



Community
mourns
musician
Peter Shea

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An announcement of a \$6 million investment in the Shaw Festival from FedDev Ontario can go toward the 2022 season and beyond, and will have spin-off benefits for the town and the region. MP Chris Bittle of St. Catharines made the announcement with Shaw executive director Tim Jennings and artistic director Tim Carroll. For story see page 5. (Mike Balsom)

NOTL has its slate of candidates for Oct. 24 municipal election

Penny Coles
The Local

With the deadline for candidates' registration for the Oct. 24 municipal election passed, there are three residents hoping to be chosen to head the next term of council.

In addition to incumbent Betty Disero, and Gary Zalepa, Niagara-on-the-Lake's regional councillor running for the position of lord mayor, jumping into the race is retired entrepreneur Vaughn Goettler.

There are 13 candidates running for one of eight positions at the council table: Tim Balasiuk, Allan Bisback, Gary Burroughs, Adriana Crater (Vizzari), Wendy Cheropita, Alistair Harlond, Maria Mavridis, John McCallum, Richard Mell, Sandra O'Connor,

Katherine Reid, Nick Ruller and Erwin Wiens.

Pat Darte, Andrea Kaiser, Paolo Miele, William Roberts and Barbara Worthing are each hoping to represent NOTL as regional councillor.

Those hoping for a position as a DSBN school board trustee are Jonathan Fast, Alex Bradnam, Lora Campbell, Kris Vrcek, Don MacDougall, Kate Baggott and Rhona Lindo-Kelly.

Candidates for NCDSB trustee are Natalia Benoit, Larry Huibers, and Jolanta Pawlak.

Candidate for the Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir trustee is Melinda Chartrand.

To find out whether you are on the list of eligible voters for NOTL, visit <https://www.voterlookup.ca/index.aspx>

Residents anxious about drainage ditch spill

Penny Coles
The Local

Early this week residents living nearby what the town is describing as a "spill" were concerned about the lack of information and communication regarding the situation.

CAO Marnie Cluckie confirmed that on the evening of Wednesday, Aug. 17, town staff "identified what appeared to be a spill in the area near the Line 5 landfill."

Families living near what they refer to as a creek, but seems to be a drainage ditch — not a ditch used for irrigation — say they were woken up early Thursday morning by bright lights flashing in their bedroom windows, around 1 a.m.

A work crew with heavy equipment was working in the nearby creek by 4:45 a.m., they said, and when they contacted the town later that morning to inquire what was being done at such

a strange hour, they were told "it was a hazardous emergency situation" and the town needed to create a berm, "as someone noticed suspicious dark water flowing through the creek."

Another neighbour talked to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), and learned the town had been told to block the creek, which led to the development of a berm to stop the flow of water.

They were also told it was likely someone had dumped grape skins — the water, residents say, was black, and remained so early this week — but they were told lab results of the contents of the spill were pending.

Neighbours were uncomfortable that they didn't know more, concerned about the lack of communication, and about their pets and wildlife in and around the creek, including frogs, birds and other animals. The

extent of the clean-up, they said, "is concerning," indicating the severity of the spill.

By Friday large dumpsters were brought in and lined up along Concession 5 between Line 6 and Line 7, neighbours said, and on Saturday, pumper trucks labelled were going up and down the undeveloped portion of the road, and "still no communication from the town with those living in the area. If there is a health risk, if there is any danger to the

public, or even if there isn't, that is information we need to know," one resident told The Local.

Pumpers continued Saturday night, neighbours said, with lights brought in to allow the work to continue, but stopped Sunday, "possibly because the undeveloped portion of the road is wet."

Cluckie says when the town heard about the issue

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‘Municipality should be run like a business’

Vaughn Goettler hopes to be given that opportunity

Penny Coles
The Local

Vaughn Goettler, an almost-retired entrepreneur, is looking at the way the municipality is run through the eyes of a businessman — and a municipality, he says, is a business and needs to be treated as such.

Deciding to run for lord mayor was a last-minute decision, when he realized there were only going to be two choices.

He’s especially concerned about the financial state of the

town. “I believe that there are things in town that need to be dealt with differently than they have been in recent history, certainly in the past four years,” he says.

“If we don’t change the direction in which we’re headed I don’t think we’ll have the ability to control our own future, because we’ll run ourselves out of money and we won’t accomplish our goals.”

He traces some of the problem to the expensive lawsuits the town has been facing.

As a businessman, he says, “I believe when money is involved there is always a solution, because everyone only has so much, both money and time. But when emotions become involved there tends to be little or no hope for solutions. People are no longer thinking about money, they’re thinking about the greater good or the greater bad, depending on your perspective.”

If you jump into a lawsuit without speaking to the opposition, without seeking compromise, “you don’t get to understand all the opportunities to reach an agreement. The agreement may not be perfect, but if you’re not talking, except through legal channels, that’s

like firing a nuclear warhead and then expecting somebody to come back and say ‘I didn’t expect you to do that. Let’s talk.’”

If the municipality isn’t run like a business, spending more money than revenue, “it’s going to get worse, and we are not in good shape.”

While he has never been a politician, in the business world he has certainly demonstrated leadership skills, he says.

“In order to run a business, you must have people who believe the business will be successful.”

They have bills to pay, “and if they don’t think you can lead the business in a direction that’s suc-



Vaughn Goettler spoke to The Local while giving blood Monday at Canadian Blood Services on Ontario Street. He is a regular donor, although interrupted by COVID, and encourages others to consider doing the same — the need is great. (Photo supplied)

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Pat Darte speaks of good relationship with region

Penny Coles
The Local

Former Lord Mayor Pat Darte is throwing his hat in the ring for the position of regional councillor representing Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He is now one of five candidates to fill one position.

During his tenure as Lord Mayor (2014-2018), the town population grew by 14 per cent, he says, continues to grow as a leading destination for winery tours, historical sites, festivals, and agri-tourism, and has been voted the

prettiest town of its size by the Communities in Bloom international challenge. The town’s average tax increase was under 2.5 per cent during his term, Darte says, had a surplus each year, and was able to secure the high school and the hospital properties.

Darte says he has extensive knowledge in working with various organizations, as a founding member of the Niagara Community Foundation, which has so far generated more than \$60 million, benefiting various groups in Niagara-on-the-Lake; created the Family and Chil-

dren’s Services Foundation, which has served thousands of children in our community; started the NOTL Town Fund in excess of \$1M; and helped form the Youth Advisory Council.

He is a former member of groups such as Niagara Parks Commission, NOTL Hydro, Regional Economic Development, the Shaw Festival board, and many others.

He has served on the board of many organizations, including the Hotel Dieu Hospital, and was the leader in the initiative to obtain a Specialist High School Ma-

jor in aviation for Holy Cross Cathy Secondary School, benefiting our local airport and youth.

The Niagara region population is expected to grow more 20 per cent over the next 20 years, says Darte, and to handle that growth, he adds, Niagara-on-the-Lake needs a strong voice with a vision, someone who will speak up and protect the town, someone who has deep background knowledge of issues and opportunities, and someone who has a good working

relationship with the regional staff and councillors.

Darte says his focus over the next four years will be to improve transportation for rural municipalities, ensure the Glendale plan “is launched with excellence,” work on economic development and housing, and improve our tree canopy and phragmites.

“We also need to find creative ways to solve our employment issues,” he says, and mental health is one of his main focuses as well.



Former Lord Mayor Pat Darte is hoping for a seat on regional council. (Photo supplied)

Kaiser’s eyes on region

Penny Coles
The Local

When Andrea Kaiser’s name popped up as a candidate for regional councillor on the last day for nominations, it may have been a surprise to many — not that she’s running, but that she is hoping to represent Niagara-on-the-Lake residents at the region.

In two telephone polls, one quite recent, she was listed as a possible candidate for lord mayor, so of course there has been much speculation we would see her name added to that list, even though, after running in two federal elections as the Liberal candidate, she said she was step-

ping back from politics and concentrating on career and family.

However, in a recent conversation about that poll with a friend, when she explained she wasn’t ready for the full-time commitment and responsibility required as lord mayor, she was asked instead if she would consider serving as regional councillor. The more she thought about it, she says, the more she realized it was something she would like to do, that would enable her to get back to her involvement in politics at a municipal, non-partisan level, and would fit into her current stage of life.

Her kids are adults, 24 and 26 now, her award-winning Drea’s

Wine Company, in memory of her father Karl J. Kaiser, is established, as is the business she shares with her brother, Kaiser Design and Marketing. And she has cut back to a couple of days a week with Reif Estate Winery, where she has worked in marketing for many years. So she quickly raced around getting the signatures need to register, and now she is ready to work with her sign committee — her son and daughter and their significant others, she says — and start knocking on doors. “I’ve come full circle,” she laughs, recalling that she and her daughter, then 11, were her 2003

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Former fire chief has municipal, leadership experience

Penny Coles
The Local

Former fire chief Nick Ruller may have left his position for one in a large urban setting, but he has not left the community he loves, and is hoping to have a meaningful role in its future.

Ruller and his wife Lida are raising their four children in town, and have decided this is his time to run for a seat on council, hoping to represent other young families and ensure their needs are considered in council decisions.

Ruller was raised in Homestead, in one of the first homes in

the Virgil neighbourhood, went to Virgil Public School and then to Niagara District Secondary School. He remembers cycling around Virgil as a kid, riding his bike to the Memorial Park pool, and has great memories of growing up in town.

It was during his high school years that he became a volunteer firefighter, before heading off to higher education. He graduated from Ryerson (now Toronto Metropolitan) University with a degree in politics and public administration, and attended the University of Guelph for a Master of Arts in leadership.

He also holds a graduate certificate from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in community preparedness and disaster management.

Ruller, 41, has been able to use his leadership skills during his career, not only as the chief of the town's fire and emergency services, a title he earned in 2017, but also as the community emergency management coordinator. He helped lead the town through the toughest years of the pandemic as part of the emergency control group, tasked with making quick decisions in response to the unfolding needs

of the community during the time it was in a declared state of emergency.

When Ruller left his job as fire chief in February, he had high praise from town leaders. Lord Mayor Betty Disero spoke to his ingenuity and strategic leadership, while CAO Marie Cluckie said he was responsible for vast improvements in fire services, developing a "terrific team" to help him.

Ruller himself is modest about his education and his accomplishments in town before leaving to take a job as platoon chief in an urban fire department.

He is focused on ensuring families and children are considered at the council table—not to the exclusion of other groups and other needs, he stresses, but that they are not overlooked in the decision-making process.

"I look at the situation we're in, the challenges the municipality is facing that are growth-related, and the importance of striking a balance of the diverse needs of the community, with young families, tourism, agriculture, development, employment and housing. I look at my four

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Nick Ruller is hoping to represent families like his at the council table, as well as residents of all ages and stages of life. (Photo supplied)

Winemaker, Lions member wants to 'help the little guy'

Penny Coles
The Local

Katherine Reid, Queenston resident, member of the Queenston Residents Association and winemaker at Joseph's Estate Winery, is hoping for one of the eight seats at the town's council table.

She's running on the slogan

"Kat for council, caring for community," she says, focusing on smart growth, agriculture preservation, and keeping communities safe.

Her main priority, she says, "is helping the little guy," whether it's the small grower trying to keep agricultural land in production, or the small business owner

trying to keep a business viable in difficult times. Both, she says, face tough supply-chain issues, including labour shortages, that have an impact down the line, driving prices up.

"I'm not sure the general population understands the hurdles we're facing," she says. At Joseph's she is dealing with a short-

age of bottles, and glue for labels, as the cost of shipping goes up—similar to issues other businesses are facing.

"We have to be supportive of business in any way we can," she says, "helping them through a difficult time."

It is also a time to take a different perspective on municipal

spending, she says. While NOTL residents "are considered for the most part to be well-off," seniors on fixed incomes and working people who aren't receiving wage increases are suffering, unable to keep up with inflation.

Reid considers herself a "bit of a different demographic," still working at 63, as she has since she

graduated from university, "and still trying to make ends meet."

Reid received a Bachelor degree from McMaster University in geography and statistics, and started her career in the wine industry 37 years ago at Chateau des Charmes Estate Winery. She has

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Worthy would bring 'investigative lens' to regional council

Penny Coles
The Local

What Barbara Worthy lacks in political experience, she makes up for in her ability to thoroughly research and understand complex issues, a skill that served her well when she was looking at such issues from the perspective of an investigative journalist.

Worthy is a long-time Niagara-on-the-Lake resident who has been involved in many aspects of community life, region-wide. She has chosen to run for regional council, she says, because the region needs help, a problem she delved into and discovered while researching the region's finances

to better understand them.

"You know the saying, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. It is broke, and it needs fixing," she told The Local, explaining her fear that the region is in financial trouble.

"They are using reserve funds – and how long can that last," she says. "They are going to run out of money."

This is the right time for her to jump into politics, she says. After years of "living in the freelancing mode," busy but not at regular hours, she now is working at the NOTL Museum, giving her a steady schedule that will accommodate a seat at the regional council table.

And bringing an investiga-

tive lens to look at the region as a whole, she says, is important. "We can't do it alone. I realize this is the time for making a difference, and I have the time to do this."

As she researched, the more she got into financial issues, and other regional concerns, such as transportation and irrigation, the more it seemed the right time, she says.

"People have taxpayer fatigue. They need to know where their money is going. That requires transparency and accountability."

To accomplish that, communication is key. "And that is something I can do."

She feels it's an important

time for NOTL at the region, considering the amount of taxes that go to support it.

"The region is very important to NOTL, but I think people don't know a lot about the region, what it does, and why it's important."

Through the many services it provides, services we need and use, it helps to create "safe, livable communities," she says.

It could also use a little more diversity around the council table, Worthy adds.

Known as Babs to most people, Worthy is an independent, creative arts producer, a former Shaw actress, instructor, writer, and long-time CBC Radio producer, well-known in the Niaga-

ra region for her stage and video multi-media productions. She produces short documentaries focusing on Niagara's history and current affairs for the NOTL Museum, where she is their community engagement coordinator. She has taught at both Niagara College and Brock University since 2006.

As well as short historical documentaries, her media productions include Parks Canada films, such as the War of 1812 multi-media, Canada-wide touring production, Flames of War, and she is a co-recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

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Barbara Worthy would offer a 'loud, fearless' voice for NOTL at the regional council table. (Photo supplied)

Retired minister also offers provincial political experience

Penny Coles
The Local

The town knows William Roberts best as the former minister of St. Mark's Church, who came to Niagara-on-the-Lake, settled here, and remained after retirement.

While at the church, he

helped support migrant workers, raised money for palliative care, and hosted Shaw actors and young musicians for dinners and special events, he says.

More recently he has served on the town's environmental committee. Roberts has decided he would like to devote his energies full-time to regional council,

and has thrown his hat in the ring hoping for that opportunity.

What many might not know about Roberts is that he was twice elected to the Alberta legislature, where he focused on funding for hospitals and medical care, and improving universal access to quality health services. "I ran against a popular incumbent, and

won twice," he says.

"This led to a MBA in Health Services, and then consulting work with the Heath Management Resource Group in B.C.," he says. "For 10 years I directed Leadership Sea to Sky, a sister program to Niagara Leadership, and graduated more than 100 young adults from this commu-

nity-based leadership experience."

Roberts grew up in a large working-class family in Aldershot, and graduated from Trent University with a scholarship to attend divinity schools in Cambridge, Mass. and New York City.

"Returning to Canada, I served full- and part-time in churches and faith communities

in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, with interim appointments in Jerusalem and the Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York," he says.

While politics and church might seem an unlikely career combination, they actually have

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Niagara community mourning musician Peter Shea

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara's music community is mourning the loss of drummer, pianist and singer Peter Shea this week.

The co-founder of the TD Niagara Jazz Festival lost his battle against pancreatic cancer Sunday morning with his wife Juliet Dunn at his side at their north St. Catharines home. Tributes began to pour in online almost immediately.

Toronto singer Heather Bambrick, who played a Music Niagara Festival show at St. Mark's Church last Friday night, spoke of losing her friend and former University of Toronto classmate during her daily shift on radio station Jazz-FM Monday.

"Everyone is devastated," she tells The Local. "Everybody loved him. He was just 'that guy.' I don't know anyone who ever met Pete Shea and didn't just completely fall in love with him. He was warm, kind, funny and engaging. He could put a smile on your face no matter what kind of hell you were going through."

Described by Bambrick as open-hearted and lovely, she recalled first meeting him in the jazz program at U of T.

"Singers and drummers always got the bad rap," laughs the frequent performer at the Niagara Jazz Festival. "But he was always so fun and hilarious. He could have been a stand-up comic. He was one of the first to ask me to sing at his graduation recital. That was such an honour, and I'll never forget it."

Dunn says she and her husband first saw signs that something was wrong back in 2018, but doctors found



Juliet Dunn and Peter Shea balanced each other so well, friends say, in music and in life. (Photo supplied)

nothing. As Shea's health declined and he began to lose weight, the couple continued to search for answers.

In March, 2020, pain in his spine prompted a trip to the emergency department in St. Catharines. A CT scan was called for, but the lockdown meant that the appointment couldn't happen. He finally had the scan when things opened up a bit that summer. Then, on June 22, 2020, his urologist called to tell him he had stage four cancer that had spread to his lungs and his liver.

Shea went through radiation and chemotherapy treatments, and had a hip

operation to relieve the pain. He continued to stay positive and made many Jazz Festival appearances at the piano, including on Canada Day this year in Simcoe Park. He was even at the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines Aug. 6 to cheer on Juliet as she sang the Franco-Ontario anthem at the opening ceremony of the Canada Summer Games.

Niagara-on-the-Lake saxophonist Jim Gay has been a friend and colleague of Shea's for over 30 years.

"He was a very, very kind individual, always upbeat, positive and encouraging," Gay says. "He was always willing to share his musical knowledge. He was a fantastic musician, a true triple threat if you want to call it that. To see him go so young, it's so sad."

Gay recalls spending the previous Monday afternoon at Peter's home.

"We had a great time," Gay

says. "He was very lucid. He played me a bunch of music that he had recorded with Brent Settingington. The two of them were going through some old recordings they did in the 1990s, and they sounded great. I hope those songs come out as a legacy project for Pete."

Dunn says she hopes to eventually enlist a number of Shea's friends and collaborators to complete that project some time in the future.

Fonthill-based pianist and bandleader Mark Lalama may be one of them. Lalama marvelled at Peter's positivity, even in the face of his struggles against cancer.

"I never heard him complain or play the victim," Lalama says. "We had an epic hangover coffee about a month ago. He ended up eating supper at my house. The last time I saw him was when (Lalama's duo) Dizzy and Fay opened the Jazz Festival (July

20). Our eyes met and he had this big smile on his face. I was so happy to see him that night."

Lalama remembered playing some gigs with Shea where both of them played keys, trading tunes back and forth. He is another of Shea's friends who spoke of his energy and sense of humour.

Toronto-based drummer Davide Di Renzo first met Peter Shea when they were in high school, Shea in St. Catharines, Di Renzo in Guelph. They connected at music competitions called Musicfests.

"We immediately became thick as thieves," says Di Renzo. "I fell in love with him the first day I met him. We laughed more than we spoke, we just became brothers right then and there. He just cracked me up, and man, was I ever a big fan of his drumming. He had beautiful technique at such a young age."

Di Renzo moved to Los Angeles after high school to further his career in music, but when his visa ran out and he was pondering his next move, a chance encounter with his old Musicfest friend at a gig in St. Catharines put Di Renzo on a course that he continues to pursue today.

"He had just finished his first year in the brand new jazz studies program in Toronto," Di Renzo says. "He encouraged me to apply, asked me to fire him a demo tape, and he gave it to the director of the program. Sure enough, I auditioned and I got in."

Di Renzo says all roads in his life lead to Pete, adding that they had a deep, deep connection.

"I don't think I would have stayed in Canada had it not been for him," he says. "Within that first year I started working with so many people and I got really lucky. I always thanked him for that."

An emotional Di Renzo says he saw Shea about a month before his death, and cried about 80 per cent of the time because he could see how much his friend, whom he calls a deep, deep soul, was suffering.

Shea's 50th birthday was this past Feb. 3. Di Renzo tried to make it down from Toronto to Spirit in Niagara Distillery for the party, but a big snowstorm meant that many who had planned to attend could not.

Niagara-on-the-Lake business person Maria Mavridis also hoped to attend that party.

"Peter and Juliet still went, and a handful of people made it out," she says. "Juliet texted me to tell me that he played all night long on that piano."

Mavridis first met Shea and Dunn when her family was operating Maria's Seafood Restaurant in Port Dalhousie. They hit it off immediately, impressed as she was with what she calls Peter's cheesiness and sarcasm. She attended their wedding in Mexico and was there to help the couple build their jazz festival.

"He was such a pure soul," she says. "Anyone that knows Peter knows what I am talking about. And he and Juliet balanced each other so well."

Dunn had been working with Mavridis to organize a Sept. 12 party at White Oaks dubbed "RE: Pete", a second chance to hold Shea's 50th birthday party. Mavridis started a GoFundMe page to raise funds to offset the cost for Dunn, and at press time it had raised \$15,390 toward a goal of \$10,000.

"The party is definitely still on," Mavridis tells The Local. "It was Peter's idea, that was where he wanted it. The food I ordered is all of his favourites, including the mash-tini buffet. Peter was going to play for four hours straight, but this will become the celebration of his life."



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Shaw Festival receives \$6 million investment

Mike Balsom
The Local

The outdoor stage on the grounds provided the perfect backdrop for an announcement about federal funding for the Shaw Festival.

Speaking on behalf of Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle announced a non-repayable investment of more than \$6 million to support the Shaw Festival's recovery from the impacts of the past two years.

"We all know the last few years have been a challenge, to put it mildly," Bittle said to the gathered crowd Tuesday morning. "Here in Niagara, after the Festival's cancellation in 2020 and the shortened season in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's vital that we ensure these economic and cultural drivers continue to thrive and grow."

Standing beside Bittle on stage, Shaw artistic director Tim Carroll and executive director Tim Jennings both seemed to be holding back tears of joy as the \$6 million figure was announced by the MP. The crowd erupted in a raucous round of applause that lasted nearly 20 seconds.

"The investment will support a new concert series," Bittle explained, "and the Fairground and Shawgrounds events, one-hour fairs for the whole family that celebrate the arts and the time period of George Bernard Shaw. Looking around, you can see the important role that these investments have in supporting a safe return of

the Festival."

Carroll thanked Bittle and the minister for the grant.

"It's astonishing and marvellous news," the man known as 'TC' said. "It's going to have an incredible impact both on our theatre and the community that we are in. I know personally that I have had a lot of people coming to me to tell me (a Shaw performance) was the first thing they've ventured out to do in the past two years."

Jennings talked of the infusion of the federal funding's potential to provide much needed support as Shaw moves through its 60th season, the longest and largest in its history.

"On behalf of the 600-plus artists, artisans and arts workers here at the Shaw," said Jennings, "and the thousands of local jobs that are reliant on our stability for survival, I thank you."

He went on to point out that Shaw is responsible for almost \$220 million a year in local economic impact.

"We know that our work generates work for others," he added. "Shaw's patrons anchor long stays in Niagara and Ontario with trips to the Shaw. They often use Niagara as a launching pad for seeing other parts of the province. And arts and culture tourists, according to Destination Canada, spend double what other tourists do locally."

As Jennings explained, some of the \$6 million that was announced Tuesday is actually earmarked for the current season. He added that two years ago he began speaking with FedDev Ontario to work out a budget for 65 live concerts in the fall and winter of 2020.

"When the government announced the major festival program (Major Festivals and Events Support Initiative, or MFESI)," said Jennings, "we put in an application last summer. We've been talking with them constantly. They're a partner, and they've been really helpful. In planning for this season, there was a lot of conversation about what we could do together and how it could happen."

Though Shaw is running a full slate of performances this year, the effects of COVID have certainly continued to be felt in the form of staffing shortages and smaller crowds. As well, whereas about 40 per cent of Shaw attendees normally come from the U.S., that percentage is down significantly due to some reluctance to cross the border.

"We hired six extra full time understudies this year to try to help beyond our normal understudy complement," explained Jennings. "We've been using them every week due to illness. As well, we've lost about 5,500 tickets worth of cancellation in the course of the season related to that."

Attendance is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, but Jennings and Carroll both look to this funding announcement as a major step toward getting there.

"It is our intent to get back to our pre-COVID attendance and economic impact as quickly and safely as possible," Jennings said. "This significant investment will help us do that. It gives us the optimism to take good risks which will benefit all of Niagara."



Shaw artistic director Tim Carroll, executive director Tim Jennings and St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle take to the stage at the Shaw Festival for an announcement of an investment that will help COVID recovery for the festival this season and moving forward. (Mike Balsom)



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EDITORIAL

Well done, Shaw, and congratulations

The Shaw Festival has had its ups and downs during COVID, as have most businesses. It's been a rollercoaster ride for sure, the festival shuttered at first, eventually to open with very limited capacity, CEO Tim Jennings and artistic director Tim Carroll trying desperately to perform some magic and keep employees working and ready when it was time to resume performances.

As cautious as they were, when the theatre reopened, COVID didn't go away, the nature of the disease and its transmission meant actors succumbed, and various performances were cancelled. Each time the stage went dark, each time they were ready to plan for a reopening of some sort, Jennings spoke not just of the festival, but of the community of NOTL,

the region, and province, and the impact the Shaw Festival has on the economy. Businesses, restaurants, wineries, short-term rental accommodations and hotels all were suffering along with the Shaw, and salvation would benefit all when it reopened. As much as Jennings worried for Shaw employees and productions, he worried about the ripple effect on the community.

Jennings and the festival had some good fortune to help out along the way, including an insurance policy he had almost prophetically decided might be wise protection against a communicable disease — not envisioning a global pandemic, but something like a flu bug that could wreak enough havoc to keep actors from being on stage and close down productions.

The insurance allowed

the Shaw to keep paying some of its actors and other employees through 2020, when other theatre companies could not, and along with some other measures, made reopening gradually under restrictions a little easier to manage.

In a good year the Shaw generates more than \$200 million in economic activity, bringing people from the U.S. and other parts of Canada to Niagara. Jennings has always been acutely aware that when the Shaw suffers, so does the economy in an area that depends on tourism.

The festival has recovered, but not completely, so it is welcome news indeed that the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario is making a \$6 million investment in the Shaw Festival to move it forward during its recovery

from the pandemic impact, and help it thrive.

Jennings and Carroll were of course both very appreciative of the substantial gift when it was announced Tuesday, but so too should we be grateful. Good news for the Shaw is good news for all of us, from the restaurants, hoteliers and owners of rental accommodations to

the owners of the gas stations where visitors need to fill up before returning home.

We're so fortunate to have the Shaw in our backyard, good neighbours that help to look after our community.

Thank you to FedDev Ontario for a very wise decision to invest in this much-loved and respected festi-

val, to Tim Jennings, Tim Carroll and all at the Shaw who used their creativity to weather the worst of this COVID storm, and congratulations on doing a spectacular job through challenging times. Your reputation is well-deserved.

Penny Coles
The Local

The beauty of black-eyed Susans

Marla Percy
Special to The Local

The focal point of this garden, the geese, are snuggled amidst a bed of rudbeckia (brown-eyed Susans). This hardy, dependable flower blooms from mid-August till October, especially if you dead-head the flowers to keep the bloom going. There are many varieties of rudbeckia, but *r. hirta* (sometimes seen as a self-sowing annual) and *r. goldstrum* (a true perennial but also self-seeds) are the most common with this colouring. This foot soldier grows in any soil which is well-drained, and will tolerate some drought but flowers better with water. It's not bothered by insects or deer and is good for pollination, attracting butterflies, and cutting for arrangements. Cut it back in fall (especially if you don't want it to reseed everywhere) but you

can leave a few stems for the birds. On your next walk about town you will see it

in large or small clumps in many gardens. Gardeners know a sure thing.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Ricki (*Ricki and the Flash*, Netflix, 2015) abandoned her husband and three young children to follow her dreams of becoming a rock star. It did not happen, but Ricki continued

to live with energy and hope. After some years she attempts to reconnect with family. Connection is what the film is about, and the saga unfolds in unexpected ways. In the end there is a correct resolution for everyone's problems. The film is brilliant, but Streep is stellar.

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.

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Garden of the Week



Al Zwegers and his wife Kay, at 15 Hope St., are the winners of this week's contest. The space of this corner lot has cleverly been created for maximum use. On the corner and running down the side of the house is a mixed line of trees, both evergreen and deciduous (even a small evergreen planted by the owner from seed) which shield the front porch from the street traffic and the fearsome winds of Niagara. Leading up to the house is a mixed garden with a row of marvellous fragrant roses. Leading your eye into the centre of the lawn area is a striking sculpture of two geese (let's assume they are Canadian) in a bed of brown-eyed Susans. This garden is pleasing and well-thought out. To nominate a garden of the week, visit jointheconversationnotl.org/garden-of-the-week (Photo supplied)

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

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Healthcare improvements require specific goals, time frames

“Real change in health care needed” (The Local-Aug 17/22): Alex Evans advocates capitalistic health care (as in U.S.).

He is wrong to say that Cuba and North Korea share our system. They are vicious dictatorships where communist military and party mem-

bers get top care and the rest get leftovers.

My son-in-law’s mother was rescued from Cuba two months ago and treated for heart failure in Toronto. Our regressive conservative Ontario government punished our nurses, healthcare workers and teachers with Bill 124,

limiting pay increases to 1 per cent a year when inflation was at 2 per cent. Then the COVID pandemic increased work on doctors, nurses etc. in acute care where every hour of the 168 hours in every week needed expert care, medicine and machinery (usually bought by private do-

nors for tax credits). The provincial government refused to grant paid sick leave — what persecution!

Private clinics just skim off the easy cases and private nursing homes skim off profit for shareholders. Contrary to business products, our ‘patients’ keep returning

for more care — hence our increasing life expectancy — among the oldest in the world.

I support the advice of the CARE economy group (Toronto Star, Aug. 13/22) which suggests increased health care funding needs an “explicit agreement about the

transformations the premiers are buying — specific goals in a clear time frame, a labour force strategy, care outside and inside hospitals, preventative medical care and public health.”

Elizabeth Oliver-Malone
Retired anesthesiologist
NOTL

Could regulating nature lead to more human accidents?



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Hang on, hold up — I’ve got a weird theory.

The more governing bodies restrict how we access natural areas, including right here in Niagara Region and Niagara-on-the-Lake, the more disconnected we become from healthy but possibly risky play.

This societal change with how we are allowed to engage with the outdoors will ultimately lead to more individuals not knowing how to handle themselves outdoors, creating more safety-related issues than already documented despite regulations. I would call this a creeping generational problem.

Of course, individual safety is a paramount concern that makes us uniquely human, and we always have to be vigilant about that. However, when does the cure outweigh the perceived threat?

This article is inspired by signs and rules I recently saw at the Virgil dam conservation area and the Niagara Gorge.

Long gone since COVID are the times of park-for-free, use at your own risk, and enjoy the versatility of the landscape days we once enjoyed. Regulation and structure around accessing natural areas has undoubtedly spiked, and it likely here to stay.

Let’s start with the Niagara Gorge trail system. During the lockdown years, where we colour-coded regions of

our province in grey, red and yellow, we negated basic, predictable human behaviour and watched people flock to Niagara for a sense of recreation. Can you blame them?

Enormous numbers of people crowded the gorge, and then, we saw a record spike in the number of dramatic and terrifying rescues down there. This isn’t good at all for the impacted individuals or the brave rescue crews.

Simple math states that a higher influx of crowds will statistically lead to more unfortunate events. So, the powers that be for the gorge cut trees down to block popular pathways down to the water, fined individuals for getting too close to the Niagara River, and erected large signs telling hikers not to trespass closer to the water.

Here is where my theory comes into play. As a child, and up until a few years ago, I swam down in the gorge with my parents and visitors from out of town in calculated, safe enough locations. Dozens upon dozens of times. I shuffled down to the river’s edge before high school classes on early mornings, and watched world-class rapids cruise down the most biodiverse waterway in the nation. It is on this now legally liable riverbank where I caught the largest fish of my life, an enormous muskellunge — an inspiring and influential nature appreciation moment.

“Well, Owen, you’re an outdoorsy guy from an outdoorsy upbringing, so you’re different from others,” might be the response. Not exactly. The key word here is upbringing. I was allowed to have that

upbringing. I was allowed to assess risks, get close to volatile environments in a gradual, repeated, and sensible fashion, all the while garnering the respect of mother nature’s powers, such as intense water, changing weather, and basic navigation skills.

Now, imagine someone who was denied such experiences deciding to have a go at the same experience?

Without having been permitted to explore these boundaries, there is no way I would be able to do what I do today. I wish those younger than me grew up in a similar time, but that is not the case.

Does a hockey team get better playing against breezy teams, or, a healthy challenging team? Which scenario allows the team to evolve and become smarter with the objective at hand? Would a cod-dled team be at risk of being naive and getting themselves into trouble compared to a humbly experienced team? We all know the answer.

On that note, before I wrap this theory up, let’s zoom in on the Virgil dams and their new signage.

Signs in this exact location now say that fishing is no longer permitted here. Similar signs appear in the gorge. Fishing? What is the point of having an Ontario fishing licence if you can’t fish your own provincial waterways? If it is in the name of safety and protecting others, why hasn’t this been an issue decades prior?

The sign also says that canoeing or kayaking isn’t allowed. I have paddled these waters several times over the years and am still here to write

about the treacherous, violent waters of the Virgil dams. With an admitted sense of sarcasm, over these shallow and borderline stagnant waters, I must professionally ask, why are we further discouraging healthy activities like paddling and nature exposure in an environment that is safer than the Niagara River or Lake Ontario?

I also can’t wait for the next alarming news segment on how much of our young population isn’t active enough and doesn’t spend adequate time outside these days. Welcome to the wall of discouragement.

The most unhealthy thing about the Virgil dams is how they consistently rank the lowest categories of water quality possible, according to the very agency that oversees and regulates them with a conservation authority report card.

My weird theory snowballs and gains momentum when I want to discuss how nature exposure and opportunity lead to environmental respect and appreciation. When we further restrict how people are permitted to access their fresh water, their forests, and their wildlife, we foster a concerning culture of indifference towards our natural world while it continues to get paved over, as we ironically continue to have fruitless meetings about how to combat climate change.

This may sound ruthless, but here is what I propose for areas of perceived natural danger.

Put up a huge sign in the areas of perceived risk. Instead of telling people not to canoe, hike, fish, or simply venture past a certain point, let the sign show how much it will cost them to be rescued. Our es-



Owen Bjorgan and his friend Chapin, holding up a massive musky Bjorgan caught in the gorge, prior to fishing and access regulations. The river legend was released unharmed back into the ecosystem. (Photo supplied)



The new sign at the Virgil dam outlines what is no longer permitted in the conservation area. (Owen Bjorgan)

tranged western world speaks in money, and it will work.

“Persons beyond this sign who are rescued will be fined “x” dollars for their potential rescue.” Make the number large, make it worthwhile, make it blatant. Make it a num-

ber scary enough that people will sincerely assess their experience and abilities before committing to a certain activity, but don’t restrict the grizzled fisherman, the intrepid explorer, or the keen paddler from a love they have always known.

GARY ZALEPA
FOR LORD MAYOR

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Common sense leadership for Niagara-on-the-Lake



NPCA crew back rehabilitating Two Mile Creek

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) crews were back working to rehabilitate the Two Mile Creek Conservation Area in Niagara-on-the-Lake this week.

The restoration efforts follow the 2021 clearing of infected ash trees on both sides of the Butler Street location and this past spring's planting of 5,000 native deciduous and coniferous trees to regenerate the forest.

This week's work involved the installation of cross vanes in the creek to improve the habitat for the numerous fish species that swim there. Cross vanes use natural materials (downed trees and stone) to focus the creek's energy into existing pools within the creek that have started to fill up with sediment.

To prepare to work in the area, NPCA employees constructed a temporary barrier below one side of the footbridge

that crosses the creek. Restoration specialist Stuart McPherson explained that the barrier was there to keep fish from swimming where the crew and contractors were working.

"What we're trying to do is to help the creek by concentrating it," said McPherson, "to help scour out some of the sediment that's been building up in the creek. Erosion happens on the banks, depositing sediment into the creek. That moves down the creek and settles in the lower, cooler pools where fish tend to take refuge on these hotter days."

The sediment typically comes from upstream sources of erosion. The cross vanes are laid in a way that focuses the creek's energy, reducing soil erosion on the banks. The sediment reduction will help provide a better habitat for both fish and insects.

McPherson explained the logs being situated across the creek came from some of the ash trees cut down in the area last year. No new felling of trees occurred this week. At least 15 one-cubic-yard bags of stone sat creekside awaiting their destination in and alongside the water.

"We're trying to direct the water into these pools to scour out the sediment," said McPherson. "Often in creeks you have a ripple-pool sequence. You get a lot of cobbles in there, and right after there's a pool. Some creeks meander and others go up and down, like this one. We're expecting this will make deeper pools."

While The Local was visiting the site, he directed a backhoe driver to adjust the position of the longest log to fine-tune the direction of the flow. The next step was to fasten the logs into place.

"There are three logs that are put together," he explained. "We're going to drill holes and tap through with rebar so it holds in place. This system will eventually rot. But it will help give a bit of a boost to the creek, creating a bit more pressure in

that specific spot. It will generally help the overall creek health."

The cross vanes were to be installed at two locations on the north side of the footbridge, one visible right next to the bridge, the other about 100 metres deeper into the forest. The NPCA says it will monitor those installations and consider more cross vanes in the area if necessary.

A press release from the organization said the timing of the latest work was chosen to take place outside of Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) restrictions to protect native fish populations.

NPCA employees were joined on the site by Ashcon Excavating and Sassafras Farms to complete the project.

This fall, restoration staff will return for additional plantings in the Two-Mile Creek riparian area. These plantings will work to hold the creek banks together, provide habitat and eventually cool the creek.



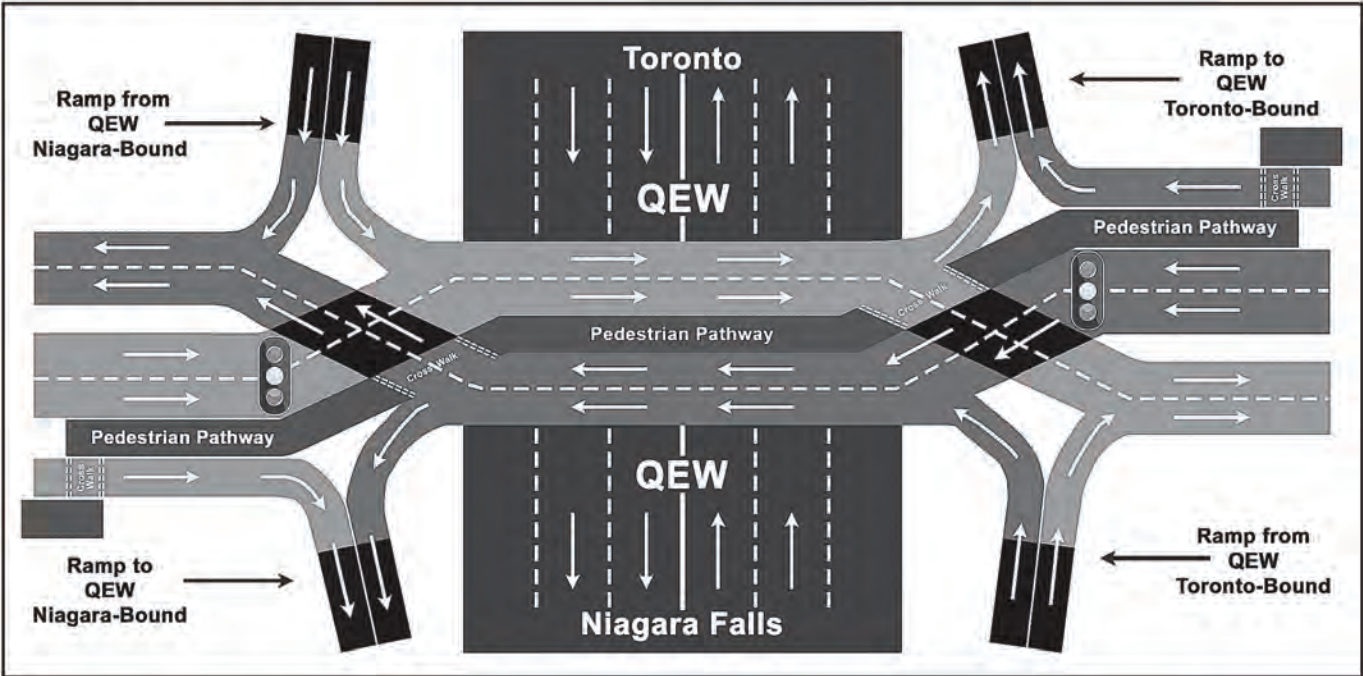
Stuart McPherson, NPCA restoration specialist, lays some logs across the creek. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



With help of NPCA staff, a backhoe driver adjusts the position of a log to better direct water flow.

Notice of Public Education Session

For the QEW/Glendale Avenue Diverging Diamond Interchange, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Regional Municipality of Niagara MTO Contract # 2019-2119



THE PROJECT

Brennan Paving and Construction and their design consultant Morrison Hershfield were retained by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to undertake the detail design and construction of the Diverging Diamond Interchange at the grade separated crossing of the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) and Glendale Avenue in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Diverging Diamond Interchange will be the first of its kind in Ontario. The Diverging Diamond Interchange will provide improved traffic performance compared to the existing interchange design by reducing the number of vehicle conflict points and allowing unrestricted access to the QEW.

BACKGROUND

The interchange, currently under construction, is nearing completion and the project team will host a Public Education Session (PES) prior to opening. This project followed the approved planning process for a Group 'B' project under the MTO Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000) and provided the opportunity for public input throughout the project. A Notice of Study Completion was distributed to stakeholders in January 2021.

PUBLIC EDUCATION SESSION

An in-person PES will be held for this project on September 7, 2022 to provide information on how to navigate a Diverging Diamond Interchange. The PES will follow a "drop-in" format. The first session will occur from 2-4 p.m. and the second session will occur from 5-7 p.m. at Hilton Garden Inn (500 York Rd., Niagara on the Lake). Both sessions will contain identical information. If you are unable to attend either session, background information and the PES materials will be available on the project website at <http://qew-glendale-interchange.ca>.

Following the PES, the DDI interchange will open the week of September 12, 2022. Construction is anticipated to be completed in the summer of 2023. Stay up to date on the project by visiting our website: <http://qew-glendale-interchange.ca>.

COMMENTS

If you have any project related questions or concerns, or wish to be added to the project mailing list, please contact one of the following Team members:

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Contract Services Administrator
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Construction Office, Central
159 Sir William Hearst Avenue, Toronto ON M3M 0B7
tel: 905-634-9302
e-mail: jason.lee@ontario.ca

Comments and information are being collected to assist the MTO in meeting the requirements of the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. All information collected will be subject to the provisions and disclosure requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act R.S.O., 1990, c.F.31*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

Hands-on makery project instruction available at library

Megan Honsberger
NOTL Public Library
Makery facilitator

Writer Jorge Luis Borges once wrote that he imagined “paradise will be a kind of a library,” and here in picturesque Niagara-on-the-Lake this is certainly the case.

From books, to programs, amazing facilities, online and community resources, free WiFi, a community garden and more – there remain few civic institutions quite like a public library.

Yet with our increasingly connected society, there is now also a distinct need for more tech support, education on new technology, and help in creating amazing, one-of-a-kind projects. Indeed, all of these needs are met under the library’s roof at the veritable creative paradise of the Makery.

I’m Megan Honsberger, the Makerspace facilitator at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, and the Makery is our in-house makerspace. Makerspaces, an incredibly recent phenomenon of the mid-aughts, seek to provide community-centred workspaces and access to cutting-edge technological tools in a do-it-yourself, collaborative environment. Globally, many libraries and schools have adapted to this model to offer services beyond ‘just’ books, and we’re happy to be one of them.

Library patrons who would like to learn more about our machines can email me for more information and/or to book a 60 to 90-minute appointment. In these appointments, you can expect hands-on instruction through the process of making a project come to life. We have textile machines (sewing and machine embroidery), a 3D printer, C02 laser, Cricut (computer-controlled cutting machine), Cricut heat press, Cricut mug press, as

well as archival services like VHS to USB/DVD, and a photo digitizer.

All appointments are free, but patrons must supply their own materials. I’m always happy to learn more about a project to help solidify an effective design process and best-recommend any supplies that are needed.

When not in appointments, the rest of my time goes into planning and delivering Makery programming. We have a lot of really wonderful things coming up for the remainder of 2022.

I love to blend science and nature in programs whenever I can for an experience that provides several facets of making and learning. Our Leaf Workshop for kids seven to 12 in the fall will do just that, engaging kids in learning about local leaves, and using them to make art as well as science. Similarly, in December, I’ll be leading a workshop for kids to learn how a C02 laser works while they decorate a puzzle that was cut and made from the machine. For me, it’s vital that kids be as well-versed in making things, using their hands, and identifying the world around them as it is that they are exposed to new technology.

It’s also important to my role that any making be paired with ways to reduce overall waste in the process whenever possible. For our Sustainability Workshop Series this fall, we’re offering two workshops for adults: making reusable container labels with the Cricut and Glowforge (3D laser printer) as well as making beeswax wraps. I’m excited for the beeswax wraps workshop in particular, as it features a local farmstead whose own bees, materials, and experience will be highlighted. Creating local partnerships wherever possible is important, as it serves as yet another way the library

connects with others right in our community.

What is maybe unexpected for a library that I’m stoked to be helping to plan is our programming for teens, where we’ll offer several unique experiences alongside cool projects from our machines that are tailored especially to teens across the region. These events, called Teen Takeovers, will be offered monthly on Thursday evenings. We’ll kick things off on Oct. 20 with an outdoor screening of something spooky, and enjoy s’mores and ghost stories by candlelight (along with pizza and snacks).

Speaking of unexpected services, we’ll be launching our tool lending library in the fall, where library patrons are able to check out various tools to complete projects at home. More details will be available on our website. Some items available include hammers, saws, drills and sockets. More details are available at the library.

We’ll also have a set of Cricut Joys to lend out in the fall, so folks can tackle all sorts of vinyl, fabric, wood, and paper projects in the comfort of their own home. Further in the spirit of DIY, our popular Repair Cafe will be making its return on Saturday, Oct. 1, when customers can bring in broken electronics and items to be serviced by technicians volunteering from our community. We are always looking to recruit new volunteers that are skilled in electronics, soldering, sewing and rewiring, who can help other community members repair household items. Volunteers interested in participating in upcoming Repair Cafe events can forward their contact information to the library at notllibrary@gmail.com.

Outside of all that, this fall will see basic digital literacy group classes for adults and seniors that cov-



Megan Honsberger is the Makerspace facilitator at the library. (Photo supplied)

er smartphones, tablets, using the web and basic photo/video skills with a device.

In addition, I’ll be running a one-off presentation on Navigating Screentime for all members of the family on Sept. 20. These topics are especially dear to me, as they echo findings and research I encountered during my Master’s degree, which looked at how technology has changed the

ways in which we think, interact and behave.

Registration is required for many of our programs, and spaces are limited, so make sure you register if you are planning on attending. More info about this and all of our fall programs can be found on our website.

Finally, but perhaps most relevantly, I’m running our Makery Open House on Wednesday,

Sept. 7 from 5 to 7 p.m. It’s a drop-in event, so no registration is required. We’ll be showcasing some of our machines, providing family-friendly things to tinker and play with, as well as offering a take-home craft and light refreshments. I’m excited for this opportunity to meet and greet the community as we enter a vibrant, plugged-in, magical fall of things Made @ Makery.

Rare hole in one



It was an exciting day, and possibly the shot of a lifetime, when public player Derek McArthur notched a hole in one on the seventh hole of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club last week, a rare feat on a par 4 hole. (Mark Forbes)

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Pathfinders doing a ‘taste test’ on a foraging hike at camp. (Photos supplied)



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NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
best served shared

Megan Gilchrist Special to The Local

As the summer winds down, Guiding in Niagara is getting ready for another year of fun, friendship, and new experiences – and we’re looking for female mentors for the next generation of Sparks, Brownies, and Girl Guides.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, we have about 75 youth members, spread across five branches of Guiding. While we have a fantastic core team of leaders, we are in need of new adult volunteers to help keep our units open and thriving. We provide training and skills development, and no experience is needed – just curiosity, an interest in our community, and a willingness to have fun.

Our youngest members, Sparks, are aged five and six, and meet in Old Town on Monday evenings for one hour. Sparks promise to “Share and Be a Friend,” which really sums up their program well — Sparks is all about making new friends and trying new things. If you love being

silly and staying young at heart, Sparks may be the right fit for you.

Brownies meet on Tuesday evenings in Old Town, and could use a few more hands — the Brownie unit always fills to capacity. Brownies are seven and eight years old, and their motto is to “Lend a Hand.” Their program is all about getting out in the community, making new connections, and discovering ways to make a difference. If you enjoy stories of mythical creatures, are curious, and like a good knock-knock joke, the Brownies would love to welcome you (and they’ll even give you an honorary “Owl” name).

Our third branch, Guides, meets in Old Town on Monday evenings. Guides are aged nine to 11, and their program encourages exploration of both current interests and new skills. Guides do lots of outdoor activities like camping and hiking, but also start to explore their leadership capacity, plan service opportunities in the community,

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Brownies learn about the science of baking at their weekly meeting.

Volunteer leaders needed to help run programs

Continued from page 10

and share their knowledge (of everything from science to s'mores!) with younger branches. If your idea of a great weekend is singing around a fire and roasting marshmallows, Guides could be a great match.

Our oldest two branches, Pathfinders (aged 12 to 14) and Rangers (aged 15 to 17-plus) meet on Monday nights in a variety of locations, ranging from Virgil to Old Town to Stamford (and beyond). While we currently have a full complement of leaders for these

two groups, we are always looking for guest speakers to share their talents, insights, and life experiences, so even if you can't commit to regular meetings, but would be interested in sharing a skill or two, we'd love to have you visit.

Girl Guides of Canada recognizes and values the richness of human diversity in its many forms, and therefore strives to ensure environments where female-identifying youth and women from all walks of life, identities, and lived experiences feel a sense of belonging and can participate fully. We encourage

self-awareness and awareness of others; room for difference; and environments where our members feel safe, respected, supported, and inspired to reach their potential. If you think we sound like the right volunteer fit for you, and you're keen to share your unique talents with our youth, please visit us online at www.girlguides.ca, email 1notlpathfinders@gmail.com, or call Megan Gilchrist, NOTL Community Guider, at 905-329-4983 for more information. We look forward to welcoming you to the Guiding family soon.



Guides attending a LEAP Interprovincial camp meet Olympian Sarah Wells.



Sparks, the youngest Guiding group, explore their community. (Photos supplied)



Rangers Tannin, Annika and Samantha, bronze Trailblazer Award recipients.

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NOTL Rotarians holding Icewine Cocktail Party

Local Staff

The Icewine Cocktail Party, one of the signature fundraisers of the Rotary Club of Niagara-

on-the-Lake, is returning after a two-year absence.

"Gracious hosts Rick and Gianna Dritsacos will welcome guests to their garden



The Icewine Cocktail Party was last held in 2019, welcoming Rotarians and community members for to a major fundraising event. (Photo supplied)

for an evening of one food, wine, cocktails beer and entertainment," says club member Trish Spagnol says, describing an elegant outdoor affair, "after being greeted with campaign and caviar."

"Multiple food stations offer entries, including beef tenderloin, sushi and cheese raclettes, accompanied by donated trays of appetizers and sweets," she adds, to be followed by an ice cream station.

The entertainment will be provided by "the soft sounds of talented local musicians, the Athertones."

This black and white, casual dress event would not be possible without the continued generous support of local winners, restaurants and sponsors,

including lead sponsor Nancy Bailey of Engel & Volkers of Oakville, says Spagnol.

All proceeds will be equally divided between Rotary International's ongoing projects worldwide, and Red Roof Retreat, the local organization that provides programming, including summer camps, for special needs children, young adults and their families. The Rotary Club of NOTL has been a sustainable donor since its founder, Steffanie Bjorgan, established this essential organization in 2006, says Spagnol. The funding raised from the Rotary event will allow for future expansion, including larger accommodations and hopefully offering weekend respite this fall.

Chris Hatch, a relative new-

comer to town and to the Rotary Club, says he joined to meet people, and to find ways to give back to the community he now calls home, "and to have fun."

He's finding his goals have been quickly met, as he helped out with the vaccine clinic held outdoors, planted tulips at Simcoe Park, and recently flipped pancakes on Canada Day.

He's never been to a Rotary's Icewine Cocktail Party, since they were cancelled during the first two years of COVID, but is looking forward to the September event.

"The icewine project tends to work for us — the tickets are usually sold out," he says. "The garden is beautiful, so the venue will be spectacular."

Hatch says he's been im-

pressed with the club since he joined, not just because of the events it hosts, but for the level of community engagement, and the breadth of the fundraising recipients, from international projects to community organizations such as Red Roof Retreat.

And for this particular event, there will be great food, lots of community support, and lots of fun, he says.

The event is Sept. 17, 7 to 9:30 p.m., at the Hiscott House, 78 Prideaux St.

Tickets, at \$150 each including tax, gratuity and a tax receipt of \$50, are limited. For more information or to purchase tickets visit <https://niagaraonthelakerotary.ca/page/icewine-cocktail-party>.

Time left to enjoy museum scavenger hunt

Maria Klassen Special to The Local

If you are looking for something fun to add to your summer list of things to do, there is another week to take part in a Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum scavenger hunt.

The museum is holding a Summer Games Scavenger Hunt, which continues until Aug. 31 — residents still have time to complete it.

You will need to download the GooseChase App on your mobile phone, enter the museum game code BLJW91, and you are set to put your sleuthing skills into motion and hopefully win some prizes.

By participating you will explore new locations, learn some fun history facts, and test your own local knowledge. As this is a Canada Summer Games Scavenger Hunt, it includes some local

sports history.

It is a free app, and the game can be completed without a car, on your own time, walking through the Old Town. Some missions ask you to send in selfies at specific locations, while others ask for answers to questions. Just don't delete the app until the winners are announced at the end of the month.

If the sleuthing bug bites you, you can wander further

afeld for more activities. This scavenger hunt is being hosted by the Museums of Niagara Association. You will need a car to get to the other museums in Niagara Falls, Port Colborne and Lincoln. All games can be found on the same app.

Amy Klassen, director of finance and marketing, says, "This is an easy and fun way for you to get out and about, and to get to know your community."



Shawna Butts and Paige Groot have fun with the scavenger hunt. (Photo supplied)

LABOUR DAY 2022: SOLIDARITY IS THE WAY FORWARD

The past two and a half years have been some of the most challenging times Canadians have faced in a generation and this pandemic has impacted the most vulnerable among us in more ways than we know. The pandemic also showed us how resilient we can be when we all stand together.

It's been a tough time but as a nation we've proven that we're ready to work together for the common good for all.

We must hold onto that solidarity and continue to stand united as we move forward with an ambitious plan for recovery.

Now, here in the Niagara Region we are in the midst of an affordability crisis. We are all worried about the increasing cost of housing, food, medication and transportation.

As we continue to recover from the pandemic and the

economic turmoil it has and is causing, many workers are still just scraping by, struggling to find good jobs. Some have left the job market entirely and this is why we continue to call for a pandemic recovery that is focused on replacing lost jobs with better ones.

Health care workers in the Niagara Region and across Canada have been sounding the alarm on the state of care in Canada for decades. Health care work is vital, but it is often unstable, undervalued and underpaid. Health care services were brought to a breaking point under the strain of the pandemic. Our economy relies heavily on paid and unpaid Health care work, with the burden of Health care often falling to women. In order to achieve full and equal labour-market participation for all, Canada needs a cohesive plan for providing affordable, quality, public childcare, as well as care for the elderly and people living with disabilities. We need a care strategy, backed by significant investment to ensure that Canadians have the world-class care services we all deserve.

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Town waiting for lab results to identify contaminant

Continued from page 1

Wednesday evening, “staff promptly investigated,” contacted Ontario’s Spills Action Centre (SAC), and took containment measures, “as is the protocol in these situations.”

An officer for the Ministry of the Environment provided direction to town staff late Wednesday evening, requesting the SAC contact

the Region of Niagara and direct the region and the town to begin an environmental clean-up.

“The environmental officer from the ministry provides guidance, documents conditions, assesses the environmental and health impacts, provides direction regarding the incident, and ensures the spill event is responded to appropriately,” Cluckie said.

“Town staff, the Region of Niagara and an environmental consultant responded to this direction as effectively and efficiently as possible, and began the necessary actions to clean up the site.” The ministry has been kept apprised of actions taken, she said.

“While the spill’s cause and source have not yet been definitively determined, lab analysis is currently being completed. Once the analysis is complete and the substance is known, additional steps will be determined, and more information will be provided to council and the public.”

The town “is doing everything practicable to address the concern and prevent and eliminate any negative effects from the spill,” Cluckie said.

“While I can certainly appreciate the many questions that result from a situation such as this one, unfortunately, there is not much more I am able to share at this time. Once the lab analysis is back, we will know more and can confirm some of the details.”

Cluckie explained the town is obligated to follow the direction of the ministry. “The town is responsible for ensuring adequate clean-up

and restoration of the site. Staff is taking this matter very seriously and is providing great attention to this matter to ensure the town’s responsibility is fulfilled.”

The provincial officer did not express concern “for imminent human or wildlife safety,” otherwise residents would have been told, she said, “and staff will continue to do their due diligence to ensure the health and well-being of those in the vicinity. Maintaining health and safety is of utmost importance to staff.”

The town anticipates the lab analysis will be complete and provided later this week, said Cluckie.



Black water was flowing through the drainage ditch, with nearby residents not knowing what was dumped, worried about wildlife and pets.



A berm across the ditch was created to stop the flow of water.



Large dumpsters were brought in, along with pumper trucks to clear out whatever is in the ditch. (Photos supplied)

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'Cheerleader for NOTL' ready to serve community

Continued from page 2

sign committee for her first run at municipal council.

And she loves knocking on doors, meeting new people and listening to their stories, she says.

Since Kaiser served three terms at the NOTL council table, from 2003 to 2014, before deciding not to seek another term so she could devote more time to family and career, her desire "to be of service to my community" hasn't changed, she says. "This seems like a good way to continue to serve and contribute, and still have a manageable workload balance. It might be just the right thing for me, with my municipal

experience and the history of the past that I can bring to the table."

Kaiser says she's always tried to be "collaborative and transparent," and those are skillsets that are needed at the region, where you are working with others.

It is also a position where the elected regional representative has to work with the lord mayor, who is automatically appointed to regional council. "We have three great candidates, and I've started to have conversations with all of them," she says, sure she can work with whomever is elected.

She feels the opportunity to run for regional council has presented itself at just the right time.

"It feels like a door has opened. The paths we take aren't always what we planned. Nobody likes to lose," she says, referring to her federal election campaigns. "Maybe this is where I'm supposed to be."

Her experience at the municipal council table, she says, will allow her to contribute in a meaningful way at the region,

while following her guiding principals, built on the pillars of sustainability, economic prosperity, and environmental protection and social inclusion.

Strategic planning is something she's good at, and will help with her goal of building a sustainable economy for NOTL and the region.

Kaiser currently serves as

chairperson of Ontario Craft Wineries Sustainable Winemaking Certification Program. Her daughter, Madison Lepp, whose thesis proposal for her Brock University Masters of Sustainability is on Building Climate Change Resilience and Climate Equity in Canadian Municipalities, has long been Kaiser's inspiration for making environmental issues

and climate change a priority.

She's also had lots of experience working around the region, with wineries and agriculture, she says.

"And I've always been a cheerleader for Niagara-on-the-Lake. I love to contribute and to be involved. It sounds so corny, but I want to be working for a better future."



Andrea Kaiser says her 11 years of municipal experience will help her on regional council. (Photo supplied)

'Feedback is residents are ready for change'

Continued from page 2

cessful they won't follow you, they'll choose to go somewhere else."

In the last eight years, Goettler says he has built the largest privately-held heating and air conditioning business in the country, with more than 1,000 employees, who seem quite happy to be there. "We have no problem attracting people and retaining them. It's amazing when people are accomplishing things and they know it, they're accomplishing it as a team, it's not like working. It's fun to be working at something you feel good about. If it's not working, if you're not careful, you disengage people, and they can't wait to get home at the end of the day."

The town, he says, appears dangerously close to that, or at least that's what he's hearing.

"The feedback I'm getting is

we need a change."

Four years ago he was disturbed by the way things were going in town, and he hoped for change with the 2018 election. Now he's hopeful the next election brings change, and an opportunity to get the finances of the town back under control.

Over the past year, he says, several people have encouraged him to run, and he has said "it's not going to happen." But that has changed. "When I saw there were only two candidates for mayor, I decided if I don't stand up and be counted, I have no right to criticize."

One of the solutions to the town's financial problems, he says, is to increase revenue that stays in town, without a high percentage going to the region. That leads him to tourism, "taking it to the step," without adding to the traffic and parking issues.

One of his thoughts of increasing revenue is building agri-tourism on local farms, maybe by assisting the farming community over time to become a destination through offering Michelin-star farm-to-table meals, that would keep young people in town, giving them jobs and building a sustainable farming community.

A few large parking areas, with hop-on hop-off shuttles, is working in the U.S. and elsewhere, "and they're beautiful."

They could be offered free, or at a reasonable price that would increase parking revenue, he says, adding it's not going to happen overnight but is something that could be built up over time. "Why wouldn't we do that to help ourselves?"

His other issue is the other communities, having plans for Virgil, Queenston, St. Davids and Glendale. "We can't just

dump everything we don't want in Glendale. And why can't we have contextual zoning so houses have a commonality, to return to the quaintness of NOTL?"

He is also concerned about young people in town. Parents of the more established families are very concerned about losing their kids to Toronto or Hamilton, where they can find jobs, he says. "If they can't find jobs, if they can't live here affordably, we're driving them out."

Goettler says he fears the direction the town is going is not looking to the future. "It's muddling with the present, and it's not working."

"I don't have all the solutions," he adds, although building agri-tourism could be one, "but people are having families, and they want them to survive and thrive. It's our job to make sure we're providing for them."

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Healthcare, long-term care priorities region can help fix

Continued from page 3

a lot in common, says Roberts. They both require a belief in the importance of public service, and a desire to help the commu-

nity. Retired from the church, although with a few projects he is still working on, Roberts says it's a good time to return to his love of politics, joking, at the age of 68, about choosing to use the "sage

wisdom of my later years" to contribute in a meaningful way. There are young voices running for council, he adds, and they are important, but there are contributions to be made "at every age."

Roberts is married to Eileen Turner, who has lived in Virgil for 12 years, and together, he says, "we have six adult children and seven grandchildren, whose future in a better world we work and pray for every day."

He says he chose regional council, having followed with interest the work and contributions of both Gary Burroughs as regional chair and Gary Zalepa as regional councillor. "I learned how essential it is to have a strong voice at the regional council table and to advance the best interests of NOTL."

He believes in the adage 'all politics is local,' he says, and also has experience in regional planning and provincial levels, so will draw on that to better serve residents in Old Town, Queenston, Virgil and Niagara-on-the-Green, and everyone in between.

With a background in improving health care, Roberts says there is work that can be done at the regional level to improve local

access to healthcare.

Not just physical and mental health, he adds, but economic, environmental, cultural and even spiritual health — how people deal with their lives in terms of meaning and values are all part of healthy communities, he says.

"Building on the many assets we have in NOTL and the Niagara region, and working with the wide-ranging diversity and knowledge of constituents, I plan to work collaboratively to maximize the advantages we have in improving the health and well-being of all residents of NOTL."

From his extensive knowledge and experience of healthcare systems, he says, he also intends to devote special attention to improving access to the advances in acute, long-term and home care.

Roberts says he's looking forward to knocking on doors — he calls his passion for meeting and listening to people insatiable, and is anxious to hear what residents have to say.

In the end, come election day, he hopes for a good voter turnout, showing that NOTL residents have some interest in the future of their community.

He can be reached at 905-371-NOTL (6685), email vot@williamroberts.ca or visit williamroberts.ca or visit



William Roberts, shown with his grandson Atli, and his wife Eileen pray for a better future for all of their children and grandchildren. He believes he can help build a better future on regional council. (Photo supplied)

Balancing tourism, residents' needs required

Continued from page 3

kids, and at growing up here and the things I enjoyed as a kid, and how the town has evolved. I want to make sure, if the opportunity is there, that I can be an advocate of others in similar situations, and make sure we strike that balance."

Ruller says his senior management role with the town has given him a good understanding of town staff and the demands they face, while also allowing him to build a relationship with council, with whom he worked on several projects to move the fire department forward. "I had to develop an understanding of municipal governance in order to be effective in my role," he says, "and I have a tremendous amount of respect for the current representatives, and the time and commitment that's involved."

He sees the huge commitment to the community, and also how rewarding it is, he says, noting the similarities to being part of the team of a community-focused volunteer fire department — he is still a volunteer at the Old Town station.

"They're doing it because

they enjoy being part of a team that's contributing to the community and making a difference," he says, similar to council, working with staff, and collaborating as a group.

He is looking at the opportunity to serve on council not as being issue-driven, but to round out the make-up of it representing young families, while developing collaborative and constructive relationships to protect the interest of all residents.

"I'm strategic-minded, disciplined, and have taken the approach of being community-focused while also data-driven," he says. He's hoping to use those skills "that were relatively successful in the role of fire chef to being politically successful" in a role at the council table.

Ruller speaks of his father, who grew up on York Road in Queenston before emigrating to New Zealand, meeting Ruller's mother, and then returning to Virgil to raise their young family. "I have a lot of great memories of growing up here," he says, and he enjoys sharing them with his kids. He lost his father earlier this

year, when the two of them were on a road trip to the U.S., and that loss has made him reflect on what is valuable in life, including the memories he is making with his kids. "I want to help ensure my kids have the same great memories I had growing up," and that means making sure there are parks and other amenities, as well as recreational opportunities, for young families, young adults, those mid-career or retired, and that the town is "adequately meeting all those needs," as well as the needs of tourism — that's the important balance, he says — over-tourism can have a direct impact on families, including housing affordability. "I realize it's all interconnected. We have to look at what we're doing, why we're doing it and the impact on our kids."

His decision to run for council has sparked a lot of good discussions with his children about what it means, what it does, and why he wants to be part of it, he adds. "Regardless of whether I'm successful or not, it's already been a great lesson about the municipality."

Transparency, accountability, better communication needed

Continued from page 3

io's Award for Heritage Conservation for the Voices of Freedom Interactive Park.

Her depth of understanding the history of NOTL, and the need for preserving it into the future, helps give a different perspective to other issues, such

as the importance of diverse economic growth, active communications, protecting living heritage as well as building and land heritage, the importance of development charges as revenue, and good community planning.

The region and regional councillors have to work very closely with town representatives

at all levels, she says. "That's the kind of synergy that will make the region work."

"It's important to have one voice," she adds, with the regional councillor elected to represent NOTL able to work well with the Lord Mayor.

"One loud voice, loud and fearless."

Reid would bring 'different perspective to municipal finances

Continued from page 3

also worked at Sunnybrook Farms, Marynissen Estate Winery, and in recent years has been the wine-maker at Joseph's Estate Wines.

In 2015 Reid received the town's volunteer award for working with youth. She has been a member of the Lions Club of Niagara for almost 20 years, and helps out regularly at the St. Davids Lions Club, she says.

She has received the Lions' Melvin Jones Award and the In-

ternational Presidents Award for her work with youth across the province.

Reid says she has been fortunate in being able to use her leadership abilities through Lions, having trained in Chicago at the Senior Lions Leadership Institute and also the Faculty Development Institute in Salt Lake City — only 30 Lions across North America are selected annually, she says.

She was also included in the Millennium Edition of the Who's

Who of Canadian Women, for being one of the few women winemakers in Canada in 1999.

Reid has served on the town's agriculture committee and safety committee, enjoying both, and is now a member of the Queenston Residents Association — she says she enjoys spending her time helping her community. "I like living in Queenston, helping the Lions of Niagara and St. Davids, serving as president of my own club and living in the most beautiful wine region of the world," she says.

She is also the current chair for Sight Preservation in Lions, with the main goal of recycling old eyeglasses.

Reid says she is concerned about local healthcare, and is anxious to see the town successful in the effort to have another nurse practitioner. "Healthcare is an issue, and it becomes even more important as people get older," she says.

Living in Queenston, and as a member of the QRA, she is looking at the lack of secondary

plans to guide development, but not just in Queenston — St. Davids has the same issue, and residents of both communities are concerned, nervous about development and she believes feeling underrepresented on council.

"I really want to be the voice of this community, especially the voice for the little guy," she says, "and the voice for agriculture and the villages, which people believe aren't treated as if they are part of NOTL. I hear that at Lions meetings for both clubs."



Katherine Reid wants to help business and agriculture prosper. (Photo supplied)

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Local brothers ready to release new rap album

Mike Balsom
The Local

Hip hop artists 80 Empire, otherwise known as Niagara-on-the-Lake brothers Adrian and Lucas Rezza, release their new album *Intermission* to streaming platforms this Friday. It's a follow-up to 2021's *Anthems & Icons* release.

"We really went at it for that one," Adrian says about last year's collection. "But *Intermission*, this one's a bit therapeutic. We did this one

much more quickly, we don't have a lot of featured artists on it, no real huge, big names. It was nice to get some young up-and-coming artists like Nejma Nefertiti."

To date, four tracks from the album have found their way to Spotify and Apple Music, in an attempt to build a buzz for the full album, which the Rezzas say is a return to their roots as young rappers living north of Toronto. That's clear from the image on the album cover, a vintage photo of the brothers as teens in their

baggy jeans, Adrian scratching a record on the family's turntable.

First came *Business* in May, followed by *Paintings*, a song whose video was partially shot in local visual artist Filomena Pisano's Virgil art studio. Pisano makes a cameo in that video.

Next came *GBS*, featuring 17-year-old Coney Island, New York rapper Lil Dee. That single, with its turntable scratches and the 1980s-style rapping from their guest, is a true throwback to the legends of rap such as Kool Moe Dee.



Lucas and Adrian Rezza, 80 Empire, in their home studio. (Mike Balsom)




Adrian and Lucas Rezza, release their new album *Intermission* this Friday night.




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Just two weeks ago 80 Empire dropped *Somedays*, with a guest rap from Buffalo female rapper 7xvethegenius. The track has been featured on US Apple Music's Best New Songs and BARS playlists, as well as Spotify's Beats and Rhymes playlists.

The brothers are expecting more adds when the other four songs on the collection come out Friday. The Local had a sneak peek listen to the full album this week.

Dear Younger Me is a nostalgic reassurance to their past selves that everything in life is going to be okay.

"I actually rap on the second verse for about eight bars," Lucas laughs. He's usually the beatmaster and producer on their music, while Adrian handles the singing and rapping. "Adrian brought me out of rap retirement for the first time in 21 years."

The high notes reached by Adrian on the opening part of the song are some of the best work he's ever done. It's probably the most soulful 80 Empire track ever, with a sound somewhat reminiscent of early 2000s Las Vegas rapper Ne-Yo.

A listening session with the brothers is always amazing. At times they talk over each other, at others they finish each other's sentences. Both bilingual (Italian and

English), they also uncannily mimic accents and famous actors in conversation with great precision. Over cappuccinos and scones from Willow Cakes and Pastries, they unveil the rest of the new release.

The cinematic Rap Pistolero could work on the soundtrack to a modern western or an episode of television show *Breaking Bad*. Adrian says the title refers to the pair being "lyrical gunslingers."

"We took kind of a Latin folk song as our inspiration," Adrian says. "It sounds very Buena Vista Social Club, but with rap over it. I even rap in Spanish over it."

Cuban-born Toronto-based trumpeter Alexis Baro is featured on *Rap Pistoleros*, adding a mariachi feel to the song and taking an expert, atmospheric solo to close out the final two minutes.

"We mixed an instrumental of that one," adds Lucas. "I actually have an instrumental version of this whole project. We want to drop it as a full album just before our next one."

Despite its ominous title, *Prepare to Die* is actually based on a line from the film *The Princess Bride*. Jamaican rapper Nadirah X lends her

patois to a couple of verses, giving the song a bit of a reggae/dancehall feel.

Finally, *Live My Life*, weaves Adrian's clever pop culture references into another reflective song, this one about being true to yourself, whether or not it wins you friends in the end. Another blazing falsetto from Adrian, and brilliant production from Lucas, make this a potential hit.

Though *Intermission* comes out Friday, the brothers are already more than halfway finished with their follow-up collection, to come out in 2023. Called *Welcome to the Falls*, the Rezzas call it an homage to Niagara.

"This album is really a lot of fun," says Lucas, who calls himself a NOTaLian.

"It's very Italian," adds Adrian. "We even took an old tape of our Nonno (grandfather) and put it into one song. He jumped into the studio back in 2002 and laid down some vocals for us that we never got to use."

That song is called *Take the Cannoli*, a famous line from *The Godfather*. Another song, called *Paul G*, is a tribute to the recently departed New

York actor Tony Sirico, who played Paulie Walnuts on *The Sopranos*.

Lucas says his daughter Vanessa loves the upbeat *Take That*, and requests it in the car as her hype song before soccer games.

Good Morning references Niagara Falls restaurant Casa Mia and the Niagara Escarpment and features a cameo from American actor Jennifer Esposito. *The Dons* refers to the brothers' first band name, the Rezzadons. Lucas rapping on the coda sounds like Wolfman Jack crossed with Prince, and makes Lucas shake his head in wonder and awe, even though he's surely heard it numerous times.

The session wraps up shortly after Adrian receives a call from his mother. Before hanging up the phone he makes sure to tell her he loves her.

After listening to the powerful bluster of both *Intermission* and the future release *Welcome to the Falls*, it's a quick reminder that the hip hop veterans, as authentic and revered amongst some of the finest in that genre as they are, are also soccer coaches and family men at heart.

NOTaLians, indeed.

Popular disc golf almost here



Disc golf should be opening soon at the community centre. NOTL Rotarians and some family members were on-site Tuesday helping to get it set up, with signage yet to arrive. They are suggesting it might be a couple of weeks before it's ready for participants to discover how much fun this rapidly growing sport can be. (Photo supplied)

NIAGARA 2022 CANADA SUMMER GAMES

Summer games sailors, volunteers impressive

Mike Balsom
The Local

As impressed as David Sprague, sport lead for sailing at the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games, was with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club's facilities, he was even more so by the volunteers and the competitors.

Sprague, who sailed for Manitoba at the inaugural 1969 Canada Summer Games in Nova Scotia, said the members of the local club, the Dalhousie Yacht Club of St. Catharines and the non-sailor volunteers involved went above and beyond in their host duties.

"They did a fantastic job," said the chief technical officer for five Pan Am Games and race officer at the Beijing Olympics and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. "I have not seen the pulling together of people like this anywhere else. These people put their hearts into it."

As with any sailing regatta the weather was a factor last week during the Games. Competitors patiently awaited proper racing conditions on three of the five days of the regatta.

"It's a normal day at the office," Sprague told The Local. "The challenge that you get is you constantly deal with the heat, no wind on shore, the forecasts. When you look at the forecasts, you have to remember you're at a new venue you don't know. We had winds between four to six knots, and I don't think I have ever done a four- to five-day regatta without at least one 10 to 15 knot day."

Those delays and general conditions forced organizers to make changes on the go. The usual course includes two upwind and two downwind lengths followed by a short hitch to the finish. On some of last week's races sailors did not have the chance to complete a full course.

"It didn't change the end results significantly," Sprague explained, "but it makes for a tactically and strategically different race. Sailing is different from other sports, as it is designed to get 'x' number of faces over 'x' number of conditions to get the best overall individual. The skill sets have to be well-rounded."

On Friday, the 10 a.m. start time was repeatedly pushed back. Competitors, who were on site preparing their vessels at least an hour prior, were milling about, socializing, trading provincial pins, and signing banners that would be carried in Sunday's closing ceremony. Some were helping their teammates cool down with squirt guns.

It didn't seem to bother the competitors. Haley Poirier of Team Alberta was just thrilled to be there with the other sailors. The 20-year-old Dalhousie University student took it all in stride, even as the horn blew and the AP flag on shore was

raised, signalling at least a three-hour delay.

"I try to keep a positive spirit, to keep myself going," Poirier smiled. "I can get distracted and bored, so you have to keep yourself pumped for when you finally get on the water. I'm making so many new friends. I've seen some of them at other events, but here we're really having a lot of fun together."

With a long wait confirmed, the tents cleared almost completely of competitors and coaches, who stretched their legs for a walk through town on the hot morning. Joan and Morris Markentin, parents of Team Saskatchewan's Erika and Elisa, weren't too upset with the wait. The couple, who were staying in a bed and breakfast in town, were looking forward to sampling some ice cream on Queen Street.

Further delays ensued, and conditions were not favourable for racing until nearly 3:30 p.m.

"We actually had the best sail of the regatta that afternoon," claimed Sprague. "We ended up getting a reasonable wind that died. We ended up shortening the last race for one of the fleets just two lengths before they would have normally finished."

With all those delays, Sprague had a chance to see how the athletes comported themselves on shore.

"They were great kids," Sprague said. "The attitude, the fortitude, especially with the pairs. I don't think I saw a single grumpy competitor for the whole week. It really was a great group to run races for."

"I was really impressed," he continued, "with the size and the quality of the teams. And the coaches were excellent. We had some technical issues during the competition, and they were very reasonable and accommodating on all of them."

When all was said and done,

Ontario and Nova Scotia led the way with four medals each.

Toronto's Siobhan MacDonald followed up a bronze from a previous Canada Summer Games with a gold medal finish in the 2.4 metre parasailing event, while Ford Amery and Tom Desroches paired up for silver in the male double-handed 29er race. Bronze medals were also earned for the team in both male and female single laser events.

British Columbia earned three gold medals at the regatta, taking both male and female double-handed 29er, as well as the female single laser races.

Saskatchewan earned a silver and bronze, both in parasailing, while Alberta's James Fair, 18, took gold in the male single-handed laser competition, and Bianca MacHabee and Julia Capolicchio captured Team Quebec's sole sailing bronze medal in the female double-handed 29er.



There were long delays due to wind conditions, but competitors took it well, official says. (Jim Schacht)



Races had to be changed to accommodate the wind, and some sailors did not have the chance to complete the full course, but it didn't affect the results significantly. (Jim Schacht)



Athletes waiting for races to begin sign a banner on shore. (Mike Balsom)

Local WORSHIP

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Sunday, August 28th

9:45 a.m.

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10:00 a.m.

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Online & In-Person

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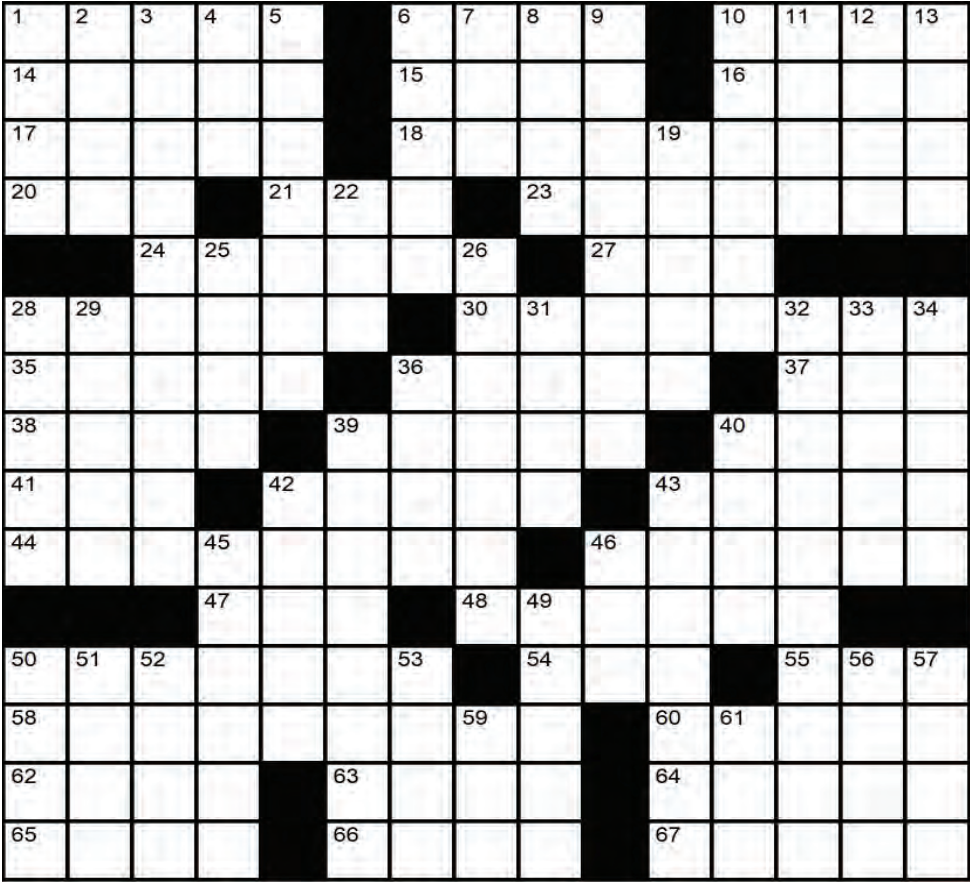
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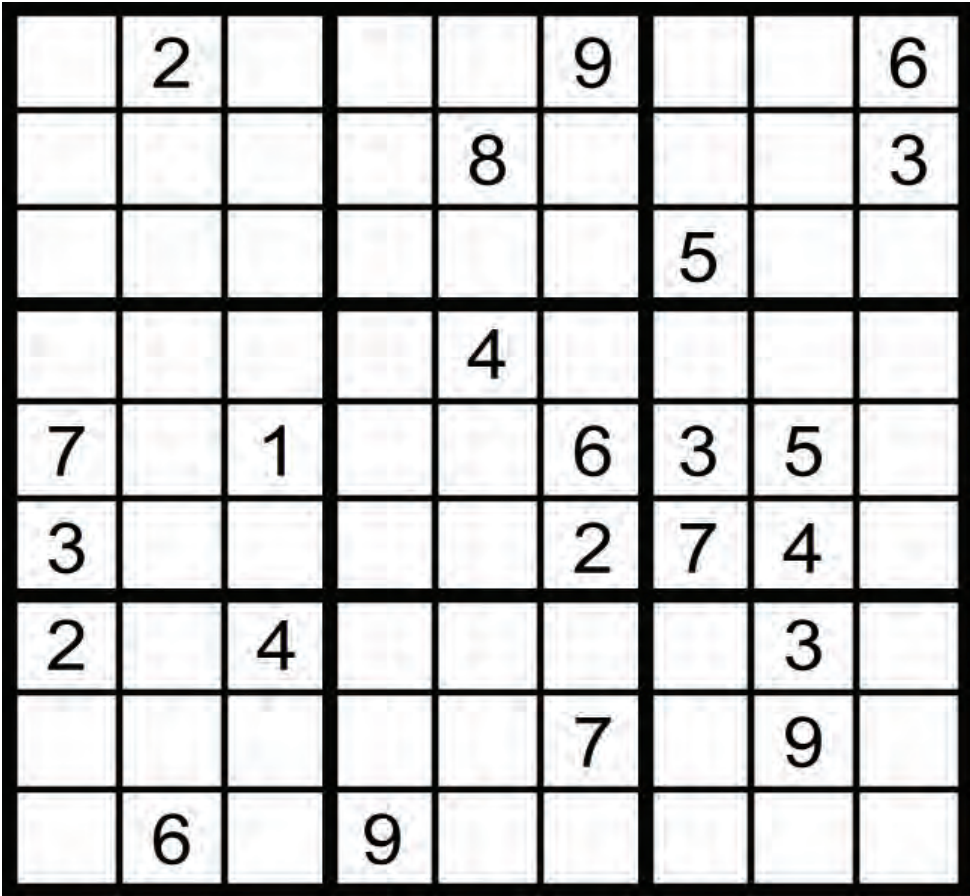


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- Across:
- 1 Grouches
 - 6 Female supporters
 - 10 Flat-topped hill
 - 14 Misbehave
 - 15 Arizona city on the Colorado
 - 16 In addition
 - 17 Latin American dance
 - 18 Side
 - 19 --- Christian Andersen
 - 20 Sharp flavor
 - 22 Note hastily
 - 24 34th President
 - 25 Moonshot program
 - 28 Sound of a lion
 - 29 Louse egg
 - 30 Washed out
 - 31 Watch --- step!
 - 33 Not odd
 - 35 Free
 - 36 Settlement
 - 37 Nudge repeatedly
 - 38 Aloof
 - 40 Conductive elements
 - 43 Hoppy brew
 - 44 Conforms
 - 45 Blockhead
 - 47 Pirate's plunder
 - 49 Mischievous
 - 50 Solitary
 - 51 "L" operator
- Down:
- 1 Coverts rotary motion into linear motion
 - 2 Appliance and electronics maker
 - 3 Bill dispenser
 - 4 Hollow gas globule
 - 5 Mar
 - 6 Unit of computer memory
 - 7 Regret
 - 8 Key with three sharps
 - 9 Pacific country
 - 10 Speed measure
 - 11 Seinfeld cohort --- Benes
 - 12 Clicked
 - 13 Valuable possession
- Across:
- 52 Unpleasant to look at
 - 54 Conjured up
 - 56 Attila, e.g.
 - 57 Aught
 - 58 Political top dog (Abbr.)
 - 59 Brief swim
 - 61 It's worth ---!
 - 63 Start playing tennis
 - 67 Skin
 - 68 Film genre
 - 69 Flowing and ebbing
 - 70 Roman wear
 - 71 Large and scholarly book
 - 72 Heap
- Down:
- 21 Prius maker
 - 23 Choice morsels
 - 25 Interest charge
 - 26 Two identical things
 - 27 Shoppe adjective
 - 28 Manage
 - 32 Be in debt
 - 34 Old kind of computer monitor
 - 36 Fighter ace
 - 37 Lower
 - 39 "Rosemary's Baby" actress --- Farrow
 - 40 Provides input for an amp.
 - 41 Observe
 - 42 Levelheaded
 - 44 Cook in hot oil
 - 46 Central bank
 - 47 Artist's workshop
 - 48 Diminishing
 - 49 Extremely
 - 50 Snap
 - 51 Map
 - 53 Enormous
 - 55 Kevlar garments
 - 58 Funeral woodpile
 - 60 Electronic helper just for you
 - 62 Border
 - 64 Old food label letters
 - 65 Carpet cleaner (Abbr.)
 - 66 Moose



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Down: 1 Cam, 2 R C A, 3 A T
70 Toga, 71 Tome, 72 Stack.
67 Rind, 68 Noit, 69 Tidal,
59 A dip, 61 A try, 63 Serve,
56 Hun, 57 Nil, 58 Pres,
51 C T A, 52 Ugly, 54 Evoked,
47 Swag, 49 Arch, 50 Lone,
43 I P A, 44 Fits, 45 Oaf,
37 Nag, 38 Remote, 40 Metals,
33 Even, 35 Rid, 36 Town,
29 Nit, 30 Pale, 31 Your,
24 Ike, 25 Apollo, 28 Roar,
19 Hans, 20 Bite, 22 Jot,
16 Plus, 17 Mambo, 18 Team,
10 Mesa, 14 Act up, 15 Yuma,
1 Crabs, 6 Bras,
Across: 1 Crabs, 6 Bras,

Sudoku solution from August 17, 2022

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

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LocalSPORTS

Virgil's Dave Brown helping NOTL minor hockey

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Ontario Hockey League's Erie Otters are coming to town for a pre-season game at the Meridian Credit Union Arena. There's probably no one more excited about the Sept. 9 tilt versus the Niagara Ice Dogs than local resident Dave Brown.

The hockey lifer, whose home backs onto the Virgil Sports Park, is heading into his 12th year working for the Otters, his third holding down the dual role of general manager and vice-president of hockey operations after signing a contract extension in July of 2020.

After being involved in minor hockey as a coach, Brown began a career in the office when he was hired as general manager by the Ontario Provincial Junior Hockey League's (now the OJHL) Brampton Capitals owner Mike Spadacini in 1999.

"I'd been pretty successful at the minor hockey level," says the Toronto native. "I had been helping Mike as an assistant coach when he gave me the promotion. He told me to call the position whatever I wanted as long as I got the job done. We won two championships in three years, and lost the one in the conference final in double overtime of game seven."

His record in Brampton led to him being hired away in 2002-2003 by the OPJHL's Milton Merchants. After a successful first season there, owner Mario Forgione, who had bought the OHL's Mississauga Ice Dogs, promoted Brown to assistant general manager of that team the next year.

Brown spent two years as an assistant in Mississauga before earning the top role in the organization, which he continued to hold when the team made its way to Niagara after it was sold to Brian and Denise Burke in 2007.

"Some of the players we had there in my first few years," recalls Brown of his three seasons in Niagara, "Alex Pietrangelo, Alex Friesen, Freddy and Dougie Hamilton, Ryan Strome, were all players I brought in. The first couple of years, starting up an organization from scratch, they were really good years."

His wife had family in the Niagara region, so the Browns, including twins McKenzie and Mitchell,

now 21, and Logan, now 19, made the move to Virgil.

Following two losing seasons and being bounced in the first round of the 2009-2010 OHL playoffs by the Ottawa 67's in five games, Burke fired his GM.

"I had never been fired before," Brown says today. "I was shocked. I'm still a bit bitter. But things happen for a reason, I guess."

After a year out of the league, Sherry Bassin, who had bought the Niagara Falls Thunder and moved the team to Erie in 1996, came calling. Brown held the position of assistant director of hockey operations for three years, and finally took the reins as general manager for the Otters in the 2015-2016 season.

Today, the team is owned by former Toronto broadcasting mogul Jim Waters, who had major success in radio with CHUM and in television with CITY-TV. Brown says Waters is absolutely the best owner in all of sports.

It's a bit of a tradition for most OHL teams to schedule offsite exhibition games in the pre-season to reach out to local minor hockey communities and charities. The Otters would usually partner with the London Knights, playing a game at that team's home arena, Budweiser Gardens, and another in a smaller community near the city.

But when the Burkes sold the Ice Dogs to a group led by a Brantford business owner Darren DeDobbelaer, Brown approached the new owner with a proposal to play a pair of exhibition games with his old team, including one in what he refers to as his "real hometown."

"My one best move was deciding to live in Niagara-on-the-Lake," says the 52-year-old. "My kids were young when we came here. They all played sports here, too. This has been a great place to raise them."

When he approached current NOTL Minor Hockey president Pete Flynn and board member Trevor Falk with the idea, the entire organization was elated with Brown's idea of giving back to the community he loves so much.

"What better way to give back to minor hockey than to play a game here," says Brown. "Minor hockey groups are always looking for ways to make money, and where would you rather play a September hockey game than in

Niagara?"

Early in his time with the Otters, he tried renting an apartment in Erie and dividing his time between there and Virgil, but says that quickly turned out to be something he didn't want to continue. A lot of his work can be done remotely these days, and with the majority of OHL players continuing to come from Ontario, he needs to be in this province rather than Pennsylvania most of the time.

Brown and the Otters also give back to Niagara through a relationship the club has developed with Brock University's sport management program. Since the Toronto Maple Leafs hired Brock grad Kyle Dubas as its general manager, the Brock program has become known as a gold standard in the hockey world.

The Otters' first Brock intern was a Winnipeg-born student named Scott Grieve.

"We got him a work visa so he could come and work with us on a full time basis," remembers Brown. "We financially treated him like a player. In his first year he learned a lot and was willing to do what we wanted. We kept him on, and took more Brock interns after that."

Today, Grieve holds two titles Brown himself once held in his tenure with the Otters: assistant GM and director of hockey operations. And Brown's fifth Brock intern was someone Brown knows even better - his son Mitchell.

Officially listed on the team's website as the team's South Central Triple-A Hockey League scout, Mitchell is now working full time with the Otters, taking on the role of video coach while also helping with sales and arranging team services such as travel.

"It's important in this business to stay current," he says. "You have to allow these young guys to make you smarter and wiser. You have to stay up to date with technologies, and that's part of what these guys bring. I like to delegate, and I'm also going to be working with Hockey Canada's Under-17 team moving forward, and you can't do that unless you have a good team behind you."

"Working with some of the best players in the world is something I'm really proud of," he says of the national team appointment. "I am pretty

elated to be a part of the program, honoured that they thought I could help. I have high expectations for my team when it comes to character and how they represent the Erie Otters. I'll carry that theme with me to Hockey Canada."

Brown's exacting standards have been reflected upon the likes of Conor McDavie, Adam Pelech, Alex DeBrincat and other former Otters drafted to the NHL during his tenure in Erie. "We've had so many great players come through our program here," he says.

Great players such as their number two and three scorers, Elias Cohen and Christian Kyrou, should be back with the team this year and may be making the trip for the game against the Ice Dogs. Local hockey fans will have a chance to catch some of the NHL's future stars on both teams right in their hometown.

Phil Leboudec, NOTL Minor Hockey's local league convenor, says about 25 per cent of the 800 tickets available for the

game have been sold. He adds that minor hockey will also reap the proceeds of the concessions stand sales during the game, and they are working on some additional fundraising options. They are hoping

to have some mini games with local players between periods, as well.

Tickets for the Sept. 9 game are available for \$10 each at Phil's Independent Grocer during normal hours of operation.



Dave Brown (Photo supplied)

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NIAGARA 2022 CANADA SUMMER GAMES

NOTL's Kai Bartel helps team win gold

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Kai Bartel is moving from one potential once-in-a-lifetime experience to another this week. Just two days after winning gold in the men's eight rowing event at last week's Canada Summer Games, the Eden High School grad jumped into a car Tuesday with his father Paul to cross into the U.S. They are on their way to the west coast where Kai will be heading back to the University of Victoria for his second year studying commerce.

"We're crossing over in Sarnia, I think," the 19-year old told The Local. "We're going through Chicago and Minnesota and Dakota. We're going to stop at Mount Rushmore, Montana and Seattle before heading to Victoria."

Bartel was still buzzing in the aftermath of his crew's Sunday win over B.C. in the final race. Team Ontario crossed the finish line on the Henley course just 0.42 seconds ahead of B.C. to capture the gold.

Last Wednesday, Bartel's crew went up against Saskatchewan and Quebec in a three-boat heat, finishing in a blazing 5:57.89, almost a full 25 seconds ahead of the second place boat.

"Our coach (Grant Boyd) did not want us to let off the gas



Kai Bartel (left) with teammate Shane Keagan of Fonthill were happy with their fourth place finish. Bartel and Keagan were both part of the team who won gold in the men's eight rowing event at last week's Canada Summer Games. (Nancy Boese)

at all in our heat," he explained. "We rowed it down as hard as we could. He didn't want us to let anyone get close to us, and he didn't want us to have our first hard race be the final."

Team B.C. actually won their heat with a faster time than Ontario's. Both crews punched their ticket directly to Sunday's final, avoiding having to compete in the repechage as did the other seven teams.

Sunday's final didn't get off to the best start. Team Ontario was trailing the front-running Team BC by about a boat length for the first half of the race.

"We had a race plan going into it," Bartel confessed, "but that fell out the window once we got behind. Our coxey just made calls to push back. We made our

move just after the 1,000-metre mark, just after everyone else finished their moves. That brought us up into close second. Then we turned on the jets and sprinted for the last 500 metres and edged them out for the exciting finish."

Though his experience rowing in the men's pairs race didn't result in a medal, Bartel and teammate Shane Keagan of Fonthill were happy with their fourth place finish in the field of eight boats.

Bartel and Keagan finished second in their heat behind B.C. on Wednesday morning, forcing them into the repechage later that afternoon. Another second place standing in that race allowed them to avoid being relegated to the two-boat con-

solation heat and earned them a chance to launch from one of the six lanes in Saturday's final.

"Going into the final we were trying to go for bronze," the 6'4" rower said. "We made a sprint from third but didn't quite grab the medal. We were happy with the outcome, though. It's the hardest boat to row, and it's not my usual event, either."

Bartel had very little time to relax after walking off the medal podium before boarding the team bus for the trip to Niagara Falls to participate in the closing ceremony. He was among the 2,500 athletes and their coaches and mission staff who paraded down the Niagara Parkway in front of the Horseshoe Falls to the sounds of the Niagara Regional Police Pipe Band.

"That was a lot of fun," he said Monday of the gathering at the park. "It was amazing to see all of us together in our colours. I didn't realize how many athletes there actually were. We all walked in together, that was pretty cool. And I loved the fireworks."

One thing he forgot to do was wear his gold medal at the closing ceremonies, but he said no one else in his winning crew remembered to wear theirs either.

Bartel enjoyed the week staying with his fellow Team Ontario rowers at the athletes' village at Brock University, though he admitted he didn't have a lot of time to meet athletes from other sports or other provinces and territories.

He did, however, participate a bit in the unofficial "sport" of

the Canada Games - trading provincial pins.

"I wasn't as hardcore as some people were," he laughed. "I dabbled here and there. Some people were going pretty hard at the trading. Everyone was after the pins from all the territories. I was able to get a few Northwest Territories but that was about it."

Bartel said the entire experience of his week at the Canada Games was "super fun." And he feels that having a chance to scope out his competition from all corners of Canada will bode well for his preparation for the upcoming USports (the national governing body of university sport in Canada) rowing season.

And when he and Paul arrive in Victoria after five days on the road, it will be back on the water with his Vikings crew-mates the very next day.

The soft-spoken Bartel, by the way, will have some ammunition if he wants to give the gears to some of those crew-mates. A few of the members of the B.C. crew that Team Ontario edged for the gold are also University of Victoria Vikings.

"That made it feel even better to win," Bartel laughed. "There was a lot of chirping back and forth. It made it even more fun to win. One of the guys in our boat had a bet with another guy in their boat. They weren't too happy when we beat them."

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