



Hayden coming to Ravine

page 13



Magical evening overlooking the river

A nautical theme for the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre's Moonlight Picnic Friday night was perfect for the setting, nestled between the pumphouse and the lighthouse overlooking the Niagara River. And nobody was surprised when the S.S. Minnow, with Gilligan, the Skipper, Mary Ann, Ginger, and the Howells, won the prize for the best decorated table. For more photos see page 16. (Photo by Mike Balsom)

How to become a self-advocate

Sharon Burns
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care and the Niagara North Family Health Team have partnered to provide a day of learning called The Seven Keys to Get the Best Care Possible, this Thursday, at the NOTL Community Centre.

Keynote speakers, Dr. Hsien Seow and Dr. Samantha Winemaker, co-wrote *Hope for the Best, Plan for the Rest*, "about navigating a life-changing diagnosis," said Bonnie Bagnulo, executive director at Palliative Care.

Seow, a professor and the Canada research chair in palliative care and health system innovation at McMaster University, and Winemaker, a palliative care physician in Hamilton, will be talking about the tools needed to navigate a diagnosis, including which are the important questions to ask, and how to become a self-advocate.

"In the afternoon, we're

doing segments on medical assistance and dying, advanced care planning, bereavement support and spiritual care," said Bagnulo. The workshop will end with a question and answer period with speakers from throughout the afternoon, from NOTL Palliative Care and the Niagara North Family Health Team.

Community tables will be set up from Wellspring, Hospice Niagara, the Alzheimer's Society and the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), the health authority for regional administration of public healthcare services.

The event is "absolutely free of charge and lunch is included," added Bagnulo. The event will run Thursday, Sept. 21, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Anderson Lane community centre. Register at notlpcp.com or niagaranorthfht.ca.

"We're really looking forward to being able to have an informed information session for our community coming from the healthcare providers in this area," said Bagnulo.

Porch pickup a solution to bare food shelves

Penny Coles
The Local

Once again Newark Neighbours is teaming up for a porch pickup food drive, this time with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club, St. Davids Lions Club and the Kinsmen Club.

It's always been a successful event, and Newark food bank chair Cin-

dy Grant is hoping for the phone calls and emails to roll in from those who plan to participate.

There are teams of drivers all set to go Sept. 23, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and requests for pickups can be made right up until that day, when Grant says she will be finalizing her lists to hand them over to drivers.

This drive is planned

to coincide with Thanksgiving food hampers — Newark is seeing a greater need than ever before, and their food supply is low.

Your porch can be anywhere in town, Grant adds — each time this has been done before, they have successfully reached 100 to 120 addresses.

Despite many generous support from Hen-

driks and Phil's Your Independent Grocers, "we still have empty shelves."

Newark had three new families who just registered this week, bringing their total up to 105 families which make up a total of 205 individuals — numbers never seen before. Some are single moms, says Grant,

Continued on page 10



Dr. Hsien Seow and Dr. Samantha Winemaker, co-authors of *Hope for the Best, Plan for the Rest*. (Supplied)

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Fred Fox keeps brother Terry's legacy alive

Mike Balsom
The Local

Now in its 43rd year, the Terry Fox Run has raised more than \$850 million across the country to fund cancer research. And Fred Fox, Terry's older brother, is more and more amazed each year by the level of support he sees for the cause in every community he visits, big or small.

Fox was in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Wednesday, where he helped local run organizer Joan King and Couns. Erwin Wiens and Tim Balasiuk raise the Terry Fox Run flag at town hall.

"My Mom (Betty Fox) started this after Terry passed away in June of '81, after the return of cancer," Fox told the supporters about the annual event that began after his younger brother was forced to cancel his Marathon of Hope in 1980. "Terry's

legacy has lasted 43 years just because of individuals like you. It doesn't happen without people like you in communities across the country."

Fox was travelling this week in the footsteps of his inspirational brother. Terry's 1980 Marathon of Hope did not take him through Niagara. However, he did make his way to the region from Toronto, where he visited city hall in Niagara Falls and stopped at NOTL's Prince of Wales Hotel for a reception. King had prepared a poster of photos from that visit to display at the flag raising.

Terry's second bout with cancer forced him to abandon his run in September that year after 143 days and 5,373 kilometres. Fox passed away in hospital in New Westminster, B.C. about nine months later.

Like his brother, Fred stopped in at Niagara Falls before



Fred Fox talks about his brother's legacy being kept alive by volunteers in communities large and small.



Sarah Pillitteri and her daughter Sophia were excited to meet Fred Fox.

visiting NOTL. There, that city's mayor, Jim Diodati, presented him with a key to the city.

"I was really given that on behalf of the citizens of Niagara Falls," he said, "who work so hard every year to organize their run. It was amazing to receive that honour, but I know it was Terry being honoured, and that's exactly what it should be about."

Fox travels regularly to different communities to lend his support to their fundraising efforts. The visit to Niagara also included a dinner last Tuesday evening with organizers of runs in NOTL, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne and St. Catharines.

"You really feel that community spirit," said Fox. "That's what keeps things like this going. Everyone knows somebody in their community who has been touched by cancer. That's why it's so important."

Fox pointed out the two or

three people there on the town hall steps who were wearing red Terry Fox Run T-shirts signifying that they are cancer survivors.

"That's what it's all about," Fox went on. "That's what Terry wanted to do, he wanted to impact research. He knew at one point, probably late in his Marathon of Hope, that something was going wrong. Even after he had to stop in Thunder Bay, when he knew he wasn't going to survive his second diagnosis of cancer, he knew what he did was worthwhile."

Rick Plato of Niagara Falls assists King with the NOTL run each year. He was wearing one of those red shirts last week, having fought prostate cancer for surgery back then and has had a clear diagnosis since.

The retired OPP officer choked up remembering Terry's run in 1980, and said he was sure that the funds raised through Terry Fox runs through the years were largely responsible for his survival.

"I had options when I was diagnosed," Plato told The Local. "External radiation, internal radiating active seeds. There were two surgical options, too, the old fashioned way or laparoscopic, the option I took. No incision, just two little holes, they

drilled in there and removed it. I was lucky, too, as they caught it early."

Plato got emotional again when asked how it felt to meet the brother of the man named one of the greatest Canadians of all time by CBC television viewers in 2004.

"It's absolutely awesome to meet him," said an emotional Plato. "It's unfathomable to think about what he and his family went through back then. You don't expect to bury younger siblings and children. It's amazing how he works to keep Terry's legacy alive."

"This is like the royal family of Canada," King said about the visit to NOTL by Fox. "It's so inspiring to have Terry's brother here to tell the story. It reminds us that Terry is a brother, a son, a cousin, a human being like everybody else. Not just a picture that we see."

The first NOTL Terry Fox Run took place in 1990. King, a retired teacher, took over the role of organizing the event in 2007. She has often said her many years of teaching young people about Fox's courage is what inspired her to take the leadership role in town.

St. Michael Catholic Elementary School student Sophia Pillitteri was at the flag raising

with her mother, Sarah. The two were excited to meet Fred Fox for the first time.

"Meeting an actual family member," Sarah said, "Sophia may not realize it now, but she'll look back on pictures when she's older and realize who she met. To continue on the legacy is so special to me. We've had so many people in our lives battle cancer."

"Students weren't born 43 years ago," Fox posited, "and likely their parents and teachers weren't. Those young kids keep the legacy going. They will be the future Terry Fox Run organizers because they've been impacted by Terry's example of never giving up."

At the end of the ceremony, Fox joined John Grummett, organizer of the St. Catharines run for the past 26 years, for the car ride back to Grummett's Beamsville home. He was to head to Toronto later that evening on his way to his next inspirational visit. Fox was scheduled to be in Regina, Saskatchewan, on Sept. 9.

However he is returning to Niagara and will be sharing the stage at one point during the evening with Joe Pillitteri for his comedy night Sept. 29.

"It's been a bit of a whirlwind 24 hours," Fox told the gathering. "Coming back and seeing photos of Terry when he was here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and at city hall in Niagara Falls, it's amazing to know that Terry so many years later still impacts these communities. We're so proud of what Terry did, because it wasn't about him, it was about other people."



Run organizer Joan King, Fred Fox and run volunteer and cancer survivor Donna Seymour at a dinner in Niagara Falls. (Penny Coles)

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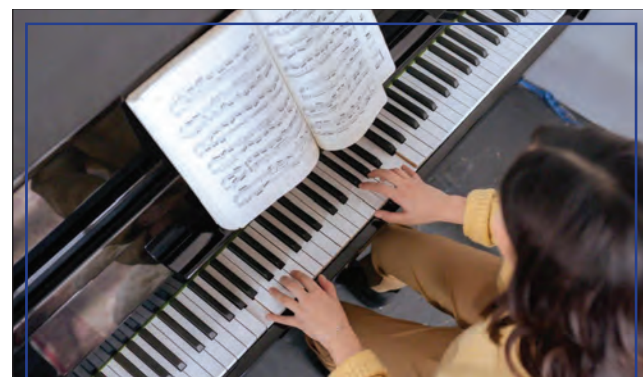
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Parking, waterfront, airport topics that were touched on Tourism strategy in early days of talks

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

Niagara-on-the-Lake has the potential to become even more of a world class tourist destination than it already is.

That's the opinion of members of the town's tourism strategy committee, which was struck last year and has been tasked with coming up with a long-term plan on how to prioritize, implement and measure ways to improve the local tourism experience by creating a broader range of visitors and more diverse options to draw people to the town of about 20,000 people.

Last Thursday afternoon, the committee revisited the first two phases of its five-phase approach to create a strategy.

Figures related to visitors shared by tourism consultant Rebecca Godfrey, from CBRE Tourism Consulting, were based on 2019, rather than last year. Pre-pandemic figures are "a better indicator than 2022 in terms of how the visitor economy is going to move forward," said Godfrey.

In 2019, about 12.3 million people visited the Niagara Region, with an estimated 24 per cent of that number coming from the U.S.

Niagara-on-the-Lake welcomed 2.2 million guests that year and an estimated 18 per

cent came from south of the border, she said in her presentation.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce president Minerva Ward, a member of the committee, said there isn't a "clear source" to calculate a finite number of visitors each year.

"I think we need a methodology," she said during the meeting. "We can't grow what we don't know."

Later in the meeting, Godfrey said it is "very difficult" to gather visitor data due to there being multiple border crossings in the area, as well as those arriving at the Niagara District Airport. Getting various attractions to "consolidate" their data could be useful, she said.

But Ward had a few other ideas on how to make improvements — one being the implementation of a wayfinding signage program.

"You have to drive really far into Niagara-on-the-Lake to realize you've arrived at a world-class destination," said Ward, who also believes creating more opportunities within all the town's villages, not just the Old Town, is something to consider.

She said an average of 10,000 people are out and about in the downtown core each day in tourism season, which can be overcrowded and stressful to some.

"The psychological impact of the 10,000 people will not be felt" if that number is spread throughout the villages, she said.

Parking is also a "major is-

sue," said Ward, adding that a multi-level parking lot needs to be considered to address issues.

Ward also believes the airport on Niagara Stone Road is a "major asset" and wonders if there is an appetite for development at the site.

"In the long term, I'd like to see a strategy in developing the airport for more than what we're using it for," said Ward.

Member Erica Lepp also touched on parking as a large problem that needs to be improved.

"That has been an issue, as it relates to tourism, for as long as I can remember," she said, adding that growing the tourism sector, creating more destinations, can't happen until issues with parking are addressed.

"We can't do all these things unless those logistics are smoothed out."

Lepp also pointed to the need for more amenities to be created involving waterways.

"It's amazing how little goes on with our waterfront," she said.

In January, most parking machines in the Old Town stopped accepting credit cards and are now operating on coins or through use of the Honk Mobile app, which users can download and then pay through their credit card.

This has caused problems, especially for U.S. visitors whose cellular data doesn't work north of the border, said committee member Vlad Haltigin.



The Shaw Festival, including the Royal George Theatre on Queen Street, is a huge draw for visitors. Chamber of Commerce CEO Minerva Ward would like to see attractions throughout all villages in town, not just the Old Town. (Kris Dube)

This matter needs to be "upped in terms of priority," he suggested.

He also believes residents need to be kept up to speed as the strategy is put together.

"We need them to come along with us each step of the way," said Haltigin.

Member Tim Jennings, Shaw CEO, said agencies such as Parks Canada and the Niagara Parks Commission should play more of a role in a solution to problems with a lack of parking, considering they "own so much" space in town.

"I think it would be useful to have those folks involved in a larger conversation about how they can help the municipality," he said, such as using the parking lot at Fort George for cars, and the provision of a shuttle service.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita is one of two council representatives on the committee, joined by Coun. Maria Mavridis.

Cheropita said Napa Valley in California is an example Niagara-on-the-Lake could learn from — turning its wineries and culinary offerings into a tourism powerhouse.

It was once a small "hick town," but grew into a high-end destination because "the residents and the businesses all rallied around that," said Cheropita, adding that Niagara-on-the-Lake could be "the number one luxury destination in Canada."

Cheropita also expressed the need for a waterfront strategy to be undertaken by the town.

The municipal accommodation tax was also part of last Thursday's dialogue. CBRE's re-

port said it generated \$767,000 in 2022, but is projected to create a revenue of nearly \$2.9 million for the town by 2025.

These numbers are only crunched when factoring accommodations with five rooms or more.

Cheropita said short-term rentals should be included in this data.

"That would greatly change the numbers we're looking at right now," she said.

Town CAO Marnie Cluckie told Cheropita that staff will look into it and "identify if any changes are needed."

The next step for the committee will be to discuss "vision and focus" on Sept. 20.

The plan's final report is expected to be delivered to council this December or January 2024.



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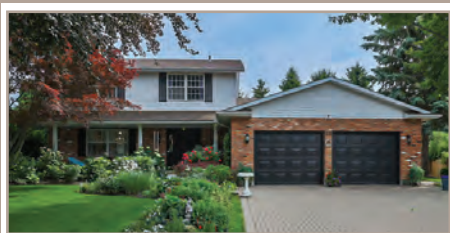
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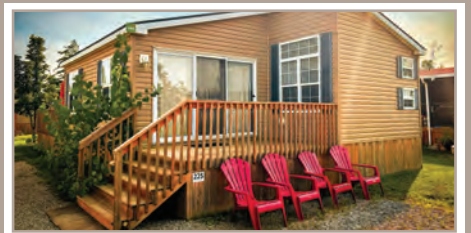
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Few issues raised over Phillips Estate plans

Increased traffic, noise are concerns

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

Residents who have watched the historic Phillips Estate sit idle at one of the busiest intersections in town for decades were given a chance to ask questions and raise concerns Monday evening about a proposed development that would see it restored for use as a hotel.

It was once a grand home built hundreds of years ago as a refuge for wealthy Americans who visited Niagara-on-the-Lake in the summer months.

Now the estate, partially restored with plans to be an upscale hotel, and two bordering lots are being proposed to become the site of an 81-room hotel with a restaurant, spa, and other features such as a portion of the fourth floor having a rooftop deck. Underground parking is also part of the plan.

The property has been owned by Rainer Hummel since 2003, and the latest proposal is being brought forward by Van Riesen Hotel Group.

Hummel told The Local shortly after the open house

adjourned that he is still the owner, and that the property is registered in his name, while Van Riesen Hotel Group is the agent involved in the proposed development.

He intends to keep the property in his name and at some point, “see it developed.”

He has no plans to sell, he added.

The proposal is to use adjoining lots fronting Simcoe Street to add two new three-storey and four-storey hotel sections that will connect to the historic home.

The estate has passed through many hands, from the early prominent citizens who originally owned portions of the property, to the Americans who first built the summer home, and then through generations who have renovated and added to it over the years.

Recent town documents say the estate and property “represent a significant example of the type of elegant summer properties constructed by wealthy Americans who spent their summers in Niagara-on-the-Lake during the heyday of the grand summer estates that sprang up in the town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.”

The town also says the “landscape setting, including the greenhouse and the specimen trees located throughout the property, is an integral defining element of the property, marking it as one of the few remaining significant summer estates in Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

One individual who asked questions during the open house was Glen Bandiera.

He’s concerned about traffic in the area that will result from the project if it’s approved as it is being proposed.

“I’m a little intimidated by the number of rooms,” he said.

Jennifer Vida, an agent representing Van Riesen Hotel Group, said a traffic impact study has been conducted and that there are some “remedial measures that need to be taken” on Queen Street, which will be worked out during the site plan process.

Concerns about noise from events at the proposed hotel were also brought up during the open house.

Carlia Rienzo said rowdiness from another accommodation in town are a “chronic issue.”

Vida said the town’s noise bylaw “will be enforced upon



An open house to discuss The Phillips Estate revealed few issues. (File photo)

the events and functions that take place on this property.”

Initial plans for the project were somewhat of a “glass box,” admitted Vida, fielding questions from meeting participant David Parker.

She explained plans have changed and the main hotel building will fit in with a heritage-style facade and “blend in with the character of the existing house.”

The highest piece of the property will be no higher than 16 metres, said Vida, adding its highest point currently is 10.66 metres.

The purpose of the open house, as well as a public meeting before council on Oct. 3, is to get closer to proposed official plan and zoning bylaw amendments.

The official plan changes are to accommodate the

height of the building, said Vida.

The zoning bylaw amendment proposes to change the existing general commercial site specific zoning related to permitted uses, lot frontage, lot area, building setbacks, building height, parking requirements, loading spaces and buffer strip requirements abutting residential uses.



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Greenbelt scandal deserves justice, but history may repeat itself

Owen Bjorgan
The Local

He flip-flopped about appropriate class sizes for school children. He flip-flopped during lockdowns and restrictions — many times. Flip-flop Ford flops more than a fish out of water, and over the past few weeks, it is no secret that he flip-flopped on his own party's original promise to protect the Greenbelt.

My end of summer touring season was clogged with work, which didn't leave me much breathing room to write my usual weekly article. However, such matters gave me ample observation time to watch one of Ontario's most jarring ecological issues play out in order to write this piece. The psychology and layering of this issue is popcorn-worthy.

To be clear, I have no political dog in this fight. All political parties have acute problems, and all sides underperform grossly in the environmental sector. Additionally, I am not against housing development. However, I do get my feathers ruffled when outright corruption rides in on its high horse and impacts our local ecosystems and livelihoods.

The Ontario Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk, has delivered a scathing public report on how the Ford government flip-flopped and opened up the Greenbelt for development, and how they did so without any public or professional consultation. I recall thinking "it's probably just to get some of his corporate and development buddies really rich." There is no way that governments would ever do something like that at the expense of everyday people and the environment — that's just conspiracy talk, right?

Lysyk's investigation revealed that the "decision favoured developers with connections to the housing minister's (Steve Clark) chief of staff." The report continues, "the government also failed to consider the environmental, cultural and financial risks and impacts of the decision," and called the process "not standard or defensible."

In fact, it is so indefensible, that Ford responded with his tailored, "I'm just a regular honest Canadian guy who made a mistake" tone. It would almost be laughable if the stakes weren't so high.

"The process should have been better, and I'm admitting the process should have been better," said Ford. Hold your breath, though — because like a child giving a jaded and insincere apology, there is always a "but" to follow. To which Ford con-



A photo from on top of the Niagara Escarpment recently, which Owen Bjorgan says perfectly sums up the mosaic of land uses in the previously protected Greenbelt. (Owen Bjorgan)

tinues, "but, when you're in a housing crisis, when you have an inferno happening, the firefighters run to the fire, not away from it. In my position, I have to deal with the crisis."

So not only can we unpack that he continues to have no substance to his defence, he also equated a government-created (this is a federal incompetence issue, too) housing crisis to a firefighter risking their lives to put out a fire. It is almost insulting to firefighters, as his argument holds like a strainer holds water.

Ford is also feeding into an age-old narrative of development versus environment. It's option A or B, without middle ground or reasonable compensation. This is a classic fabricated dichotomy. As a society in recent years, we have become trained to believe that large, complicated issues must be compartmentalized into polarized sides, which is nonsense, and ineffective at solving problems.

On that precise and painful note, Lysyk's report continues to highlight how, when certain parcels of the Greenbelt became sacrificed to development, the process had no consistency or "fairness" at all, and that it was poorly thought-out from a land planning perspective. The report states that "there was sufficient land for the target of 1.5 million homes to be built without the need to build on the Greenbelt." All of this just steers to a facetious shocker — your elected officials are sometimes more in it for themselves and their buddies than they are for you, the voter and citizen.

Furthermore, both the Premier and the now-resigned housing minister told Lysyk that they "did not know" how the selection process of parcels to become unprotected went through. So, who is really running the ship that figuratively and literally sails through our precious watersheds?

As we speak, the RCMP is also investigating the Ford Greenbelt scandal after Ontario Provincial Police delegated the task to them. As much as I think this sounds totally appropriate and encouraging for justice, even the RCMP has had a hard time keeping a clean nose over the years. That comment, please understand, is of no disrespect to the vast majority of men and women who serve with dignity.

Now, Ford has recently come out to say that he is going to add parcels of land back to the Greenbelt. This only happened once he got caught. If this were you or I, we'd be fired or fined already.

I speculate this is just smoke and mirrors for some of Ontario's most biodiverse and agriculturally productive farmland to be destroyed, in lieu of adding properties of much less significance. It stinks a whole lot of the 2015/2016 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority board, Niagara Region officials, a handful of mayors, and a foreign investor trying to destroy protected wetlands while advertising it to the public as "biodiversity offsetting."

This has been just another reminder that whatever the political, social, or in this case environmental issue, the big mouths on our screens are not the end-all

and be-all of credibility. Nor in any industry or conversation, for that matter.

Over the past few months I have been grateful to help MPP Wayne Gates spread the message to our

local town and city councils, as well as in Queen's Park. Yes, a housing crisis exists (as I write this from my parent's place. Love you, Mom and Dad!), but we can address the issue without

harming the Greenbelt. I will continue to be an active voice for an issue that truly affects us all, including the unique and rare species that have called Niagara home long before us.

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EDITORIAL

Important accommodation tax talks set to begin

Leading up to the last municipal election, and since then, there has been lots of discussion from residents, businesses and politicians about the municipal accommodation tax.

The accommodation sector wasn't happy about it — the timing couldn't have been worse, when tourism hadn't really started to recover from the pandemic years.

Taxpayers lobbied for it as a way of lowering taxes, although they were told that wasn't the way it works, or the reason for enacting it — and that it had to be spent on tourism infrastructure, and new tourism-related projects.

Businesses were mixed —

would the NOTL Chamber of Commerce's 50 per cent be spent on marketing the town to tourists and help them out of their pandemic funk, or would it drive away visitors who wouldn't want to come to a town with an extra room tax?

There was concern from some residents that the town didn't really want or need more tourists — parking was and still is scarce, streets don't need to be any more crowded, and those living nearby were negatively impacted by the numbers of tourists already arriving.

There was also lots of conversation about how the town's 50 per cent of what is collected could and should be spent.

The tax passed, the tax was collected, the Chamber began talking about marketing plans it could fund, and the town banked its portion.

And that's pretty much where it stands today.

The town's tourism strategy committee met recently, a committee tasked with deciding how to make NOTL even more of a world-class destination than it already is, without bringing any more grief to residents than it already does.

The municipal accommodation tax was also part of last Thursday's tourism strategy dialogue, saying it generated \$767,000 in 2022, but is projected to create a revenue

of nearly \$2.9 million for the town by 2025 — it will be including short-term rentals, and not just those with five rooms or more, and the tax will be raised from two to three per cent in 2024, then four per cent in 2025.

But absolutely nothing has been decided about how it will be spent. The MAT committee has been formed, but hasn't had a single meeting — that won't happen until Sept. 20.

And, says Coun. Sandra O'Connor, one of the councillors on the committee, all that's been determined is a pretty vague mandate, which is to "develop approval criteria for and make recommendations to council

about MAT-funded capital projects on an ongoing basis."

Originally, it was sold as a tax that would be used to offset tourism-related costs and projects, but fortunately she does her homework. She's been studying the provincial legislation and learned that there are no restrictions on how the town spends its portion of the money collected. She has tried to sort out some of the confusion of the early discussions. "I hope I've said it often enough to clarify that," she tells *The Local*.

Can it lower taxes?

If roads are improved, explains O'Connor — and roads are used by everybody — it will

help residents as well. They get better roads, without funding those improvements out of their own wallets.

"These are issues the committee will be wrestling with," she says. "We have to look at all kinds of things."

And they are only acting in an advisory capacity to council, who can disagree with their advice.

It's town policy for all town committees to be open and available to the public, she says. Almost \$3 million a year is a lot of money. Imagine what it could pay for?

Penny Coles
The Local

Wrecks of the Lower Georgian Bay

David Gilchrist
The Local

It has been claimed that there are 10,000 wrecks in the Great Lakes. Each year, with modern technology, more and more of these lost vessels are being found.

In Lower Georgian Bay, in the area of Hope Island, there are three that have been known for decades and since then have been visited by hundreds, if not thousands, of scuba divers.

Located in the shallow, clear waters, these three wrecks represent an interesting glimpse into Ontario's rich marine heritage. The story of the vessels and their loss can be quite fascinating. These wrecks, with the exception

of those at Tobermory, were some of the first wreck dives that I completed in the early 1970s, and have since continued to be interesting sites to visit after all those years.

The wrecks of two sailing vessels lie relatively close to one another off Hope Island. One is the Lottie Wolf and the other is the Marquette. The Lottie Wolf sailed the waters of the Great Lakes for many years before she was lost. She was built in 1866 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and was 126 feet in length. She enjoyed a long life on the lakes but was sunk after a collision with a large boulder, later named Lottie Wolf Shoal, off the north shore of Hope Island in October of 1891. She was carrying corn, and no lives

were lost. It was reported that many old-time sailors who had previously sailed aboard her lamented her loss as if they had lost an old friend.

Today her remains, spread out and flattened on the bottom, offer a good look at the construction details of a mid-1800s sailing vessel. Among the wreck can be found a sail winch, capstan and other pieces of equipment.

Just around the corner of Hope Island lies the remains of the second sailing vessel — the Marquette. This was discovered by chance in the mid-1970s within sight of the lighthouse, and was quite an exciting find. For many years it remained unidentified until a researcher came across the details of her loss in November 1867. The Marquette was built in 1856 at Newort, Michigan. At the time of her loss she was carrying a cargo of 20,000 bushels of corn from the port of Chicago, destined for the Gooderham & Worts Distillery. She was caught in a snowstorm and, according to her captain Thomas Fountain, she hit a reef. They had anchored to do some repairs but a wind shift caused further problems and she foundered in 25 feet of water. No



Swimming over the twisted metal remains of the Michigan. (David Gilchrist)

loss of life was recorded.

When she was found, she was sitting upright and all her ships equipment was intact.

Unfortunately, divers visiting the site stripped all the dead-eyes and anything else they could, leaving it in a much-

reduced state. She became the focus of a five-year study by

Continued on page 7

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View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In *On the Rocks* (Apple TV+) a young mother, suspicious of her husband's fidelity, reconnects with her larger-

than-life father, played by Bill Murray. He is determined to prove his son-in-law is unfaithful. A silly, yet well-crafted film.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to the movies. Until

he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for *The Local*.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake
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Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week, Doug Hernder correctly identified Ben's location outside the town hall on Four Mile Creek Road, beside the bell from the original Bethel School.

COMMENT

Local LETTERS Betsy Wall to speak at Red Brick Church Sunday

Betsy Wall will be speaking at Niagara United Mennonite Church on Sept. 17 during the morning service at 10:45 a.m. After the service, everyone is invited to our gym for a potluck lunch followed by a question and answer period with Betsy. The service and the potluck are open to everyone.

For many of us, the visit of Betsy Wall is particularly special because of her family's past connection to NUMC. The church was built in 1948, and Betsy's parents, Jack and Anne Wall, were among the first couples to be married here. It was also the church in which Betsy was dedicated as a baby, and some of us older members have vague memories of these events.

In the late '60s, Jack Wall became the founding president of International Child Care, and several NUMC businessmen joined him in this venture. Before this, Jack and Anne had run a home for troubled boys in Ailsa Craig, and the NUMC members actively supported the Walls and the school. Our church Youth Group even visited the school, and later one of our members taught there for several years. In 1980 Jack founded FIDA (Foundation for International Development) to "empower the poor to become masters of their own destiny." When Jack and Anne then decided to move completely to Haiti in 1984 to run FIDA (Foundation for International Development),

many of us who had followed their involvement with Haiti over the years were impressed by their devotion to a country which seemed to be constantly experiencing natural disasters, and never able to overcome its poverty.

Although our church connection to Jack and Anne Wall had become more distant over the last few decades, many of us still regarded their passion for Haiti with great respect. It was thus with excitement that we met and visited with their daughter Betsy who exuded all the enthusiasm and energy of her parents as she introduced us to the goals of the upcoming FIDA fundraiser. It was like a second chance to reconnect with Haiti through the Walls.

As a congregation, NUMC is fortunate to be able to hear firsthand about the needs of Haiti, and how FIDA

is working to fill these needs. Betsy Wall will share her experiences and visions with us in the sanctuary of NUMC.

Please join us for a most enlightening morning!

Kathy Rempel
NOTL



Betsy Wall with artisan Lidnes Dorval in Haiti. (Supplied)

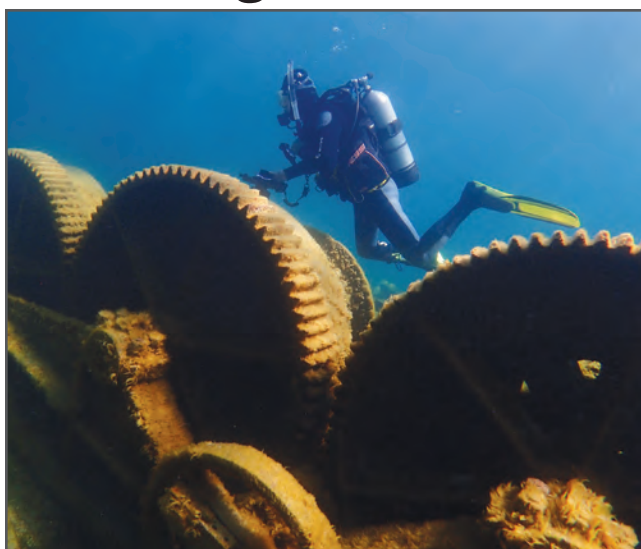
Wrecks interesting to dive on

Continued from page 6

the Ontario Marine Heritage Committee, which documented these changes. Still, she sits proudly on the bottom, her anchors stretched out off the bow, and interesting to visit. Her centreboard case is still upright and a capstan and winch for raising and lowering the centreboard are still present, but either partially or fully covered with sand.

On the north side of Hope Island lie the remains of the Michigan. She was built in 1890 at Bay City, Michigan, originally as a car ferry, and measured 297 feet in length. Later, she was converted to a barge and was being used as a salvage barge when she was lost in November 1843. She had been brought by tug to help unload another vessel, the Riverton, that was stuck on the rocks with a cargo of grain when she herself was carried onto the rocks, and despite efforts could not be rescued. She sank quite near Lottie Wolf Shoal. Her twisted metal hull and her large salvage equipment remain on the site and make for some great photographs.

Our dive club last visited these three wrecks a few years ago and, as always, they remain quite interesting to dive on. Shallow, clear water make them great for novice divers.



Examining one of the large winches on the wreck of the Michigan. (Photos by David Gilchrist)



A diver checks out the anchor on the Marquette.

Local LETTERS

Please leave rifle range alone

I totally agree with Leonard George, (The Local, letters, Aug. 30).

Leave the "former DND

property to Mother Nature".

Stop cutting the fields regularly and leave it to go wild, much like what they have done

by the fort on the south side of the Niagara Parkway.

Kerri Sant
NOTL

Constantly see people running stop signs

We live in St. Davids and every afternoon travel from here to The Commons in Old Town via either Concession 2 or 1.

It seems that at least once a week we see the results of serious accidents caused by drivers along the lines, in particular

Lines 2 and 3 where they cross Concession 2, running or rushing the stop signs at the Concession. We wonder why there are not over-sized stop signs on both sides of the lines (as there are at Line 3 where it crosses Concession 1), flashing lights, rumble

strips and signs indicating cross traffic does not stop. People are getting hurt and emergency response teams are no doubt being pulled away from more essential work. Can't something be done?

Brenda and Keith Lord
St. Davids

Celebration of Nations



The Celebration of Nations, an annual partnership and gathering of Indigenous arts, culture and tradition, took place at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre this weekend. (Jack Custers)

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RLP TOP NOTL TEAM JAN-SEPT 2023

Historic Parliament Oak panel a step closer to preservation

**Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter**

Niagara-on-the-Lake's municipal heritage committee continues to work with a developer who plans to build a 129-suite hotel at the site of the former Parliament Oak School. With the building slated for demolition, their recent meeting was the second one to discuss how pieces related to the property's history will be preserved and incorporated into the proposed project and had some new recommendations since the last time the project and a notice of intent to demolish the building were discussed.

On their list for the second time was the well-known text panel on the front of the former school, familiar to residents as an integral part of the school's history, that describes the site as where one of the first sessions of Upper Canada Parliament occurred in August 1783, for which the property is much celebrated.

But researchers from Stantec, the firm behind the commemoration plan, argued that the information that is part of the fabric of the town's history is wrong.

And it seems nobody can prove it isn't.

In August, Lashia Jones, a heritage consultant who is part of the team behind the proposal, said "dates and times don't add up," and that according to research, Sir John Graves Simcoe, who is said to have chaired the meeting, was not in the area at that time.

The commemoration plan included in last month's heritage committee meeting agenda says that on Sept. 17, 1792, Graves Simcoe held the first session of parliament for the new colony of Upper Canada, and that the "exact location" of the first session of parliament is unknown.

Both the town and the NOTL Museum responded to The Local's questions of the authenticity of the plaque's long-accepted description of the town's history.

Sarah Kaufman, CEO of the museum, explains: "The town reached out to us, in our role of town historian, for clarification on this historical narrative a while back. I discussed it with a few of our historians/researchers in the community. It was decided that there is no conclusive evidence that Parliament Oak School is the location of a Parliament meeting."

However, she adds, it has been used as a "marker location" to talk about the history of the first Parliament, since there is no other reference to the location that she is aware of.

Town spokesperson Marah Minor says "Even though what has been inscribed on the panel for many years has been a part of local history and the town's identity, it appears the local government isn't contesting the opinion in the commemoration plan, from Stantec, that it may con-

tain historical inaccuracies."

They concluded that "it is unlikely that any parliamentary proceeding took place under an oak tree at present-day 325 King Street in August 1793," as was indicated on the text panel, said Minor. "Other sources suggest that the year may have been 1792. The date has never been corroborated through historical sources."

"The local lore that a Parliamentary proceeding took place on the site has long roots" in town, and municipal heritage staff have recommended that the event be recognized through any redevelopment on the site, added Minor.

"Further, it is suggested that interpretive plaques could be incorporated alongside the textual panel that corrects any inaccurate information."

Due to these findings, the developer wasn't planning to use the panel in its commemoration.

But town staff are recommending an amendment to the developer's plans — that this panel is retained and placed fronting King Street.

Town heritage planner Denise Horne also noted to the committee that receiving the report related to plans is "not an approval" and that the committee's decision still needs to go back to council.

Sara Premi, legal counsel for the developer, Two Sisters Resorts, said it is possible that the text panel could be part of the commemoration plan, even though it was their initial opinion that it shouldn't be due to alleged historical inaccuracies.

"We are considering that, and I think that's likely to happen," she said.

Its location proposed by staff, fronting King Street and not Regent Street, is something that raises "some concerns," but the developer's team will "look at that" as well, said Premi, noting that the project's engineer and architect will need to weigh in on this possibility.

The bas-relief panels, as well as a stone-incised oak tree panel, the Parliament Oak School sign, bricks from the former school, a sculpture related to the Underground Railroad, are other components the developer says it will incorporate into the plans.

In a second report on the meeting's agenda, the committee also reviewed a heritage impact assessment of the site, which touches on the design value, its historical and associative value related to the story

about Sir John Graves Simcoe, and its "direct association" with the public education system in Niagara-on-the-Lake, said Horne's presentation.

Its contextual value, that the site is historically linked to the development and growth of the town, functioning as an educational institution for more than 60 years, is also important, said Horne.

It was also recommended that the town enter into a temporary heritage easement agreement, which would apply to the preservation of heritage attributes for "any new development" on the property, she said, and that it would apply to potential future owners of the property.

Coun. Gary Burroughs, council's representative on the committee, asked who will be responsible for costs related to removal and storage.

"It will all be on the property owners," replied Premi, the developer's legal counsel, adding it is preferred that items be stored safely off site.

Where they will be kept is a matter "we will have to discuss," said Premi, noting that the developer is in conversation with the town about a municipal facility being used.

Heritage committee member Amanda Demers asked about "more delicate" items, such as those contained in a 1948 time capsule.

"Once you take them out and expose them to modern air, things can degrade rather quickly," she said.

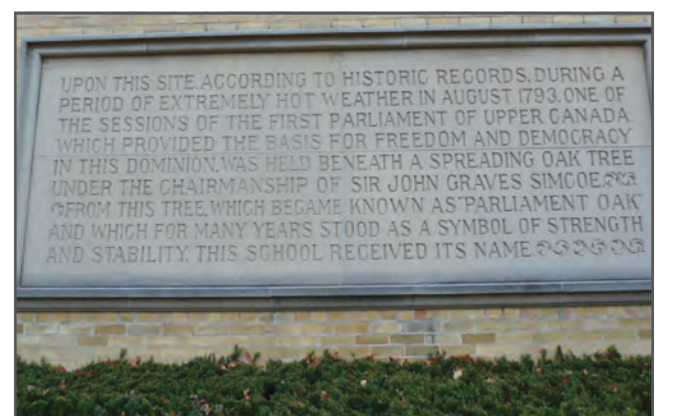
Jones, the developer's heritage consultant, said it is expected this would be handled by someone with museum or archival experience.

Alex Topps, the museum's representative on the committee, said he's already started that conversation and that the museum is interested — even though there may be issues with available storage space.

"Putting that aside, we'd be happy to have them," said Topps.

Council first received the notice of intent to demolish the school in February, but asked in April for more information, which was submitted by the developer in early August.

The Ontario Heritage Act requires a municipality to issue a demolition permit 60 days after the notice of intention to demolish a building, and additional plans and information have been submitted, which would be Oct. 1.



The date and place of the first Parliament is uncertain. (Kris Dube)

Town has changed — it's time for an indoor pool, advocates say

Penny Coles
The Local

Residents advocating for an indoor pool are working on strategies from all angles, and plan to convince the town decision-makers to look to the future rather than the past.

It's an idea that has been floated before, but they are moving on from those discussions, doing their homework and hoping the town will get behind them and look at ways to make it happen.

The capital and operating costs have always been considered too steep for a small town like Niagara-on-the-Lake, but the group of five people, with many more supporting them, point to other Ontario towns with similar or smaller populations that have been successful in building an indoor pool, and paying for its operation, some with a deficit — one of the most recent examples they could find funding it from development charges.

Garron Wells, Pam Lillos, Dawn McIsaac, Sheila Serio and Lynne Sawatsky make up the core group, and while getting signatures for a petition to show a groundswell of support is their focus at the moment, they continue to look for "strategic people" who have ideas that may help them advance their cause.

All of them are women who, over the course of many years, have relied on Vintage Hotels' indoor pools in the winter, attending their morning aquafit programs. Some of them made it to five classes a week, even during the summer — the local pools have either had no such programs during the summer, or when they did, the classes were in the evening.

"We'd have gone to them if they were at 8 or 9 a.m.," says Serio, but evening classes just

don't work for them.

Calculating the number of residents who regularly used the Vintage pools, Wells says, pre-pandemic, there were about 90 members spaced over the time slots. "It was formidable."

Paul MacIntyre, vice-president of operations for Vintage Hotels, responding to an inquiry from The Local, says they have no plans to open their pools to the public for this season.

"Our pool facilities are not large, and our outdoor pool at the Pillar & Post was the popular location for our guests and membership. Our facility is simply not big enough to accommodate everyone and meet the standards of service and space we want to provide for our guests and a membership base coming out of the pandemic," he says. "In the future, if we expand we would possibly reconsider, but for now our focus has been on recovery efforts of the hotels."

The women stress they are not criticizing the hotels for no longer opening to them — the pools closed during the pandemic, and have never reopened to residents. As McIsaac says, they are within their rights, as a business, to make the best decisions for their businesses.

It's the town's responsibility to look after its residents, and an indoor pool would benefit more than just seniors, the women stress. They have heard from young moms who would love a moms and tots program, and who are concerned about water safety, which would include swimming lessons for younger kids and lifeguard training for the older ones.

Other indoor pools nearby include the one at WhiteOaks Resort and Spa, with a small pool and a steep membership, and the Kiwanis Aquatics Centre in St. Cath-

arines, which is a bit of a drive in winter.

It's also the only one offering physical therapy, which would be a benefit to many closer to home.

The women have done their research, and discovered several older indoor pools in similar sized municipalities built at around the \$12 million mark.

Other newer ones reached prices as high as \$32 million or more, but they were for community recreational complexes that include libraries and arenas and more, in one new or expanded building, such as the one McIsaac recently travelled to visit in Caledon East.

While the women are leaving details such as funding opportunities and locations up to council to decide, they are ready to help out if the town decides to move ahead.

"We're not trying to reinvent the wheel," says McIsaac — the town staff can do its homework, and will find many changes on the recreational landscape since their 2018 report.

As Lillos points out, "the demographics in town are changing so quickly. We really do need more in the way of recreation, especially for young people."

There needs to be a "political will," adds Wells. "It would attract people to town, and it would bring young families."

While they are open to any location in NOTL, they fear, if the town does give a positive response, it will be tied to development in the Glendale area. They would happily drive to Glendale to swim, they say, but they don't want to have to wait for years — they joke at their age they can't wait too long — and they are uncomfortable with the thought that it could be planned as part of the development, but might never ma-



Garron Wells, Pam Lillos, Dawn McIsaac and Sheila Serio talk about their group's ideas and motivation for an indoor pool. (Penny Coles)

terialize.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor has attended some of the group meetings, and agrees the discussion "is not just about seniors who want to do aquafit, it's families and swimming lessons, it's about young people training for lifeguards. It has to be inclusive for everybody to use."

The group reached out to her for some advice, she says — whereas her first term people knew her as someone who would champion environment causes, "this time they are contacting me about many different issues."

O'Connor says while cost is at the top of the list of challenges, she thinks "it's doable."

"There's a big difference in the landscape," she says. "We no longer have other options. And personally, I think this is a realistic request," she adds, mentioning municipalities close to NOTL's size that have indoor pools "that are affordable and sustainable."

The women are aware there is a fundraising committee moving forward to see either a new pool or a refurbished one for St. Davids, and although they haven't spoken to that committee, they intend to. They don't want to step on any toes, and theirs is a different project altogether, but if there was a will to combine them, even with a covered outdoor pool, they could

work with that.

"I'd drive to St. Davids," says Serio, if the town was on-side and it could be worked out with the St Davids Lions to use the park.

The group is looking for help, mainly at this point to get their petition signed. While they need signatures, they could also use volunteers willing to go door-to-door, especially in Glendale.

They also suggest if people belong to an organization in town they could print off a petition and take it to their group to sign.

For a petition, more information or to offer to help, email notlindoorpool@gmail.com.

St. Davids Pool committee will meet this fall

Penny Coles
The Local

Coun. Adriana Vizzari says the St. Davids pool committee will be meeting soon, and if there was any doubt the community needs a pool, this summer definitely proved the need for it, reflecting the changing demographics with a growing number of families.

The swim team was popular with the youth in the community, and did really well over the summer against teams from larger municipalities, says Vizzari.

And both the swim team and swim classes were well-attended, with numbers that increased over last year.

"It shows we have a community that likes to use its

pool," she says.

The Electrifying Eels, made up of swimmers from both NOTL pools, came in second as a team at the regional competition that winds up the summer, and includes all municipal swim teams, she says. "Last year we came in fifth."

Several individual swimmers came home with medals, including firsts, she added.

She says she's looking forward to hearing the ideas of the group advocating for an indoor pool.

As for St. Davids, her goal is just to ensure that it continues to have a pool.

A design for a new pool that comes with a \$5 million price tag was approved in 2019, but since then, the town

has gone through rounds of funding applications with no luck, and without a grant from other levels of government, committee members haven't started on raising its portion of the cost. They have received donations of about \$52,000.

Although the committee's mandate was originally to raise money to help fund that new pool, in March 2022, council changed the mandate of the committee so that members could also look at repairing as well as replacing the ageing structure.

It's not as if St. Davids is asking for anything new, Vizzari says. "We have a current asset that was not maintained. Now it needs to be replaced or fixed."

Local HOME of the WEEK

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Randall Armstrong
Broker

**Niagara
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Food requested for Thanksgiving hampers

Continued from page 1

some are couples with one of the partners out of work, and others are recent immigrants, including Niagara College students who came to the area thinking they had enough money to cover expenses, but discovered “they don’t have nearly enough.”

Not all of those registered for the food bank

want Thanksgiving hampers, “but we will need a lot of food.”

The Thrift Shop is doing very well in its new, much larger space, attracting visitors to town as well as locals who had never made it to its former, out-of-the-way location.

“You know what they say: location, location, location. Since our move the Thrift Shop has been

successful beyond our wildest imagination. I can’t tell you how many people have lived in NOTL and didn’t know where we were.”

The store is starting to accept small furniture and nice household items, making the front display a place you would want to stop and shop, but Grant says they are having drop-offs outside of items they can’t sell,

and have to pay to get rid of, such as large furniture or pieces in bad condition, kids’ toys, books, tools and appliances that don’t work. “We just don’t have the space, even in our expanded store.”

What they really do need are volunteers to help fill their expanded hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Saturday, except Thursday, when it will stay open to 7 p.m.

all year, thanks to how successful and profitable the later hours have been. Sundays are noon until 4 p.m. until Thanksgiving.

Most volunteers, Grant says, work half days.

“Before the move, we had about 35 to 40 volunteers. We put out a call for help and now we’re up to 57 volunteers, but some are snowbirds. And it would be nice to have

some on-call.”

Residents who would like to donate to the food bank are asked to call 905-468-7498 or email newarkneighbours1@gmail.com. Volunteers will pick up donations Sept. 23.

For more information about the pick-up, and a list of most-needed food items, see the Newark Neighbours ad on this page.



Shelves are pretty bare — even stock of Kraft Dinner needs replenished, and that never happens, says Cindy Grant. (Photos by Penny Coles)



Cindy Grant, Heather Quick and Nancy Jacks with Sophie admire the front display in the new Newark Neighbours store — they would never have had room for in their former location.



Discretionary Grant Program Now Open for Submissions

This Program is designed to allocate discretionary funds to organizations, groups, and events that contribute to the cultural, social, environmental, and economic well-being of the Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

Apply to the Town’s Discretionary Grant Program before October 20, 2023.

For more information and to apply today, please visit www.notl.com/discretionary-grants.

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COMMUNITY DONATION PROJECT

Porch Pick-up Food Drive

Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary, NOTL Kinsmen and St. David’s Lions Clubs, are holding a porch pick-up food drive.



We were so grateful for the tremendous community support of our food drive held in the last several years. It is always 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 23, 2023**, 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"> • Stuffing Mix • Cranberry &/or Apple Juice • Canned Corn • Snack Crackers (any type) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cranberry Sauce • Canned Pineapple • Canned green beans • Cookies - any kind or flavour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned Gravy (turkey or chicken or Gravy mix) • Applesauce or Canned Fruit • Canned peas
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GENERAL ITEMS REQUIRED ON AN ON-GOING BASIS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned Salmon • Canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli • Chunky Soups - any kind or flavour • Canned Ham, Corned Beef or Spam • Canned Fruit • Canned Beans (kidney, chick-peas, lentils) • Tomato Sauce • Pudding cups - any flavour • Shelf stable milk (e.g. condensed, powdered, rice, etc.) • Canned Tuna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condiments - salad dressings, mayonnaise, sauces (e.g. HP Sauce, soya sauce, Worcestershire sauce etc.), dried spices, salt & pepper • Peanut Butter • Canned beef stew • Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey • Soda (Soup) Crackers • Canned Tomatoes • Pasta • Cereal and Oatmeal - any kind • Paper Towels / Toilet Paper • Granola Bars / Cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitant Soups • Sidekicks and Ramen soup packets • Jams - any flavour • Kraft Dinner • Canned Potatoes / Instant Mashed Potatoes • Rice • Coffee (instant/regular/ decaf) Tea • Household items e.g. dish soap, laundry detergent, cleaning products • Toiletries e.g. toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, hand and body lotion, mouthwash, feminine products
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- GARNISH:** Nectarine slice



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Niagara Dog Rescue raises money for canine friends

Sharon Burns
The Local

Dogs and motorcycles, can it get better than that?

This past Saturday, Niagara Dog Rescue (NDR) hosted its second annual Ride4Paws event, and some of the 125 riders brought their dogs along for the ride.

Originally from Mexico, members of the Fuentes family attended the event with a four-legged friend. Alberto Fuentes' puppy is named Nacho. The family own and operate a Mexican-food restaurant, Taco Embassy, in downtown St. Catharines. Nacho rides in a custom harness that Fuentes wears in front like a backpack. He even sports his own mini motorcycle helmet!

Jamie Leal and Danielle Lisi brought Murphy, a Lab/Australian shepherd mix who rides in his own back seat. They adopted Murphy from a family who had an unexpected litter of dogs.

They ride to raise funds for the dog rescue organization that started nine years ago, and is 100 per cent volunteer run and operates without "regional, provincial or federal funding," said Roci Freeman, who sits on the board of directors of the organization. "We rely on events like this to sup-

port dogs that have medical needs, or if we need to rent a van to bring dogs here to be adopted."

Niagara Dog Rescue has placed more than 9,500 dogs in homes all over the Niagara Region and beyond. "We have adopters, even in the States," said Freeman. NDR is not a brick and mortar organization, rather, they are foster-based. "We don't have a shelter, so we have foster homes and we're all working from home."

The fundraiser started with a dream, she explained. "We had this vision of having riders supporting our rescue, flying our flag and really advocating for our dogs." Last year's inaugural ride raised \$8,200 with 83 participants.

The international organization also works with the communities that often do not have enough support for humans, never mind dogs, said Freeman. "We have been working in Manitoba, Northern Ontario, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories," and beyond.

"Last year we brought 12 dogs from the war zone in Ukraine," said Freeman. "We're now being asked to help dogs from the hurricane in the southern U.S."

The event is a poker run. After getting their first play-

ing card at Husky's Travel Centre on York Road, Ride4Paws participants stop at four other checkpoints to pick up other playing cards before putting their kickstands down at Willoughby Firehall in Niagara Falls. The rider with the best poker hand at the end of the run wins. The route, about 130 kilometres, avoids highways and was expected to take just over two hours.

A group of friends riding from Brampton said they each have one or two dogs at home. "We just want to be here and support the good cause," said Gurvinder Singh.

"This is our first time riding here," said Singh, who explained that the friends ride together in many charity events. "Next week we are doing the Ride For Dad in Hamilton, and then we're going to ride Boots on the Ground," a Peel fundraiser to support first responders.

Kanwar Sran, Iqbal Brar and DJ Sarao, all Sikhs, ride wearing turbans instead of helmets, which has been legal in Ontario since 2018.

"It's part of your identity," explained Singh. "All these guys are passionate about riding, and they are happy because they get to keep their identity, and also enjoy their passion. We all understand there's a safety concern

about it, but people with helmets also die, so there's no hard and fast rule to say that if you have this (a helmet), you're going to survive."

DJ. Sarao explained why he does not wear a helmet. "Wearing a turban is part of my life. This is not a choice whether I wear it or not. I have to wear it wherever I'm going, whether it's work, the market," or riding.

Last month the group of friends rode motorcycles on the island of Tofino in British Columbia and "dipped down into the States," said Singh.

They started riding together four years ago and then COVID hit. "COVID helped us a lot," joked Singh, who estimated it allowed them to put 98,000 kilometres on their bikes, 36,000 of them in the first year of COVID. "Last year we did a full Atlantic Canada tour and the year before, we did Ontario."

As the group left for their next destination on the poker run, Freeman talked to The Local about how Niagara Dog Rescue is a huge advocate of responsible dog ownership.

"Dogs only know what you teach them, so people need to be patient and understand that these dogs think of you as their family. They will die to please you."

She was also excited to explain a new direction NDR will be taking. "On Remembrance Day, we're going to be launching a companionship initiative, a way to give back to veterans and first responders who we will pair up with trained dogs."

For more information, visit niagaradogrescue.com.



Two- and four-legged riders get ready to set off from The Husky Saturday morning to raise money for Niagara Dog Rescue. (Photos by Sharon Burns)

Newcomers gearing up for new season with lots of activities

Sharon Burns
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Newcomers Club is a social club intended to help women who are new to the Niagara-on-the-Lake region, and they are hosting their first event of the season Wednesday, Sept. 20, in the auditorium at the Community Centre.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor, who is serving her second term on town council, will be present as a guest speaker and she will offer her insight into the community, past and present.

The club offers many opportunities for members to find their niche in over a dozen groups, including four book clubs offered at different times of the month, and with different meeting sites.

For those who want to add movement to their day, there is a weekly virtual workout, golf and two different walking

groups, one of which encourages members' four-legged friends to join.

Euchre, knitting and crochet, watercolour, mahjong and movies are a few of the other groups. If dining is preferable, one could join the breakfast or lunch clubs and, of course, it is after all Niagara-on-the-Lake — a wine club.

Members can suggest new interest groups, provided that there is interest from other club members and a volunteer to convene meetings.

Membership is open to women who have moved to NOTL, Glendale, Queenston, St. Davids and Virgil within the last three months. Women living in these communities who have recently experienced a significant change in their life, such as retirement, divorce or bereavement, are also encouraged to join.

Membership is \$30 for the year, and covers ongoing club

expenses such as meetings, honorariums, room rentals, insurance, website and dues to the National Newcomers Association Canada, whose motto is 'connecting newcomers with community and friends.'

The NOTL club started in 1991, and has grown from a small group of women to almost 300 members. Throughout the year, they also visit local attractions, such as Shaw Festival, local art galleries, and historic buildings and venues.

The club hosts Coffee and Conversations, an informal gathering at the community centre on the last Friday of every month. Members meet to catch up on news, chat, and sign up for programs.

The event on Sept. 20 starts at 1 p.m. Light refreshments will be available.

Visit notlnewcomers.com for more information.

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Heritage Trail Phase 2 Feedback Opportunity

PARTICIPATE

The Town is looking for feedback about the design concept for Phase 2 of the Heritage Trail Rehabilitation Project from East & West Line to Line 3 Road.

Have your say about the design, including the width, trail positioning, and surface.

- Attend the Public Information Centre on Thursday, September 21, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Community Centre Lobby (14 Anderson Lane, Niagara-on-the-Lake)
- Provide feedback in writing at www.jointheconversationnotl.org/heritage-trail until October 6, 2023.

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Folk rocker Hayden playing solo show at Ravine

Mike Balsom
The Local

When Toronto singer-songwriter Hayden Desser and production designer Christie Greyerbiehl tied the knot, they served wine from Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery at their wedding. So when the offer came in to play a solo show there on Sept. 21, Desser jumped at the opportunity.

Known simply as Hayden, the Toronto native burst into national and international consciousness in 1995 when his independently released DIY album *Everything I Long For* became the subject of a bidding war between American record labels.

He signed with Outpost, a subsidiary of Geffen Records, who released the record in the U.S., and the lead song *Bad as They Seem* caught on with the grunge crowd. He was accepted as a more lo-fi purveyor of the genre made popular with the success of Seattle-based bands such as Nirvana and Soundgarden.

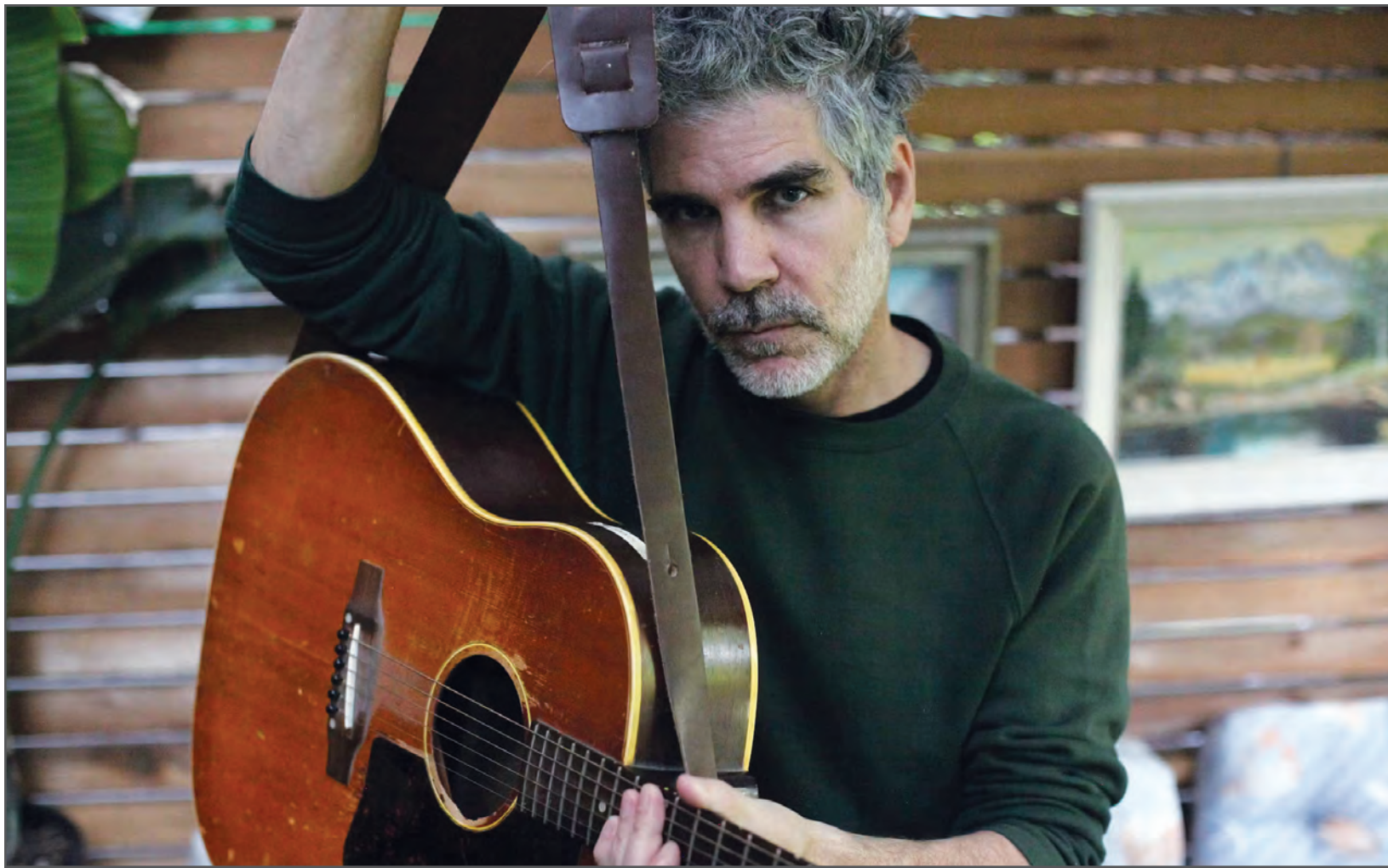
But that success was all too much for Desser, just 24 years old at the time.

"It was partly exciting, because my dreams were in a way coming true," he tells *The Local*. "But aspects of it were just too much. One day I was meeting some of my heroes, and the next day my back would go out, I couldn't walk. My mind and body were experiencing it."

That excitement followed almost two years of building a grassroots following in Toronto and Southern Ontario. He describes travelling around the area with his guitar, playing solo sets between grunge bands, and selling his tapes out of the back of his Toyota Tercel as a much more fun experience.

After the release of his second album, 1998's *The Closer I Get*, Outpost folded, the hype machine subsided, and Hayden returned to those roots. He put out his third record, 2001's *Skyscraper National Park*, in an original run of 100 copies on his own Hardwood Records label, delivering the CDs to friends and family members.

Almost 30 years on from his debut, any hint of Hayden's grunge-adjacent past is long gone. On *Are We Good*, his ninth and latest album, his voice is much more melodious, somewhat muted on some songs. Instrumentally, the distorted guitars of his earlier work are replaced by piano on many tracks,



Some old and some new songs will be performed at Ravine, a vineyard Hayden says he loves. (Supplied)

acoustic guitars on the others.

And he wears his influences on his sleeve on the opening one-two of *East Coast* and *We Danced*, emulating Leonard Cohen's playing style on the first song and naming that bard's *So Long Marianne* on the second.

"Clearly I'm obsessed with him," Hayden laughs, "as everyone should be. Since I started seriously writing songs my big five were Leonard Cohen, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Tom Waits and Bob Dylan. I'm one of those people."

Fellow Toronto singer-songwriter Leslie Feist chips in on vocals on the record's first single, *On A Beach*, an uplifting song that Desser says actually has at its core a relationship at a crossroads.

"It comes from a place where people are hypnotizing one another to try to get back to how they

felt and treated each other when they first met," he explains. "There's an undercurrent of tension, but musically it is quite uplifting."

The video for *On A Beach* features actor Steve Buscemi, of *Reservoir Dogs* and *Boardwalk Empire* fame, playing a psychologist.

"We've stayed in touch since the mid-'90s when I did a song for his directorial debut *Trees Lounge*," says the Thornhill, Ontario native. "I had this plan to go to California where Feist now lives. I shot him an email and he showed up. He was so professional and awesome, he took the role seriously."

Desser explains that the title of *Terry Cloth Blue* comes from a memory of his first crush at 11 years old.

"She was wearing this one-piece," he laughs. "It was beautiful!"

And there's some local content on the album, at least title-wise, on the song *Miss Fort Erie*.

"The part of the song where *Miss Fort Erie* opens the blinds after a night of craziness is inspired by '70s rock stars," Desser explains. "It's very tongue-in-cheek. I think I just took *Miss Fort Erie* out of the air. I was trying to figure out what would be a fun-sounding beauty pageant town, and I was thinking about playing in the Niagara-Buffalo area, which I did a lot in the '90s."

Are We Good, which features collaborations with Aaron Dessner and Matt Berninger of The National, drummer James Krivchenia of Big Thief, and engineer Jonathan Low, who has worked with Taylor Swift, is Hayden's first album of new music since 2015.

"It always takes me a

long time to make a record," he admits. "I've really had my eye on the prize enough to be really ambitious. I only write songs that I'm pleased with if I write them when I really feel like expressing myself in a genuine way. It's hard for me to pull songs out of the air just to release material. Over the years I've become meticulous and obsessive with my music."

In November, he'll be heading out with a full band for a tour that will take him across the western provinces. Niagara-on-the-Lake audiences

will get his solo show at Ravine.

"I like to play at least a couple songs from each album and a few from the new one," says Desser. "It will be an intimate solo show, just me, with my piano, a guitar and probably a bass. It'll be fun. I'm looking forward to it. I love that vineyard."

Tickets for Hayden's performance at Ravine Vineyard on Thursday, Sept. 21, presented by Noisemaker, are \$45 plus taxes and fees, and are available at ravinevineyard.com.

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Carlos Morgan to discuss Black music at museum

Sharon Burns
The Local

Carlos Morgan, a Juno award-winning Black singer, songwriter, and recording artist, will discuss the history of Black music in Canada in the final in-person lecture of 2023 at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, Thursday, Sept. 21.

Morgan, also founder of

Solroc Records, was born and raised in Canada “but I wasn’t educated about the contributions of Black artists and musicians in Canada,” he said. “And they were an integral part of our cultural identity.”

Morgan’s informal music education came from his father, who was an avid music lover. “My parents are from Jamaica and my father had hun-

dreds of records, reggae, R&B and soul music predominantly, from Jamaica, as well as American Black music.”

It was a few years after 12-year-old Morgan started singing in a band that he asked himself why he wasn’t seeing or hearing Black artists in Canada. It seemed as if “we didn’t have any Black artists in Canada. Why is that? One recurring message was that people don’t listen to Black artists in Canada because it sounds Canadian,” said Morgan.

He would hear that sentiment not just from the layperson, but also from people in the music industry, and even Black artists. “They said ‘we’re not getting played on the radio. We’re not getting signed to record labels, because we sound Canadian.’”

Morgan used to think that Canadian R&B didn’t sound as good as American, but later came to the conclusion that Canada should have its own identity in music. “What’s wrong if we sound Canadian? We’re in Canada. Even though I wasn’t able to articulate it in the manner that I am now, my education was growing,” he said.

Radio stations played predominantly American or West Indian/Jamaican music before the 1980s, said Morgan. In the mid-to-late ’80s, Liberty Silver, Billy Newton-Davis and Erroll Starr received radio play and recognition, but, for Morgan, their music lacked the R&B rhythms and funk that defined Black music. Their sounds, he explained, “were more pop, dance, and almost rock.”

At the lecture, Morgan will focus on four artists who laid a foundation in Canada for Black music.

Oscar Peterson, a Canadi-

an jazz pianist and composer, released more than 200 recordings, and won eight Grammy Awards.

Maestro Fresh Wes is a rapper, record producer, actor and author. He is one of the earliest Canadian rappers to achieve mainstream success. “Maestro came out with hip-hop and then the hip-hop scene in Canada started to grow. Maestro is really the only one that comes to my mind who started to shift the landscape for Black music being played on national radio in Canada,” said Morgan.

Lesser known, he said, is Portia White, a concert singer born in Truro, Nova Scotia, who won international acclaim and was considered one of the best classical singers of the 20th century. She died in Toronto in 1968.

Eleanor Collins is a Canadian jazz singer, television host and civic leader who, at 103 years of age, lives in Edmonton. She is known as the Canadian First Lady of Jazz.

“These Black artists have played an indelible and integral part in the history of music in this country, but it is not widely known,” said Morgan, who also educates on the history of Black music around the province. “I’ve spoken at a lot of schools, and a lot of the young people today, the furthest they go back to is Drake. They really don’t know who came before Drake.”

“When I mention Gordon Lightfoot, a lot of young people know who he is, as well as Celine Dion, Anne Murray, Joni Mitchell and Burton Cummings. They all know all the white artists,” he said.

Morgan’s debut album *Feeling Alright* (1997) won him a Juno Award in the Best R&B/Soul Recording category at a



Oscar Peterson at the Boys Club in Toronto.



Portia White, from Nova Scotia, was considered one of the best classical singers of the 20th century.

time when there “were only eight radio stations across the country that were playing Black music,” he said. The album topped the charts at number three after only two weeks of being released. “When my first album came out, all of the radio stations were playing my music, but they thought I was American, and that’s how I got signed by Universal Music Canada.”

Morgan’s new double album, *Where I’ve Been, Where I’m Going*, will be released in March of 2024. “I’m really excited about this record. I’ve been writing for a long time and working on planning a tour, with my band of nine people, for next year as well.”

Morgan’s lecture can be heard Thursday, Sept. 21, at 7:30 p.m. at the NOTL Museum. Lectures are \$10 for the public or free for members. Call to reserve seating.



When Carlos Morgan began his musical career, he says, it seemed like there were no Black artists in Canada — nobody was listening to them. (Photos supplied)



Maestro Fresh was one of the earliest Canadian rappers to achieve mainstream success.

Artist is donating portion of sales to Farmworker Hub

Maria H. Klassen
The Local

Artist Lynne Gaetz volunteers at the Farmworker Hub, but wants to do more to help.

On Sunday, a reception at Ironwood Cider House

will showcase her artwork, and half of her sales will go toward The Hub, which, she says, “is in need of financial help to pay the rent and buy supplies that are not donated.

I would like to do my part and give back to the commu-

nity in which I live.”

The Farmworker Hub is located in Virgil, at Cornerstone Community Church on Niagara Stone Road, and was started during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was difficult for farm-

workers to buy work clothes, household items and basic groceries. At no cost, or a reduced cost for these items at The Hub, workers can save more money to send home. Gaetz speaks Spanish, so when volunteering at the hub her language skills are an asset.

Her exhibit at Ironwood Cider House, entitled *Fragments*, showcases what she is best known for, using symbols, collages, surreal and mystical elements in her work.

Gaetz continues to use mixed media in her paintings, adding recycled materials such as tiles and pieces of metal molding, stones and pieces of sea glass. Many of the objects she uses are designated for the landfill, and she is happy to repurpose them. These objects reflect light and add texture to her work.

Richard Liu is president of Ironwood Cider House. Originally Sunnybrook Farm Estate Winery, he opened the Cider House in 2022. When

asked what motivated the addition of an upper floor art gallery, he commented, “We like the synergy between arts and craft beverage, as they are both a labour of love.”

The exhibit will be at the Ironwood Cider House to

Sept. 27. The opening reception is Sept. 17 from 2 to 4 p.m. Take a drive down Lakeshore Road, view the stunning work of Lynne Gaetz, enjoy a cider or wine cocktail, and snack on internationally inspired tapas.



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Artist Lynne Gaetz, with *A Blissful Moment*. (Maria H. Klassen)

Deeply rooted friendships become treasures to cherish

Jane Andres
The Local

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program started in the mid-1960s and ushered in a new era of prosperity in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Tender fruit farms flourished, farms expanded and local businesses thrived, thanks to the men and women from the Caribbean who provided a reliable labour force.

Elijah Steele was one of the men who made the difficult decision to leave his family and young children to work on a Niagara farm almost three decades ago.

After his first long day of travel, the crew was taken to buy groceries at MB Foods in Virgil and set up an account at the Niagara Credit Union next door. He marvelled at the lush orchards laden with cherries, apricots and little green peaches on the drive along the way.

The next day they began to harvest cherries, a fruit he had never tasted in Jamaica.

A few weeks later, he ventured out on a bicycle to explore on his own. He discovered he was only a short distance from the mighty Niagara River, one of the few areas in Canada where tender fruit could be grown.

He noticed a neighbour, Ron Peters, moving a pile of firewood in his yard and offered to help. He received a friendly welcome and was invited back after the chore was completed.

Ron was happy to share his knowledge of chainsaw and other equipment repair on subsequent visits, a valuable skill that Steele was eager to put to use upon his return home.

The flow of conversation was mutually beneficial with each one learning about the other's experience as fathers of young families, gardening and work life.

Elijah, or 'Prophet' as he was known on the farm, was grateful to be called back to the same farm the following year. He feels fortunate to have had a great relationship with his employer, Walter Gaio, ever since.

He began attending the Caribbean Workers Outreach Project (CWOP) church services run by Grace United Church. The annual cricket match was in its early stages back in the '90s. The first year he played and helped out the Vineland team, which was short on players. Helmut Boldt, a volunteer with the outreach project, noticed Prophet's aptitude for the game and invited him to coach the NOTL team. With the exception of two years, Prophet has led the team to victory every year since!

Taking part in the outreach church services and cricket team provided Prophet with the opportunity to make lasting friendships. He has wonderful memories of the late

town councillor Robert Howse and his wife, Nancy, who made him feel especially welcome at the church services in the early years. The personal and practical support he received from Forrest Miller and his mom Carol, Phil Bergen, Adam Hawley, and many others over the years initiated friendships that are still going strong.

His good friend Ron Peters was also a faithful member of the Niagara Clippers fan club, cheering Prophet and the cricket team on to victory every year.

One evening last week I had the opportunity to spend some time with Prophet, Ron and his wife, Rita, on their back deck. The mutual delight of their friendship was obvious, and it didn't take long before the jokes were flying.

Ron and Rita shared some of their early recollections of their friendship and how it was such a great opportunity to learn about each other's culture and family life.

They began planning their holidays to include Jamaica and a visit with Prophet's family. On their first visit, Prophet treated them to a traditional Jamaican meal of ackee and salt-fish and the fresh fruit juices that are the pride of the countryside. Playing the tour guide, he would drive them down winding roads to showcase the hidden gems most tourists would be unaware of.

Ron would try to pack an extra suitcase loaded with drill bits, saw blades and tools, which never failed to attract the curiosity and suspicion of security guards on their travels.

As the evening on Ron's deck progressed, he invited me to view the 'wall of fame' in his workshop, where he proudly displayed photos and news clippings of the cricket team over the years, a trip back in time.

At the end of evening, Prophet and I handed him one more framed picture to hang. It was a photo I had taken three years ago during the infamous COVID summer of 2020. It was taken on a spontaneous visit that we both remember well.

It was August, and I had just dropped off necessities to a farm nearby. The sky was ominous with dark clouds scudding by, whipped up by strong winds. The sun was setting with brilliant flashes emanating from behind the low-hanging clouds. Driving down Concession 1, I happened to spot Prophet standing in the field beside the driveway. I slowed down and he waved me in. It was a dramatic scene befitting a genuine prophet (or at least how I imagined one!).

The sun flashed out directly behind him, his face illuminated by its reflection in a puddle on the tractor flat-bed trailer.

I pulled out my phone and managed to get a lucky shot with the sun breaking through



Local Ron Peters and farmworker Elijah Steele, known by his friends as Prophet. (Jane Andres)

behind him, his figure outlined in a thin silver line.

Prophet had never seen the photo until the night we visited the Peters and was moved at the memory.

When we handed the framed photo to Ron, his face broke out in a grin.

"Why, he looks like an angel!" he exclaimed. "But you spelled his name wrong. I always thought it was more like Profit!" he joked. "Always working hard to support his family."

Prophet nodded in agreement.

It was an inspiring evening of reminiscing and remembering how a simple neighbourly act led to an enduring 27-year friendship.

On the drive home, Prophet and I talked about the treasured friendships that have taken root, bearing good fruit

in our community over the years.

He reminded me of a Jamaican proverb: "A good friend is better than pocket money."

Well said, Prophet. You have many friends here who would agree!

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Pumphouse a magical moonlight evening

Mike Balsom
The Local

It was difficult to determine which was more impressive at the annual Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre's Moonlight Picnic last Friday night.

Was it the costumes worn by the revellers, or was it the impressive table settings?

It was certainly clear, though, that many went all out to honour the nautical theme assigned to the popular event. And what an appropriate

theme it was, considering the art centre's location on the Niagara River.

If you arrived late, by the way, and your tablemate told you to look for someone wearing blue and white stripes and a white captain's hat, you may have ended up looking for him or her all night.

Steve Goldberger, Paul Martin, Sandra Marynissen, James Gay and Dave Norris got the crowd up and dancing to an assortment of classics from the '60s to the '80s.

As the night got darker, the ambiance of the event, held on the grounds between the Pumphouse and the lighthouse, became more magical.

The crew of the S.S. Minnow — Gilligan, the Skipper, Mary Ann, Ginger, and the Howells — ended up surprising absolutely no one by winning the prize for the best decorated table.

There's no word yet on what the theme will be for 2024, but this one will be hard to top.



The evening's nautical theme was evident in clothing choices and table settings, and as the evening went on, was bathed in the glow of the moonlight overlooking the Niagara River. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



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Girls' tennis tournament thrives at Lions Park

Mariya Yurukova
Special to The Local

The Lions Club Park in St. Davids was alive with energy and excitement on Saturday, Sept. 9, as more than 16 young tennis enthusiasts, girls ranging in age from 10 to 14, gathered for an exhilarating tournament. Drawing participants from both the local area and as far as Mississauga, Cambridge and Richmond Hill, this event was a resounding success. The interest in this event was clear with spots filling up in just three days! It was part of Tennis Canada's visionary initiative to enhance competitive opportunities for girls, known as Girls Set Match, and it created an atmosphere of fun and camaraderie for girls, parents and volunteers alike.

Throughout the day, the tennis courts were abuzz with activity as players engaged in thrilling matches, both on and off the court. Each participant was guaranteed a minimum of four matches, ensuring a



Participants rocking their Ontario Tennis Association sweatshirts, with volunteers and parents. (Supplied)

day filled with riveting tennis action. Spectators, which included players, parents and educators, expressed their joy at having an opportunity to partake in a competition tailored specifically for girls. One parent enthused, "These kinds of activities are usually out of reach and require travel to other cities. It is great to see this happening in Niagara."

The girls relished the chance

to play against different opponents and compete in a dynamic format. Unlike team sports, tennis empowers girls to solve challenges independently, cultivating their mental fortitude, self-confidence, athleticism and skill.

Behind the scenes, the event ran seamlessly thanks to the efforts of local tennis coach Kendra Osa and a dedicated group of volunteers. Joining in on the action was Fast and Female, an or-

ganization dedicated to promoting girls in sports. Their engaging activities, ranging from beading stations to footwork drills and games, provided ample entertainment in between matches.

The Ontario Tennis Association and Fast and Female generously sponsored the event, providing participants with sweatshirts and swag bags to commemorate their involvement.

This event serves as a bea-

con of hope and progress in the world of girls' sports. According to a recent study by Canadian Women and Sport in partnership with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, one in every three girls drops out of sports during adolescence, compared to only one in 10 boys.

Shockingly, as many as 62 per cent of Canadian girls do not participate in any form of sport. Initiatives like Girls Set

Match are vital steps toward closing these gaps and ensuring that girls have equal access to the benefits of sports participation.

This event would not have been possible without the support of long-term local tennis promoters Rosemary Goodwin and Karen Wright, along with local tennis enthusiasts Jen Allen, Stephanie Bonetta, Sandy Burns, Sunni Cao, Margarete Miarecki and Mariya Yurukova.

More championships at tennis club Saturday

Mike Balsom
The Local

The NOTL Tennis Club will crown its Men's and Women's Champions this Saturday at the courts located at Memorial Park.

Things get underway at 10 a.m., when the Women's semi-finals will see Fran Doran face off against Karen Rhind, while Natalie Early will take on Ann Davies. The winners will meet in the final.

On the Men's side, things are split into two divisions.

In the A division, Rob Lipovsky and Moshin Kamran will meet, while Ken McGillivray and Gerry McIlhone will compete in the other semi-final. In the B division, it will be Harry Schlange versus Scott McGregor and Glenn Barr facing Sean Hilliker.

The championship rounds will be decided by the best two out of three sets. If sets one and two are split, a 10-point tiebreak will be played to determine the winner, who must win by two points.



Gerry McIlhone defeated Mike Symanski 8-6 to move on in the Men's A championships. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Rob Lipovsky defeated Rob Lamond, who suffered a leg injury, to advance to the next round in the Men's A division.

St. Davids Tennis Club held its Summer Showoff Sunday

John Yoxall
Special to The Local

The St. Davids Tennis Club celebrated its first season at the St. Davids Lions Club Park with a Summer Showoff on Sunday. Twenty-four students participated in four teams, challenging each other for the chance to hoist the Dancevic Ball.

After several close matches, the Yellow Team narrowly defeated the Red Team to win the team challenge.

Lots of fun and laughs were had by all with events set up with balloon tennis, crafts, drawing and face painting.

The St. Davids Tennis Club's mission is to bring accessible tennis to the St. Davids area. The club runs several kids' programs along with adult beginner lessons.

Contact stdavidstennisclub@gmail.com for more information on programs running in September and October.



The St. Davids Tennis Club held a season wrap-up with competitions and lots of fun. (Supplied)

Hometown player to suit up for Preds Friday

Mike Balsom
The Local

When the Niagara Predators take to the Meridian Credit Union Arena to begin their Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League (GMHL) season this Friday, there will be a 'hometown hero' wearing the blue and gold.

Josh Frena played his final game for the Under-18 NOTL Wolves on that very same surface in March 2020. That's when the pandemic hit, cancelling the remainder of the hockey season.

Since then the 21-year-old East and West Line resident has been concentrating on his studies in sports management at Niagara College, only stepping onto the ice periodically with his older brother Michael to play in the local Wallbangers League.

But now he has finished his co-op placement handling social media for the former Junior B Niagara Falls Canucks, and graduated from his college program, he's ready to get back to the game he loves, with the hope of turning the experience into an opportunity to catch on at a Division III NCAA school or with a team in Europe.

Frena is no stranger to the Predators, by the way, having handled videography duties sporadically beside his brother Michael, who was the team's play-by-play announcer for their first two seasons.

"I saw their tryouts listed on Instagram," Josh tells *The Local*, "and I was planning to take a year off before looking for work. I decided to give it a try at their first open camp. I had a couple of good skates and they asked me to come back to their second camp. They saw some good things in me and asked me to stick around."

The 6'5", 160 pound



Josh Frena, skating for the Preds at a recent training camp. (Mike Balsom)

Frena brings some much needed height to the Predators' roster. But that wasn't necessarily what impressed the team's head coach, Kevin Taylor.

"He has some raw talent," Taylor says. "He works really hard. From the first skate to our most recent practice his improvement has been phenomenal. He's playing with some better players than he has before, and that forces him to work harder."

Frena admits he was a bit rusty his first couple of sessions, having not really played for three years. With each successive practice he began to feel more comfortable, and was able to fit in with the rest of the team both on the ice and in the locker room.

The Eden High School and Crossroads gradu-

ate says he brings a strong hockey IQ to the team.

"I've always had a good eye and a good sense of where to be on the ice," explains the right-handed shooter. "I'm a head-up kind of player, always looking for the open man. And I think my height is an advantage. With the Wolves I brought a strong presence in front of the net."

Frena is looking forward to the chance to play Junior A hockey right in his hometown.

"It's going to feel pretty cool to play in my home arena," he enthuses about this Friday's home opener. "It's great to get back to the excitement of game day, showing up to the arena, seeing the boys, all the camaraderie with the coaches, and everyone in town."

Frena's only disappoint-

ment is that his older brother has stepped away from the booth to take a new position at Niagara Falls Genesis.

"It would have been pretty cool to hear what he would have said about me scoring a goal or making some good plays," he laughs. "It was a tough choice for him to make."

As for Friday night, Taylor isn't making any predictions about their first game against the Tottenham Railers. But he knows he has a deeper team in terms of talent than 2022-2023's fourth place finishers.

"We're still adding pieces, and we don't have as many guys yet," Taylor says. "We've replaced players who aren't returning with some from other teams who may not have fit in with other systems but will

play an important role in ours."

Taylor adds that the focus thus far has been primarily on the back end, ensuring the team has some key players minding the net and protecting their goaltenders.

"That will be our strength to start the season," he says. "I'm counting on our defence to score more goals this season, too. We only had 26 from them last season, I'd like to see at least 40 to 50 from the blue-line this year. And when we get the players that we want up front, we'll be able to let the defencemen play roles that are more defined, that they're more comfortable in."

Key to the team's success will be returning players such as defencemen Logan Baillie and Nick Savoie as

well as forward Reese Bisci. Baillie and Bisci are in their third year with the Preds.

"I'm expecting big things out of Bisci this year because it's his last year," Taylor says of the 21-year-old who had 12 goals and 17 assists in 40 games last season. "We're excited to have him back. And it will be interesting to see how Zane Clausen follows up his goalie-of-the-year season, too."

The 6'4" Clausen will share time in goal with Gorgii Kodzaev, a 19-year-old from Russia who was on the roster last year but never played a game as visa problems held him from leaving his country. He arrived in Canada last week, and fellow "Russian, 6'3" forward Georgi Kholmovsky, is expected to arrive on Sept. 27.

"And I'm really looking forward to seeing our two Americans playing against other players at this level," Taylor says. "Dylan Denning (a 20-year-old defenceman from Buffalo) has really elevated his game. He's a great guy in the room, too. He has so much skill. And there's Connor Weiskerger (from Buffalo) too."

The Predators open the season at home Friday, Sept. 15 against Tottenham, now rebranded as the Railers after an ownership change. Puck drop is 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at the door at \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors.

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Cornerstone Kids Sign In
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10:00 a.m.

Worship Gathering
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Message: Kevin Bayne
The Church: The Body
of Christ (Romans 12:4-8
I Corinthians 12:12-27)

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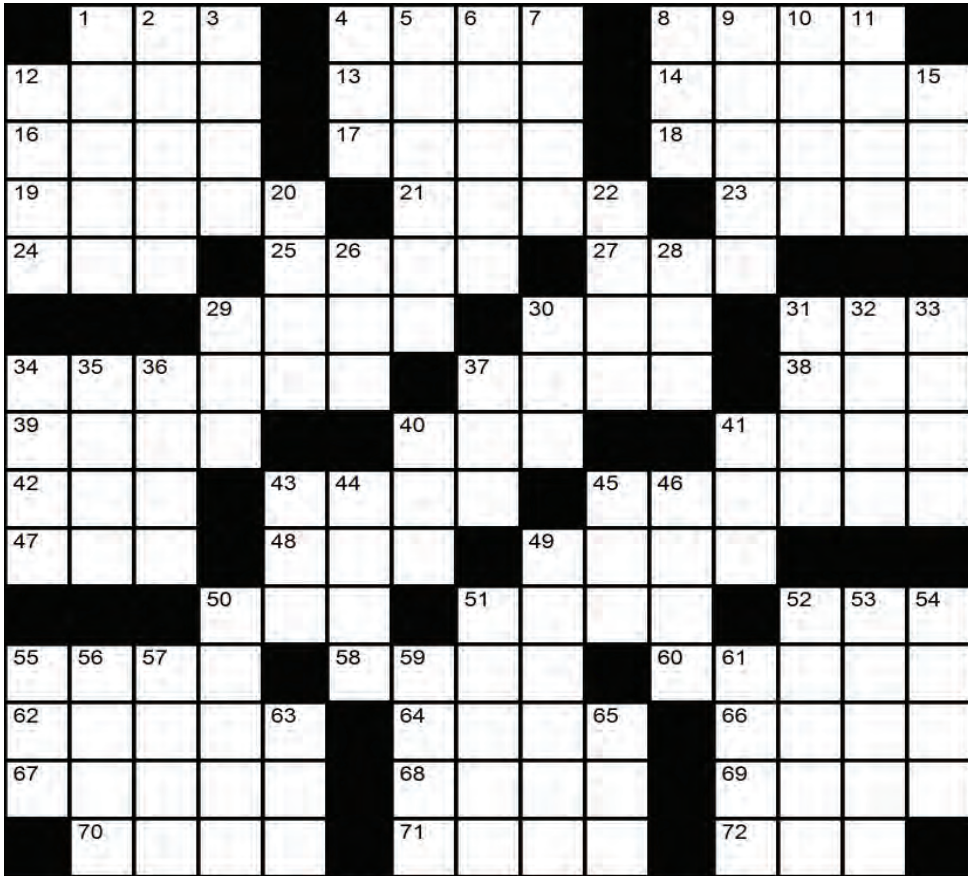
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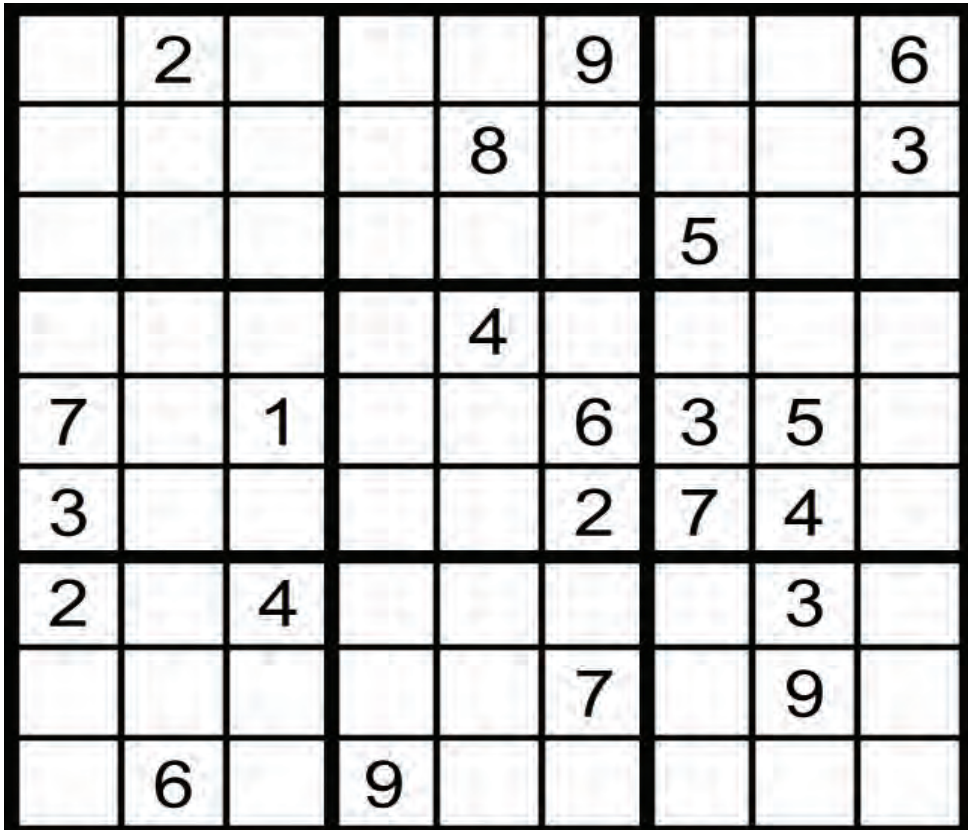


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- Across:**
- 1 Sizable
 - 4 First Lady before Mamie
 - 8 Speedy
 - 12 Flintstone pet
 - 13 Large international show
 - 14 "I am just --- boy, though my story's seldom told ..." (Simon and Garfunkel, "The Boxer")
 - 16 North of Tex.
 - 17 Take --- Train (Duke Ellington song)
 - 18 Upper story
 - 19 Totters
 - 21 European mountain system
 - 23 "Copacabana" showgirl
 - 24 Tucson time
 - 25 Barrier
 - 27 Holler
 - 29 Sheet of glass
 - 30 Computer interconnection system
 - 31 Higher degree
 - 34 Marzipan base
 - 37 Tomb Raider --- Croft
 - 38 Not ordained
 - 39 Undiluted
 - 40 Big Blue
 - 41 This place
 - 42 Sawbuck
 - 43 Chemical pollutants banned in 1975
 - 45 Leftovers
 - 47 Space viewed from below
 - 48 Play on words
- Down:**
- 1 E.g. Schwinn
 - 2 Arm of the sea
 - 3 Target
 - 4 Gamble
 - 5 Breathe out
 - 6 Incantation
 - 7 Cleaner
 - 8 Aviation safety grp.
 - 9 Fittingly
 - 10 "Licence to Kill" Bond girl Talisa ---
 - 11 Labor strenuously
 - 12 Campus housing
 - 15 --- Building, now the
- Across:**
- 49 Computer brains
 - 50 Some foreign Government heads
 - 51 Tree with a partridge at Christmas
 - 52 Adult female pig
 - 55 Interlock
 - 58 --- Silvers or Collins
 - 60 Singer/songwriter --- Mars
 - 62 Thespian
 - 64 Line about which rotation occurs
 - 66 M --- mouse
 - 67 Formerly the Gold Coast
 - 68 Model and actress --- Suvari
 - 69 Liquor measure
 - 70 Adhere to
 - 71 Toboggan
 - 72 A T M ID
- Down:**
- 20 Graceful waterbird
 - 22 Lasting mark
 - 26 Logical operator
 - 28 Viral genetic material
 - 29 Mary Jane
 - 30 Flee
 - 31 Court statement
 - 32 Heavenly instrument
 - 33 Fabric colors
 - 34 Hill dwellers
 - 35 Emblem of Wales
 - 36 Large number
 - 37 2,000 to a ton
 - 40 Arabic "son of"
 - 41 Slugger's stat.
 - 43 Common measure of pollutants
 - 44 Turning point
 - 45 Health club
 - 46 Edge of a street
 - 49 Singer --- Dion
 - 50 Ring
 - 51 Screen dot
 - 52 Osaka fish dish
 - 53 Aromatic bulbous vegetable
 - 54 Habit
 - 55 Journal
 - 56 Reverberation
 - 57 Dagger thrust
 - 59 Overactors
 - 61 Coarse file
 - 63 Flat fish
 - 65 Down



IN MEMORIAM

DR. JOSEPH E. POHORLY - SEPTEMBER 12, 2020



Remembering the life and legacy of our father who left us three years ago. Not a day goes by when we wish you were still here with us. We will always remember your great passion for the art of winemaking, your inspiration you have brought to others as a wine legend in the industry and your innovative grape seed oil. You showed kindness in helping others whether it was engineering design, building, educating or volunteer work. You are greatly missed and never forgotten. Love from the twins, Barbara and Caroline xoxo

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from September 6, 2023

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

Across: 1 Big, 4 Bess, 8 Fast, 12 Dino, 13 Expo, 14 A poor, 16 Okla, 17 The A, 18 Attic, 19 Reels, 21 Alps, 23 Lola, 24 M S T, 25 Wall, 27 Cry, 29 Pane, 30 L A N, 31 Ph D, 34 Almond, 37 Lara, 38 Lay, 39 Neat, 40 I B M, 41 Here, 42 Ten, 43 PC Bs, 45 Scraps, 47 Sky, 48 Pun, 49 C P Us, 50 PMS, 51 Pear, 52 Som, 55 Mesh, 58 Phil, 60 Bruno, 62 Actor, 64 Axis, 66 As in, 67 Ghana, 68 Mena, 69 Shot, 70 Obey, 71 Sled, 72 P I N.

Down: 1 Bikes, 2 Inlet, 3 Goal, 4 Bet, 5 Exhale, 6 Spell, 7 Soap, 8 F A A, 9 Aptly, 10 Soto, 11 Toll, 12 Dom, 15 R C A, 20 Swan, 22 Scar, 26 AND, 28 RN A, 29 Pot, 30 Lam, 31 Plea, 32 Harp, 33 Dyes, 34 Ants, 35 Leek, 36 Many, 37 Lbs, 40 lbn, 41 Hrs, 43 P m, 44 Cusp, 45 Spa, 46 Curb, 49 Celine, 50 Phone, 51 Pixel, 52 Sushi, 53 Onion, 54 Wort, 55 Mag, 56 Echo, 57 Stab, 59 Hams, 61 Rasp, 63 Ray, 65 Sad.



New year, new courts for Pickleball Club play

Mike Balsom
The Local

It's an exciting time for the newly elected board of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club, which held its annual general meeting last week.

New courts are soon to open up in a bright new space, replacing those that no longer exist at Centennial Arena now that the ice has been put in for the hockey season. And new members are flocking to the club's website (sites.google.com/view/notlpickleball-ca) to register.

With almost 400 current members, the previous board decided to close registrations in the summer as there wasn't enough room to accommodate them. But that will soon change.

"This club is growing like crazy," says Joy Sanguedolce, a director on the board. "We have about 50 new registrations on our waitlist. Once those new courts open up, they'll automatically become members, and any new people that register will also become members."

She adds that during the summer they were receiving



The recently-elected Pickleball Club board members are John Hindle, president; Cheryl Schwartz, secretary; Kevin van-Niekerk, treasurer; Stephanie Howcroft, vice-president; Joy Sanguedolce, director; and Stewart Istevan, director. Missing from the photo are Tim Lutton and Mary Ann Enns, both directors. (Supplied)

at least two emails a week from prospective members hoping to join. As well, many vacationers visiting the town contacted the club looking to play as guests, a common pursuit in the pickleball world.

Six new courts are soon to be opened to the club at the Central Community Centre on York Road. Sanguedolce says from the club's standpoint, everything

is ready to go. They are just waiting for the community centre to get the lines painted for the courts.

"Central is climate controlled; it's a beautiful facility," Sanguedolce says. "We hope to be able to continue there indefinitely. We will still have our times at the NOTL community centre, too. Who knows, if the club keeps growing, and the town wants to offer up the arena

again next summer, I'm sure we'll take that, too."

Pickleball Canada insurance rules allow newcomers to the sport to try it out for up to three sessions without registering with a club. Those beginner sessions can be completed this fall and winter at either Central or the Anderson Road community centre.

"Another nice thing about Central," she adds,

"is we can have one or two courts dedicated to beginners. We will be able to assign courts to different levels. We want to fill those courts."

Up in the air still is the status of the outdoor pickleball facility at the Virgil sports park. The noise bylaw injunction imposed back on June 15, 2022, will expire next summer. The board is hopeful that when the ban

is lifted discussions can be opened to allow outdoor play there as well.

Also undecided as of right now is whether or not the NOTL Pickleball Classic tournament will return in 2024. The hugely successful event drew close to 300 players from far and wide for two full days of competition, with an opening professional exhibition on the first day.

"The previous board discussed it, and I think we want to bring it back," says Sanguedolce. "But it was a massive undertaking that took a lot of work from a lot of our members. We've left it with the new board to decide whether it returns next year, or the year after."

Meanwhile, Sanguedolce will be working with her fellow members of the new club executive to plan an open house some time this month. It will be a chance to show off their new digs on York Road.

And like most who have taken up the sport, she welcomes new players enthusiastically.

"Come on out and give it a try," she says. "I can pretty much guarantee you'll be hooked."



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