Onto
60. Got in
61. P-L-O
62. Eat
63. Wingspan
64. P-L-O
65. Engage
66. Also
67. Wingspan
68. Lit
69. Noodle
70. Nits
71. On, O
72. Stayed.

**Down:**
1. Mexican mom
2. Three bright stars are his belt on high
3. Just defeated
5. Old file copy
6. The same number of
7. Desire
8. Rings blue about conclusive indication
10. Blanchet of “Blue Jasmine”
11. Probably the most prominent native of Kosovo MS
12. Round at the bar
13. Mustburger or Scowcroft, for example
14. One way to deliver
15. Country singer Ritter
16. Home to an anchor, a lion and a bull
17. Web address
18. Shifty types
19. Matt beavers
20. Nite dam
21. Unattractive quality
22. Convert into leather
23. Unhand me!
24. Put down
25. Funds for the golden years
26. Ring Sue about conclusive indication
27. Desire
28. Put down
29. Funds for the golden years
30. Funds for the golden years
31. Parties for the golden years
32. Convert into leather
33. Put down
34. Convert into leather
35. Convert into leather
36. Convert into leather
37. Convert into leather
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66. Convert into leather

### Sudoku Solution from August 10, 2022

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

*Completed on August 10, 2022.*
the past three months.

‘I’ve never swam any distance like this,” he said.

“This proves my point I was getting across, that if you set your mind on something that seems impossible, you’ll definitely be able to accomplish it. For example, with depression, someone who has depression and thinks they’ll never get out of it, they need to know they can do it.”

Though his attention-getting feat did raise a large sum of money, for Rumsey, that’s not what it was all about.

The purpose behind Rumsey’s swim was to raise awareness for mental health issues, and to encourage those who suffer from depression and other maladies to try to fight through their problems without pharmaceuticals, if possible.

“I had PTSD since I was 14. I was diagnosed with psychosis when I was 17,” he explained after catching his breath. “Doc-tors always wanted me to take pills. But just through—”

Rumsey paused, laughing. “But today, I one-way, “ she added. “Dylan has gone through this far, though.”

Rossi admitted that yes, the money raised is important, but the impact Dylan made on stigma reduction is potentially much more impactful.

“It spreads the message far and wide in a different way,” she added. “Dylan has a whole different circle of people who do not talk about these things. One in two people will have a mental health struggle. This fundraising with a whole new group of people who may want to find out how they can help Path-stone.”

Almost all of those who greeted Dylan at the end of his swim were there for the start of his journey in Queenston. Many of them were wearing one of the 100 T-shirts made to sup-port him on his journey. The Local was told that all of the shirts were sold, rais-ing even more money than what was posted on the GoFundMe page.

Some, such as his grand-parents Ron and Martina Rumsey, made numerous stops along the Niaga-ra Parkway to track their grandson’s progress.

“We’re pretty worried,” Ron told The Local. “I grew up right around the cor-ver from here, and I swam across this river all the time when I was younger. I nev-er swam against the current so far, though.”

Dylan said he may have been inspired by Ron’s ad-ventures on the river, as well as those of his father Ken, who also frequently crossed the span as a youngster.

“When I was a kid, I al-ways wanted to do that,” he laughed. “But today, I one-upped them.”

As far as the money, Rumsey hopes it goes to-ward supporting a different approach to helping youth with their mental health struggles.

“I wouldn’t mind see-ing it going to something like their natural park (at their Branscombe Centre in St. Catharines),” he said.

“That’s the reason I chose Pathstone, because I saw that they were trying to take a more natural approach to things.”

Rumsey hopes it goes to-ward supporting a different approach to helping youth with their mental health struggles. This fundraiser has introduced me to a whole new group of people who may want to find out how they can help Path-stone.”

Continued from page 1

Kim Rossi of the Pathstone Foundation greets Dylan Rumsey when he finishes his swim, a fundraiser for the foundation. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

A group of friends and family send off Dylan Rumsey as he prepares to swim from Queenston to Queen’s Royal Park.

Rumsey has a small contingent of spotters with him as he swims.

Kim Rossi of the Pathstone Foundation greets Dylan Rumsey when he finishes his swim, a fundraiser for the foundation. (Photos by Mike Balsom)
Monday and Tuesday were training days for summer games sailing participants, with racing beginning at the NOTL Sailing Club Wednesday at 11 a.m. and continuing daily until Saturday. Tuesday was overcast and there were few spectators, just a few visitors to town who happened to be sitting on benches in the small waterfront park beside the old custom dock. (Photos by David Gilchrist)