



**Celebration  
of Nations  
this weekend**  
**page 15**

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George Bandak and his father Chris Bandak are the champions of the men's A doubles at the NOTL Tennis Club. For more tennis results see page 23. (Sonja Schindeler)

## Owner explains design of new Line 1 house

**Mike Balsom**  
**The Local**

Construction of a modern three-story home at 729 Line 1 in Virgil has been turning a lot of heads lately.

After receiving a number of inquiries about the building, The Local contacted property owner Chris Draayer and a few homeowners who live nearby.

Some of those neighbours have expressed concern to The Local, and also through social media, that it looks like an apartment building, or that it is being built with the purpose of opening an Airbnb.

Draayer, who lives in Virgil not far from the house under construction, insists that despite what many people assume, when it is done it will simply be a three-bedroom single family home.

"It's on a very, very small lot," Draayer says, "the old Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro property. Nobody even knew it was there, it was all overgrown with weeds and enclosed by a chain link fence. It's just 50 by 60 feet."

Draayer contacted NOTL Hydro and offered to purchase the lot. Once the agreement was reached he had some remedial work done to clean it up. He then hired an architect to come up with a design for a house that would fit on a very small property.

"It's not an apartment building, it's not multi-unit, it's a three-bedroom tiny house that goes up in the air 35 feet," he says. "When it's done, I think people will see that it's unique, and that it makes good use of a property that would have been other-

**Continued on page 2**

## Questions, concerns over \$1 million clean-up continue

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

A representative of the provincial environmental office overseeing the clean-up of the Cole Drain says the town took appropriate steps to contain and clean up the material in the drain to protect the environment.

However, the contents of that material, referred to as an organic pollutant in last week's update from the town, had not yet been fully explained by Tuesday, leaving some to question, including one town councillor,

whether spending more than \$1 million on pumping and removal of the material was necessary, or an excessive and unnecessary expenditure of taxpayers' money.

Residents who live near the drain, concerned last week about the lack of communication from the town, were invited to a virtual meeting Thursday evening — a full two weeks after the vacuum trucks showed up in their neighbourhood very early one morning. They were given an update from environmental and drains supervisor Brett Ruck, told the

material was not hazardous, and that he had seen frogs and turtles still living in the water. There was nothing further about the source of the material, but Ruck told them the cause of the incident might never be known.

One person who attended said there were only five residents, along with Ruck and acting operations director Kevin Turcotte. There were others who have property with the drain on it or nearby, who likely didn't attend because they were unfamiliar with virtual meetings, not from a lack of interest,

she said.

By late last week, the clean-up operation was called off, and the vacuuming of the drain halted. The berms created to stop the flow of the drain into Four Mile Creek had been dismantled and the black water disappeared.

A neighbour said Tuesday morning there was some water in the drain from the recent rain — not a lot — but it is still black.

The large blue tanks that were used to contain the contents of the drain as it was pumped out were still on-site,

but she'd seen no truck activity in a few days.

She told The Local she feels confident "the town is doing as much as it can. I felt better after that meeting. I'm not as anxious any more."

Although she says she wishes it wasn't going to cost taxpayers \$1 million to clean up, her perspective living so close to it is a little different than others.

"It's a lot of money, but if it had been hazardous, it could have been a lot worse."

Rural residents don't get a lot of services for their taxes, she said, but this has been

something significant that had them very nervous, and she doesn't fault town staff for their quick actions initiating the clean-up.

Cluckie explained to The Local Thursday that although the material in the drain was not hazardous, the levels of concentration of some of the contents found in the lab analysis were higher than normal, and had to be prevented from reaching Four Mile Creek. The material that was pumped into the tanks was at first being sent

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# House on small lot meets all zoning bylaws

Continued from page 1

wise just sitting there.”

Draayer, who has previously developed the old Wall’s of Virgil property as well as the old Virgil fire hall, says he and his wife are not planning to move into the home once it is done.

“I’ll stand back and look at it once it’s complete,” he laughs. “I’ll either be in love with it and want to keep it, and rent it long-term, or I’ll sell it. I hope we can finish

by Christmas.”

He insists he has no plans to run it as an Airbnb, either.

The home will feature a central staircase and a glass tube elevator that runs from the first floor to the third. The basement will contain a small rec room, a wine cellar and a rough-in for a three-piece bathroom, as well as utilities.

There is a garage on the south side of the ground floor, with doors to be added to the front and back. A small bedroom or office sits

on the north side, beside a three-piece washroom.

“Every bedroom has an en-suite,” Draayer says. “It’s all very small, very compact. It’s almost in a nautical design style. And there’s lots of balcony space, with five balconies.”

The showpiece of the house will be the second floor, where an open-concept layout features a kitchen, dining and living rooms, with large windows both front and back. The top floor houses the master bedroom and a smaller bedroom.

Draayer says he spoke to the neighbours whose properties abut the lot at number 729. When The Local spoke to neighbours on the street, some of them expressed dismay that no information was given to them prior to construction beginning. As well, there were no public notices posted on the property announcing applications for any minor variances.

“We proposed a plan to the town, and originally they pushed back a bit,” Draayer says. “Instead of going for any minor variances, we made a plan that stuck within the limits. Everything is to code, within code and within the zoning restrictions.”

That was seemingly confirmed by town officials. In response to questions posed



This is a sketch of what it will look like finished. (Supplied)

by The Local, NOTL’s communications coordinator Marah Minor said in an email, “the applicant applied to construct a three-storey dwelling with a below-ground basement. Building staff reviewed the building height, and it complies with the maximum height provision of 10 metres contained in the town’s zoning bylaw. No variances have been applied for at this address. The proposal meets all zoning bylaw requirements.”

Draayer expresses frustration with the current climate for construction. Supply chain issues have meant delays in the delivery of materials and problems sched-

uling tradespeople to complete important steps in the process. And he’s been frustrated with delays at the town caused by staffing changes.

His other project, an addition to the plaza on the old Wall’s property to house a Swiss Chalet and Harvey’s, is also being affected by those same issues. Those plans are currently in their third year without a shovel in the ground.

Draayer is adamant that once 729 Line 1 is completed it will be an improvement to the neighbourhood in which he actually lives, just around the corner.

“It was just a weeded, grown-over bush,” he says.

“It’s an improvement in this space. Now that the balconies are on, I think it’s starting to show its interesting character. Once the (exterior) finishes are on it’s going to clean it up nicely.”

He adds, “we need more living spaces, more houses, more rental homes. There doesn’t appear to be enough room. The town is not opening up a lot of space to do it on, and with farming and agricultural restrictions we are running out of buildable, developable land within our boundaries. This was a scrap piece of land that would have otherwise sat as scrap. Soon it will be a fully-functioning living space.”



The three-storey house is only 1,600 square feet, on a very small lot. (Mike Balsom)

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# Involvement of ministry not clearly understood

Continued from page 1

to Mors Refining Systems, an environmental waste company in Beamsville, she said, but once the composition of the material in the drain was known, the region approved taking it to the regional Port Weller water treatment plant in St. Catharines, beside Sunset Beach.

Niagara-on-the-Lake mining engineer Ron Simkus told The Local that when he heard about the smell coming from the drain, it began to sound like swamp water, old decaying matter that has been underground for hundreds of years in an oxygen-free environment rising to the surface. He is convinced it is not a spill, and he is also quite certain the town didn't need to spend an estimated \$1 million to clean it up.

Simkus, retired from a career of working with what lies underground, says a spill is accidental, and hazardous. He told The Local he believes that what the town staff saw in the Cole Drain last Aug. 17 was neither, and in an email blast he sends out regularly to more than 100 residents, he shared his view that it is swamp water.

Cluckie told The Local Thursday that although the initial lab results on the material in the drain had been received, tests were continuing on the sediment, which would provide more information on the content, and also on where it had come from. The results would lead to forensic tests along the drain as part of the investigation into the source.

Staff have walked the length of the drain, and have been unable to find any indication of material entering it, Cluckie said.

Despite assurances that the town wants to be open and transparent, when The Local asked for the lab analysis, Marah Minor, the communications coordinator, said that information would not be released without making a request through the Freedom of Information process.

CAO Marnie Cluckie said Thursday the amount of material removed from the drain was more than one million litres. Although that material "has no name," she said it is what would be expected to be found in a drain, but at higher levels of concentration than normal. She mentioned the

BOD level being high.

Simkus explains biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) represents the amount of oxygen consumed by bacteria and other microorganisms while they decompose organic matter under aerobic (with oxygen present) conditions at a specified temperature. "The greater the BOD, the more rapidly oxygen is depleted in the stream. This means less oxygen is available to higher forms of aquatic life," he said. "The consequences of high BOD are the same as those for low dissolved oxygen: aquatic organisms become stressed, suffocate, and die."

The frogs and turtles Ruck saw in the drain, Simkus added, don't require oxygen in the water.

Simkus said he couldn't see why letting the water flow into Four Mile Creek would have any impact. The liquid would be diluted, and even more so when it got to Lake Ontario. As it flows, he explained, it would gain oxygen, and afterwards be darker in colour, but harmless. Instead it's being taken to Port Weller, "where it will be treated by bubbling air through it."

Another resident with experience trucking waste said he's been told the material being taken to Port Weller has a low level of e-coli — not what you would expect from a septic tank leak, but from the excrement of "a few deer or coyotes" in the area.

His question is how much the town is paying for multiple truck loads being taken to sewage treatment plants for disposal, and whether the town has any idea how many trucks or how much time is being spent on this. "I wonder if anyone is on-site monitoring this?"

His problem, like others, is that his questions to the town are not being answered.

Kim Groomsbridge, the Niagara manager of the drinking water and environmental compliance division of the Ministry of the Environment Conservation & Parks, provided some information about the situation in an email to The Local Friday afternoon, but again, nothing further on the contents of the drain, or the source. Residents have dealt with Phil Hull from the MECP onsite, and questions sent to him by The Local were answered by Groomsbridge, his boss.

A spill under Ontario's Environmental Protection Act "is a discharge of a contaminant to the natural environment that is abnormal in quality and quantity," Groomsbridge said, and although the ministry and town continue to call it a spill, they haven't explained how or where the contaminant was discharged.

On Aug. 17, shortly after 7 p.m., the ministry's Spills Action Centre was notified by the town about "an unknown black material resembling sewage in the municipal ditch at Concession Rd 6 and Line 6 Rd in Niagara-on-the-Lake," Groomsbridge said.

"We take all spills and threats to the environment seriously and respond to reports of materials that have the potential to cause an adverse effect to the environment."

Groomsbridge said "owners of pollutants are required by provincial law to report spills. Municipalities are also required to report spills to the ministry, unless they believe the ministry has already been notified."

Asked if the municipality should have known whether the material was hazardous, or if that is for SAC to determine, Groomsbridge said "it is the ministry's role to respond to incidents such as spills that could have an adverse impact on the natural environment or human health, and to ensure that those responsible take all necessary steps to clean up any spills to the natural environment. As part of the clean-up, the responsible parties must characterize the material being cleaned up and if it is determined to be a hazardous waste, additional disposal requirements must be followed."

She explained the town was given verbal direction, followed up later in an email. She said the ministry did not issue an order, which is a legal document that must be followed, and that "the town has voluntarily taken steps to contain the material to the Cole Drain and carry out the clean-up."

She said environmental officers had been to the site "frequently" to ensure that appropriate actions were being taken to address the spill — she did not answer when or how many times — and did not address directly when or how the ministry knew whether it was

hazardous material, or if the process would have unfolded differently if it had not been treated as a spill.

At last week's council meeting Coun. Erwin Wiens expressed his frustration at the lack of answers from the town and the expense of the clean-up, and he continues to.

Town staff are not being open and transparent, as they said they would be, he said, "they're closed and opaque."

There are three simple questions that should have been answered by now, the councillor said. "What is it, what caused it, and are we insured for it? If the town doesn't know the answer to those first three questions, we have a serious issue. It's close to three weeks now, and we should know exactly what it is, what caused it, and if insurance is going to pay for it."

While he has sympathy for the residents in the area, he said if the town was doing its job, it should have known very quickly if the material in the drain was naturally-occurring sewage.

He believes it was, and "absent any other information," all the time and money spent was to clean up non-hazardous, non-lethal, non-polluting water.

He has had no other information from the town to tell him otherwise, "zero," he said. His questions aren't being answered either.

The installation of the berms to stop the flow of water through the drain contained whatever it was, and that should have been the end of it until the content was known and any more money spent, he said.

"The question is, would you want \$1 million spent on swamp water?"

Another local expert, Dr. Keith Kennedy, is a geologist with a career in environmental issues who is also trying to get to the bottom of the content and source of the material in the drain, and is questioning who on town staff had the authority to commit to the expensive clean-up.

The first step, he said, should have been determining whether the content was harmless. The MECP should have taken field samples, "straight-forward tests" that would have given them information how to proceed.

"Everything depends on



This photo was taken of Cole Drain Tuesday, Sept. 6.



Drain photo taken Aug. 30.

that first step, the contents of the spill. And it seems nobody knew what that was."

If the town doesn't have qualified staff on hand to make that determination, the MECP, he suggests, should have offered guidance.

He would expect someone from the MECP would have knowledge that would enable them to "use their eyes and noses," take some samples and get them to a lab to see if the content justified taking action.

"They're the regulators," he said. "They have the expertise."

If it's decided it's not hazardous, "it becomes a matter of quantity, and not a quality

issue." Instead, it seems decisions were made about how to proceed "without data, without analysis, without knowing how contaminated it was."

"That's water under the bridge now," he said Tuesday, after walking the length of the drain himself.

"The good news is there isn't anything residual in the drain. There doesn't seem to have been any adverse effects."

The future should bring "an autopsy," a debriefing of what happened, said Kennedy, "and hopefully it will be made public."

Questions to the town, the region and to the ministry were not answered by press time.



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# Men needed for library’s second speed dating event

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Whether you’re looking for a life-long partner or just a chance to meet new people, there is an event to present just such an opportunity, and it’s being held nearby.

The NOTL Public Library is hosting *Between the Stacks*, its second speed dating session, Sept 17, and it needs more men.

“Check out more than books,” the library’s website says. “Find love among the stacks,” this time for men and women between 60 and 75 years old.

Debbie Krause, the library’s community engagement coordinator, says although it might seem an unusual event for a library to organize, it meets one of its goals, “to build social connections,” especially after COVID.

Libraries have been about much more than books for many years, and

there are always discussions among staff as to what more they can do to bring people together. After the pandemic there was a sense that many were suffering from two years of limited social interaction.

“We’ve seen speed dating on TV, and thought, wouldn’t it be nice to try it in the library. We have a really good space, and the heart of the library is bringing people together, building social connections in a social structure. Only this is a little more specific.”

Offering it to a younger crowd seemed like an obvious way to start, so the first event, held in July, was for those aged 28 to 40 — people who are already used to making connections online, and using dating apps, says Krause.

When staff considered holding the event, they looked online for models to follow. They found very few held in a library, none close by, and most were in

the U.S. “It’s definitely out of the box,” she says.

Staff came up with a good layout to follow to make it more comfortable and relaxed for the six men and eight women registered for the first event. They placed six square card tables throughout the library — by the fireplace, near the doors to the garden, and among the stacks, all locations offering some privacy.

The men were each given a table, on which was a list of conversation-starters in case there was some awkwardness to begin with, says Krause — safe questions such as “what did you have for dinner,” or “where have you been on vacation.”

The women rotated through the tables, with a five-minute limit for the one-on-one chats, and a brief pause in between, the two extra women having a chance to visit while they waited.

Continued on page 11



Tables will be set up around the library for *Between the Stacks*, the next one for those 60 to 75. (Photo supplied)



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Barbara Schmidt, owner of Pilates Emporium

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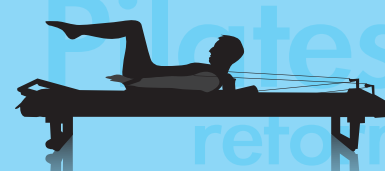
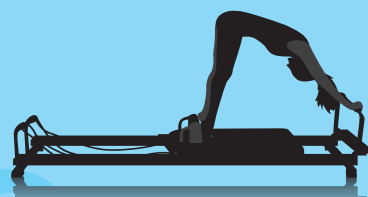
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# EDITORIAL

## If it isn't swamp water, what is it?

So many questions, so few answers.

In fairness, questions about the Cole Drain to the town, the region and to the local office of the MECP (Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks) by The Local, and several individuals we've spoken to, were sent Monday (a holiday) or Tuesday, the day after a holiday.

The Local goes to press at the end of the day Tuesday. By the time the paper is delivered Wednesday morning, the answers may have been as well. If so there will be updates to the story online. But there were no responses by 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, from any of the three levels of government. That's not a good sign.

And really, the questions

were nothing new — the same have been asked in one form or another for almost three weeks now, since we first heard there was a spill that may not have been a spill, of material possibly hazardous, likely not, or maybe a little, early on the morning of Thursday, Aug. 18. It had been reported to the ministry's Spills Action Centre Wednesday at about 7 p.m.

The mystery remains about what happened those first few hours, and early Thursday morning, once daylight arrived, how conclusions were arrived at that led to the actions taken.

We know samples were taken, but not when, or if by the town, the region, the ministry, or all three. Well, somebody

knows, but it has so far not been made public.

And although the town explained they experienced some delay getting the results, experts ask if field samples were taken to at least provide some basic information when the spill or not-a-spill was reported. We don't know the answer. Again, somebody does.

We also don't know why we don't have the answers we're looking for.

Marnie Cluckie was gracious enough to talk to The Local last Thursday during what have been a very busy time, an unusual event, when questions nowadays have to be emailed and are answered by one of the town's communications or pub-

lic engagement staff — usually with a line that says "quotes can be attributed to . . ." But they don't sound like quotes, they sound like carefully crafted responses vetted by several people.

The questions that couldn't be answered led to more questions, and those remain unanswered. Meanwhile experts are weighing in, saying the material cleaned up and trucked away was swamp water, something natural in the environment, and nobody is telling us that is not the case.

Coun. Erwin Wiens shares that frustration. Talk of "in the old days" is really about the difference of just a few years, less than a term of council ago, when councillors and media could actually speak to the staff person they needed. Not that long ago we could pick up the phone and talk to the CAO, any of the department directors or relevant staff. Wiens says for years he would enter the building and head downstairs to ask his ques-

tions, and more recently, at first, as a councillor, was encouraged to talk to staff. Not any more.

So this is the new way to do things. It can't help feeling like we have a small town operating like it's the GTA, protecting itself from what? Is there something going on that we can't know about? Is there a need to keep information that close? Whether it's councillors or the press, the questions asked are only to inform the public.

So, back to the matter at hand, the Cole Drain.

The town may have responded appropriately. The MECP says it has. They may both have simply been erring on the side of caution, and \$1 million or more is the price to pay for that. The town may not have had staff that understood the process, staff who weren't trained in handling what could have been a real disaster, who simply didn't know what to do, or maybe took the wrong advice.

Or the right advice. We simply don't know.

If anything good is to come of this situation, it must be what can be learned for the future. Did the town have a manual for staff to turn to? Did staff have a pre-determined process to follow? We don't know. We do know, as Coun. Wiens said, "this wasn't their first rodeo," so if they didn't, they should have. Does the town have trained staff for such incidents? And back-up staff if the person at the top of the list isn't available?

These seem simple procedures that could and should be put in place.

We're told there is legislation to follow. Is it being followed?

The other lesson, which does not come easily to any level of government, is that in the long run, open, honest and timely communication, should be the go-to policy.

**Penny Coles**  
The Local



## View from the couch

**Donald Combe**  
Special to The Local

*The Duke* (Prime, 2021) is the story of a real working-class pensioner who steals a famous portrait of the Duke of Wellington and

holds it for ransom in exchange for free TV licences. It is a simple, but profound story of values. Jim Broadbent and Helen Mirren are superbly cast.

*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.*

## Local LETTERS

### Worthy withdraws from a 'crowded field' of candidates

I would like to announce that I am officially withdrawing my bid to run as Regional Councillor here in Niagara's 2022 Electoral Campaign. This has been an incredibly hard decision. I felt encouraged, challenged, and inspired by the potential of becoming the next regional councillor.

However, the field is quite crowded.

Which is a good thing — it shows we have some strong, civic-minded citizens. Plus this is the first time that I can find a record of any women running for this elected position. And there were two of us. Which is tremendous. And our platforms are very similar — honouring heritage, the

arts, our agricultural base, and careful intelligent stewardship of our communities as they grow.

But I won't be very far away. I like municipal politics, and I'll

be watching very closely, and intend to stay very much involved.

Thank you for all your enthusiasm and encouragement.

**Barbara Worthy**

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**Local**  
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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## Autumn sedum

**Marla Percy**  
Special to The Local

We've rolled into September and have enjoyed the Gardens of the Week, but all our gardens are starting to have that look — sigh! However, this final garden has many plants that stand up well into the fall. Autumn sedum (aka stonecrop) packs a punch when other plants have faded and browned.

Actually sedums are a wonder all summer long, because they grow in full sun, can survive some drought and their greyish green succulent leaves are a wonderful backdrop for other plants. They are virtually indestructible. The Autumn Joy series has the loveliest smokey pink flowers which grow about two feet high and two feet wide.

This one in Dena's garden may be an Autumn Fire, which

tends to be a bit more reddish than the Autumn Joy.

The plants can be divided easily or started from cuttings. They turn a coppery brown in late fall and have their own merit when all else is gone. Cut back to the ground in late

autumn or very early spring, and you will be rewarded by their tiny round heads when they push out of the ground around the time your tulips are blooming. Happy gardening — summer 2023 is just around the corner.



## Garden of the Week



Dena Broeders and Dave Hunter on Balmoral Drive are the last Garden of the Week winners for this season. This property displays specimen plants and trees. There is a large mix of mostly perennials, but also annuals, grasses and ground coverings using yellow, pinks and reds for the colour palette. The garden features kousa dogwood, Chinese wisteria and Hindi cypress as focal points. (Photo supplied)



# COMMENT

## Local LETTERS

### Peach Celebration not so peachy for some visitors

It felt like an old friend had just stabbed us in the back!

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, you would think that NOTL would want to greet its visitors with open arms. Not levy a fine on those people who had to park on the grass in order to come and spend their money at the Peach Celebration.

We are a family from Ajax, Ontario who have attended the NOTL Peach Celebration for the past many years. And yes, we still came to visit NOTL in 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic period, even though the event was on hold.

On Saturday, Aug. 13, the day of this year's Peach Celebration, we arrived in Niagara-on-the-Lake at approximately 12:30 p.m. While overall parking was scarce, we were pleased to find space at the Hospital Lot (at Byron St.).

I immediately went to the meter assigned to the lot and

used the "contactless payment" method and obtained my receipt through e-mail. While I found the \$24 fee a bit onerous, as we had to park on the grass field (there were no clear indications as to where not to park), we were nevertheless glad that we could now go and enjoy the Festival!

A couple of hours later, to our surprise, as we came back to our car to deliver a load of peaches and other purchases, there was a "Penalty Notice" (Parking Ticket for \$30) under the windshield wiper, stating we were not parked within a "designated space".

The parking lot signage clearly indicates "find parking space", and we found a parking space within the area available. There were no chains, concrete barriers or otherwise clear restrictions barring parking on the grass area.

However, in reality, the bigger issue is much more than

the fact a fine was levied on law abiding visitors. Most people will simply pay the \$30 ticket and be done with it.

Yes, it felt like an old friend had just stabbed us in the back. And as such I am certainly inclined to go and spend my money somewhere else next year. And from the expression and comments of the many others who received similar tickets on that Saturday, I expect I am not alone to feel that way.

This is where a municipality needs to work with its merchants and its Chamber of Commerce in order to ensure its visitors feel treated fairly and want to come back.

While I have appealed it, I have now paid the \$30 fine.

But this family will now travel and discover more welcoming Ontario towns next year.

**Robert de Savoye**  
Ajax, ON

## Local LETTERS

### Different perspective on proposed roundabout

As the self-proclaimed president of the Roundabout Appreciation Society Niagara I am writing to give a different perspective on the much-maligned proposed roundabout for the centre of St. Davids (The Local, Aug. 31).

Mr. Gartner indicated that "In St. Davids...[I] haven't heard from one resident who supports a roundabout at that intersection." There are 2 problems with this observation. The first is that in such an emotionally/politically charged atmosphere in St. Davids it is not surprising that supporters would keep their views to themselves. Secondly, the implication is that this intersection is of importance only to the residents of St. Davids. Were this at a little-used intersection of purely local streets, that attitude would be appropriate. However, this intersection is where 2 busy regional roads come together. This means that the issue is one affecting not just local residents but also others living in NOTL, in the Region of Niagara and beyond (because of the tourists who frequent NOTL).

Although I respect Mr. Gartner's background as a municipal planner, I don't believe that he was correct in telling councillors

that "statistics show roundabouts are safer for vehicles, but not for pedestrians". Addressing the issue of pedestrian safety, Bill Burnett in a 2021 piece entitled "Pedestrian Friendly Roundabouts" wrote: "There are some misconceptions that roundabouts pose a greater danger to pedestrians than traditional intersections with traffic signal or stop control. Roundabouts are a proven way to increase safety and efficiency for all those sharing the road—including pedestrians. Federal Highway Administration and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studies have shown that properly designed roundabouts result in as much as a 40 percent reduction in pedestrian collisions along with other significant improvements in safety over more traditional intersections." He then lists 9 features of properly designed roundabouts to achieve that enhancement of pedestrian safety. A similar conclusion was reached by J.R. Stone, et al, in a 2002 study commissioned in relation to a planned roundabout in North Carolina.

Mr. Gartner does not dispute that roundabouts are safer for vehicular traffic than other forms of intersection controls. J.R. Stone

noted that "The circulating traffic movements at roundabouts eliminate or drastically reduce the critical conflicts resulting from red light running, left turns against opposing traffic, right angle conflicts at corners and rear-end collisions. As a result roundabouts significantly reduce vehicular crashes." To that can be added the environmental improvements that result from freer traffic flow and lower tailpipe exhausts from idling vehicles.

As a frequent user of this intersection, I strongly support the proposal for a roundabout at that intersection so long as recognized proper design principles to protect pedestrians are followed by the Region in building this roundabout. Now if only the Niagara Parks Commission would build a roundabout here in Queenston at the intersection of the Niagara River Parkway and York Road/Street that would significantly improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists who have to navigate this badly designed intersection in crossing from one part of the pathway to reach its continuation on the other side.

**Ron Fritz**  
Queenston

#### Letters! We want letters!

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

## How did healthcare come to this for our seniors?

### MPP Wayne Gates Niagara Falls Riding

In my life I've been lucky and humbled to have been elected by our community four times provincially, and to my own local council before that. In all of my years of legislating I can honestly say I don't believe I've seen a more cruel piece of Legislation than Bill 7.

If you think that's a grand statement, allow me to explain what Bill 7 is going to do to seniors and those with disabilities.

It could not be clearer that Ontario is facing a hospital crisis. Numerous emergency rooms across Ontario have entirely shut down because of a lack of staff. Nurses are leaving the profession in droves, and communities continue to struggle to get the doctors they need to provide care for residents.

Working together, we've

undertaken massive efforts to ensure Niagara is not a region facing these issues, but it's clear our local health system is stressed to the breaking point. There are major issues facing our healthcare system, but certainly one of them is the fact that alternative level of care (ALC) patients are stuck waiting in our hospitals despite the need for long-term care (LTC) or home care. The reason they are there is because the province has failed to create enough long-term care beds in their communities. To compound issues, Personal Support Workers (PSWs) required for home-care continue to have their wages held back, to be chronically underpaid and overworked. Instead of attracting PSWs to care for our seniors in their own homes, they are leaving the profession. All of this means that seniors and those

with disabilities are waiting in hospital beds until their name comes up on a wait-list.

The solution here should be straightforward. Pay healthcare workers and PSWs a wage that matches the level of work they do for our families. Open new, publicly-funded and available LTC beds so our loved ones know they'll be spending their twilight years in comfortable facilities. Attract more doctors to service our communities. These are common-sense proposals that should be the basic responsibility of a government.

This is not what happened. Instead, we got Bill 7.

Bill 7 attempts to address this problem in the cruelest way possible. Bill 7 says explicitly that it empowers administrators to share your medical information without your consent to private long-term care home operators, and ultimate-

ly move patients without their consent. Quoting from the bill itself, the actions "may only be performed without consent if reasonable efforts have been made to obtain the consent of the ALC patient or their substitute decision-maker."

Here's the thing – administrators have always already had the power to have these discussions and make efforts to move patients. So the only thing that changes here is the Ford government has now authorized moving seniors without their consent if they say no.

So why might a senior say no to being moved? Well, in most communities the publicly-funded beds are occupied. In many cases, the only homes with open beds are private, for-profit homes that may have records of poor care. Many of these open beds continue to be in the homes that only pro-

vide air conditioning in common areas, not in the private rooms where residents sleep or quarantine for days if there's a COVID outbreak.

Though the government has yet to regulate how far they can send a loved one without their consent, leaked discussions say that some communities could send patients as far as 300 km away. When I made the comment that people might be shipped to the other side of Niagara, the government insinuated that seniors would have no problem getting to the other side of Niagara Region, regardless if they drive or not. This entire time Ford's part-time Minister of Long-Term Care, who is juggling several portfolios, offered nothing but excuses as to why seniors and those who are disabled would be happy to be sent to communities they don't know and into homes with du-

bious records. We've seen every answer in the book so far, except any single one that contains compassion for the generation that built our province.

The other problem will be, what constitutes 'reasonable efforts'? Both Ford and his part-time LTC minister have flip-flopped on whether or not patients will be threatened with paying the uninsured hospital rate if they don't want to be shipped to a different community; that rate can be as high as \$1,800 a day.

Whether they're being bullied or coerced, both solutions are awful. Caring for the generations that came before is a basic function of government. Caring for those with disabilities is a core responsibility of elected officials. How on Earth was this cruel policy more reasonable than just providing healthcare residents can count on?

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# Shaw announces 16 productions for 2023 season

**Mike Balsom**  
**The Local**

With the announcement of Shaw Festival's 2023 line-up this week, Tim Carroll cements his reputation as an artistic director who is willing to take chances while also honouring the sense of tradition that goes along with a 61-year-old theatre company. Works by the company's namesake playwright and his contemporaries Edith Wharton and J.M. Synge find space on the playbill next to newer plays by the likes of Tom Stoppard, Helen Edmundson and Selma Dimitrijevic. There's a trip to Narnia with *Prince Caspian*, three musicals, and a collaboration with Toronto's Why Not Theatre in association with London, England's Barbican Centre. Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* returns for the first time in 30 years, holiday favourite *A Christmas Carol* goes into its sixth straight December (if you include 2020, when it was planned to run but cancelled due to COVID-19), and a former artistic director returns to direct a play in the studio theatre that bears her name. "We step into 2023 with hope and pluck," Carroll stated in a press release last Wednesday. "A mix of classics, real hidden gems, new works and a variety of voices will be

seen, heard and experienced in both our indoor and outdoor spaces next season." The season starts with a bang at the Festival Theatre with *Mahābhārata*, previewing on Feb. 28. Written and adapted by Ravi Jain and Miriam Fernandes, using poetry from Carole Satyamurti, the play is a modern retelling of a Sanskrit epic that is more than 4,000 years old. The gripping story of a family feud explores profound philosophical and spiritual ideas and is recognized as a text that sheds light on the development of Hinduism. Shaw's production, in partnership with Why Not Theatre, promises to be a visually stunning spectacle that stars a cast made entirely of performers from the South Asian diaspora and presents a complex hybrid of cultures balancing East and West, traditional and contemporary. It is presented in two full-length parts that takes audiences on a journey through the past in order to write a thrilling new future. After presenting both *The Doctor's Dilemma* and *Too True to Be Good* this year, Carroll has dug deeply into Shaw's oeuvre for two of his less-often seen works. *Village Wooing* will be presented at the Royal George Theatre as a lunchtime one-act play, directed by Dimitrijevic. Last seen at the Shaw in 1999, the story finds two unlikely travelling companions - a writer and a young woman - meeting on a cruise and falling head over heels in love with each other. Similar to the casting of this year's marvelous *Everybody*, the ensemble members to play each of the characters, known simply as 'A' and 'Z', will be chosen by lottery for each performance. Also in the line-up is *The Apple Cart*, the fourth time it will be performed in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Eda Holmes directs this one at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre beginning in May. The 1928 play is a witty political satire, focusing on the power struggle between an English king and his prime minister. Originally subtitled *A Political Extravaganza*, it reveals much about the true nature of governmental power through a series of lengthy monologues by its characters. It's perhaps fitting that the festival's artistic director emerita Jackie Maxwell returns to the theatre that bears her name. Maxwell will helm J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, previewing on May 25. It's the story of a man on the run after allegedly murdering his father. He becomes a bit of a local celebrity as he tells his story, attracting the

attention of the women in town, until his father walks in very much alive. First performed in Dublin in 1907, Synge's play caused riots provoked by Irish nationalist and republicans who viewed it as an insult to the country. Written in 1901 but not discovered until 2017, Edith Wharton's *The Shadow of a Doubt* is a three-act mystery/drama by the author of *The Age of Innocence* and *The House of Mirth*. *Gypsy* was one of the victims of the pandemic in 2020, when the lockdown shut down Shaw's planned season just days before it was to preview. Shaw gets a second chance at the popular musical inspired by the memoirs of Gypsy Rose Lee, the world's most famous strip-tease artist, and her relationship with Momma Rose. The music of Jules Styne and lyrics from Stephen Sondheim include *Let Me Entertain You* and *Everything's Coming up Roses*. Long-time Shaw actor and director Jay Turvey directs *Gypsy* at the Festival Theatre. Two other musicals are on the playbill for 2023. Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*, last seen at Shaw in 2019, returns to the Festival Theatre in November, while Rodgers and Hammerstein's *A Grand*

*Night for Singing*, a musical revue in one act featuring songs from *South Pacific*, *The Sound of Music* and others, hits the outdoor BMO stage in at the end of June. The puppet show *A Short History of Niagara* returns for a third year in the outdoor setting next summer, while a new outdoor venue will host Dimitrijevic's *Mother, Daughter* and Pierre de Marivaux's *The Game of Love and Chance*. The latter is a comedy about an arranged marriage, directed by Carroll, featuring a different cast for every performance. Both *Mother, Daughter* and *Love and Chance* will showcase the new Spiegelteint installed on the Shaw grounds. "It's a large historic tent we have brought over from Europe," explained Carroll in the press release, "that was constructed at the turn of the century from exotic wood and canvas and decorated with mirrors and stained glass - a cabaret-style venue and an attraction in its own right." The Festival Theatre will play host to the popular Noël Coward comedy *Blithe Spirit* and James Baldwin's *The Amen Corner*. Baldwin is one of the 20th century's most profound voices. *The Amen Corner* is a drama of love and hate that questions the role of the church in the Black community. Though not a musical, director and Shaw associate artistic director Kimberly Rampersad promises a repertoire of rousing songs performed by a gospel choir. Tom Stoppard's 1981 play *On the Razzle*, featuring dazzling linguistic gymnastics and playful puns, will take Royal George audiences on a fun-filled romp, while British playwright Helen Edmundson's *The Clearing*, opening at the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre in August, weaves the spectre of Oliver Cromwell's ethnic cleansing campaign against the Irish Catholics into a marriage between an Englishman and his Irish wife. In all, 16 different productions are planned for 2023 at Shaw. "We continue to build on last season's momentum," Carroll said. "After these past two years, it's time to further bolster our connection to one another. A heck of a theatrical ride is about to get underway." The 2023 season casts, creative teams and additional Outdoor @ The Shaw events and activities will be announced at a later date. Tickets will go on sale Nov. 5 for Friends of The Shaw and Dec. 3 for the public. Further updates will also be available at shawfest.com.



## Porch Pick-up Food Drive

Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary Club, are once again holding a **porch pick-up** food drive.



We were so grateful for the tremendous community support of our food drive held last year - it was overwhelming. Thank you all very much.

We're asking for your generous support once again, this time to assist us in filling our Thanksgiving hampers for our clients.

On **Saturday September 24, 2022**, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** If you wish to donate food in support of our Food Bank, please call **905-468-7498** or email us at **newarkneighbours1@gmail.com** to register your address for pick-up. **We appreciate your support!!!**

ITEMS REQUIRED FOR THANKSGIVING HAMPERS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stuffing Mix</li><li>• Cranberry Sauce</li><li>• Cranberry &amp;/or Apple Juice</li><li>• Canned Pineapple</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canned Gravy (turkey or chicken or Gravy mix</li><li>• Applesauce or Canned Fruit</li><li>• Canned Corn</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canned green beans</li><li>• Canned peas</li></ul>
GENERAL ITEMS REQUIRED ON AN ON-GOING BASIS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canned Tomatoes or Tomato Paste</li><li>• Canned Tuna</li><li>• Canned mixed vegetables</li><li>• Habitant Soups</li><li>• Chunky Soups</li><li>• Soda (Soup) Crackers</li><li>• Snack Crackers - any kind</li><li>• Granola Bars</li><li>• Peanut Butter</li><li>• Rice</li><li>• Jello - any flavour</li><li>• Toothpaste/Toothbrushes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tomato (Pasta) Sauce</li><li>• Canned Ham, Corned Beef or Spam</li><li>• Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey</li><li>• Canned beef or chicken stew</li><li>• Campbell's Soups - any kind</li><li>• Bottled Juice/Juice boxes - any kind</li><li>• Cereal - any kind</li><li>• Jams - any flavour</li><li>• Ketchup/Mustard/Mayonnaise/Relish</li><li>• Soap / Shampoo / Conditioner</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beans (kidney, chick-peas, lentils, black, white, dried pea, other) canned or bagged</li><li>• Canned Salmon</li><li>• Canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli</li><li>• Canned Baked Beans</li><li>• Kraft Dinner Mac and Cheese</li><li>• Sidekicks &amp; Mr. Noodle packets</li><li>• Cookies - any kind</li><li>• Oatmeal</li><li>• Cake Mixes (any kind)</li><li>• Coffee/Tea (any kind)</li><li>• Paper Towels/Kleenex</li></ul>

## Shaw Guild Sip, Savour & Stroll



The Shaw Guild hosted the Sip, Savour & Stroll event recently with more than 130 guests attending what has been described as "a truly magical evening," on two Niagara River properties provided by the homeowners. All prizes and wines were all donated by local business and friends. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Shaw Festival from the Guild. *(Photo supplied)*



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# Between the Stacks a fun way to meet people

Continued from page 4

“That in itself was a connection they could make,” says Krause.

Although two of the women who registered were friends, none of the other 14 knew each other before the event, and none had tried speed dating before.

It was interesting to watch them arrive, she says.

“The men all arrived first, and then the women walked in the door together. Two of them knew each other but the others were on their own. Several said they were encouraged by friends who were part of a couple. They talked about a lot of different reasons for trying it.”

Snacks, along with wine donated by Konzelman Estate Winery, were offered, to help make it a more relaxing occasion, and having the tables scattered throughout the room “took some of the nervousness away,” she says. All of

of them stuck around for a bit afterward, and said they had a really great time. They were thankful we had organized it — we had a lot of positive feedback.”

About the possibility of matches, “all I can say is we gathered score cards, asking if they would say yes or no to being paired with certain people.”

The library received permission to let each of the participants know of any matches.

Several received more than one, and others none, says Krause, “so some had the potential for more than one date,” but the library has no plans to follow up on what has happened since. They won’t know if there were dates as a result of the event, or how they went, unless they hear anecdotally from participants.

Participating in a speed dating event, says Krause, “is making yourself very vulnerable. It’s difficult telling people they don’t have any matches. Those who did,

doesn’t mean they’re interested in connecting with that person. It’s a fun event, but also a very sensitive situation. When we’re planning it, and talking about it, we try not to forget that. Whatever happens, you hope they’re prepared for that.”

The second event coming up, with seniors, “we’re seeing a little differently. Those in the younger group have been on similar dating situations. They may have app fatigue, but they’ve been through it, they’re accustomed to it, it’s part of their life. We’re feeling very differently about doing it for seniors. We don’t know how they will deal with it.”

In order to have enough time for each conversation the number is capped at 10 women and 10 men, says Krause. They have 10 women registered “and a very long waiting list,” but only five men.

The concept of what they are doing, she adds, “seems a bit like a social experiment. Women are

much more willing to put themselves out there, to step out of their comfort zone and try something new. The men have to be coaxed to give it a try. It doesn’t come as easily to them.”

To encourage them, she says, she hopes they can look at it as an opportunity to have some fun and meet new people. “What do you have to lose?”

She says she can’t guarantee a match, “but I can guarantee it will be a fun evening and a chance to make a new friend or two.”

The event for those 60 to 75 is Saturday, Sept. 17, from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Library membership is not required, and it’s open to everyone — it’s not limited to NOTL residents. The cost is \$30, with refreshments. All participants must register and show identification at the door. To register visit <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/between-the-stacks-speed-dating-for-seniors-ages-60-75-tickets-390568961277>



There will be refreshments served at the event to help make it relaxing and fun. (Photos supplied)



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## Red Roof horses provide moments of peace for client



Logan Fair, with his mother Lori, loves spending time with Wonder and Mikey. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

### Mike Balsom The Local

Logan Fair's face lights up when he sees Wonder and Mikey, two horses who live at Red Roof Retreat, approaching from the far side of the ring. He holds out his hand to gently feed carrots to both, and periodically leans in to snuggle face-to-face with his equine friends.

The non-verbal autistic 23-year-old St. Catharines resident first fell in love with horses while he was living with his mother, Lori, in Mexico. During a visit to a farm there, they met a Mayan shaman who suggested that Logan would benefit from riding a horse. Skeptical, Lori eventually relented and she and Logan climbed aboard for a bare-back ride through the jungle.

"He would not get off the horse," Lori says. "That was the day Logan fell in love with them. When I did finally get him down, he stood in front, and the horse lowered his head, and they just pressed their foreheads together for the longest time."

Realizing that something natural was happening with her son, when they returned to Canada about 13 years ago, Logan began participating in the riding program at Red Roof Retreat.

It was clear to Lori how beneficial it was for her son to spend time with the animals. When Red Roof executive director Steffanie Bjorgan adopted Wonder a few years ago, Logan almost immediately formed a special relationship with her.

"Wonder and Logan have such an interesting bond," marvels Lori, "more so than he has with Mikey,

who is a bit more dominant. He says he is talking to her. He just puts his head up to her and they just stand there. It's amazing."

Though the 6'3" Logan is non-verbal, he does communicate. It wasn't until he was 18 years old when it was discovered at a workshop that he could answer questions by spelling words out using a pencil that he learned to poke through a stencil.

"It was shocking," Lori says incredulously. "He just kept surprising everyone during the three-day session. He moved up to a laminated letterboard, and he eventually graduated to a keyboard."

During a visit to the farm Lori unfolds a thin keyboard which she has connected to an app on her phone. Logan's fingers wander the keys, and the app calls out "great to meet you, Mike."

Besides the visual evidence of Logan's love of Wonder and Mikey, he's been able to use his communication system to express his appreciation for the time he gets to spend with them.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be at the farm," he typed out to Lori before the meeting at Red Roof. She asked him what he gets from being there, and he replied, "I feel at peace."

Bjorgan has also marvelled at how communicative Logan has been since learning to use the keyboard. She watched him in his younger days show frustration when he couldn't express himself, and she sees less of that frustration the last five years.

"There's a really smart, sensitive human being inside Logan," Bjorgan says.

"He has so much spirit, emotion, soul and intellect, and for so many years didn't have any way to express it. He was an observer all of his life, and then he had this breakthrough. I often wonder how many of our other clients also have that same potential."

Through the years Logan's size and his frustrated behaviours, manifested in periodic fits of dysregulation (a poor ability to manage emotional responses), meant that he was often misunderstood, sometimes feared. Bjorgan believes that with Logan, as with many of Red Roof's other special needs clients, taking the time to get to know him can be a valuable and enriching experience.

"Most of us are so busy, and we're dealing with our own developmental stages," she says. "We don't have the self-confidence to step out of our comfort zones to get to know people who are so much different than us. It's important to take those opportunities."

In his teen years Logan moved from high school to high school, never really finding the right program to meet his needs. Last year, in an effort to give him more purpose, Lori and Logan began a clothing brand called Stay Humble, selling T-shirts with that slogan in an online marketplace (facebook.com/humble-andme99).

"It gives him something to feel good about, something to wake up every morning and look forward to," Lori explains. "It's coming along slowly, but in a good way. He's very proud of himself. People are sending us pictures and videos,

Continued on page 11



# Learning to communicate reveals depth of thoughts

Continued from page 10

he loves to see them, and he loves any time anybody mentions it.”

The slogan comes from an interview Logan had during a workshop with the International Association for Spelling as Communication (ISC) in January, at which he participated with his siblings. He was asked if there was anything he wanted them to know about him that his sisters and brother didn’t say. His reply was, “that I’m humble.”

Besides the T-shirt business and spending time with horses, Logan, the youngest of the single mother’s four children, loves to help out with yard work in the fall, enjoys rock climbing and watches surfing videos often in his downtime.

From 2012 until the start of the pandemic, Lori had been making an annual trip to Virginia Beach, often accompanied by one of Logan’s siblings, so he can participate in the Surfers Healing camps for autistic children. The event brings together surfers from across the world to take autistic kids out on the waves. Lori says she has never witnessed a more accepting, support-



It’s easy to see Logan Fair’s attachment to the Red Roof horses. With them, he writes, “I feel at peace.” (Mike Balsom)

ive and inclusive experience for her son.

About four years ago, after he had learned how to type, he began attending gatherings of a social group in Buffalo for other non-verbal autistic youth who had learned to use similar devices. Lori no-

ticed a young girl, Kaylie, who seemed to be flirting with him.

“They were exchanging messages, and she told him she thought he was cute,” laughs Lori. “I thought, ‘is this actually happening?’. That really motivated him to get really good at typing.

They didn’t see each other during COVID. When she was finally able to come to Canada, he planned a picnic for her at Red Roof. He bought her a gift.”

Kaylie enjoyed the day at the farm, however she has yet to take to Wonder and Mikey the way Logan

has. But that’s okay, and she seems to be an important member of Logan’s support network as well.

“When he’s having a bad day,” says Lori, “I’ll message her mom and Kaylie will send him a message back. He’s a real romantic. He bought her some jewel-

ry, even though she doesn’t wear jewelry. But her mom told me it’s fine, she likes just looking at it.”

Another recent surprise for Lori was the discovery, when he was 18, that Logan had a deep faith in God. He is strong and firm in his religious convictions, and this has led to some interesting conversations at their St. Catharines home. When asked how he was so confident in his faith, Logan replied, “just look at nature, how else can you explain the wonder of it.”

Which leads one to wonder if maybe Logan sees God manifested in his quiet moments spent with Wonder and Mikey at Red Roof Retreat. One might also wonder how much of this would never have been known if Logan hadn’t learned how to finally communicate his deep thoughts and feelings to his loved ones.

“He still has a long way to go,” Bjorgan says of Logan, “but the fact that he has an outlet to show other people what a deep human being he actually is, that’s the aspect we forget about people with special needs. We’re so busy providing the physical and medical care that we forget about that side.”

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# Tickled pink to hold Together 5K Walk or Run

Mike Balsom  
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and business owner Elise Gasbarrino is tickled pink to get the gang back together on Sept. 17. Between now and then, though, there are a few kilometres to cover.

Gasbarrino is the founder and executive director of Pink Pearl Canada. The charitable foundation provides support, facilitates connections and empowers self-identifying young women across Canada who are dealing with cancer.

Pink Pearl is holding its annual Together 5K Walk or Run, to be done any time between Sept. 10 and 17 in any neighbourhood, and following

that up with the return of their Family Support Day in NOTL next Saturday, Sept. 17.

At just 21 years old, Gasbarrino was faced with a cancer diagnosis of her own. At the time, her only choice for treatment was to travel to the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton. She rarely saw anyone near her age at Juravinski, and she desperately looked for other young women like herself with whom she might be able to share her experience.

“Nothing existed for women in their 20s,” she tells The Local, “very few organizations that supported young adults. Some supported younger kids, and others supported older people. But I was going through this while I was still in university, then I was mov-

ing away from home, getting a career. There was nothing that was specific for young adults.”

Her family banded together to show their support, organizing a benefit for Elise and other young female cancer patients. The benefit turned into an annual event, and after seven years they took the step of organizing and formalizing Pink Pearl Canada as a foundation.

It began nine years ago with a retreat at The Good Earth Food and Wine Company in Beamsville. Word caught on, and the popularity grew. Soon, women between the ages of 18 and 40 with cancer were attending retreats at NOTL locations such as White Oaks, Queen’s Landing, The Pillar and Post and The Prince of



Mary and George Gasbarrino with Greg and Rena McDonald, and Elise and Melaina Gasbarrino.



Ashley Waters and her Hakuna Matatas team: Kristi Williams, NOTL; Ashley Pietrangelo - Niagara Falls; Lisa Vinc, St. Catharines; and Ashley Waters, Robyn Pearson, Tina Vaillancourt, Krista Visscher and Vanessa Dominski from Niagara Falls. (Photo supplied)

Wales hotels. Typically, these are one- or two-night gatherings for education, fellowship, relaxation and support.

Proceeds from those events, and others such as their Black and White with a Touch of Pink evenings, have helped to raise funds to expand the organization’s offerings to young women. Today, they provide post-secondary scholarships, support packages and local socials, and have begun offering one-on-one counselling services the past two years. They are also expanding their retreats into locations such as Calgary and Halifax.

Sarah Hunt will be doing the Together 5K walk next week. The 35-year-old from Cambridge, who has a rare sarcoma in the nerve bundle in her arm, discovered Pink Pearl in 2017 while searching for support online.

“I had no one to connect with,” she recalls. “It’s really different going through cancer at 29 or 30. The other people

Continued on page 13

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# Retreats ‘welcome break’

Continued from page 12

sitting around in the waiting room are older, retired, they have money saved up. I had just finished my masters (in speech language pathology) and was starting my career.”

Since her diagnosis Hunt has undergone 25 high doses of radiation and three major surgeries, which have left her with limited function in her arm. Finding other young women with similar experiences was a huge help for her.

“When you had a bad day and something didn’t go right, it was great to have someone to talk to,” Hunt says. “When you had a new struggle you could reach out and find others who had gone through the same thing. It meant a lot to know you weren’t the only one.”

Having a chance to meet fellow Pink Pearl participants in person at the retreats was Hunt’s saving grace. The opportunity to relax, share a meal or go for a swim with other women was a welcome break from the treatments and the reality of cancer.

Gasbarrino adds that many who take part in Pink Pearl Canada’s programs are going through pivotal times in their lives. A cancer diagnosis makes those moments harder to deal with.

“It could affect your fertility, it can affect your financial health, your ability to take care of yourself physically, to make that move for your career,” she explains. “There are a lot of life events that happen during those formative years. A cancer diagnosis can prohibit a lot of those things.”

The peer-to-peer support that Gasbarrino found through the benefits organized by her and her family made her journey much easier to take. Since forming the organization, she’s continued to ensure that Pink Pearl focuses on the needs of the program participants.

In the nine years since Pink Pearl Canada began, almost 4,000 women across the country have participated in their programs. Close to \$700,000 has been raised since that time, and many donations have been made to hospitals and other



Sarah Hunt and her service dog Molly. (Photo supplied)

charitable organizations.

Those retreats planned for Calgary and Halifax this year were actually supposed to happen two years ago. The pandemic caused their cancellation and meant that all in-person retreats were out of the question. So Gasbarrino and her team shifted to an on-line version.

“It was good in a way, because we were able to interact with women we wouldn’t normally get to,” says Gasbarrino. “At our last virtual retreat we had a woman from Nunavut who was able to be a part of it, and a Canadian living in Ireland. We’ll always keep some aspect of virtual programming for our people going forward.”

Gasbarrino’s family lives in NOTL, and Elise bought a house about seven years ago in the Chatauqua area after moving back to Canada from New York City. Since then, many of her Pink Pearl efforts have centred in this community, and she’s partnered with Maria Mavridis and her Anchor Niagara organization for several recent fundraisers, including one at local restaurant Ruffino’s last spring. And, in July, the Par for Pink Pearl Tournament at the NOTL Golf Club raised more than \$8,000 for the foundation.

Niagara Falls resident Ashley Waters golfed in the tournament this summer. She also participated in last year’s walk, leading a team of 28 friends, family members and their children in support of her mother, who was

dealing with breast cancer.

“Being my Mom’s caregiver, I didn’t really feel that I had control over much,” she tells The Local. “Being able to focus on the run, organizing people to come together, getting T-shirts made, it was a great relief. And doing the run was a lot of fun.”

“Elise is amazing, supporting the younger demographic,” Waters continues. “The retreats bring people together to form a network. It’s really crucial during that time to have that support system.”

Waters will once again be out there running, and she plans to be at next week’s Family Support Day. Participants will gather casually with their spouses, partners, family and friends at Gasbarrino’s Style Canada store on King Street. They’ll be offered food and beverages, maybe do a shorter walk together, then have a chance to enjoy a casual afternoon at Simcoe Park or elsewhere in town.

Gasbarrino’s financial goal for the Together 5K Walk or Run is \$15,000, but the Family Support Day will put a very special cap on the week.

“We’re excited to be able to do something in person again,” says Gasbarrino, “after not being able to for so long. We’re hoping to get around 40 to 50 people for the event. We will get to end the week with everyone together. That is something that you can’t quantify so much.”

For information and to register for the walk, visit pinkpearlcanada.org/together-5k/.



CANDIDATES FOR THE 2022 MUNICIPAL & SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

For more information visit [www.notl.com](http://www.notl.com) or call 905-468-3266

**Election Day: Monday, October 24, 2022**

## Lord Mayor

*One (1) to be elected at large*

Betty DISERO  
Vaughn GOETTLER  
Gary ZALEPA

## Town Councilor

*Eight (8) to be elected at large*

Tim BALASIUK  
Allan BISBACK  
Gary BURROUGHS  
Adriana CATER (VIZZARI)  
Wendy CHEROPITA  
Alistair (AJ) HARLOND  
Maria MAVRIDIS  
John William MCCALLUM  
Richard MELL  
Sandra O’CONNOR  
Katherine REID  
Nick RULLER  
Erwin WIENS

## Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir Trustee

Melinda CHARTRAND (ACCLAIMED)

## DSBN School Board Trustee

*Four (4) to be elected at large*

Kate BAGGOTT  
Alex BRADNAM  
Mike BROUSSEAU  
Lora CAMPBELL  
Jonathan FAST  
Rhona LINDO-KELLY  
Donald MACDOUGALL  
Kris VRECK

## Regional Councillor

*One (1) to be elected at large*

Pat DARTE  
Andrea KAISER  
Paolo MIELE  
William A. ROBERTS  
Barbara WORTHY

## NCDSB School Board Trustee

*Two (2) to be elected at large*

Natalia BENOIT  
Larry HUIBERS  
Jolanta PAWLAK

## Voting Methods

### Proxy Voting & Voting by Mail

If you are unable to vote during Advance Polls or Election Day, alternative options are available for qualified electors. For more information about how to vote by proxy or by mail, please visit [www.notl.com/council-government/elections](http://www.notl.com/council-government/elections)

### Voter Notification Cards

Voter Notification Cards will be mailed out late September. All voters are required to present valid identification at the Advance Polls and on Election Day.

- Victoria Steele, Town Clerk

## Where & When to Vote

### Election Day

(10 a.m. - 8 p.m.)

Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre (14 Anderson Lane)

Laura Secord Homestead (29 Queenston Street)

Crossroads Public School (1350 Niagara Stone Road)

St. Davids Public School (1344 York Street)

Holiday Inn Express (524 York Road)

### Advance Polls

(10 a.m. - 8 p.m.)

**Saturday, October 8**

St. Davids Public School (1344 York Road)

**Wednesday, October 12**

Municipal Offices (1593 Four Mile Creek Road)

**Saturday, October 15**

Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre (14 Anderson Lane)

**Wednesday, October 19**

Municipal Offices (1593 Four Mile Creek Road)

Qualified electors are welcome to vote at any Niagara-on-the-Lake polling location

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JOKE



How do you tell the difference between a bull and a cow?

It is either one or the udder!

Answer:

## Local News

Happy September! We hope you all had a wonderful summer and are soaking up the last few days of vacation! Best of luck to all you JOYOUS NOTL kids in the upcoming school year!



End of the season banquet for the summer youth sailing program. All the kids had a wonderful time in this three-week program!

## Art Camp at the Pumphouse

by Stephanie, 7

My sister and I went to art camp at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre last week. Every day we made different art pieces. We made clay figures, we painted, and we did sketches with crayons. My favorite things that I did were the optical illusions, the col-

or wheel, and the oil pastel hallway. Every day we would watch our instructors draw. We would eat our snacks and lunches by the river, where there are picnic benches and a gazebo. The instructors would make sketch books and we could bring them

outside to draw. We kept all our art pieces in a folder that we could decorate any way we wanted. At the end of the week, we had a mini art show. We brought our favourite pieces outside and parents came to see them. I had an awesome week.

## Interview with Stephanie

- Q. What are your hobbies?

A. My hobbies are hugging my family, soccer, and art.

Q. What do you want to be when you grow up?

A. I want to be a doctor, a scientist, a soccer star, and a famous artist.

Q. What is your ideal day in NOTL?

A. My ideal day would be walking by the river or on the Bruce Trail with my family, going out for ice cream at Petrulo's or Avondale then playing on the swings with my sister.

Q. Why did you pick the art camp at the Pumphouse over any other summer camps?

A. I picked it because I love art. I went there last year, and I had a great experience.

Q. What did you like best about the art camp?

A. My favourite thing was the mini art show by the river at the end of the week when our parents came to look at our art pieces.
- Q. What was your favourite art piece you made at the camp?

A. My favourite piece is the 3D landscape because it is very colorful. I tried to make it look like the outside of the pumphouse where we had our snack breaks by the river.

Q. What is your favourite thing about NOTL?

A. My favourite thing about

NOTL is my house because I can walk to the pool to swim, or I can play tennis at the tennis courts.

- Q. How would you change the world if you could?

A. I would change the world by planting a lot of trees to clean the air, and I would make more time to play and spend with my family.



Stephanie W., 7

WORD SEARCH: BACK TO SCHOOL

Z S L Z N G E I B E R A V A P A J T F V  
O H M W V Y I G F N P E N C I L M V Y U  
W A K Z Q Z F R K P B V K V T F X P N S  
Q A I I Q G S P I W M E D I H B D D N C  
F M K W O D Z O Z E I A U U S Y Q A J R  
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E Z X C Z P U K N A Z X E Z E P R E R O  
J O W C U N I F O R M M E H X R D T S N  
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C B X C L A S S R O O M F C H S X P M U  
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R I U O U S U O Z L O Z U Y U B I D N U  
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# Celebration of Nations honours matriarchs

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

The theme for this week's sixth annual Celebration of Nations, "Honouring our Matriarchs: Restoring the Balance," is near and dear to the heart of artistic director Michele-Elise Burnett.

"Our matriarchs are really at the centre of most of our Indigenous communities," she explains on the phone from her Wainfleet home. "Even if they're not matriarchal-based societies, they still hold the women in those communities at a high regard and treat them with respect."

Through her organization Kakealanicks, Burnett oversees the three-day gathering of Indigenous arts, culture and tradition in downtown St. Catharines, taking place at and around the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre. It runs this Friday, Sept. 9 until Sunday, Sept. 11.

The weekend includes a concert by legendary Indigenous icon Buffy Sainte-Marie, singer Shawnee Kish, originally from Niagara, and the Strong Water Singers, as well as sunrise ceremonies, sacred fire teachings hosted by female Elders, and opportunities for participants, both Indigenous and not, to participate in workshops.

Though last year's virtual event attracted as many as 60,000 viewers across the world, Burnett is relieved that this year's celebration can be held in person.

"I'm excited that we are able

to finally come together for the first time since COVID," Burnett says. "It's so important to be able to feel the energies together. You can only get so much out of the virtual platform in terms of those energies. During the teachings and workshops, it is so much more impactful to look each other in the eye. Those experiences will stay with you forever."

The weekend will also include "The First Ladies of Jazz" concert experience, featuring female vocalists Cheri Maracle, Faith Armour and Ranee Lee in a tribute to Mildred Bailey, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald.

As well, the 2022 Celebration of Nations Outstanding Achievement Awards will be handed out, there will be a panel focusing on the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, and the Film House will screen *The Water Walker*, starring Indigenous activist Autumn Peltier, and *Blood and Water: A Reclamation Story*, directed by Indigenous entrepreneur and filmmaker Layla Staats.

Of the matriarchal focus, Burnett adds, "they're our life givers, our water carriers, the ones that nurture us, that inspire us. In some of the different nations they are the ones who elect the chiefs. They watch the young men and women and how they work in the community. They guide them to their responsibilities to the community."

Burnett feels it's time to get the world back in balance, by lifting and supporting the youth



Firekeeper Brian Kon (Four32 Media)

and the men who find themselves since colonization living instead in patriarchal societies. It's about finding the balance to create a healthier environment.

The weekend will also feature the Red Dress Exhibit, an immersive experience honouring the stories of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited people (MMIWG2S) from 13 Indigenous Peoples in Western New York and Niagara.

Burnett is fresh off of curating a similar installation just across the border at Artpark. The one this weekend will in-

clude an audio documentary for each dress and a special "Her Moccasins Talk" teaching on Saturday at noon with some of the project's contributors.

"It was incredible, the amount of awareness we received on the long weekend," she says. "It's a big part of honouring our matriarchs and restoring the balance. We give their spirits a voice so that they can create awareness along this journey. I'm hoping we can take this right across Canada, right across North America."

Coming back this year is *Drums Across Canada*. It debuted as part of last year's virtual celebration, when drummers in Niagara connected with others in London, Ont., St. John, NB; and Nanaimo, B.C. to hold a healing drum circle that went across the nation. This year, the circle becomes even bigger.

"We started working on it right after last year's event," she tells *The Local*. "We reached out to other performing arts centres across the country, to create a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. It's one of the

best ways to educate people, through the arts, and we have a great connection with our performing arts centre here."

Burnett and her Kakealanicks team helped to connect local arts centres with drum groups in their areas. This weekend, the original four will be joined by groups in Halifax, Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Montreal and Prince Edward Island.

"We are going to do a complete full circle," she says, excitement in her voice. "We're going to wrap our arms around this nation that is still healing from so many different atrocities. These drums send out healing vibrations, the songs are medicine. We're going to have a call and response to create an ongoing narrative about healing, love and gratitude."

Like *Drums Across Canada*, many of the over 40 events this weekend will have virtual options as well. That includes some of the hands-on workshops, storytelling, poetry and discussion sessions and music, drumming and dance demonstrations.

As in previous years, firekeeper Brian Kon will watch

over a sacred fire that will burn from Friday at dawn until the close of Celebration of Nations in the backyard of the PAC. The Procession of Nations will return on Saturday, showcasing the breadth and diversity of Indigenous peoples who live within the Niagara region and who travelled long distances from across Turtle Island to participate.

As well, a canoe launch will be held at Henley Island, the Métis Fiddlers will hold a performance and workshop, and an Indigenous Discovery Zone will provide interactive hands-on learning opportunities and fun for the whole family.

"There's something very special about it this year," says Burnett, "a super special energy. We have women doing the sunrise ceremonies all weekend. We have Indigenous women advisors this year. We really are embracing our women this year, and those women are also holding space and embracing our men, so we can all find that balance."

Details on the weekend's events can be found at [celebrationofnations.ca](http://celebrationofnations.ca).



Buffy Sainte-Marie will perform at the Celebration of Nations. (Lyle Aspinall)

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# Celebrate Seniors Golden Years Guide

## How do common areas work in a condo?

(NC) Among the most attractive features of condo living are the amenities that come with it. Being able to have an intense workout, take a refreshing swim, and then laze about on a sunny rooftop terrace – all without having to leave home – is certainly a nice idea. But how does ownership of those amenities work since they are outside of your individual unit? Who pays if something breaks down? When it comes to individual units, there's a seven-year builder's warranty for new condominium projects.

Common elements coverageCommon elements come with the same warranty that exists for every individual unit. The only difference is that, while the unit warranty is the responsibility of the unit owner, the common elements warranty is managed by the condominium corporation. This means that the condo board is responsible for submitting warranty claims and working with the builder and the province's new-home warranty administrator, to get issues resolved.

The Performance Audi-

ta key part of the warranty for common elements is the performance audit. During the first year after a building is registered, the condo corporation must arrange for an audit. The audit is conducted by a qualified individual (in most cases an engineer), and the purpose is to determine if there are any construction defects in the common elements. The results of the audit are submitted to the builder for resolution, and progress on them is tracked at regular intervals by a representative for the condo corporation.

What you can doUnit owners are a shared owner of the common areas. If you notice a defect outside of your unit that may be a warranty issue, you can bring it to the attention of your property manager or board of directors for further action. You can also seek to become a member of your corporation's board of directors to become more closely involved in this warranty process.Find more information about the new home warranty for condominiums at Tarion.com

www.newscanada.com



## 3 ways to organize your life online

(NC) It's no surprise that Canadians are living more of our lives online. An April 2022 study from Statistics Canada reported that three quarters of Canadians use the internet more than before for activities

like staying in touch with family, accessing entertainment and buying food.

Here are three ways to keep your increasingly digital life organized to save time – and money.

### Hit "unsubscribe"

While email is an important connection point for work and life, it can also be a source of clutter. Unsubscribe from emails you never read to make managing your inbox easier and free up precious time.

### Manage automatic payments

A recent BMO survey found that about 20 per cent of Canadian subscribers pay for services they had forgotten about or subscriptions they didn't want. Take time to review pre-authorized payments for services like streaming

and fitness attached to your account.

### Tap into new tools

Tools to organize your online life, like built-in productivity monitoring on your phone, can help prevent wasted time and identify opportunities to

save money. For instance, BMO's Pre-authorized Payments Manager feature within its mobile banking app, allows customers to easily track automatic payments and stay on top of their expenses.

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# Newark Neighbours 'far outgrown' its current space



**Cindy Grant**  
Newark Neighbours  
Special to The Local

Newark Neighbours, our local food bank and thrift store, has been proudly and successfully serving Niagara-on-the-Lake residents for 50 years, over 30 years in our current location on the grounds of the Riverbend Inn/Peller Estate property.

We are very grateful for our community's consistent and incredible support over these many years. This support has been critical to our success as a not-for-profit organization, since we must rely solely on the generosity of our donors in order to deliver our programs to the NOTL community.

Newark Neighbours has

far outgrown its current building for both our thrift store and food bank. Our thrift store is receiving an increasing amount of high quality of donations on a regular basis. The space required to properly sort, organize and display the wide variety of clothing and household goods that we receive is becoming increasingly limited.

In addition, and perhaps more critically, our food bank storage capacity and ability to properly serve our food bank clients is becoming extremely limited. The number of registered clients visiting our food bank bi-monthly has increased over 100 per cent in the last two years. We are now feeding almost 150 individuals and families living in Niagara-on-the-Lake, each month.

We are now reaching out to our community and key stakeholders in an appeal for ideas and suggestions on a potential new location and space — a space to better serve our growing needs. A requirement "wish list" has been developed including a minimum of 2000-plus square feet in space. The location must be central, have ground floor accessibility

and be able to afford privacy for our food bank clients. We have a detailed requirements list that is available upon request but at a minimum, it must accommodate our retail space for the thrift store and have storage for managing our non-perishable food supply, a refrigerator and freezer, and suitable space for serving our growing number of food bank clients.

We have been discussing

our need for a new location with various stakeholders and organizations in the past several months. Unfortunately, to date, we have not been successful in identifying a solution. We are now publicly enlisting our community's assistance to identify a new location, either a piece of land and/or an existing building that may be suitable for our requirements. Our timelines are flexible; however

we would like to be able to re-locate within the next six to nine months.

If you have a parcel of land that we could use to construct a building or have, or know of, an existing building that would be suitable for our needs, please contact us anytime at newark-neighbours1@gmail.com or 905-468-3519. Our board members would be pleased to meet with you anytime to discuss any possibility.

We would be pleased to host anyone at our current location at 310 John Street East (on the Riverbend Inn property) so that you can see our current space and operations. Thank you in advance for your past and future support and commitment to our on-going success in offering our essential service to our Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

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# Sean Wright will swim, not run for Terry Fox

**Penny Coles**  
**The Local**

Sean Wright likes to push himself, to face challenges, to set goals and surpass them. He chooses goals he knows will require hard work, and then methodically plans what he needs to do to accomplish them. He makes lists and follows them. He sets training schedules and makes sure they become part of a routine.



Last year Sean Wright took part in the annual Terry Fox Run, intending to run five laps of five kilometres each. He did a little more than that, and decided to set a new goal of swimming for Terry Fox this year. (Photos supplied)

He keeps track of details, writing them all down. This year, he has set himself the goal of swimming along the Lake Ontario shoreline to raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation, instead of running. He hasn't decided where exactly to start — he was originally planning to go from a friend's dock, opposite Lakeshore Antiques & Treasures on Lakeshore Road, to the gazebo at Queen's Royal Park. Now he's thinking that might be a little too much — he may begin his swim at Konzelman Estate Winery. He's hoping for a distance he can handle safely in about two hours, he says, and he isn't stopping until he gets to the gazebo. His parents Patti and Bob Wright and his big brother Ben will be waiting for him — they haven't all been together as a family for a while, so he's excited about that — and he hopes lots of friends "will be hootin' and hollerin'," cheering him on as he reaches the gazebo and climbs out of the water. "Nothing is going to stop me from finishing, except maybe lightning."

Since 2016, when he walked five kilometres in his first Terry Fox event, one of his goals has been to do something each year that would be different, and harder than the year before. He pushed himself to train, to run, and then to run further. In 2018 he finished the 10-km Terry Fox run in 50 minutes. He completed 15 kms in one hour and 10 minutes in 2019, and 20 kms in one hour, 39 minutes in 2020.

Last year, he set his sights on a 25-km run, but "due to a little confusion" he stopped at 28.67 kms when he realized he was doing an extra lap. He

finished in two hours, 27 minutes, raising about \$600.

Wright, now 39, was an 18-year-old Niagara District Secondary School student in 2001 when he was involved in a collision at Line 1 and Townline Road. The driver of the car, another student, lost control, went into the ditch and hit the guardrail. Wright was thrown onto the road from the backseat, and sustained a severe head injury.

He graduated from high school, and worked hard to become a registered massage therapist at college. It wasn't easy because of his brain injury makes him forgetful, he says, but he wasn't going to give up. "It took me an extra year, but I finished."

In recent years, he has been working at 124 on Queen. A chart he keeps meticulously shows that since September 2014, when he started at the Queen Street hotel and spa, despite lockdowns during COVID and closures during renovations, he has given 2,311 massages. That includes another 20 for athletes competing at the recent Canada Summer Games, where he had fun volunteering. "That was an awesome experience," he says.

These days he's busy working out, cycling, and running. He's added swimming at the

Kinsmen Pool in St. Catharines, gradually increasing his time from 20 minutes to an hour, in preparation for his fundraising swim.

"I set myself a good schedule, what I'm going to do every day, and I abide by it," he says.

He started training last October, ramped up with outdoor runs once the weather improved, and has been increasing his weights and working with thicker resistance belts.

He has also found a training mask useful. Intended to improve lung capacity and oxygen efficiency by restricting air flow as you run, he says, "I can't believe how much it's helped. It's even helping me with my job, making the massages easier."

He will do some open water swimming, likely beginning this week, being very cautious and staying close to the shoreline as he swims.

He'll have kayakers along with him for safety, but is hoping to find someone with a motorized boat to also accompany him when he swims.

Despite having to work harder than others might to accomplish his goals, Wright focuses on a positive attitude, much like Terry Fox.

He won't accept that he can't do something — he just keeps working on it until he can. And when he feels like giving up on a goal, he pushes himself until he gets it done.

"During the beginning of the pandemic I began making up my own beats and rhymes and putting them up on YouTube at SW2," he says. So far he has 14 subscribers, and worldwide lifetime views are at 4,209.

"I just posted my song #365. Again, don't say you can't or you will quit," says Wright. "Who knows what else you can do? Don't give up. Don't quit."

"If I think something is tough," he adds, "and I don't think I can do it, I tell myself I can. You have to prove to yourself that you can do it."

Terry, he says, wanted to do the impossible to show it could be done.

Wright wants to show that he can do this swim for Terry, he says. "I'm going to try my hardest."

After two years, the Terry Fox Run is back in-person, beginning at Simcoe Park Sept. 18, at 9 a.m.

Wright is swimming the same morning, beginning around 10:30 to 11 a.m., and hopes to be finished between 12:30 and 1 p.m.

Wright can be reached at myleftyourwright@hotmail.com.

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# Niagara College grad competing on Top Chef

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

A Niagara College graduate could be the winner of *Top Chef Canada*'s largest reward in the history of the show: \$100,000, and a Lexus NX are among the prizes.

Vish Mayekar, a graduate of NC's culinary management program in 2014, is one of 11 chefs from across the country chosen to compete for the Top Chef title in the popular Food Network series.

He tells The Local the show has already been filmed, and he is now back in Vancouver, where he is a head chef for Caffè La Tana. Sept 26 "is the big date for the premiere, and I am thrilled for all my friends and family members to be watching it."

Mayekar lived in Niagara Falls for most of his time at Niagara College, along with a short stint in Thorold, he told The Local.

During his co-op time at college, he worked at The Marriott by the Falls, and also at the Benchmark Restaurant on Niagara College's NOTL campus, as well as spending some time at Trius Estate Winery with Chef Frank Dodd.

"Whilst working at these restaurants I also was heavily involved in a lot of events

around the Niagara region," he says, including volunteering at food and wine events locally.

"I am more than thrilled" about being chosen to compete on Top Chef, he says. "I've been wanting to compete on the show for a few years now, but it has come at the right time."

Mayekar told The Local he owes a lot of his success in the culinary world to the foundations laid at Niagara College, including "the amazing chefs, mentors, and like-minded passionate students," some of whom he says he feels fortunate to still call friends.

"Niagara College wasn't just an education institution for me, it was an experience that has helped mould me into a confident chef in the Canadian food scene. I will forever be grateful for it," he added, mentioning "a couple of the amazing professors who to this date mentor me — Chef Olaf Mertens, Chef Avi Hollo, Chef Alan Kerr and Chef Tony de Luca. These are only a few of the many incredible chefs I was fortunate enough to learn from."

Mayekar says he has been following the show since its first season, and with his longtime passion for competition, he knew he wanted to be a part of it.

"It's an absolute honour. You know it's not something everyone gets to do or is able

to do so being selected to compete in one of the most prestigious competitions in Canada feels amazing," he says.

As a professional chef, Mayekar is known for his unique ingredient combinations and love for infusing flavours and spices from his Indian heritage, says a Niagara College news release.

Trained and well-versed in Italian cuisine, he is currently head chef at Pepino's Spaghetti House and wine bar Caffè La Tana in Vancouver, B.C. He also cooks for some of Hollywood's biggest stars every year at the Cannes Film Festival, where he is the head chef at the American Pavilion.

A member of Culinary Team Canada, he is also preparing to represent Canada on the world stage in 2024 at the IKA Culinary Olympics.

He has a lot on his plate, balancing his career with Team Canada and *Top Chef* competitions, but Mayekar believes where there's a will, there's a way.

"I just like staying busy, always being involved in things and always trying to be a better cook and a better person each day."

Mayekar grew up in Mumbai, India and fell in love with food at an early age. His passion for the culinary arts led him to enrol at NC where he

made his mark not only at culinary events and competitions, but on the board of directors for the NC Student Administrative Council and as a volunteer with the international department.

News about Mayekar's selection as a contestant on *Top Chef Canada X* is stirring up excitement throughout the college and its School of Culinary Arts.

"The ultimate satisfaction that an educator can have, is hearing about the success of their graduates. At Niagara College, we strive to set our alumni on the right path with a relevant set of tools, but ultimately it's their own hard work and determination that breeds success," said Craig Youdale, dean, culinary, tourism and beverage studies.

"Our entire team is very proud of Vish, and we will look forward to cheering him on both on the set of *Top Chef Canada*, as well as his life's journey."

Another NC alumna, Erica Karbelnik, was the winner of Season 9 of *Top Chef Canada*, while her husband Josh Karbelnik also cooked his way to the top four.

They both graduated from NC's culinary management co-op program in 2011, and were the first married couple to compete on the show.



Vish Mayekar volunteered at several local wine and food events while at Niagara College, and won the prestigious Ontario Youth Award in 2014, his last year at the NOTL campus. (Mike Ford, Food Network Canada)

*Top Chef Canada X* will air on Sept. 26 at 10 p.m. on Food Network Canada and will be available to stream through STACKTV.

In addition to the title of Canada's Top Chef, a cash prize of \$100,000 provided by Royale Tiger Towel, and a luxury Lex-

us NX, the winner will receive a brand-new kitchen outfitted by KitchenAid, an exclusive farm-to-table adventure courtesy of Glad, and a \$10,000 cash prize from DoorDash.

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# NOTL actor transitions from theatre to TV, film

## Second season of *Sort Of* debuts on CBC Nov. 15

**Mike Balsom**  
**The Local**

To Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Gray Powell, who has a major supporting role in CBC's *Sort Of* series, the accolades it is now receiving are not at all surprising.

In an online review of the television series, John Powers of NPR (National Public Radio, an American media organization) says the "low-key gem is funny, tender and humane."

Patricia Karounos of *Toronto Life* calls it a "rare treat," and a "smart, boundary-busting new series that captures the true heart of Toronto." And the show made *Vanity Fair's* Sonia Saraiya's "14 Best TV Shows of 2021" list.

The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television took notice of the series this year. *Sort Of* took home three Canadian Screen Awards in April, including one for Best Comedy Series.

Created by Bilal Baig and Fab Filippo, *Sort Of* follows Sabi, a gender-fluid Pakistani-Canadian who prefers they/them pronouns, played by Baig. Sabi is trying to find their identity while dividing their time between a job in a bar/bookshop and their role as a nanny for two children.

Powell plays Paul, the patriarch of the family who employs Sabi. Paul has his own identity issues, especially after his wife is seriously injured in a bicycle accident and he discovers she had been having an affair with a much younger man.

Until then, Paul seems to be cruising through his life, not fully aware of what is going on with his family, let alone his nanny, and not really engaged with any of them. His inability to recognize his own issues is somewhat ironic, since he is a therapist working out of the family's Toronto home.

Powell's involvement in the ground-breaking series came about just after wrapping *Man and Superman* at Shaw Festival in fall, 2019. His agent sent him a script for a "sizzle reel" — an extended trailer of sorts used to pitch series ideas to networks. He auditioned for the role of Paul, got the part, and spent two days shooting in Toronto that November.

"I first met with Bilal and Fab, getting more of an idea of what the story was," Powell explains. "The writing was great. As an actor, I was really looking forward to the chance to do the full series. In August of 2020, CBC and HBO Max both picked it up for eight episodes based on the sizzle reel."

Powell calls the decision made by the two big networks a "really great surprise."

Surprise or not, *Sort Of* is a series that has come about at exactly the right time. Acceptance and understanding of gender-fluidity, honouring everybody's right to identify themselves their own way, is front and centre. The series is written and performed in a way that encourages the viewer to feel a genuine sense of caring and compassion for all the characters and to empathize with Sabi's struggles.

Like their gender identity, Sabi's entire life is really in transition, spanning their daytime world with Paul's family and their nighttime world in the bar that caters to a very gender-diverse clientele.

And Sabi's roots complicate matters. Their mother has difficulty understanding the way Sabi lives their life. Not only because of the way they dress, but also because they are working as a nanny, something her culture frowns upon.

It is a comedy, but none of it is ever played for the obvious big laughs that might come from such a show if it were

developed by one of the traditional major U.S. networks. Instead, the humorous moments are subtle, sometimes sarcastic, and often bittersweet.

"It doesn't pander, it doesn't create tokenism," Powell says. "That's the beauty of this series, what they've created in the writing. It's about Sabi's journey through their life as they negotiate their transition, in terms of how they are seen in the world, how they identify in the world. In fact, everyone in the series is dealing with some kind of transition."

Powell sells Paul's transition with facial expressions that suggest he feels like he's been run over by a Mack truck. As his wife lays in hospital in a coma, he doesn't know what to tell his children, or whether or not they should see her in her current state. He seems to have very little understanding about his kids in general.

"Paul is having a mirror held up to himself," Powell says. "He's being thrust into where life is now, and maybe what's actually going on with himself. The accident makes him realize how unaware he is of what's actually going on in his life, and some of his past struggles start to bubble up, too."

CBC announced in July they were picking up the show for a second season, debuting on Nov. 15. Baig and Filippo have suggested that season two is really about love, while Powell adds there is a big focus on the family dynamic, both Sabi's and Paul's. Shooting has already wrapped in Toronto.

"We finished at the end of June," he says. "It was a mix of sound stage and location shooting. For most of Paul's scenes, they are shot at a house in High Park. It's wonderful, but it has also been kind of tough, especially in 2020, during COVID, when the rules would change on the fly. Watching the crew and how they dealt with it all was inspiring."

In 2020, he locked himself in the Toronto bubble, staying in the city while shooting. This



Sabi (Bilal Baig) and Paul (Gray Powell) in *Sort Of*. (Photos supplied)



Gray Powell as Paul has a major supporting role in *Sort Of*, a CBC series returning for its second season.

time around, he was able to come back and forth between there and Niagara-on-the-Lake when his schedule allowed for it.

Powell and his wife, Shaw veteran Molly Atkinson, have lived in town since 2008 and have raised their two sons here. Shaw fans will recognize Powell from past roles in recent plays such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Dracula*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Cabaret*.

After landing his role in *Sort Of*, he returned to Shaw for 2020. He was in rehearsal for *Prince Caspian* and *Playboy* when the pandemic began, cancelling the season. Powell hasn't walked across a Shaw stage since and is not too sure

when he will do so again.

He loves both theatre and television, and doesn't see a lot of differences between the two as far as his work.

"As an actor, it's all about storytelling to an audience," says the 52-year-old. "In theatre, I have more control, depending on the space. I can control how I am carrying the story through. On the set, the only control I have is between 'action' and 'cut.' The mechanics are different. In the theatre, you have to reach out to the back of the space, while on set you can sometimes tell the story with your eyes."

He misses the energy of the rehearsal hall, but he's a busy, in-demand actor in the studio

these days. Besides *Sort Of*, Powell also plays Young George Eastabrook on *The Hardy Boys*, another Canadian-shot series that is going into its third season. And he has a role in *The End of Sex*, a film that premieres during the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 10.

One might say that Powell himself, like his character Paul and Baig's character Sabi, is making his own transition right now, from theatre into television and film.

"I'm really grateful for the experience of *Sort Of* and to be able to do some exploring being on set," he says. "It's been a lot of fun figuring out what this kind of storytelling is all about."

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# The buzz about bee misconceptions in NOTL

**Owen Bjorgan**  
Special to The Local

A loss of honey bee populations is occurring while conversations about these benevolent pollinators is increasing.

Standing out back of Red Roof Retreat on the outskirts of Virgil, I met up with George Scott, the president of Niagara Beeway, which is focused on protecting native fauna species and restoring native habitats in Niagara.

It took one hand shake, and within the blink of an eye, I was fully suited up in a beekeeper's suit hovering over one of the boxes donated to the property. Over the years, and within the bounds of private property, Red Roof Retreat has been fortunate to undertake wetland restoration, forest planting, and the installation of a new bee box without many bureaucratic hoops to jump through, and my family is grateful for that.

However, with the recently procured bee box located on the "back nine" acres, which includes wheelchair accessible trails, there was a surprising amount of scrutiny over the concept.

I didn't need to cut to the chase with George. His passion flew through me like a bee riding the wind.

When I asked him what he would say to those who feel concerned about managed honey bees being an introduced species from Europe nearly 400 years ago, *Apis mellifera*, he pointedly discussed how it is essentially the least of our worries.

"It is absolutely not true that these honey bees are competing with native bees. The cycle of honey bees is different from native bees, and the same is for food sources."

Although honey bees are not native to the North American continent, they play a historic and currently vital role in pollinating our local forest species, meadow plants, and even our manicured landscapes such as orchards and gardens.

George estimates that approximately \$1 billion of ecosystem services come from *Apis mellifera* and its various subspecies in Niagara Region alone — largely on the backbone of pollination abilities in a landscape denuded of its original habitat and insects. In other words, here we are, and it is certainly better than nothing, considering the historical wreckage of Niagara's biosphere.

"There are bigger issues," George continues,



George Scott, president of Niagara Beeway and Owen Bjorgan discuss misconceptions about honey bees in Niagara. (Owen Bjorgan)

"like habitat loss for our original pollinators."

This is where George and I approach the beehive, like a couple of spacemen about to investigate a rock on a newfound lunar surface. We are aware that the Niagara Region and NOTL have lost more than 90 per cent of original habitat coverage, and that we continue to hack away at an ecological system that sustains our society and pollinators alike.

George pulls the lid off the top of the box with his bare hands, and tells me he is looking for female honey bees, that make up the vast majority of the hive's population, sometimes up to 90 per cent of the population. And they do all of the work to keep it functioning.

Males are bigger, don't have a stinger, and spend their lives doing barely any work. They are biologically fixated, consuming honey, and waiting for the oppor-

tunity to mate. Readers, let the jokes roll!

Knowing that some people see honey bees in common settings, some may not believe that population declines are unravelling. George informs us of a stark reality that hits close to home.

"There are large areas of Niagara where there are no bees," he explains. Habitat loss is one factor, but George wanted to set the record straight on the misconception that farmers are to blame.

"Urban areas contribute 12 times the amount of toxins and chemicals compared to rural environments. The girls of the hive are picking up the toxins and it is killing them. The chemical compounds of our past sins are now combining with our current chemical sins, making more deadly compounds."

By sins, George is referring to previously used, and now largely banned,

chemical compounds that have now recently combined with our current regulated products to create a molecularly destructive soup to all pollinators of the region.

"Our urban gardens are concrete islands, where predators have native pollinators and honey bees on a platter," he explains. Combined with habitat loss, George also paints a picture of way bigger fish to fry.

I asked him how we can address this, and what stands in the way of such change.

"We (beekeepers) would like to see more representation on the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA)." He continues. "Beekeepers have been trying to transfer their technology into the NPCA for some time," as well as other layers of government.

Ecologically speaking, we are only left to work

with what we are currently given. We cannot change the past, but we can start today to create a better tomorrow.

As a past Rotary Club exchange student, I was fortunate to have spent many months in a bee suit in Australia, learning about the biological, ecological, chemical, agricultural, political, and cultural world of honey bees, which benefit both society and our local ecosystems. Even if they were originally from Europe, just like most of us. Think about that before we label this insect as an invasive species.

George holds up a sleeve from the beehive and explains the intellect and language behind *Apis mellifera*, which I am forever learning about, considering the hive's appreciable complexity.

"The queen is the moth-

erboard, from threats, to ventilation, and temperature. The hive speaks in braille, audible sound, pheromones, tactile bee dances, frequency, and written language patterns we see on the combs." He also highlighted the complexity of how honey bees can respond to threats such as tapping on the bee box, from a wood pecker, or perhaps the thumping and personal space invasion of a black bear. These insects are hardwired to be intelligent as a society, almost like our own, although I often question the collective "hive mind" of our own species these days.

With this complexity in mind, look no further than our own species, as to who the real invasive species is.

We need honey bees, no matter how much it stings to think about it.

## Local WORSHIP

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**9:45 a.m.**

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**10:00 a.m.**

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OBITUARY

ALFRED ROBERT MOUGET  
MAY 7, 1930 - SEPT 1, 2022

Alfred Mouget died on September 1, 2022, with Nancy, his wife of 37 years, by his side. He was 92. Just days before he died Alfred said, “I have no illusions. I know my days are numbered. But I can’t complain. I’ve had a beautiful life”.



A bon vivant, architect and engineer, he was a man of relentless optimism and courage who could never tell a joke without laughing his way through the punchline. Born in the Saarland region of Germany, he and his young bride Kriemhild emigrated to Canada and settled in Montreal, where they lived happily together until her death in 1980 and where their beloved son, Yves, continues to live with wife Marie and children Thierry and Mia.

On a cruise in 1983 he met Nancy and they married soon after. Alfred’s work as an engineer on the St. Lawrence Seaway brought them to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where they found a vibrant and welcoming community, centered around the Shaw Festival Theatre, and made a home of laughter and hospitality, deep friendships and civic engagement.

A lover of poetry and ideas, Alfred could also make things with his hands: he designed and built elaborate gingerbread houses, entirely edible and ever popular at local charity auctions. In retirement he returned to an early love of painting with support from the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. His watercolours capture both the landscapes of his youth and the farms around Niagara.

A man of strong religious belief, he had faith in an afterlife. He believed in reincarnation. Alfred hoped that when he came back he would be Ambassador to France. *Salut, Your Excellency!*

Friends are invited to gather and share memories on Sunday, Sept 11th at 4:00 PM at 15226 Niagara River Parkway, Service Road 66 at Line 3. Those wishing to honor Alfred with financial contributions are encouraged to donate to the Shaw Festival or the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

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63						64				65				

- Across:  
1 Distant  
6 Apex  
9 Jobs  
14 “ER” actress --- Tierney  
15 “--- Believer”, Monkees hit  
16 Start playing!  
17 Tap  
19 “Fear of Flying” author --- Jong  
20 Snow runner  
21 Less common  
22 Buoyant  
23 Old-fashioned cab  
25 Lightweight tropical hats  
27 Elite group  
28 Gene Pitney was only 24hrs from here  
29 Downloadable program  
32 Small lake  
34 Natter  
35 Tenor --- Bocelli  
37 Sidestepped  
39 Splendors  
40 Demeanor  
41 Total  
42 Capital of Norway  
43 Source of formic acid  
44 Jambalaya ingredient  
46 Little one
- 47 “Band of Gold” singer Freda ---  
48 Miscreants  
51 Economizer  
54 Succeed  
56 One of New York’s finest, perhaps  
57 Nautical fastener  
58 To  
60 Carroll’s rabbit-hole explorer  
61 Wyo. neighbor  
62 Extended area of land  
63 Waterproofed as many showers are  
64 Affirmative vote  
65 Solemn promises
- Down:  
1 Pennsylvania Mennonites  
2 Sri ---, formerly Ceylon  
3 Ahead of the field  
4 Mineral source  
5 Litter of pigs  
6 Bracket  
7 Stimulus  
8 Security detachment  
9 Anna Paquin won an Oscar for this film, aged 11  
10 Spanish winds  
11 The pen  
12 Recoil  
13 Remain  
18 Rotating engine part  
24 Welcome  
26 Old Testament song  
28 Sliver  
29 Nobleman  
30 Rind  
31 --- doble (dance)  
32 One of the Three Bears  
33 “--- Almighty”, in which Morgan Freeman played God  
34 Nixon’s successor, informally  
36 Drivel  
38 At peace  
39 Rev up  
41 --- Todd, barber  
45 Chest pain  
46 Am disposed  
47 Serenity  
48 Pro  
49 Gun handle nick  
50 Notices  
51 Get outta here!  
52 “--- want is a room somewhere...” (“My Fair Lady”)  
53 Bridal wear  
55 Start of a Hamlet soliloquy  
59 Geological time composed of periods

SUDOKU

	7		8				2	9
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		8			5			2
3		1						

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 1 Aloof, 6 Tip, 9 Tasks, 14 Maura, 15 I’m a, 16 Hit it, 17 Intercept, 19 Erica, 20 Ski, 21 Rare, 22 Perk, 23 Hansom, 25 Topis, 27 Few, 28 Tulsa, 29 App, 32 Mere, 34 Gas, 35 Andrea, 37 Avoided, 39 Glories, 40 Manner, 41 Sum, 42 Oslo, 43 Ant, 44 Prawn, 46 Tot, 47 Payne, 48 Felons, 51 Saver, 54 Get on, 56 Cop, 57 Cleat, 58 In order to, 60 Alice, 61 Neb, 62 Tract, 63 Tiled, 64 Aye, 65 Oaths.  
Down: 1 Amish, 2 Lanka, 3 Out in front, 4 Ore, 5 Farrow, 6 Tier, 7 Impetus, 8 Patrol, 9 The piano, 10 Aires, 11 Stif, 12 Kick, 13 Stay, 18 Cam, 24 See in, 26 Psalm, 28 Tad, 29 Aristocrat, 30 Peel, 31 Paso, 32 Mama, 33 Evan, 34 Gerry, 36 Drool, 38 Departed, 39 Gun, 41 Sweeney, 45 Angina, 46 Tend to, 47 Peace, 48 For, 49 Notch, 50 Spots, 51 Scat, 52 All I, 53 Veil, 55 To be, 59 Era.

PLEASE RECYCLE  
THIS NEWSPAPER

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



# LocalSPORTS

## Spectacular month for tennis at NOTL club

**Hugh Dow**  
President, NOTL Tennis Club

Hot on the heels of the tennis event for the Canada Summer Games, the Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tennis Club held its annual men's and women's tennis tournament.

I think it is safe to say that our club has never seen such a spectacular month of tennis. With the

new courts recently re-surfaced the players seemed inspired, with three of the final matches going down to the wire with third set tie-breakers determining the winners.

Many members turned out to cheer on the players and then stayed to enjoy a catered dinner under the club's pavilion.

Results of the tournament were as follows:

Burke and Michelle Marsh.  
Finalists - Barb Kavanagh and Mary Lou Turner.  
Score - 6-4,6-2.

Glen Salzman.  
Score - 8-4.

**Men's A Consolation**  
Champions-Roman Korda and Gerry McIlhone.  
Finalists - Jean Lalonde and Shawn Parker.  
Score - 8-4.

**Men's B' Consolation**  
Champions - Les McFarland and Terry Ratkovsky.  
Finalists - Ross Robinson and Richard Berti.  
Score - 10-4 Tiebreak after 7 All.

### Men's A Doubles

Champions - Father and son Chris and George Bandak.  
Finalists - John Pilling and Scott Lewis.  
Score - 6-1,5-7,10-4.

### Men's B Doubles

Champions - Jim O'Gorman and Bill Devolin.  
Finalists - Jim Thackeray and

### Women's A Doubles

Champions - Natalie Early and Karen Rhind.  
Finalists - Amanda Thackarray and Sylvia Allen.  
Score - 6-3,4-6,10-8.

### Women's B Doubles

Champions - Nicole Mash-



Amanda Thackarray and Sylvia Allen (Photos by Sonja Schindeler)



John Pilling, Scott Lewis, George Bandak and his father Chris Bandak



Karen Rhind and Natalie Early



Michelle Marsh, Nicole Marsh-Burke, Barb Kavanagh and Mary Lou Turner



Nicole Marsh-Burke and Michelle Marsh

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Opens Sunday, September 18th

NSO opens the season with a concert featuring  
**Stravinsky's *The Firebird*,**  
**Tchiakovsky's *Fourth Symphony*,**  
and the Canadian premier of  
*Harriet: Journey to Freedom*,  
composed by **Timothy Adams**  
with narration by **Juliet Dunn**

## This season offers something for everyone

From the music of film score master, **John Williams** to *Big Band Swing* with selections by **Duke Ellington**, **Count Basie** and **Glenn Miller**, on through to classics from **Mahler**, **Brahms** and **Dvorak** to World Music from **Sultans of String**. **Jared Miller's *Shattered Night*** will be performed by pianist **Sara Davis Buechner** and *Invisible Cities* by **Dinuk Wijeratne** will be performed by **TorQ Percussion** along with **Rachmaninof's *Symphony #2***. Chickasaw Composer **Jerod Tate's *Chockfi*** will delight alongside **Jarred Dunn** performing **Mozart's *Piano Concerto #24***. And Rock meets symphony with **Symphonically Hip** while Pop meets symphony with the music of **Phil Collins** and **Genesis**.

## Ticket options

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Senior (60+) \$60	Arts Worker: \$35 w/ID	\$ + taxes & fees

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To purchase tickets or packages by phone please call our venue's box office Tuesday-Friday from 11 am - 4 pm

# Ladies' and men's teams compete for Pro's Cup

## Harry Huizer Special to The Local

Beautiful warm weather greeted the 14 ladies and 14 men as they competed for the Pro's Cup at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course.

This was the 10th annual match between the Solheim Ladies team and the defending champions, the Senior Men's Ryder Cup team.

The ladies were dressed in their blue and yellow matching sharp outfits, looking to regain the title they won two years ago.

The men wore their blazing red and black outfits hoping to imitate Tiger Woods and his usual march to victory.

There was again great excitement and anticipation in the air and the men knew they were in for a stiff battle when Val Chubey hit a booming long drive to begin the 'friendly' competition. The men were in awe as lady after lady came out with their A-games, especially with their opening drives. However the men were not intimidated as they knew more than a super tee shot is needed to win a match.

The format was seven pairs of ladies matched with seven pairs of men. The front nine was an alternate shot format and the back nine was a best-ball format.

Each nine was worth two points, but the 18-hole match was also worth two points, meaning six points were up for grabs in each match.

There were 42 possible points and at least 22 were needed to win the Pro's Cup.

The ladies obviously had quite a pep talk from their captain Martha Cruikshank as they darted out to an early lead, but the men didn't flinch.

After all seven matches finished their nine holes the score was seven to seven. The real battle for the prestigious title had just begun!

The ladies had the men on the ropes when the team of Ginny Green and Robin Foster took all six points from the strong team of Jim Panetta and Ted Wiens.

The third ladies team added four more points and there was a sense that the ladies were the ones marching to victory, but not so fast!

Suddenly the tide turned on the next three matches, and maybe a little "lady luck" had something to do with it.

Yours truly (Harry Huizer) hit a shot in the fourth match on the 17th hole, which not only went through a tree but somehow shot forward off a branch and miraculously ended up on the green, shocking himself and his opponents, thus turning a sure

loss of a hole into a winning hole. Without this turn of fate the result would have been quite different.

The tide was now turning in the men's favour. The ladies never quit and they lost a heart-breaking sixth match by one hole, giving the men a five to one result due to the scoring system.

Sometimes the scoring doesn't seem fair, as the ladies will certainly agree to!

The ladies dominated the final match but it was a little too late, and the men won the nail-biting finish 23 to 19.

The ladies deserved a better fate as they won as many holes as the men, but a one-hole win at the right time in a few of the matches gave the men the victory and the Pro's Cup.

The players all had their lunch on the first tee, and then came the exciting and "tearful" moment when our pro Keith Vant presented the Pro's Cup to captain Harry Huizer, with the ladies captain Martha Cruikshank looking on, but in true sportsmanship clapping along with all the players and fans.

It was really a winning day for everyone, as could be seen from the fun and friendly chatter after the matches were completed.

For sure it was a nail-biting victory for the men in one of the most exciting club events of the year.



Men and women's teams had a great day at the NOTL Golf Club, with a close victory for the men. (Photos supplied)



Women's captain Martha Cruikshank claps as captain Harry Huizer accepts the Pro's Cup from pro Keith Vant on behalf of the men's team.