

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



Local boys
thrilled to
get PM's
autograph

page 3

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Echoes of the past

Tank commander Stu Robertson waves to the crowd during the Echoes of Niagara's Past parade on Queen Street. The tank is always a crowd pleaser. (Fred Mercnik)

Vigil held for victim of fatal hit-and-run

Penny Coles
The Local

On a narrow stretch of gravel at the side of the road where a 33-year-old Mexican farm worker was the victim of a fatal hit-and-run, farm workers and locals were called to gather in her memory.

A single mother of two daughters, she was taken to the

Hamilton General Hospital after being struck Saturday, Aug. 17, and died from her injuries two days later. Her friends said she was walking home after a church picnic.

She was in NOTL for the second year, packing peaches at Tregunno Farms.

A Pelham man has since turned himself in. He was arrested by the Niagara Regional Po-

lice and charged with dangerous driving causing death and failing to stop at the scene of an accident resulting in death.

Sonia Aviles of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change organized the Sunday evening event on Concession 7, which drew about 50 people, some holding candles and praying for the victim and her family, others listening in respect.

Another group of farm workers had been bused to a church service held in Vine-land to remember her.

Although her first name was published last week with permission, the media has since been requested to not use it.

During the vigil, a small memorial was set up near where the collision occurred.

Aviles and others who

spoke also called on all levels of government to improve the safety, transportation, housing and other issues for migrant workers in Niagara and across the country.

Locally, she said, workers should be able to walk safely at night, calling on the municipality to help with lighting, infrastructure to slow traffic and better transportation.

She also called on all Canadians to unite against racism, saying 70 per cent of immigrants to Canada are temporary workers, and asked they be given permanent resident status.

"If they're good enough to work here, they're good enough to stay," she said. "They come to work in the agricul-

Continued on page 2

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Local boys have experience of a lifetime

Penny Coles
The Local

Two young local boys have had an experience most of us don't have in a lifetime — they met the prime minister of Canada, had a brief conversation with him, got his autograph and have a record of it to keep forever.

Morgan and Spencer Mitchell are 11 and six, but they are both well aware of the importance of the country's leader, and their good fortune in meeting him.

"We were there, and we've never met a prime minister," said Morgan.

When asked if they know what the prime minister does, Spencer chimed in, "he's the person who runs the country."

Justin Trudeau was in Niagara-on-the-Lake last week for a funding announcement. After having breakfast in Silk's Country Kitchen, where he chatted and shook hands with locals, he headed to

the Anderson Lane community centre, where he made his announcement from the community garden behind the building, and took questions from reporters.

That accomplished, he spent some time greeting locals, talking with them and posing for photos.

The boys were at the library to participate in one of the kids' summer programs, said their dad Michael Mitchell, and heard the prime minister was going to be there.

The week before that, the boys had been featured on the front page of The Local.

They were captured by photographer Fred Mercnik, who was on Queen Street taking Peach Celebration photos. Morgan and Spencer had set up a lemonade stand to raise money for Red Roof Retreat, and Mercnik took their photograph.

Most lemonade stands might make a few dollars, but in the six years

they have been doing this, Morgan and Spencer have topped \$10,000 for the organization that helps kids with disabilities. Six years ago, they had a baby-sitter who was a volunteer at Red Roof, and she took Morgan there regularly during that summer, explaining the purpose of the organization and why it was needed, said Michael.

When they got to talk to Trudeau, Morgan said, "he asked us about the lemonade stand and how much money we raised. We told him about Red Roof, and that it helps kids with special needs. He thought that was really cool, that we were raising money for children."

He signed their photo in The Local, "Great stuff, Morgan and Spencer."

Morgan said he's been learning about government at Wheatley School in St. Catharines, and he is pretty excited to be able to say he'd met the prime minister over the summer.

He has the newspaper on his bedroom wall, and his parents will have posters made of it for both boys.

Michael says he's been telling Morgan about the page program for students, thinking after his summer adventure, he might be interested in it when he's old enough.

"The whole experience

was just serendipity, that the boys wanted to go to the community centre to pick up papers, and that they stuck around for the library program, and heard the prime minister would be there," said Michael.

"I joked with him that the boys had eclipsed the other article on the front page, which was the suc-

cessful nomination of Andrea Kaiser to the Liberal Party running in Niagara, who is also a personal friend."

The headline below the photo of the boys and their lemonade stand, unnoticed by the Liberal prime minister, said, "Kaiser hopes to paint Niagara Falls riding red."



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau autographs a photo of Morgan and Spencer Mitchell on the front page of The Local. (Michael Mitchell)

View from RiverBrink



Members of the Newcomers' Cycling Club stop at the waterfront near RiverBrink Art Museum to take in the view. Marie Landoni, Peggy Larder and Arlene McGuire enjoy a weekly Monday morning ride along the Niagara River Recreation Trail, cycling about 25 to 30 kilometres. (Penny Coles)

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Federal funding announced for Niagara

Penny Coles
The Local

The federal government is investing in tourism in Niagara, with support for the Shaw Festival, the grape and wine industry, and local craft beer industry.

Minister of Tourism Melanie Joly was in Niagara last Monday and Tuesday for the announcements.

The Grape Growers of Ontario will receive \$250,000 for an International Cool Climate Wine Symposium to be held next July at Brock University, from the Canadian Experiences Fund, which supports tourism products, facilities and experiences in communities across Canada, she said, at an event held at Oast Brewery.

GoSip Niagara will receive \$50,000, which promotes local craft beer, and \$34,000 will help The Exchange Brewery to enhance its second Sourpalooza festival this September, which showcases sour beers.

The Shaw Festival will be upgrading audio equipment in the Festival Theatre, thanks to a \$330,000 grant from the federal government.

The money is in addition to \$2.77 million also from

the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, to theatre upgrades for the Shaw made since 2016, Joly said at the announcement held on the Shaw Festival grounds last Tuesday.

“Tourism is a rapidly-growing sector that showcases Canada’s diversity, natural beauty, unique experiences and culture to the world,” said Joly. “These investments will ensure that the Shaw Festival will continue to be an important cultural attraction for both residents and international visitors to the region for many years to come.”

Shaw CEO Tim Jennings thanked the federal government for its funding, and for its support of the arts in Canada.

“Already one of the country’s strongest arts and culture economic generators, the Shaw Festival delivers more than \$200 million each year in economic impact to the Niagara economy,” said Jennings.

“As a recipient of Canada Cultural Spaces funding, the Shaw will be able to better deliver on our artistic programs, support the needs of our audiences, and encourage tourists and visitors to the Niagara region during both our

summer and, with the introduction of our holiday stage offerings, winter seasons.”

The federal government also announced funding for grape and fruit growers in Niagara last week.

The Ontario Tender

Fruit Growers and Fresh Grape Growers will receive up to \$476,908 for research to improve fruit quality and availability of tender fruit and fresh grape varieties for consumers.

This collaboration is a long-term commit-

ment from growers and researchers at the University of Guelph and the Vineland research centre to bring new varieties of locally grown fruit to consumers across Canada, said Phil Tregunno, chair of the Ontario Tender Fruit

Growers.

“These partnerships have resulted in new growth opportunities that not only provide benefit for family farms, but also all of our partners, including marketers, retailers and nurseries,” he said.



Robin Ridesic, founder and CEO, of The Exchange Brewery; Debbie Zimmerman, CEO, Grape Growers of Ontario; Bill Schenck, vice-chair, Grape Growers of Ontario; Chris Bittle, MP, St. Catharines; Melanie Joly, Minister of Tourism; Vance Badawey, MP, Niagara Centre; Debbie Inglis, director, Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, Brock University; Matthias Oppenlaender, chair, Grape Growers of Ontario; Karen Doyle, tourism marketing office, City of St. Catharines at Oast Brewery for a funding announcement last week. (Photos supplied)

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Phil Tregunno, chair of Ontario Tender Fruit Growers, St. Catharines MP Chris Bittle and Niagara Centre MP Vance Badawey at a funding announcement for tender fruit and grape growers last week.



Melanie Joly, Minister of Tourism, greets members of the public who were at the Shaw Festival last Tuesday to hear news of a funding announcement.

Residents concerned about decorating hydro boxes

Penny Coles
The Local

An effort to brighten up the Old Town has led to some concern from Dock Area residents.

In a pilot project of the Town's Communities in Bloom Committee, Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro and the Niagara Pump House Art Centre, three electrical transformers have been selected to be fancied up by way of an art competition.

Artists are invited to submit a design, and those selected will have their artwork transferred onto a vinyl wrap to beautify the boxes. Those chosen for the project by NOTL Hydro are located at King and Ricardo Streets, Memorial Park off King Street, and on Front Street near Victoria Street.

But Ron and Irene Simkus, along with Tony Poulton and a few others who have responded through email, are concerned the project could prove dangerous.

Simkus, a retired mining engineer who has been keeping Dock Area residents up to date on waterfront issues and the lake level, said he discovered the plan to beautify electrical boxes on social media, and felt compelled

to notify town council and NOTL Hydro, which he did through email.

"My wife is a retired primary school teacher, my background is in engineering, and Tony comes from the insurance underwriting industry," he explained.

"Teachers have for years taught the basics of safety with electricity to children. It's important to see that the message for children about pad-mounted electrical transformers is simple. They can even be dangerous for adults."

The message the Town should be sending is to stay away from "the big green box," he said. "These boxes should not be attention-grabbers, or perceived as playground features. Just walking through Old Town, we saw many examples of transformers with service access obstructed by plantings and landscaping. The guidelines for 10 feet of access to the front and four feet around just isn't being followed."

In some cases the warning stickers were obviously scrubbed off the box to make the big green box more invisible, he said.

"These transformers are, of course, safe, otherwise they wouldn't be installed all over the

community. But they need to be treated with respect. They are critical components of our residential infrastructure, not garden accessories for taking selfies, or tables to place your lunch on and abandon coffee cups on."

If the Town wants to beautify the transformers, Simkus suggested asking artists to come up with more eclectic ways of applying the universal safety message to stay away from the boxes and avoid injury.

"Very few people have had to attend the scene of a high-voltage electrical fatality or interview a survivor. I've done both, and that's why I take this topic so very seriously," said Simkus.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said if there was any danger from the project, NOTL Hydro would not have agreed to it.

Municipalities across Canada, including "right in the heart of downtown Toronto," have decorated

electrical boxes, she said.

She was recently in St. John's, NL, and "I loved the hydro boxes there," she said.

"We'll move ahead cautiously, we'll take it slow. This is a pilot project, and we'll see how it goes."

Disero said they could talk about putting the danger symbol in one corner, warning people not to get too close.

But as far as it being a danger to wrap the boxes in artwork, she said, "I

think we have to agree to disagree."

The competition is open to artists who live or work in the Niagara Region.

The deadline for submissions is Sept. 18. Three winners will be notified by Sept. 25. Three selected artists must submit high resolution JPGs by Sept. 28. Each will receive a \$500 honorarium. There is a cost of \$20 to enter, and entry forms are available at tiny.cc/hhafbz.



Hydro boxes across the country are decorated. The plan is to move forward slowly with a pilot project in NOTL. (Photo supplied)

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EDITORIAL

Safety first when school starts

The dog days of summer are coming to an end, nights are cooler, backpacks and new shoes purchased, bus drivers are practising their routes and parents are trying to get their kids to bed early. On Tuesday morning, Niagara-on-the-Lake roads will look very different, with school buses stopping for kids, crossing guards in place, and students cycling or walking to school.

It's a day when police are often out near schools to watch for speeders, but whether or not there is a police presence, it's time to obey those school zone speed limits.

Please take your time on the road, as we all get used to the buses and kids once again on their way to school. And don't forget, distracted driving is illegal for a reason. It's dangerous, especially around kids and bicycles and moms holding onto toddlers, and school buses pulling out of traffic and back into it.

Let's all pay extra attention on the roads and make sure our children get to school and home again safely.

Penny Coles

Is amalgamation a done deal?

It seemed, with municipal politicians and staff all gathered in one place with a goal of talking to provincial politicians and staff, amalgamation might have been a hot topic.

Premier Doug Ford was at the Association of Municipalities Conference last week to talk about funding cuts and funding increases. He didn't speak about amalgamation.

The next day, Stephen Clark, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, did mention the dreaded word, but he released no new information about what the Province is planning.

Does he know what Ken Seiling and Michael Fenn, the two provincial representatives who spoke to municipalities about amalgamation, are recommending in their report?

Does Ford know? Are decisions made? Maps drawn?

All we know is the Conservatives are waiting until after the federal election to share their news on the subject. That sounds suspiciously as if voters aren't expected to like what will be said and the provincial PCs don't want to harm the federal party's chances in Ontario.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero has a plan. She has a chart. She is thinking, hoping, this isn't about amalgamating cities, that it's about cutting politicians and creating efficiencies.

Her chart lays out how to disentangle services, how to avoid duplication, leaving local decisions, such as planning issues, to local politicians and staff, while providing services such as garbage and sewers as a region.

But is anyone else on the same page? What do other municipal leaders think? What do regional representatives think?

Unfortunately, each municipality has its own agenda, and some are coveting drawing Niagara-on-the-Lake, a town with little debt and room to grow, into their folds.

Let's hope our lord mayor is right, and this exercise isn't about amalgamation.

It's unsettling to say the least to think NOTL could be absorbed as a result of these recommendations, and even worse, that the decision has already been made, and we just don't know it yet.

Penny Coles

LOCAL FINDS

W.H. SMITH
died Nov. 29 1840
Aged 30y, 9mo. 15d.

Cornelia died 24 Aug 1836
Aged 9 m. 19 d

Rosannah an infant died Nov 5, 1836
Aged 9 mo, 19 d

Henry an infant died Nov. 7, 1837

Julia died June 22 1840
Aged 11 mo. 9 days

Elias Wm. died April 19 1841
Aged 8 mo. 8 d's

Children of W.H. and Rosannah Smith

A second marker, now illegible, lies to the rear of the first stone

Smith
Sacred to the memory of
Rosannah
the much
beloved wife of
Wm.H. Smith
who Died
March 11 1845 *

**As inscribed*



Tragedy of a family Donald Combe Special to The Local

A tragic tale of a family wiped out over a nine-year period. If there were surviving children, it is unknown.

Garden of the week



This week's Garden of the Week winner is 1481 Gate Street, owned by Judy and Sonny D'Mello. The judges admired the lovely symmetrical gardens with hostas, plate hibiscus, cedars and a maple tree. "The window boxes on the balcony add a nice ambiance. Overall, a very colourful garden that has been well maintained." There is one week left to submit nominations of phenomenal front gardens. Residents are encouraged to submit nominations, with forms available on Join the Conversation on the Town's website. (Photo supplied)

The NOTL Local acknowledges the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

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Kudos to all involved in mental health initiative



Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

In my day job as a high school teacher, my colleagues and I deal with student mental health concerns on a daily basis.

Talk to any teacher, or for that matter, anyone who works with youth, and he or she will tell you how much the job has changed over the past few years. Each year, it seems teachers spend more time dealing with student mental health issues, leaving less and less time to deliver the curriculum mandated by legislation.

Complicating matters, even though each teacher is required to take courses in basic special education and psychology in teacher's college, many of us do not feel qualified to counsel students and to help them deal with mental health

issues. A few hours of in-service training, as well, can only go so far.

So, as we head back to school this week, it's great to know that Niagara-on-the-Lake youth now have a local place to turn to for mental health services.

This week, Pathstone Mental Health Services announced that beginning Sept. 9, a free walk-in clinic will be run every Monday at Red Roof Retreat. The clinic will operate from 11:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m., with the last appointment taken at 6 p.m.

Youth up to the age of 18 can visit the clinic free of charge, without accompaniment by a parent or guardian, and with no health card required.

This is a huge and very welcome step toward solving what many view as an epidemic, and serious concern to the future health of our children. Pathstone will be offering a safe space for them to visit, to discuss their fears, con-

cerns and worries with a professional, one who is armed with the resources and tools to help them.

It's a partnership between the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee, Red Roof Retreat, the Niagara Community Foundation, and, of course, Pathstone Mental Health.

Says Steffanie Bjorgan of Red Roof Retreat, "we welcome the opportunity to share (our space and property) with children and youth seeking mental health support. Together, we hope the walk-in clinic can give hope and positive growth to the young people who need it the most."

And the local aspect of this clinic is, from my perspective, a huge benefit to our youth. Already, as we know, most of our youth must leave our community to attend high school in St. Catharines or Niagara Falls. That, in itself, can be a huge stressor to a Grade 8 boy or girl making the transi-

tion from Crossroads, St. Michael or St. Davids School.

Think of those other milestones that occur for every teen during those years. Puberty, first loves, fitting in with friends, stresses over marks and exams, and having to de-

cide on their futures at such a young age.

For all of those reasons, the timing of this announcement couldn't be more perfect. And the help these kids need can be found right here in their own community.

Kudos to Pathstone Mental Health Services, Red Roof Retreat, the Town and its youth committee, and all of those involved for stepping up to the plate to help our youth. It is a very big step in the right direction.

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LETTERS

Peach Pickers Picnic a great success

On Aug. 11, the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake came together to recognize and celebrate our farmers and our farm workers who come from the Caribbean and Mexico, leaving their wives and children behind to bring us our tender fruits and tend our vineyards. Without them, we would not have our Peach Festival, Cherry Festival, Strawberry Festival and our incredible wineries here in Niagara.

The event brought togeth-

er locals and volunteers from the Rotary Club of NOTL, Gateway Church, community members and town councillors, who served meals to the workers who had dedicated the greater part of their day to harvesting our fruit. Five hundred meals had been planned, but close to 800 meals were served with home delivery coming off the barbecue at 10:30 p.m. for 20 workers who could not attend.

Music and dancing and

celebration happened at the Garrison Village picnic site.

This worthwhile event needs to be recognized in our local news. Each year the event gets bigger and better with additional local support recognizing our local agricultural community.

Thank you to everyone who donated money and time, and contributed in picking up and driving, preparing, serving and supporting this worthwhile event.

Thank you to our farmers

and local heroes who work long hours on the local farms so that we can celebrate and enjoy the bounty of their labour.

Visit this Cogeco link to see the action:

https://yourtv.tv/node/197696?c=niagara&fbclid=IwAR1y1YX-GfVn1VEcQG5VQAUC-5JBhL3aQ5lWvgTDdbDe1Y-CKK2_WgeGIVzYMi4

Patricia Murenbeeld
NOTL

LETTERS



Best Shred-it so far

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service would like to extend a huge thank you to the awesome group of people who contributed to a very successful Community Shred-it event Saturday, Aug. 17.

Thanks for the support of the Meridian Credit Union, the dedicated efforts from Vineridge Academy, Shred-it employees, and our own NOTL CPCS volunteers. The group's spirits could not be damp-

ened despite working in heavy downpours at times. And a very special thanks to the generosity of the local residents, who helped us raise over \$4,700.

The proceeds will help us continue providing free services and equipment to the seriously ill and their caregivers in our community.

Margret Walker,
Event Coordinator
Bonnie Bagnulo,
Program Manager

Letters! We want letters!

We have an opinion page put aside just for residents — we know you have opinions and we would love to share them. If you have a letter to the editor you'd like to see published, please send it to penny@notllocal.com. Please try to keep it to about 350 words. Sorry, but we won't publish anonymous letters. The deadline is Monday at noon.

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The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

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Paul Lalonde of the NOTL Rotary Club shows off the final stage of the anniversary project at Queen's Royal Beach. (Photo supplied)

Rotary Rocks project is now complete

Local Staff

After a series of unavoidable delays, the Rotary Rocks stone, planned as part of a project to celebrate the NOTL club's 25th anniversary, has been engraved.

Paul Lalonde, chair of the NOTL Rotary Club's community service committee, says the reaction from people on Queen's Royal Beach, "has been overwhelming."

The limestone seating arrangement at the beach was the club's gift to the town, with members helping to raise money and also doing some of the work toward installation.

The project was completed last October, except for the engraving on the centrepiece stone. The goal of Rotary, Have you made someone's life BETTER today?, and the Rotary symbol, are now etched in stone for all to see.

"It was finished this last Saturday afternoon,

and within minutes, people were taking selfies," said Lalonde. "The next day, when I visited, so many people were reflecting on the message. It was so gratifying to watch people talking with their kids about the message and what it meant and how they felt about it."

The words were meant to call people to action, to reflect and to start conversations, said Lalonde.

"In a world where we hear so much negative, the club wanted to encourage people to do better, to make a difference. In such a beautiful park that is tranquil, peaceful, what better place to have a focus on what to think about."

The message is a simple, pay-it-forward mantra, a call to action and reflection, he said.

"The back side has The Rotary Four-Way test on its simple principles that we should all try to consider when dealing with people in life or in

business. It's part of the Rotary DNA and we are proud to share our philosophy with the town and the world."

Rotary is dedicated to making this community better whenever it can, he said.

"The town and its residents have been so supportive of our fundraising endeavours, and we are all about giving back. We hope residents and tourists love the new addition."

This park is a special place, he added, "and we wanted to enhance its beauty and usage. We feel we've achieved it and we couldn't be happier."

Due to record water levels, the bottom section of the stone and sand were partly destroyed in a storm, but will be repaired in the fall as water levels continue to recede, said Lalonde.

"In the meantime, we hope this positive message and story will impact many lives and change the world, even if it's in a small way."

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Echoes from the past



Fort George and the Lincoln and Welland Regimental Museum commemorated more than 200 years of Niagara's military history this weekend, with interpreters, animators, and veterans displaying uniforms and weaponry. Phil Ward, a member of the 35th Simcoe Regiment, shows off his wares. (Fred Mercnik)

Volunteers needed to be fixers

Local Staff

Do you have a talent for fixing things?

The library needs your help.

On Oct. 26, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library Makery is hosting a Repair Cafe, and is looking for fixers to help with repairs.

Fixers are scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to allow time for setup and takedown.

A fixer is a volunteer who is skilled at repairing household items — everything from appliances to electronics to clothing, says Sarah Bowers, organizer of the event. Everyone is needed and welcome.

Visitors are asked to bring their items to the Repair Cafe, where they will get help fixing it

from volunteers. Most importantly, community members will learn from the fixers how to do the repairs themselves.

At the Repair Cafe, fix anything from lamps to toasters to computers — you name it. It's free and all are welcome.

The goal of the library event is to reduce the waste that's sent to landfill and to change society's throw-away mindset, says Bowers.

To join the team of fixers, please phone Bowers at 905-468-2023, ext. 202.

Those who have an item needing repairs can drop in between 11a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and register the item in person at the intake table. The event runs until 1 p.m., says Bowers, but registration of items will stop at 12:30 p.m.

RiverBrink show and sale



The RiverBrink Art Museum gala is Friday evening, and the summer art sale continues Saturday and Sunday, with about 200 pieces of art for sale from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Showing some of the works of art for sale are Keith Bullen, Mary Webster and Nancy Bongard. On the left is Rural Bridge, a reproduction by Frederick Haines, and on the right, The First Mrs. Teddington, by E. Wiese. (Penny Coles)



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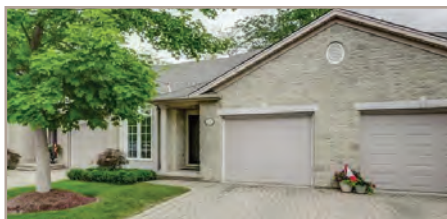
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Local author to be featured in Wine and Words

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

In Debi Goodwin’s backyard garden, garlic, tomatoes, kale and beans find space next to roses, hydrangea, sedum, rhododendron and lilies.

There are many trees providing just enough shade, including her three beautiful seven-son flower trees, which bloom in late summer.

It is a beautiful backyard oasis in Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Old Town, that played host to her August, 2016 wedding to her long-time partner, Peter Kavanagh.

Goodwin has documented the creation of that garden, and her life with Kavanagh, in a new memoir, *A Victory Garden for Trying Times*, published by Dundurn Press.

Goodwin will be reading from her memoir this Oct. 9 at Southbrook Vineyards to kick off the NOTL Public Library’s annual Wine and Words series.

During the First and Second World Wars, the government of Canada encouraged residents to use their backyard spaces to plant vegetables for personal use and to support the war effort. Originally referred to as “war gardens,” they became known as “victory gardens,” promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture as a “patriotic form of wholesome leisure,” according to the Canadian Encyclopedia.

It became a way for those back home to help fight against the “unknown” enemy.

In November, 2015, Kavanagh was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. Goodwin, of course, was shattered by this diagnosis. Alongside him through his cancer treatments, she realized she needed a project to cope with her own fears. She came across the concept of the victory garden.

Inspired by this phenomenon, Goodwin threw her efforts into creating her own version of a victory garden. She began to plan out her garden during the winter Kavanagh would start undergoing treatments. It was her hope the creation of the garden would mark her husband’s victory against the unknown enemy, cancer.

Weakened by the cancer, however, Kavanagh suffered a fatal heart attack in early September, 2016, just a month after their wedding.

Goodwin’s victory garden still stands today, stunningly beautiful and providing sustenance, as a tribute to the life of the man she loved for more than 30 years.

Debi Goodwin and Peter Kavanagh met while both were working at CBC’s *The Journal*, with Barbara Frum. Goodwin had just gone through a breakup of a previous marriage, and she immediately bonded with Kavanagh, who, having been diagnosed with paralytic poliomyelitis at a young age, had been

living with pain his entire life.

It didn’t take long before this bond led to a relationship, and, as the two moved into different spheres with the national broadcaster, the bond grew even stronger.

Kavanagh became Peter Gzowski’s book editor for his popular *Morningside* radio program. Among his many accomplishments as a producer was the creation of the Canada Reads competition in 2002. In addition, he published his own memoir, *The Man Who Learned to Walk Three Times*, about his struggles with polio as a child, having to re-learn to walk again at the age of 12, and then once more at age 60 after surgery to remove a metal plate.

Goodwin, meanwhile, moved on to CBC Newsworld and then became a documentary producer for *The National*. One of her documentaries resulted in a book, *Citizens of Nowhere*, about the struggles refugees to Canada face in their first year in a new country. Ten years ago, Goodwin left the CBC to teach English as a Second Language and Advanced English at Sheridan College.

Five years later, the two retired and bought their home in NOTL.

Goodwin grew up in Grimsby, as part of a ninth-generation Niagara family. Her early years were spent on a fruit farm in west Niagara, so she was famil-

iar with the area. Moving to NOTL seemed almost natural, and the home they found had a huge backyard, with two garden sheds and more than enough room for her to scratch her gardening itch.

Living in Toronto for 22 years, she always had a garden of some sort. They lived on what she calls a reverse ravine lot, where she slowly got rid of all of the grass in the front yard and replaced it with a rock garden. In addition, influenced by her father, who grew vegetables for the family, she always found some time and space to grow vegetables.

In contrast, Kavanagh was not a gardener, though he fully supported Goodwin’s love of cultivating and beautifying their space.

Those first few years in

NOTL were idyllic. That changed, though, when the couple received Kavanagh’s cancer diagnosis.

Throughout his struggle with the disease, he encouraged her to continue with her victory garden. Goodwin says even when they discovered his diagnosis was terminal, he told her not to stop with her project.

“He knew how much the garden would help me even after he was gone,” she says. “He knew my connection to the cycles of the seasons, he knew all those things about me, like a true partner does.”

A Victory Garden for Trying Times, ties those seasons to the couple’s fight against Kavanagh’s cancer. According to the website of her publisher, that first winter was an anxious one, as she researched

and planned. That was followed by spring when, while Kavanagh was in remission, her garden was thriving. “But when Peter’s cancer returned like a killing frost, the garden was a reminder that everything must come to an end.”

The memoir is very raw, and bares her soul, but Goodwin is glad she wrote it when she did. She says if she had waited 10 years to write it, the memoir would have ended up much more polished.

Having grown up in a small town, she remembers always wanting to get out of that town. “My father was the high school principal,” she says. “Everyone knew everything about me, and here I am having written a

Continued on page 11



Author Debi Goodwin poses in her victory garden. (Mike Balsom)

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Chamber president's background prepares him for NOTL

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

For Eduardo Lafforgue, a life spent living and traveling across the world has prepared him to take on the role of President of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce.

In succeeding Janice Thomson, who held the position for the past 18 years, Lafforgue is clear that his focus will be on the community, and the assets that are the essence of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Lafforgue was born in Argentina, but his family moved to Mexico, where he was educated in French at the Lycee Franco Mexicano. Lafforgue's high school education was completed at a school in England. He then studied architecture at university in Mexico, before earning a Master's Degree in Spain.

He points out that travel was always a part of his life. He

remembers climbing the fence from his boarding school with a backpack when things got to be a bit too confining. As well, his travels to China as a student at the tail end of the "cultural revolution" in 1975 are documented in his book, Mao's Late Show.

His first foray to Canada was to Laval University, in 1974. Later, he married Monique, who was born in Canada. Her family owned property near Saint-Sauveur, Quebec, where the young couple often spent time.

His background in architecture informs his experience in and his love for tourism. While still in school, he was hired on as part of a team designing a hotel in Mexico. This piqued his interest. After graduating, he asked a professor for some tips on how to be involved in more hotel projects. Lafforgue remembers that professor telling him, "you don't choose,

life will guide you."

Looking back, that statement seems to be quite prophetic.

After that experience on the design team, he picked up another hotel, then got connected to a huge hotel chain that brought him to the US. He later became the Commercial Director of Architectural Products for a French-Canadian company that also manufactured hockey sticks for Wayne Gretzky. Following that, he was the Vice President of the Commercial Division of Quebec's Caisse de Depot, where he was involved in many hotel developments.

In 2004, he took on the role of Vice President - Acquisitions with Intrawest. The natural evolution of his career through all these stops led to him forming a consulting company. In this capacity, his expertise expanded to encompass not just hotels but also tourism planning on a regional level. He ended up working with organizations in Morocco, France, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Spain and the Caribbean. Just prior to his being hired in Niagara-on-the-Lake, he spent nine months as the CEO of the Headwaters Tourism district.

Lafforgue says the Headwaters (Caledon, Orangeville etc.) "is an extraordinarily beautiful area, rural, very natural. It has heritage, but it's a rural area. Here, we are rural as well, but we are much more urban in many senses, with our heritage linked to culture with a big "C". The Shaw Festival and our wineries make a huge impact on what we are - a mature, established destination."

"Tourism," says Lafforgue, "starts with the community. That's what generates authenticity. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, the community and its values are what we are. We have di-

versified assets, heritage, culture, hotels, culinary, and it's a fantastic place to live in."

History, of course, is a big part of the appeal in the town. Though Lafforgue has worked with areas in which the history goes back almost a thousand years, he values Niagara-on-the-Lake's importance to Canada. "Two hundred years is quite something," he says. "If I had to choose a place that represents what Canada is all about, I would choose Niagara-on-the-Lake."

He recognizes NOTL is not an isolated community. Though he says "we have our own identity," which is essential to maintain, we must work together with the other communities and stakeholders in Niagara in order to grow."

Lafforgue says Thomson

did a "fantastic job protecting the essence that is this town." Looking forward, though, one of his first priorities is to work on a strategic social media marketing plan for the Chamber. As well, though he affirms that Chamber membership is healthy, he thinks there is room to grow on the membership side, "that will make us stronger, and allow us to reach further than just the tourism side."

In addition, he hopes to get to work building up programs that will benefit all the stakeholders, not just those in the tourism sector, but also, those who think they are outside of that value chain.

As an example, he points out that in a visit to a local gas station, he asked the attendant if he felt he was part of the tourism industry in the town. He wasn't

surprised to get a negative answer, and that's something he would like to see change.

Now in the position for just over a month, Lafforgue has spent much of his time meeting people and learning their insights, while growing accustomed to the mechanisms of the Chamber of Commerce. As well, he recently spoke about his vision for the Chamber at a Rotary Club meeting.

Over the next few weeks, he plans to sit down with members of the local Bed and Breakfast Association as well as other stakeholders in all areas of the town. "It's important to remember that there is heritage in all areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake, not just the Old Town. Queenston, St. Davids, Virgil, Glendale —they are all part of the essence."



Eduardo Lafforgue (Photo supplied)

Personal memoir also a tribute to Kavanagh

Continued from page 10

book all about me."

During the treatments, she wrote down her thoughts and feelings along with a description of everything that happened at every doctor's appointment. The process was difficult, but deeply meaningful.

When she sat down to write it, she says, "it was more about how a caregiver gets through things."

But after he died, she went to India, on a trip that she and Kavanagh had planned together. There she attended a master writing class, where she "realized people would want to learn more about Peter, so in my re-write, it became more of a tribute to his and my life."

Asked if it will be difficult for her to read from this personal memoir to a crowd most likely filled with some familiar faces, she admits she may have a bit of trepidation.

Goodwin believes the memoir, as personal as it may be, will resonate with anyone who has gone through or is going through grief. She says she wrote the book to connect to other people as well as to tell her story. And she is looking forward to connecting to these people on Oct. 9.

In the meantime, she continues to cultivate her victory garden, a beautiful symbol of hope and a poignant reminder of life's cycles. And she continues to harvest the vegetables and share them with others, in a fitting tribute to the man she loved, and continues to love,

for more than 30 years.

A *Victory Garden for Trying Times* will be published by Dundurn Press on Sept. 7. Tickets for Debi Goodwin's Wine and Words session at Southbrook Vineyard can be purchased at notpubliclibrary.org.



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Andre Sills as Tom and Julia Course as Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, on stage at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre. (David Cooper)

Shaw ensemble delivers in *Glass Menagerie*

Paul Sawchuk
Special to The Local

The *Glass Menagerie* is the first of American playwright Tennessee Williams' successes, and the Festival presents a faithful adaptation at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre.

Intimate pre-show interaction from Andre Sills and clever set design quietly draw the audience into the explosive lives of the Wingfield family.

Tom Wingfield (Sills) is the family's breadwinner, whiling his days away at a local factory for a pittance. Tom's mother, Amanda (Allegra Fulton), pines for her youth, her servants and her father's rich plantation in Louisiana. Tom's sister, Laura (Julia Course), is affected by a crippling physical disfigurement that leaves her bereft of confidence or ambition. Laura has become a pitiable thing to her mother, and Amanda's only solution is for a "gentleman caller" to whisk the girl away into domesticity, and free Tom from his burden of support. Unfortunately for the family, things do not improve when Tom brings Jim (Jonathan Tan) to dinner with the ulterior motive of setting him up with Laura. Ultimately, the failure leads Tom

into the very cycle that led to this dreadful situation in the first place. Like his father, he contemplates simply abandoning the family.

Williams, like other American writers in the post-depression and post-war tradition, chooses to focus on the meek and despairing citizenry. By sheer numbers it is their world more than it is the world of presidents, kings, and corporate owners. It is fitting that the Shaw has chosen to exhume *The Glass Menagerie* today, when many millennials are forced back home with their parents, whose own incomes have stifled due to decisions beyond them. The family unit is often not what's been sold to them by those ivory-towered American dreamers.

The *Glass Menagerie* reminds anyone who yearns for the past that it was fraught with the same class lines that exist today, just with a different flavour, and Williams leaves out any comment about racial or gendered lines of the 40s. Often criticized for being too autobiographical (and I apologize to fans of Williams, as he won't escape that here), Williams' own privilege is on full display. Amanda, who the play notes attends DAR (Daughters

of the American Revolution) meetings, longs for her family's former glories. Yes, Amanda's family is now poor, but when her grown son is the sole breadwinner, her daughter is considered so fragile from her ailments as to excuse her from contributing, and she sells magazine subscriptions infrequently . . . well, it begs some questions.

Williams treats these characters with nobility because, as the play notes in detail, they are largely pulled from Williams' life. Tom shares his name with the author (Tennessee being a pen name), and Tennessee's sister suffered from similar ailments as Laura. Yet, despite the play's focus on finding Laura a "gentleman caller," apparently a term already outdated in 1944, Tom bears the majority of the emotional burdens. Williams putting his own life on display in *The Glass Menagerie* has certain consequences, and with his "poetic realism" such a prominent feature, he tends to use exaggerated dialogue excessively and comes across as self-absorbed. I left the theatre thinking Williams had maybe too high an opinion of himself (that may be putting it nicely).

The Shaw cast delivers, however. Sills is exceptional as Tom,

revelling in the quiet moments of sibling camaraderie with Course as Laura, but not holding back during the explosive moments between Tom and Amanda, or his moments of debauchery.

As Laura, Course is captivating, internalizing and externalizing Laura's fragility in a great physical performance. When Laura finally realizes how internal her fragility is, Course brings new life to the character; yet, in Tennessee Williams fashion, it's extinguished all too quickly.

"Gentleman caller" Jim (Jonathan Tan) appears as a brief entanglement in the Wingfield story, yet his impact cannot be dismissed. Tan as Jim is the future. He is the progressive world that is quickly forgetting the Wingfields. He's crafted a plot to study public speaking and radio technology at night school, after full days of work with Tom, and build that into a career as a business executive or even in television. Tan plays him effectively as a fast-talking paragon of the future — ambitious, excitable, creative and ultimately ignorant

of working class struggles. He is Mark Zuckerberg or any other Silicon Valley royalty, exploring his newest ventures but forgetting the human cost. Jim nicknames his friends, forever displacing their real names for his fabrications, and in a brief, fateful moment forgets even his own reality in favour of an emotional indulgence that furthers the Wingfield nosedive into despair.

Amanda, the matriarch of the family, is fascinating. Allegra Fulton brings the full emotional range of a character who was raised to perform southern hospitality at all costs. As Tom continually challenges her, she breaks down and sees the world is not at all what she remembers. In realizing Amanda's failure, Fulton presents her cracking facade. Her voice will crack ever so slightly, or her laugh will squeak, hoping to use southern hospitality to mask her true self.

While Williams filled *The Glass Menagerie* with flowery dialogue, he was wise to let the characters also enjoy quiet, familial moments. Considering

the Shaw's clever set design, we're allowed to listen in as Tom and Laura giggle amongst themselves while Amanda may be in another room, desperately trying to hold everything together. The central placement of the stage, though absent the claustrophobic walls of a small apartment, is still strikingly intimate. We certainly feel as if we're watching a small family in duress in their space, not a stage. This is effortlessly complimented by the effective lighting design of Mikael Kangas and direction of Laszlo Berczes, including great use of natural candlelight in the second act.

Mileage on *The Glass Menagerie* may vary. Williams is simultaneously current and outdated, but the Shaw Festival's rendition is strikingly, hauntingly beautiful. Its tragic course is a lesson in fragile, fractured heroes of an America emerging out of the Second World War that is all too willing to sacrifice those who aren't willing to catch up, and the unseen human costs of excitable progressivism.

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Auchterlonie begins astrology podcast in retirement

Penny Coles
The Local

With a radio voice perfectly-suited to a podcast, and after years of studying his favourite subject, Auchterlonie on Astrology was almost inevitable.

Now retired after several careers, most recently as the owner of a Victoria Street gallery of Inuit and Six Nations art, Bill Auchterlonie devotes his spare time researching “what’s going on in the skies,” an interest that developed when he realized astrology is not only about looking forward, but also looking back.

On his recently-released inaugural podcast, he says he had an interest in “esoteric cultural expression” from an early age.

As a youngster he collected books about ancient sites in Britain, Mexico and North America, books about “arcane kind of stuff I regarded as lost knowledge,” he said.

While working in the curatorial department of The Art Gallery of Ontario, he went to Britain and Europe visiting art galleries, and had an opportunity to visit Stonehenge, which is widely regarded as “an astrological edifice,” set up so that at a particular point during the winter solstice, the sun comes up precisely between two stones.

It’s one of the first dedicated man-made pieces designed to “keep track of the skies above,” says Auchterlonie, and that opened his eyes to astrology.

His career in radio began when he was working behind the scenes at CFRB when

he was at York University, studying film, art and film production. After university, and his job with the museum, he went back to radio, this time while hosting a morning radio show in Hamilton. While there, he had as a regular guest well-known astrologer Alex Spraggett, who in reading Auchterlonie’s signs, mentioned a near-drowning experience when he was four years old. Spraggett related that to the near-fatal car accident that had left the radio host with a year of healing and physiotherapy when he was in his early 30s.

Auchterlonie knew nothing about a drowning incident, he told the astrologer, who suggested he should ask his mother.

He learned he had nearly drowned at the age of four, although his mother didn’t go into details, but gradually, over a period of 11 years, the memory came back. His family was visiting Honey Harbour, and he had slipped off some rocks, and had grabbed a tree branch as he fell. He was in the water, clinging to the branch for dear life, for almost two hours before someone found him.

“I’m a Taurus. We’re stubborn,” he jokes. “I guess sometimes that can be a good thing.”

When he realized Spraggett could read the past through astrology as well as the future, Auchterlonie says, “from then on, I was hooked.”

Putting the two near-tragic events together, and wanting to avoid a third situation, he began tracking his astrological chart to ensure

he would know when it was time to take extra caution and avoid any activity that would put him in danger.

“It took about a year to figure things out,” he says, talking of charts, houses, planets and signs. “I began to read more about how everything fits together.”

Astrology isn’t his only interest. Time spent on politics behind the scenes, working on campaigns for candidates of all levels of government, led him to run for council in 2014, believing it was time for a new wave of councillors. He was a little ahead of his time, with the majority of councillors re-elected that term. He was also chair of the Town’s parking committee, and was an outspoken critic of the expensive pay-and-display system purchased, with meters that often did not work properly and frustrated downtown merchants and visitors.

He still follows town politics, but is no longer involved. He and Heather, whom he met when he moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake about 30 years ago, live on a firelane, on the lake. He loves walking their dog Brooke, a German Shepherd they got from the Welland Humane Society, and he also likes working out astrological charts for people — he wouldn’t mind doing that a couple of days a week.

He’s also recovering from some serious health issues.

He had a year of radiation and chemotherapy to fight an “insidious” kind of lung cancer while still running the store. Fortunately the tumour was small and found early, he said, but he was left exhausted

by the treatment.

Then in January he caught a deadly flu virus during a doctor’s visit. He ended up being transported to the hospital by ambulance, where he spent 10 days on life support.

“I’m finally starting to feel healthy for the first time in a couple of years,” he says.

And while his health issues could be considered a run of bad luck, “I’d say I’ve

had good luck. I’ve come out of it.”

But to an astrologer, luck is not necessarily the reason he’s still here.

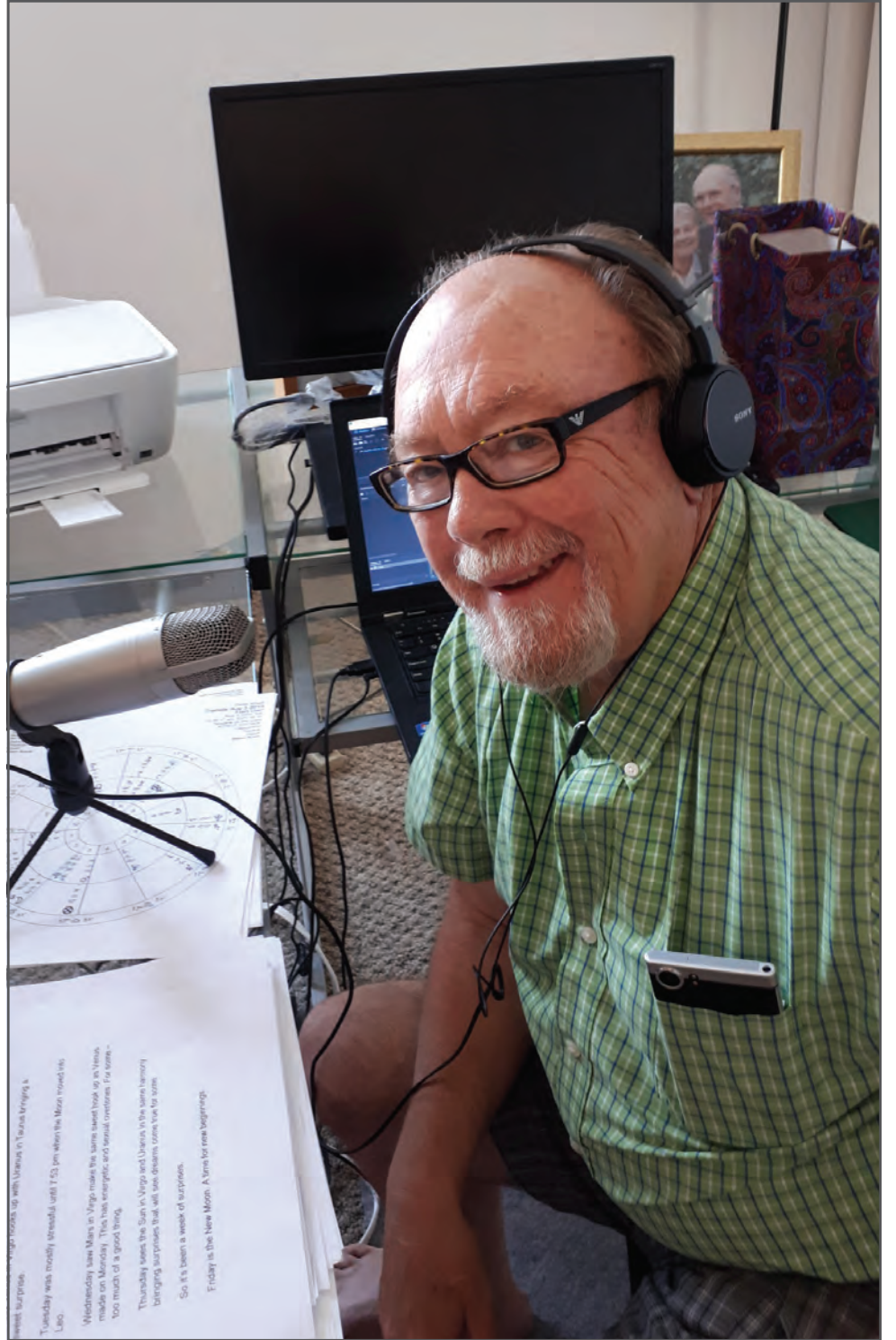
He’s studied what happened in the last 200 to 300 years, and sees the results of a cycle that began again in 2008.

“It’s a repeat of the turbulent times that created the U.S., democracy in France

and other places. It’s turbulent again today, the way it was then. It isn’t exactly the same, but it’s the same planet configuration as at that time.”

His research leads him to question coincidence.

“Astrology gives you the feeling there is some great mind behind all this. It’s not exactly predetermination, but I think there is a lot more to coincidence than we know.”



After a career in radio, Bill Auchterlonie says dealing with the technology of a computer podcast has been a challenge. (Photo supplied)



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

Welcome to Auchterlonie on Astrology. Every week I’ll present an overview of what’s happening in the solar system and what it may portend for us here on Earth.

This is the week of the New Moon in Virgo which happens on Friday, Aug. 30 at 6:37 a.m. EST. It’s a time of new beginnings. For Virgo – new beginnings in your innermost self. For Scorpio, new beginnings in formal relationships and partnerships.

The Moon began the week on Sunday Aug. 25, in Gemini and moved into Cancer on Saturday at 5:06 p.m. The Moon is the ruling planet of Cancer so it will be very powerful and sensitive for a few days. Mars and Chiron make a connection on Sunday night. It portends a time of stress urging growth and healing.

Monday Venus in Virgo hooked up with Uranus in Taurus, bringing a sweet surprise.

Tuesday would have been mostly stressful until 7:53 p.m., when the Moon moved into Leo.

Wednesday saw Mars in Virgo make the same sweet hook-up as Venus made on Monday. This has energetic and sexual overtones. For some – too much of a good thing.

Thursday sees the sun in Virgo and Uranus in the same harmony, bringing surprises that will see dreams come true for some.

So it’s been a week of surprises.

Friday is the New Moon. A time for new beginnings.

And the week ends on Saturday with a strong connection between the Moon and Pluto. It’s a time when practical willpower can move mountains.

Next week sees the start

of a new month. Sunday is the first day of September.

Monday is a holiday – Labour Day – full of energy and seriousness with the First Quarter Moon in Sagittarius on Thursday.

Tuesday Sept. 3 promises to be busy and full of clever ideas as Mercury hooks up with both the Sun and Mars and the Moon in Scorpio does some friendly connections with eight different objects in the sky!

The Moon moves into Sagittarius Wednesday night and Venus opposes Neptune in the early morning, which may be dizzying – but likely also sweetly so.

And I’ll be back next Thursday with another edition of Auchterlonie on Astrology, right here in The Local.

Check out my podcast on Facebook at Auchterlonie on Astrology or visit my website Looking up with Bill at <https://www.lookingupwithbill.com/>.

A

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Red Roof Retreat gives kids a reason to smile

Terry Davis
Special to The Local

The first thing you notice when you walk into The Ranch location of Red Roof Retreat are the smiles. Big, wide, happy smiles on the faces of the children walking, rolling around the grounds in wheelchairs or sitting under the shade of a tree, and the smiles are just as broad on the faces of the staff there to help the kids through their day.

Perhaps that's not surprising. Red Roof Retreat was established in 2006 to be a place where children, teenagers and young adults with special needs, along with their families, would enjoy access to quality recreational and respite services. It offers a place for relationships to develop and lasting bonds to be nurtured through understanding and respect for each individual's special needs.

But it isn't Red Roof's mandate that makes it so special. It's the people who bring that mandate to life and make it real, starting with the organization's executive director, Steffanie Bjorgan, and her dedicated staff. Together they've created a range of sensory-based programs and activities for children, geared toward

their specific needs and recognizing their unique differences. Children can touch, feel, taste and hear different things, from putting something in their mouth, reaching through the fence surrounding the animal enclosure to pet a pony, goat or rabbit, or picking and eating a tomato.

Each client to The Ranch is different, Bjorgan explains. She and her team develop a profile on each one, noting their physical, emotional and cognitive needs. That's important. Some children are driven crazy by background noise, others receive nourishment through a tube connected to their stomach, some enjoy repeatedly touching an object (such as a string of beads), while others like being read to or splashing their feet in a pool of water. Knowing the wants and needs of each client, and tailoring an experience geared to them, is key.

Understanding how to communicate with each client is equally important. Some clients to The Ranch communicate verbally as well as through facial expressions and hand movements. Others are less verbal. Tools such as pictograms, iPads and touch screens are used by Bjorgan and her team to

communicate with the kids, and help them to respond.

A key feature of The Ranch is its size. The 11-acre property on Concession 6 in Niagara-on-the-Lake provides opportunities for special needs clients to walk on natural trails, interact with and ride horses, find a quiet place in the shade of a tree or to enjoy a range of other recreational features, including a playground and inflatable splash pool. In most cases, their days can be as active or as peaceful as they'd like them to be.

Not all clients to The Ranch are independently mobile. Some have special needs that make it difficult or impossible for them to participate in activities and programs without assistance, so staff make a point of bringing the activities those kids like directly to them. Yet another reason that it is such a happy place, so full of smiles.

"My goal here was to connect kids with special needs to nature and animals" says Bjorgan.

The Ranch is landlocked, surrounded by farms, providing a safe and inviting environment for clients to explore and enjoy.

But it just may be that the joy radiating through The Ranch each and ev-



Steffanie Bjorgan (right) and staff members interact with clients to The Ranch. (Photos by Terry Davis)

ery day is Bjorgan's doing. It might have its genesis in the decisions that she and her family made when her second son was born with Cerebral Palsy in 1993. It could stem from the knowledge and commitment she brings to her work – in addition to earning a degree in child studies and education, Bjorgan taught at the elementary school level for 16 years, and participated in several pilot projects and services focussed on early interventions, screening and assessment, and teaching the non-verbal child.

Staff at Red Roof Retreat are also important factors in its success and the smiles it brings to the faces of clients. They're dedicated, caring and willing to go the extra mile for the young people who come to Red Roof, up to and including visiting them in their homes.

Whatever the reason for the contentment of clients to The Ranch, it is clear that Garrett, Bjorgan's second son, was the catalyst that sparked the creation of Red Roof Retreat.

"After we had Garrett, we had two choices," she says. "You're allowed to go

through the grieving, then you make a choice. We chose to look at all the blessings."

Today, Bjorgan says Red Roof Retreat was somewhat borne out of necessity – she had needed something to focus on at that time. Following Garrett's birth, she and her husband Moe were a bit housebound at first. The family made some difficult choices together, including moving from their home in Queenston, which was on a hill and not well-suited to the needs of a child in a wheelchair, to a flatter property in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Then they decided to turn their new property into a small hobby farm. Shortly afterward, when she saw how much pleasure the farm gave Garrett, Bjorgan, a self-admitted type-A personality, began inviting a few families with special needs children to visit.

Back then, people did not really have a sense of what respite was, she says. Families needed a break from the day-to-day challenges and responsibilities of caring for a child with special needs, and kids needed a break from their day-to-day

routines. She saw that need firsthand in the families who brought their children to the hobby farm, and with Moe's support, decided to do something about it.

"It was a family decision," she said about opening up their property to clients, and a few years later establishing Red Roof Retreat.

The timing of those decisions was fortuitous. The Ranch, a house and property ideally suited for Red Roof, was up for sale. Equally important, Michael Katz had recently opened a McDonald's restaurant in Niagara-on-the-Lake, one of several McDonald's franchises that the Katz family owns and manages in the Niagara region. When Steffanie went out looking for financial backing, both the Katz family and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club stepped forward to help.

Both have contributed to Red Roof Retreat from day one, making a huge difference in the life of the not-for-profit organization and in the lives of the children, teens and young adults who visit its three facilities, as well as

Continued on page 15

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING EVENT & BBQ



Saturday, September 21st
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
Simpson's Pharmacy
1182 Niagara Stone Rd., NOTL

Please contact Karen if you have any questions

karen@redroofretreat.com

Accepted Materials: televisions, desktop computers, monitors, home audio, video system, cell phones, answering machines, non-cellular telephones, photocopiers, multi-function devices and clothing.



Clients to The Ranch enjoy a story under the shade of a tree.

Red Roof offers three facilities and many programs

Terry Davis
Special to The Local

The Ranch – NOTL

The Ranch house is used for Red Roof Retreat's adult day program on weekdays, allowing young adults with special needs who visited Red Roof Retreat as a child to continue their relationship with the program, as well as offering respite to new adult

visitors and their families.

The program provides physical and personal care as well as social and emotional support, along with leisure and social activities to young adults (ages 21 to 40) with special needs.

Activities may include walks along the Niagara River Parkway, visits to the Butterfly Conservatory in Niagara Falls and the Bird

Kingdom, and sports such as bowling. The program is designed to help get people with special needs out of their homes and involved in their communities in a safe and enjoyable way.

The Ranch also provides a children's respite program during weekends. Typically five special needs children stay at The Ranch every weekend, enjoying a safe and

fun experience, while their families enjoy a break.

Special needs visitors to The Ranch, of any age, may also enjoy horseback riding, as well as learn about feeding, grooming and tacking horses. Horseback riding can improve balance, posture, core strength, mobility and function, and help people with special needs in the areas of physical, cognitive, communications, emotional and social wellbeing.

Summer Camp is a key program at The Ranch. Red Roof Retreat's summer day camps run for six weeks, beginning in July, for children from five to 16 years of age,

providing a range of enjoyable, safe activities for special needs kids at The Ranch and the Niagara Children's Centre.

Red Roof Retreat Community Centre – St. Catharines

The centre offers visitors the use of a therapeutic swimming pool, five-pin bowling alley and activity rooms. Programs include an adult day program, teen night, Saturday camp and Dads' swim.

Teen night may include a pizza dinner with special guests, swimming, dances, bowling and movies.

Dads' swim brings together fathers and their spe-

cial needs children for pizza and a swim.

The Saturday Camp program includes outdoor play, music, special guests, crafts, swimming and bowling.

Kevan's House – NOTL

Red Roof Retreat offers an adult respite program at the house on weekends, and emergency residential care throughout the week. Typically five adults (over 19 years of age) enjoy the weekend respite program at Kevan's House on weekends.

For more information on the full range of programs offered by Red Roof Retreat, visit www.redroofretreat.com.

Donors, volunteers welcome

Continued from page 14

in the lives of their families.

The Katz family donated the seed money needed to launch Red Roof Retreat, with no strings attached. Some of those funds went toward bricks and mortar – allowing Bjorgan to purchase The Ranch in 2004 and to develop it into the safe, happy place it is today – some toward operations, from hiring staff to developing programs. Other key steps included forming a board of directors, and in 2005 obtaining a licence from the Province to operate the facility.

Today Red Roof Retreat has grown to include a community centre in St. Catharines where clients can take part in a range of recreational activities and social events, from bowling and swimming to teen nights and pizza dinners. Red Roof Retreat also owns Kevan's

House on Concession 2 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which offers respite programs for adults on weekends as well as emergency residential care. The house is named after the late Kevan O'Connor, a well-known Niagara-on-the-Lake realtor, and key supporter of Red Roof Retreat from its inception.

In addition to the activities and programs offered at Red Roof's three sites, Bjorgan and her team also take special needs children, teens and young adults out into their communities. It's not unusual for a group from Red Roof Retreat to visit the community centre or to get out for a walk along the Niagara River Parkway.

Having supporters such as the Katz family, Rotary Club and O'Connor has been a key factor in the success of Red Roof Retreat. The organization receives no government funding, and

relies primarily on donations to meet its annual \$1.7 million operating budget. Only a small percentage of the costs of the programs it provides and the salaries of the trained staff who work at Red Roof's facilities are paid for through user fees.

New donors and volunteers are always welcome. Volunteers don't need special training (although they will need to obtain a clear criminal record check from Niagara Regional Police). All that's required, said Bjorgan, "is a desire to help other people and commitment, along with a big, wide-open heart."

She guarantees that if you do volunteer, "you'll walk away from the experience a different person... You really learn to appreciate all the small things."

For more information on Red Roof Retreat and its programs, as well as how to donate or get involved, visit: www.redroofretreat.com.



Steffanie Bjorgan and friends enjoy a quiet moment in the shade at a recent barbecue at Simpson's Pharmacy, which raised money for Red Roof Retreat. (Penny Coles)



Clients to The Ranch enjoy opportunities to explore nature trails and interact with animals. (Terry Davis)



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Back to school with ROCS

There is a nervous buzz in the air for students across the Niagara region as school officially starts for the 2019/2020 school year in just one week's time. For ROCS students, back to school is also filled with excitement, the thrill of re-uniting with teachers and friends and all the anticipation of wonderful learning in the year ahead.

ROCS students, Ruby Elltoft, Colby Martens and Wes Ridesic share some feelings below about the year ahead!



Wes (Grade 3): "I'm super excited to get back to school to see my friends. I can't wait for tech time and coding games. I'm also really looking forward to going to camp with the school and playing gaggle ball there!"



Colby (Grade 1): "Seeing my new classroom and doing math problems. Just the easy ones though."



Ruby (Grade 5): "I am excited for a new classroom, seeing all my friends and having new challenges to accomplish this year!"

ROCS to make milk bag mats

A call for milk bag donations! Please collect and donate milk bag covers for Royal Oak's school milk bag mat project. As of Sept. 19, ROCS will have a donation box at the NOTL community centre for you to drop off collected bags.

See the video link below to learn more about this important initiative of turning waste into useful items for families in need: <https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=631949>.

ROCS clubs 2.0

Royal Oak would also like to announce to the community that our after school clubs this year are open to the entire Niagara region!

If you have a child in Grade 3 or up who would like to join our ROCS kids in their after school programming, please contact the school at royaloak-communityschool@gmail.com and sign up!

The cost for our 12 week after school camps is \$100. Our fall lineup of clubs includes:

- Monday 3:45-4:45**
- Walking Club** - Walk our beautiful community with Ms. McIsaac and explore nature and stay active!
- Tuesday 3:45-4:45**
- Soccer Club** - Join Ms. Koyle and Mr. M., our resident soccer pros for a fun club of learning skills and refining our soccer prowess.
- Thursday 3:45-4:45**
- Knitting Club** - Join Ms. Koyle for knitting club, where students will knit milk bags to donate for sleeping mats for communities in Canada in need. Focus on learning initial knitting skills and creating beautiful and useful mats for others.



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LOCAL SPORTS

Two new members inducted in town's Sports Wall of Fame

Jennifer Chornley
The Local

The Meridian Credit Union Arena corridor containing the town's Sports Wall of Fame served as the backdrop to honour two notable Niagara-on-the-Lake residents for their contribution to community sports.

About 60 friends and family members gathered Friday to celebrate the induction of Doug Garrett and Dave Wall, whose photographs will now

be added to the arena wall.

Garrett was inducted as this year's athlete recipient, while Wall was recognized for his behind-the-scenes efforts as a builder.

Sports Wall of Fame chair Ward Simpson emceed the ceremony and engaged the audience with humour and reminiscing.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates attended on behalf of the Town and Province, presenting plaques of

recognition.

"I am a sports nut and the one event I enjoy coming to yearly is this one," Gates said. "It is amazing to me how you honour your athletes, and more importantly how you build your community."

"The Sports Wall of Fame is a wonderful way to recognize talent, dedication and leadership and community," said Disero in her introductory speech.

"Congratulations for all your successes, all of your ac-

complishments, both on and off, the greens are outstanding," she said to Garrett.

Regarding Wall's contribution, Disero said, "our community is a better place because of your leadership in the arena and on the diamond. Your dedication to the community is incomparable. And, I'm certain the Wall-bangers will continue to play for many, many decades."

When people put so much of their life into giving back to the community, "they are truly community builders. Community builders play a large part in helping a town be what it is," Disero said.

"It is because of you that we have arenas, baseball diamonds and the spirit of Niagara-on-the-Lake that we have."

Introducing Garrett to unveil his photo, Simpson said, "it is every golfer's dream to shoot his age on the golf course, however (Garrett) can't because he is 92 and can never shoot over 90. I'd like to shoot my age, but the way it's going, I'd have to live to be 120."

"It is a great honour to be here," Garrett said. "Thank you to the board for its kind remarks and to the members of the community as I stand here before the Wall of Fame."

Garrett said in his golf career he had only one hole-in-one, Aug. 8, 1971 on the second hole at the old golf course. "In those days," he joked, "there were a lot of holes-in-one that never were, but mine did happen because we had a boy on the hill witnessing it."

Other memories Garrett shared included caddying for 35 cents for nine holes, and 75 cents for 18, and sneaking beer in wrapped-up towels to a group of golfers after they finished their fifth round. "What I am trying to explain is that there is nothing new to having a beer cart on the golf course."

Garrett's golf idol was Ben

Continued on page 19



Doug Garrett, with emcee and committee chair Ward Simpson beside him, recalls his golfing days during the Sports Wall of Fame induction ceremony Friday. (Photos by Jennifer Chornley)



Accompanied by his son Richard, Dave Wall shares some memories at his induction into the Sports Wall of Fame at the Meridian Credit Union Arena.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
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61						62				63				
64						65				66				

- Across:**
1 Wander
5 White or Blue African river
9 Ahura ---, Zoroastrian Supreme Being
14 "... Marching --- war ..."
(Sabine Baring-Gould)
15 Downright dastardly
16 Sherlock seeks them
17 Supercelebrity
18 Immeasurably long periods
19 Heavenly supporter
20 Causes house moves in California?
23 "... Venus sets --- Mercury can rise" (Pope)
24 Some
25 For each
26 Piece on earth?
28 Timber management
33 Lay
34 Wedding attendant
35 Weeding implement
36 Ironclad Mrs. Rice encrypted some FBI database entries
40 GWB, to GHWB
41 Quaintly ancient
42 Flag
43 Really?
46 "In your dreams!"
47 It never gets off the ground
- in Australia
48 Home to Jaguars but not Panthers
49 A decade
52 Sub rosa
58 Found in rings and bulbs
59 "Battle Hymn of the Republic" author
60 Pennsylvania resident famous in February
61 Fatty acid, for example
62 And the rest
63 Kansas movie barker
64 Corporate bigwigs
65 Century note
66 Double-click, perhaps
- Down:**
1 Elevate
2 Half of "The Odd Couple"
3 Pet Antonio fusses about sometime
4 Nat King Cole's "--- Lisa"
5 "Well You ---" (Theltonious Monk)
6 Trade in the elephant variety is illegal
7 Short note
8 "Lohengrin" heroine
9 Big name in antivirus software
10 Tables with frontals
- 11 Bantu language
12 Distribute cards
13 Helper, for short
21 Model --- Campbell
22 Bender
27 "Solaris" author Stanislaw ---
28 Golfer who won three British Opens and three Masters
29 Giant people-eater
30 Place to find a bargain
31 Staffs
32 Triumphant cry
33 28 Down is one of them
34 Friends
36 "--- : Miami" (CBS hit)
37 Still in dreamland
38 Superior herring?
39 "Halt! --- fire!"
44 Valiant
45 They're made in reparation
46 Far away from home
48 Up in arms
50 Cream of the crop
51 It can run while you walk
52 Flat-fish
53 Multi-user computer operating system
54 About to go off?
55 "---- Call Me MISTER Tibbs!"
56 Jot
57 "He's --- no good"

SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across: 1 Roam, 5 Nile, 9 Mazda, 14 As to, 15 Evil, 16 Clues, 17 Icon, 18 Eons, 19 Altas, 20 San Andreas Fault, 23 Ere, 24 Amy, 25 Per, 26 Plot, 28 Forestry, 33 Poem, 34 Page, 35 Hoe, 36 Criminal records, 40 Son, 41 Olde, 42 Ins, 43 Is that so, 46 As if, 47 Emu, 48 A F C, 49 Ten, 52 Surreptitiously, 58 Onion, 59 Howe, 60 Phil, 61 Lipid, 62 Et al, 63 Toto, 64 Execs, 65 Yard, 66 Open.

Down: 1 Raise, 2 Oscar, 3 At one point, 4 Mona, 5 Needn't, 6 Ivory, 7 Line, 8 Eliza, 9 McAfee, 10 Altars, 11 Zulu, 12 Deal, 13 Assist, 14 Naom, 22 Spree, 27 Lem, 28 Faldo, 29 Ogre, 30 Thrift shop, 31 Rods, 32 Yes, 33 Pios, 34 Pais, 36 C S I, 37 Not up, 38 Cisco, 39 Or, 44 Heric, 45 Amends, 46 Afield, 48 At war, 50 Elite, 51 Nylon, 52 Sole, 53 UNIX, 54 Ripe, 55 They, 56 Iota, 57 Up to.

LOCAL SPORTS

Wall instrumental in fundraising for arena

Continued from page 17

Hogan, who said, “The most important shot in golf is the next one. And, that is true.”

Another prominent golfer Garrett worked alongside was George Knudson, who taught Garrett the fundamentals, rules and how to control his temper.

“I was golfing with him one day and made a terrible shot. I was so mad I threw my golf club. He made me go get it, looked at me and said, ‘you are off the course for two weeks.’”

“Boy, I cried. I certainly learned my lesson, never threw another club.”

Knudson carried a tiny camera and took photos of Garrett’s swing in each of the stages. When Knudson laid out the photos and pointed out what Garrett needed for his swing and where the equipment was to be placed, showing the pro as “ahead of his time” in teaching the sport, Garrett said.

Garrett’s Wall of Fame description says, “A Veteran, Legionnaire, Mason and even a former horse-drawn wagon milkman, Doug Garrett still made his largest impression on our community on the golf course. His personality, competitiveness and athleticism led him to 21 NOTL Club Championships at all levels plus one Senior Champion of Champions for the entire Niagara District. His indomitable spirit and joyous personality coupled with innumerable course records still evoke joy and awe for all those who know him.”

Garrett also extended congratulations to Wall for his acknowledgement as a builder, saying he considered it a privilege and honour to be inducted

with Wall, especially since they were fellow golfers and played a few rounds of locker room cards.

Wall’s Wall of Fame photo description cites him as, “In youth, a well-rounded athlete in a myriad of sports, it is primarily for Dave’s behind-the-scenes efforts he is now being honoured. Dave was instrumental in the organization and fundraising for both of Niagara’s Arenas. Among many other accomplishments, he was one of the initiators of the Wallbangers Hockey Team in 1984, which continues to thrive to this day. He was also a director, coach and manager of the slo-pitch league and sponsored innumerable sports teams for decades in all of NOTL’s youth leagues. His enduring legacy will long remain something to strive for all the thankful residents of NOTL.”

As an avid sports fan, Wall was energetic, enjoyed playing sports and worked to achieve the highest level he could. He played hockey, baseball, decades of golf and in his retirement years took up tennis, horseshoes and billiards.

Simpson introduced Wall as a “successful businessman, as there was always a sale at Walls Furniture,” drawing some laughs from the crowd.

He said that Wall’s contributions to the building of two Virgil arenas, establishing the NOTL Wallbangers, and helping to build the ball diamonds were important, successful contributions to the community.

Upon receiving the honour, Wall said, “It’s nice to be in a community where people love their community more

than they love themselves.”

Wall’s son Richard described his father’s achievements as “visionary.”

He recalled that when his father joined the Virgil Business Association (VBA) in the early 1960s, the organization had mandated it wanted to do something that benefited the community.

“In the 1950s and 60s, there wasn’t a lot of infrastructure for sports as far as arenas, but there were some outdoor skating rinks, baseball and soccer fields,” Richard said.

When Wall was elected the second president of the Virgil Business Association, town council and the association decided to build Virgil’s first closed-in arena.

With that, Wall took the position of chair of the fundraising campaign.

The goal was \$120,000, which, Richard said, “was a stretch. That was a lot of money in those days and a lot of

people wanted it, but they were unsure and couldn’t believe it could be done. It was too much for a small community.”

Nonetheless, the fundraising was completed and in 1967 the Centennial Arena opened.

Wall and the VBA’s fundraising efforts were recognized at then provincial level in a letter written by the then Premier John Robarts, citing it was the most successful fundraising campaign in celebration of Canada’s centennial anniversary.

The same year, the Town of NOTL recognized the community milestone by naming Wall Citizen of the Year.

Richard described the recognition as “pivotal” moments for his father.

The visionary term Richard explained as “coming from his understanding that sports is an important part of the community, is a creative social fabric and he realized that it was something

that would be a benefit to the community to help the community grow.”

“Somebody had to take a leadership role, which I believe he did,” Richard added.

Richard followed in his father’s footsteps in the early 2000s when the town decided to add a second arena and he was asked to sit on the fundraising committee.

Again, similar to the Centennial Arena fundraising campaign, it was “still a lot of dollars to raise,” however, the committee was energetic and great thus again, achieving the goal ahead of schedule and on budget and opened in September 2003.

Wall’s love for hockey led to the establishment of the Wallbangers in 1984, which evolved into a travelling team. The team originally began as a multi-generational father-son unit that played pick-up hockey at 6:30 a.m. Sunday mornings as that was the only ice time available.

With that in mind, Richard recalled the Sunday after the second arena’s official grand opening, the Wallbangers played the first ice time of 6:30 a.m.

“Not only did the Wallbangers get the recognition of the first ice time, but also we got together as three generations, myself, my father and my son and were the first to step out onto the ice,” he said.

In addition, Richard considers having a sports complex like the Centennial Arena a victory, especially in the 1960s and today, the best of its kind for the community of its size in the province.

“Not only can we be proud as a family, but as a community,” Richard said. “We achieved great success with a lot of people involved in making it happen.”

The NOTL Sports Wall of Fame was established to recognize those who have made considerable contributions to sports in the community either as an athlete or community builder.

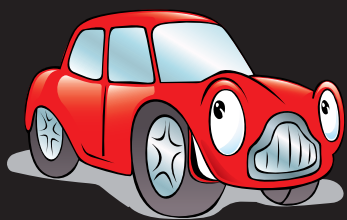
Pickleball courts well-used



It was a busy day on the pickleball courts in Virgil Saturday, with Jarvis and Gord Neufeld returning the serves from Braydon and Simon Archer. They said playing outdoors is more fun than the indoor game, although a wind screen would be helpful — the wind has a big effect on the light ball used in the sport. Sophia and Andrew Attema were also enjoying the new courts, liking the outdoor exercise, they said. (Fred Mercnik)

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