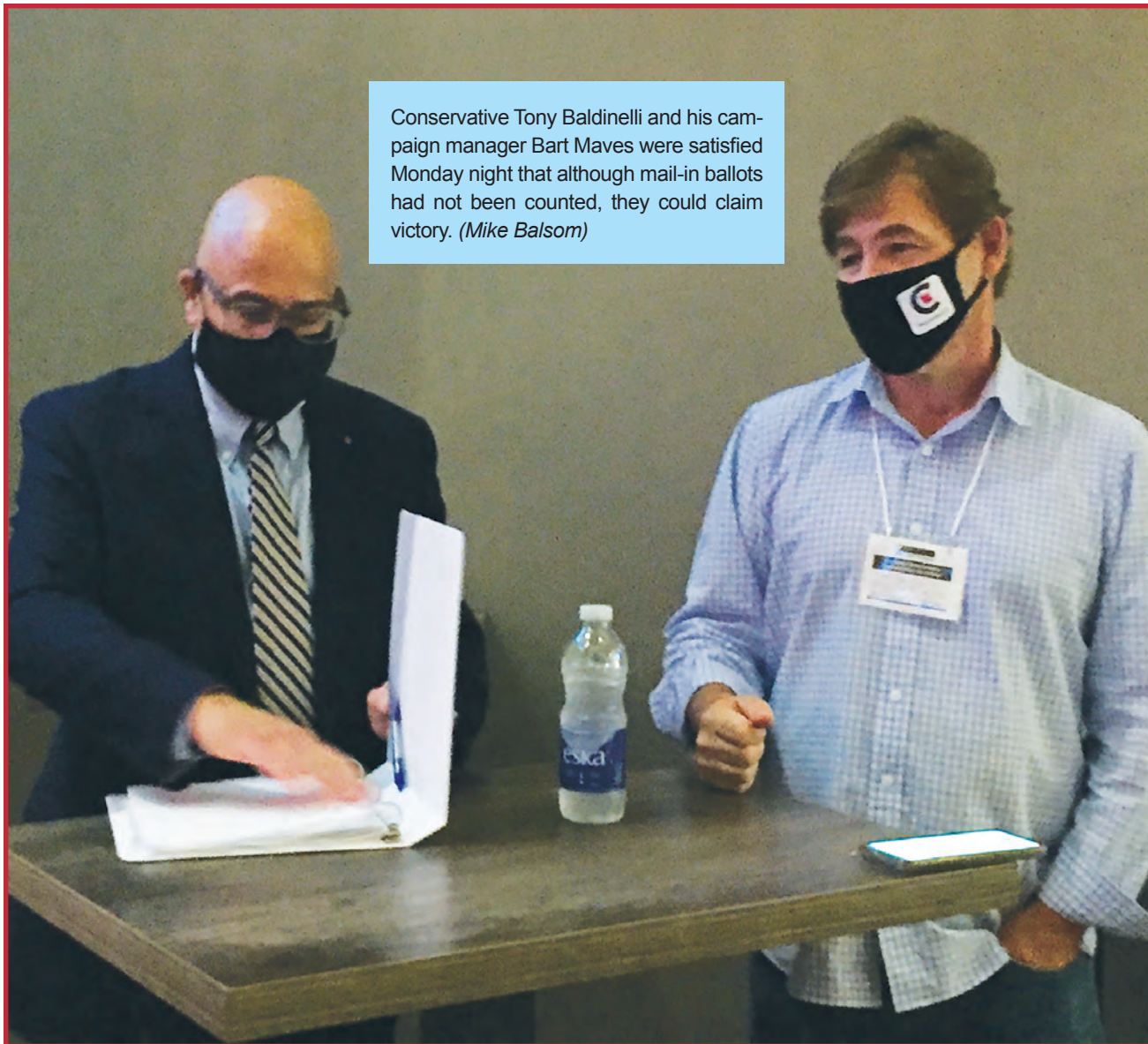




See what  
NOTL kids  
are up to  
**page 13**

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Conservative Tony Baldinelli and his campaign manager Bart Maves were satisfied Monday night that although mail-in ballots had not been counted, they could claim victory. (Mike Balsom)

## Votes fall short for Kaiser's second run

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Sitting outside with a much-needed cup of coffee early Tuesday morning, reflecting on losing her second stab at a trip to Ottawa, Liberal candidate Andrea Kaiser says running in the federal election was a great experience.

The election was very much a repeat of 2019, with the number of seats won by the Liberals giving Prime Minister Justin Trudeau another minority government. And in the Niagara Falls riding, Kaiser, after the rollercoaster ride of seeing polls counted, going back and forth between her and Conservative Tony Baldinelli in 2019, her close second place run Monday also mirrored that election.

Brian Barker of the NDP came third, as he did

in 2019, Melanie Holm of the Green Party fourth, and Peter Taras of the People's Party of Canada came fifth.

Kaiser says she's not buying the 'third time's the charm' rationale, she says, and is already making plans for getting on with the next stage of her life, which won't include another federal election.

When she learned she'd lost by a slim margin to Baldinelli in 2019, she told supporters without hesitation that night she'd be back. She didn't expect it to be quite so soon, but she said when this election call was announced she'd never stopped her involvement with the party and the community.

Since then, she's stayed in touch with her constituency and kept them engaged, doing the work she

Continued on page 2

## Conservative Tony Baldinelli returns to Ottawa as opposition

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

His supporters were urging him to take the floor for his victory speech, but a cautious Tony Baldinelli wanted to be sure he and his team had actually won the Niagara Falls seat.

For much too long Monday night the race between the Conservative incumbent Baldinelli and his Liberal challenger Andrea Kaiser was too close to call. While one television station had declared him victorious

as early as 11:40 p.m., the 56-year-old candidate needed a second opinion.

Baldinelli was alternating his time between talking to supporters and checking out the monitors dotting the walls at the Spice Lounge in Niagara Falls. As usual, some of those monitors were showing Blue Jays highlights. But the candidate was watching the TVs tuned to the election coverage, commenting on some of the races involving close friends and colleagues in Parliament.

Finally, at approximately 12:05 a.m. Tuesday morning, Baldinelli was ready for his victory speech.

To chants of "Tony, Tony, Tony," Baldinelli took the floor to accept what he referred to as a tentative win, pending the tally from the mail-in ballots that made this year's election the most confusing one to call in recent memory.

"Being elected in 2019 was the greatest honour ever bestowed upon me," Baldinelli told the room full of his supporters. "I will continue

to advocate for the issues of importance for the people of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Stating that the election was about getting people back to work and rebuilding the economy, Baldinelli promised to continue to advocate for his riding's businesses and farmers on their recovery and infrastructure needs.

"I will fight for our borders to be treated fairly," he added. "I will continue to fight for a clean environment, and for our youth and

their futures, so they can stay here and be able to afford their own homes. And I will fight to ensure we will get through this pandemic and into this recovery as quickly as we can."

Baldinelli told The Local he ran his campaign knowing he would face a stiff challenge from his Liberal opponent, who came second in the 2019 election by about 2,000 votes.

"You always expect a close race, and you have to work like that," the Niagara Falls resident said. "You

take nothing for granted. From our standpoint, for this campaign, it was the most volunteers we've ever had, the most signs we've ever had, and we knocked on more doors. We worked hard."

He credited his Liberal and NDP opponents, both of whom also ran against him in 2019, for working hard as well.

"I got to know Andrea and Brian (Barker) in this campaign and the last one,"

Continued on page 2

## FALL FLIGHTS

### NEW SEATED OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

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# Kaiser has no plans to find out if third time's a charm

Continued from page 1

needed to do to be ready when the call came. She was already feeling the momentum, and it just continued to build throughout the recent weeks, she says.

"I feel proud of the work we did, and the campaign we ran. It was an exceptional experience to have so many great people behind me."

Despite the outcome, she's glad she tried, she says.

"If I hadn't, I would have always wondered."

But with her second run behind her now, she adds, "I'm not leaning towards running again. I gave it my all, put everything on the table, left no stone unturned, and now it's time to turn my attention to seeing what comes next."

One decision she has already made is to refocus her attention on Drea's Wine Co., which she started to carry on the legacy of her father, Karl Kaiser. Her life as a candidate has taken her attention away from that, and it's something she wants to get back to.

"It's hard to put your life on hold," she says. "This election could have gone either way. When I woke up this morning my life could have looked very different than it does, and that makes it difficult to make plans. I think it's time to make some plans for the future."

She gave "110 per cent" of herself during this election, she says, "and at the end of the day I don't know that there was anything I could have done differently that would have had a different outcome. I felt the

momentum, felt the positivity, but it wasn't meant to be."

As she sat in her backyard this morning, she says, she thought about how much in her life she has for which to be thankful, how fortunate she is in so many ways, and that it's time to look forward to what's next.

She was also reminded of the time in her life when she had just lost her father, who was so important in her life, and realized then that "life is short, so enjoy what's in front of you, and around you. This is my life, and I want to do all the things I've dreamed of doing, enjoying every moment. It's an amazing feeling just to be thankful for every day."

At press time Tuesday, Baldinelli had received 25,920 votes, Liberal candi-

date Andrea Kaiser 22,410 votes, and Brian Barker of the NDP had 12,414 votes.

Although there were mail-in ballots still to be counted, the difference between Baldinelli and Kaiser was enough to satisfy both of the outcome.



Liberal Andrea Kaiser thanks her supporters, who helped run a great campaign, she says, despite her second place finish. (Photo supplied)

# Baldinelli: election money could have been spent on hospital

Continued from page 1

he said. "They ran excellent campaigns. I know Andrea had been working even before the writ had been dropped. My congratulations to them, and thanks to

them for sharing their ideas and platforms."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a final hour stop in Niagara Falls Sunday, just a day before the election. He and Kaiser, along with St. Catharines and Niagara Centre incum-

bents Chris Bittle and Vance Badawey, greeted supporters at Heartland Forest two days after Conservative leader Erin O'Toole had stopped in the riding.

"I think it was too little, too late," Baldinelli said when asked if Trudeau's vis-

it might have swayed some voters. "People had already made up their minds before they headed to the ballot boxes today. And so many people had already voted in advance polls."

Baldinelli claimed that while knocking on those doors he met many people who were angry about the Prime Minister calling an election only two years into his mandate, and in the midst of a pandemic.

"Canadians and the people of our riding were very disappointed that the Prime Minister decided to put his own self-interests and that of the Liberal party ahead of theirs by calling this \$610 million federal election campaign," he said in his address.

Pointing out that the House of Commons will look almost exactly the same following Monday's results, Baldinelli suggested the money could have been better spent on a new hospi-

tal, infrastructure or for assistance to the local bridge commissions in his riding.

Despite his frustration that the election was held during a pandemic, he says, he felt his campaign was effective. His team used every opportunity to get their message out, including billboards and radio, and opened three campaign offices, one in each municipality, "never taking anything for granted." He also had a large number of volunteers supporting him, "even during COVID, and I'm so thrilled, so happy for all those who worked on the campaign."

He spoke proudly of the Conservative platform under leader Erin O'Toole, and promised he would push the Liberal government to adopt some of his party's promises.

"My colleagues and I will be looking at that," said Baldinelli. "What are those items and issues that we can

find cross-party support to do that. In a minority parliament, you're going to need additional support from other parties to help do that. We're here to help people. If we can do it by reaching out across the floor and working with our colleagues, I look forward to that."

The re-elected MP concluded his speech by thanking his campaign manager Bart Maves. He also made mention of young Daniel Ferraro, a St. Paul Catholic Secondary School student, for whom he said he was just keeping his seat at Parliament warm.

Election day was also his anniversary, and Baldinelli of course thanked his wife Carol and his son Daniel for their support and understanding. And he wrapped up with maybe his most important promise of the last 36 days — to make sure he and Daniel get out later this week to see the new Marvel movie.

50th Anniversary

Newark neighbours

Food Bank & Thrift Shop

Niagara-on-the-Lake

COMMUNITY DONATION PROJECT

Porch Pick-up Food Drive

Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club

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

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

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

**On Saturday September 25, 2021, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Note that our volunteers will all wear masks and gloves and will respect all physical distancing restrictions, including contactless pick-up.

**If you wish to donate in support of our Food Bank, please call 905-468-7498 or email us at [newarkneighbours1@gmail.com](mailto:newarkneighbours1@gmail.com) to register your address for pick-up. We appreciate your support!!!**

**Items required for Thanksgiving hampers:**

- Stuffing Mix
- Cranberry Sauce
- Canned Ham

- Canned Gravy (turkey or chicken)
- Canned Pineapple
- Applesauce or Canned Fruit

- Canned Corn
- Canned green beans
- Canned peas

**General Items required on regular basis:**

- Canned Tomatoes
- Tomato Sauce
- Canned Red Kidney Beans
- Canned Tuna
- Canned Ham, Corned Beef or Spam
- Canned salmon
- Canned mixed vegetables
- Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey
- Canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli
- Habitant Soups

- Canned beef stew
- Canned Baked Beans
- Chunky Soups
- Campbell's Soups
- Kraft Dinner
- Mac and Cheese
- Canned pineapple
- Rice Sidekicks & Mr. Noodle packets
- Soda (Soup) Crackers
- Bottled Juices - Cranberry or Apple
- Cookies

- Snack Crackers
- Cereal • Oatmeal
- Peanut Butter • Jams
- Granola Bars
- Cake Mixes
- Jello - any flavour
- Ketchup • Mustard
- Mayonnaise
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes • Shampoo
- Coffee or Tea • Paper Towels • Kleenex

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# Town, businesses prepare for vaccination proof system

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Patience, patience, patience. That is the plea from Lord Mayor Betty Disero to those who are asked to show proof of vaccinations to enter certain businesses and venues.

Today, Sept. 22, is the day business owners begin dealing with the provincially-mandated vaccine certification system, and customers entering restaurants, gyms, and some other non-essential businesses — retail outlets are not included — will be asked to show proof they are fully vaccinated, which means they have received their second dose of vaccine two weeks ago or more.

Town staff have put together an information package to send out to businesses and the public to help smooth

the process, says Disero, with a goal of “educating and facilitating where we can.” It was available Tuesday. She is also planning another of her videos, and her message will be for residents to remember to be patient, maybe allow more time, and arrive earlier.

“These are new rules from the province, and it will take extra time to get people checked in and ensure everyone understands the new regulations,” says Disero.

“I hope everyone will be patient. Staff at the town hall and businesses will have to take more time with people, and patience will be very important during this next stage.”

So far, people have worked together to cope with provincial pandemic regulations “in a kind and co-operative way,” added Disero, and she hopes that will continue.

It’s unfortunate that restaurants, the businesses that have been among the hardest hit throughout this pandemic, will also be the most impacted by this new regulation, says Disero, along with the Shaw Festival.

Tim Jennings, CEO of the Shaw Festival, agrees with

the timing.

“I think we are prepared and ready,” he says, “although I am sure there will be some bumps, as with anything new.”

For those attending a performance at the theatre, he says, “we are opening up about 30 minutes earlier (now an hour before performance, in-

stead of half an hour) to help improve ease of arrival.”

Visiting the town hall, using the gym at the community centre, attending programs offered there, and sitting down with food from the cafe will all require proof of vaccination, but just picking up something from the cafe to take out will

not, Disero said.

The same applies to those visiting the arena, with exemptions, which includes individuals who are medically exempt from the vaccine. Those individuals will be permitted entry

Continued on page 9

## Andrew Peller among companies with vaccination policy

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

Andrew Peller Ltd. is one of several companies in Niagara working on a vaccination policy for the safety of employees and customers.

Vintage Hotels also joins that group of Niagara businesses, as does Arterra Wines Canada.

Although their goals are the same, the details of their policies may vary, says Greg Berti of Andrew Peller.

Ontario’s vaccine passport system for customers frequenting certain businesses begins today, Sept. 22, and in addition to those regulations, Peller has shared its vaccine policy details with its staff. The company has 1,500 employees across Canada, says Berti, vice-president of international marketing and industry relations, and theirs

is a national policy. Staff will all be expected to be fully vaccinated, and must notify the company of their vaccination status by Oct. 1.

He believes a large number of staff are already vaccinated, although he won’t know the exact percentage until Oct. 1.

The policy will include office staff, vineyard employees, those working in Peller restaurants and retail stores, says Berti — every current employee and new hire.

“This is certainly uncharted territory,” he says of how to handle those who don’t comply with the policy.

The expectation is that they will be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on their reason for not being fully vaccinated, he says, and may require testing more frequently. “Every option is on the table. We are taking this very

seriously. We would certainly encourage people to get vaccinated. Maybe they all will be. That would be wonderful.”

The policy was not created “from the top down,” but rather from employees who have wanted to go to work in a place that is safe for them, and for customers as well.

As the winery restaurants begin to ask for proof of vaccination Sept. 22, he says, he is hoping it will go smoothly, without any issues. Staff have been trained to handle it, and most people should be prepared for it, he says.

“I feel we’re not going to have any major issues. We’re all in this together, and staying safe is the spirit with which we are going into this.”

Paul MacIntyre, vice-president of Vintage Hotels, says the company, which includes The Pillar and Post, The Prince

of Wales and Queen’s Landing, is “committed to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all of our team members.”

Lais Hotel Properties Ltd. implemented a vaccination policy for all current and new employees to protect team members and their families, guests, visitors and members of the community, says MacIntyre. “Through this process, it is critical that we communicate clearly and often with the team. And we are committed to making every resource available to them.”

The company also continues to employ “Duty of Care” policies with adherence to the strictest of COVID-related protocols; meeting and often exceeding provincial and regional guidelines.

He was not able to share the details of the policy.

## Police looking for missing NOTL man

**Local Staff**

At press time Tuesday, the Niagara Regional Police were still reporting Darren Werner, 58, as a missing person.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake man was last seen around 9 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 16 in the area of Townline Road. Police say they and his family are concerned.

He’s described as a white

male, 5 feet 11 inches tall, 180 pounds, with short grey hair and brown eyes.

He was last seen travelling in an unknown vehicle, say police.

Anyone with information regarding his location is asked to contact the Niagara Regional Police Service dispatch at (905) 688-4111, dial option 3, extension 1024325.



Darren Werner (Niagara Regional Police)

## NOTL vaccination rate best in region

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

With at least one more vaccination clinic planned at the community centre, Niagara-on-the-Lake is already the Niagara municipality with the highest percentage of its population vaccinated.

As of last Wednesday — the results are shared weekly by public health, says Lord Mayor Betty Disero — 83 per cent of NOTL residents had their first dose, and 79 per cent were fully vaccinated, numbers that will be higher this week.

Yesterday, across the region, more than 74 per cent of Niagara residents have their first dose, and more than 68 per

cent are fully vaccinated.

That’s “significantly higher in NOTL, about 10 per cent more,” says Disero, adding that doesn’t include those vaccinated outside the province, including snowbirds who were vaccinated in the U.S.

She said the number of vaccination increases took a jump when the need for a vaccination certificate to enter certain businesses and venues was announced, but have flattened out again.

The public health department is planning a vaccination clinic at the NOTL community centre next Wednesday, Sept. 29.

While the demographics of NOTL, with its senior popula-

tion, is likely one reason for the municipality having the highest percentage of people vaccinated, “it also means people in NOTL are working together to pull through this pandemic,” says Disero.

“I’m very proud and pleased to live in a community that pulls together like this.”

Sean Simpson of Simpson’s Pharmacy says he’s definitely seen the number of people in town wanting to get vaccinated dwindle. He no longer has a waiting list, and he’s reduced the days he does vaccinations to about two or three a week so as not to waste vaccine.

At this point, “anyone who wants a vaccination has access to a vaccination,” with lots of

public health pop-up locations in addition to pharmacies making it easy. Those who are now coming in are a younger group, says Simpson.

“I’d say largely the seniors are done at this stage. I see some younger people slowly trickling in, as people get more comfortable about the safety of the vaccine. There are still a lot more who could get it, and we’re encouraging them to do that. When they’re ready, we’re ready.”

Simpson says he’s anticipating the next group of five to 11-year-olds, once vaccinations are approved for that age group. “It will be good to get another portion of the population vaccinated.”

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# Neighbour hoping for permanent solution to Virgil dam

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

Kim Killeen has a beautiful view from his home on Four Mile Creek that includes the Virgil dam and reservoir.

The pond is home to hundreds of ducks, geese, and herons, as well as lots of frogs and fish, he says.

He sees people fishing in the pond, which is also part of the nature trail that follows the creek — more fishermen than in pre-COVID years.

After vandalism to the dam this Saturday, not for the first time, about 25 feet of mud, usually under water, was left exposed, he says.

“There are a number of

boards gone from the dam, and this isn't the worst I've seen. The water has dropped significantly.”

He has lived near the pond since 2017, but it wasn't until 2020 that he realized it wasn't the weather that was making the water level drop, he says.

“The water had dropped to such an extreme that the water receded about 50 feet from the

shore, all along the west side of the pond at our end. The west side was a vast exposure of mudflats, and the remaining pond had a depth of only five or six inches of water at most along much of the pond. You could literally see the backs of the large fish cresting out of the water as they struggled to swim.”

He has witnessed ongoing vandalism since then, and suspects, although he has no knowledge, that the perpetrators are kids.

He says he appreciates that the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, which owns the dam and is responsible for repairing it when damaged, is usually very quick to respond after it's been vandalized.

When Killeen contacted the NPCA in May, dam boards had been removed then as well, at a time when the carp had started spawning.

He thought then it was likely kids, although when the water is lower, there is more dry land where the fishermen set up, he says.

This most recent episode is making him question how seriously the NPCA is taking its responsibility to the area, when it

has not come up with a permanent solution to the problem.

“This reservoir is built right beside a growing suburb brimming with teenagers looking for something to do,” he said in an email to the NPCA. “The lack of security on the reservoir is a serious issue. You do not even have signs telling people they will be fined for removing boards.”

It should be simple for knowledgeable people to come up with a permanent solution, he adds.

“I feel bad for what happens to nature, to the egrets and herons, the ducks and geese, when the water level drops.”

He and his neighbours are becoming “disenchanted with the failure to produce a workable solution to this on-going problem.”

He is hoping the conservation authority “takes its role seriously,” and comes up with a solution. In the meantime, with water levels decreasing, “wild-life hangs in the balance.”

After Killeen's recent email to the NPCA, and his frustrated call to The Local Monday morning, the dam was fixed.

He was also assured he would hear from Adam Christie, director of land operations

about a permanent solution.

Christie told The Local Monday he is working on it, but it's not simple.

“It's a massive dam,” he says, far too large to fence off. The solution will have to be one that makes it difficult to vandalize, but will have to be in conjunction with the town, which adjusts the water level when it's being used for irrigation.

“This needs to be done in partnership, with the two organizations working out the best solution.”

The NPCA has tried to get there within 24 hours of vandals doing their work, he says.

“We have vandalism in all of our conservation areas, all over our watersheds. We see damage to buildings, graffiti, but pulling out boards to lower the water,” he says, seems “so random, how do they even know about that?”

The need for the town to control the water level “is what makes this a bigger conversation, one that needs to be done in collaboration.”

He was planning to meet with the town this week, he says, and “I'm sure we'll come up with something to fix it.”

## Saturday cleanup a success




Co-organized by Owen Bjorgan and Kyra Simone of the town's environmental advisory committee, Saturday's cleanup along a stretch of the Niagara River Parkway recreation trail included town staff, local families and couples, as well as some members of the NOTL Rotary Club. About a dozen large bags were filled, despite the Niagara Parks Commission conducting a cleanup at the sites the day before, which was unexpected, since they were aware of the committee's cleanup plan, says Bjorgan. (Photos supplied)




Kim Killeen sent these photos to The Local, and the NPCA, to show what the water level should look like (above), and what it looks like when boards are removed from the dam (middle).


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# Local BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Revel Realty

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

## NOTL Real Estate Done Differently

To a lot of people it didn't seem like it was the right time to start a new business. It was July 2020, in the middle of COVID when Evan and Jessie MacDonald decided to buy 1596 Four Mile Creek Rd, known by most as the old Benjamin Moore paint store. Together Jessie, Evan and Andrew Perrie had a dream to take their passion for real estate to another level.

"Everybody said we were crazy." Looking back, everybody knows the real estate market did better than almost any other industry, but at the time, there was a ton of uncertainty. "We've always loved real estate. Over the past 17 years we've built and renovated countless houses, developed land, bought and sold houses from \$90,000 to \$5,200,000. Throughout the whole journey, one thing has remained constant: we love Niagara-on-the-Lake."

"There's something about this small town. Niagara-on-the-Lake is a final destination for everyone here and every home



Jessie MacDonald Broker, Evan MacDonald Sales Representative, Andrew Perrie Sales Representative.

here is a dream home."

When Evan and Jessie MacDonald teamed up with Andrew Perrie, dedicated local realtor in NOTL, they came together with

one common goal: to create a real estate service like no other. To truly take the buying and selling experience in Niagara-on-the-Lake to another level. "We call

it our concierge service. We've found incredible success by taking on less clients and focussing on them and their needs."

"We found that there

was a gap in service in the NOTL real estate industry that we knew we could fill. We are a full-service, luxury concierge real estate team that provides con-

stant communication with our clients and invest real marketing dollars to help get our client's home sold and find their dream home" said Perrie.

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## EDITORIAL

## Election behind us, vaccination proof ahead of us

For 36 days, we listened to election promises from all candidates.

And we went to the polling stations Monday with no idea how long we'd have to wait to find out who would form the next government. It was surprisingly quick, given the predictions that it could take days.

The uncertainty was due to the large number of mail-in votes still to come, and seats too close to call, from coast to coast, but those votes only turned out to impact a small number of ridings.

In the Niagara Falls riding, Conservative Tony Baldinelli was returned to Ottawa, although again to a Liberal minority government, and Liberal candidate Andrea Kaiser says despite it being another tight race, she's moving on with her life.

The People's Party of Canada,

which some thought might earn their first seats, didn't, but across the country PPC candidates took a significant number of votes away from Conservatives. It could have been a different map of seats if the PPC hadn't taken those votes — the CBC suggested maybe seven or eight ridings could have had a different outcome.

However, it wouldn't have changed the Liberal win, and some of us are of the mind that a minority government, especially during a pandemic, is not necessarily a bad thing. As everyone but the Liberals said during the election campaign, the minority government we had up until the election call was actually working quite well, and there is no reason to believe it can't continue. The PM now feels he has the mandate he was looking for, he can't keep threatening to call

an election, at least for a while, and parties will need to play well together to find the best solutions for Canadians during what is bound to be a difficult few years of COVID recovery.

Locally, we'd like to say thank you to the candidates in the Niagara Falls riding who put their lives on hold, ran a campaign on short notice through a pandemic, and stayed positive and respectful throughout.

We had none of the aggressive campaigning and protesting that we'd heard about in other municipalities, even here in this region, and that has been noticed and is appreciated.

As to the other big news of the day, the vaccination proof we're going to need in certain circumstances, such as going out for a meal, fingers crossed that it goes smoothly.

Many people — those who

have accepted that being vaccinated is the right thing to do, both for their health and the end to the pandemic — are happy to see the regulations that come into effect in Ontario today, Sept. 22.

It might have been easier to wait until the provincial vaccination certificate system is available, but this is an important time during the fourth wave to get the system in place. It may be a little clumsy, but if

we are all mindful of what is expected of us and do what is asked of us willingly, it could be relatively seamless. And it may also have the bonus benefit of encouraging the unvaccinated to come over to the other side, possibly saving their lives and others.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero has encouraged us to be patient, kind and compassionate as this process may be a little cumbersome at first. It's sad

that we need to be asked, but hopefully we will be, for the sake of our local business owners, who have already weathered so much. The reward will be another step toward the return of a normal life, being able to resume some of the activities that are important to us, and knowing we're doing so in a safe environment.

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

## Life is a lot like golf



**Ted Mouradian**  
Special to The Local

When I saw a sign being carried by a protester that showed the execution of our current Prime Minister, I was sickened. This is Canada, people, we don't do this sort of thing up here.

It worries me how visceral the rhetoric is, and how divided we seem to be. We seem to be listening only to answer back, when we should be listening to learn.

Protesting and free speech is one thing, but calling someone a traitor, or corrupt, along with wanting them executed, is quite another. We need to stop!

I have people in my family and in my circle of friends who are anti-vaxxers, some are racists, some are misogynists. I know extreme right-wingers and extreme left-wingers. I have meat-eaters and vegans. What I don't have are discussions that personally vilify those who don't agree with me.

Now, do I get frustrated by those who I don't think get it, and do I sometimes want to just give them a shake... of course. But I do my best not to personally attack what they stand for. Do I have a choice of whether or not I want to engage or even be in the same room as them? Yes. It is not easy to keep your cool when someone says something that you know is false and misleading. In many cases, we

believe it is our job to save them from themselves. Well, I have to tell you point blank, your job is not to save them. Like you, they believe what they believe from the deepest recesses of their souls.

So, what do we do about the state of the world today, without getting caught up in the visceral tribalism that currently exists? Here are some ideas on how to neutralize any situation.

#### Ten Steps to Neutralization:

- 1. Calm down and organize your thoughts.** When we let our emotions overtake us, we lose perspective and are not able to make logical choices aimed at neutralization.
- 2. Offer to try to understand their point of view.** When we validate their right to feel the way they are feeling (even if we don't agree or understand), we will find it easier to neutralize the behaviour of others.
- 3. Prepare to listen without judgment.** When we listen without judgment, we are allowing that person to vent, which gets them to calm down and effectively neutralizes the energy being put into the other person's behaviour.
- 4. Empathize.** When we empathize we are putting ourselves in the other person's shoes where, once we see the issue from their point of view, we are better equipped to neutralize without attacking.
- 5. Realize your part in the interaction.** When we can acknowledge and accept our part in the interaction, we neutralize the foundation of the other person's attack

such that there is no place for them to go.

- 6. Accept responsibility for your part.** When we take responsibility for our actions, we fully neutralized the other person's argument.
- 7. Tell the truth.** When we tell the truth without trying to preserve our ego by putting ourselves in a better light or by deflecting, we are able to neutralize and halt the other person's attack in their tracks.
- 8. Investigate possible solutions.** When we investigate possible solutions without judgment, and with neutrality, we find solutions that work for all parties involved without being preoccupied with who wins.
- 9. Value their right to hold their perception.** When we value their right to hold whatever perception they have, no matter how twisted it may seem to us, we no longer feel the need to fight to prove them wrong. Acceptance is not necessarily agreement.
- 10. End with a clear understanding of all parties' positions.** When we find a clear understanding of all parties' positions, we are better equipped to come to a solution that neutralizes the cause of the issue, and helps to prevent future issues from developing for this same cause.

*Ted Mouradian is the President of the 2% Factor Inc. and creator of the Law of Cooperative Action. He is an author and professional speaker and can be reached at [ted@the2percentfactor.com](mailto:ted@the2percentfactor.com)*

## Local LETTERS

## Cleaning up the environment is a rewarding feeling

This past weekend, like many others before it, I had the opportunity to get involved with a garbage cleanup along the Niagara River Parkway.

It was a beautiful morning, and it was also World Cleanup Day — oh, the wonderful irony! Our earth provides us with so much life and beauty, the least we can do is keep mother nature clean.

It is astounding the amount of garbage that we

cleaned up — cigarette butts along the perimeter of the parking lots, takeout containers and plastic utensils hidden in the long grass, and weathered snack bags, specifically cheese-flavoured, buried deep into the earth.

What's even more interesting was learning that the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority had just gone about their own cleanup in this very location just 48 hours before! There should have been no

garbage left, right? Wrong.

Thankfully, many Niagara-on-the-Lake residents and passionate advocates for the environment came forward to successfully collect an abundance of garbage and recycling bags from the wooded areas of Smuggler's Cove and Brown's Point. Maybe the NPCA can take a friendly lesson and try a little harder next time.

**Kirstyn Smith**  
NOTL Resident



## View from the couch

**Donald Combe**  
Special to The Local

This fifth season of *Travels with my Father* (Netflix, 2021), is as bright and silly as were the others, but for me, these new

episodes present a sweet view of Britain that is both highly personal and enlightening. If you enjoyed series one through four, you will love season five.

*Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who*

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake  
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# COMMENT

## How did black bears end up in London, Goderich?



**Owen Bjorgan**  
Special to The Local

Following a typically cumbersome and mildly frustrating drive through the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), my biology brain began perseverating on how rough it must feel for a bear or a moose who accidentally finds itself too close to this urban mecca.

What is too close? That depends on what perspective you indulge in. Black bears, moose, wolves, elk and Wolverines used to occupy Toronto and southern Ontario on the cusp of the 1900s, broadly speaking. In precolonial times, these magnificent mammals were quite at home in the area's mixed forests — a complex salad of deciduous (oak, maple, ash and beech) and coniferous (pine, hemlock, cedars and spruce) trees, and a never-ending access to fresh water.

The difference is that these forests existed with unimaginable contiguity and quality. The ecosystems were relatively undisturbed, and provided a connected gradient from south to north. Our deciduous dominant forests in Ontario's extreme south blended into the St. Lawrence mixed forests of central Ontario before turning into a spruce abyss in the north. Highway 401 wasn't in its gridlocked existence, and the GTA wasn't sprawling around the corner towards Niagara. Southern Ontario is an area where different biomes (broad geographical areas with an identifiable set of flora and fauna) collided.

So, why are these mammals only found up north nowadays? And, how do they end up down south, and make the news on occasion?

Some animals come packaged with a DNA blueprint that enables their survival as a population. For example, female black bears statistically prefer a territorial range of 10 to 40 square kilometres, and males are upwards of 100 square kilometres. Do we have that type of covered habitat in southern

Ontario too often these days? Absolutely not, although, we once did.

As I drive north of the GTA to head to a cottage for a fun weekend, I see the wood density increase once past Barrie. There are simply larger swaths of habitat, and they benefit large mammals that require such spatial needs. It makes me wonder how far south the odd bear, or other large mammals with similar space requirements, haphazardly meander down toward the GTA and other humanly populated areas.

What's fascinating about nature is that it knows no hard boundaries. According to the province and other independent sources, black bear populations in Ontario "stop" at Barrie, Collingwood, and Owen Sound as their southern limit. Is this a coincidence? Not when you line up the maps of their perceived range and where Ontario's most densely populated regions are.

So, how did a black bear end up in London or Goderich in July of 2020? And, how did a moose find its way dashing across busy highways in Markham in 2017?

I went straight to Google Earth and tried to assess the potential path, or habitat corridor, that allowed these magnificent creatures to land in the local news in southern Ontario.

For the Goderich and London incidents, which occurred within three days of each other, I speculate that the black bears moved down the Lake Huron coast from the Bruce Peninsula, where they have a reasonable and stable population. Southampton is the rare but not impossible location in this neck of the woods where you could see a black bear — it is

the last, truly large coat of dark green on the landscape cloaked in agriculture and small towns.

What happens next nobody will ever know. It is really difficult to identify a solid habitat corridor from here towards Goderich, and especially London. However, there must have been just enough. To be clear, these habitat passageways are narrow in nature, and could never biologically support a sustained black bear population. They did, however, provide a risky but plausible opportunity for a large black animal to make its way southbound without getting noticed by humans. This doesn't happen every day, so there must have been a bit of luck and odds involved. Funnily enough, animals have no concept of the term luck, and it happened to be on their side to arrive in the locations they did safely.

What about the Markham moose on the loose? Was it really loose, though? Moose, like bears, are typically only spotted north of Barrie. Markham lies nestled as an extension of the GTA on the northern outskirts, but is still nowhere near the wild ecosystems north of Barrie.

According to Google Earth, I see a strand of consistent forest and wetland coverage branching down from Beaverton to Newmarket, and even this is outside of the prescribed range. Moose are not staying and reproducing in these woods, despite their depth, and that's because they are fragmented and isolated woodlands. How the moose then meandered into the residential stretch of Markham, an area of no permanent moose population next to Canada's largest city, is an impressive mystery.

Like the black bears who

wandered into Ontario's deep south, there was an element of luck involved, and a miracle that nobody spotted the animal before it got there.

For me, there are two takeaways to these stories of southern wanderers.

First, it emphasizes the importance of habitat corridors. These are the remaining natural tracts of land which thread the needle between human

dominated landscapes, allowing animals to move safely without disturbance. In the bigger picture, the connectivity, although weak, is an available option for them to spread their genetics across a broader landscape and prevent inbreeding islands. This has major value for conservation for moose, moles, and mudpuppies alike.

Habitat corridors are like WiFi. Even with a weak con-

nection, you can still send the email and get things done.

Second, there is a symbolic tale that saddens me. These animals are wandering home where we've built our houses. Historically, these grandiose and iconic animals lived and thrived down here in southern Ontario. There would be something poetically disheartening about retuning home to find out it isn't home anymore.

## Local LETTERS

### Thanks, NOTL, for the warm welcome

I'm not a human rights activist, political activist, or any sort of activist at all for that matter, but lately, after reading some editorials written by a variety of people with regard to what it's like to be a member of the LGBTQ+ community living in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I feel I must come forward and talk about my personal experience, as others have.

Having purchased a home on King Street in August, 2020, my husband of 24 years and I were excited to take possession in September and move in. Many people may not realize that underneath the feelings of excitement during this time, many gay couples (and other minorities) suffer from anxiety and fear that they won't be so readily accepted by their neighbours or people throughout the town.

I'm overjoyed to report that any trepidation felt by us before the move was totally without merit.

To say we have been embraced and welcomed by not only our direct neighbours, but also by residents from all corners of the town, would be an understatement.

In my heart I believe people are inherently good, and kind,

and the people of NOTL have proven my beliefs to be spot-on. We've received invitations for glasses of wine and conversation, and one couple even baked us a welcome cake and cookies.

As I've made clear, I'm not a cynical person. I did, however, wonder at first if all the kindness directed toward us was due to the fact that we were taking a very ugly, neglected house and working hard to make it fit in with the beautiful houses around it. Property values can be a strong driving force in regard to how people behave. Homes are a huge investment in financial portfolios. But behind all of the comments and compliments (there have been so many kind words) regarding work we are completing on the house, there has always been something more. There's been a sense of respect and a true interest in who we are as people. Inquires in regard to where we moved from and what made us choose NOTL as our retirement destination are common. Interactions ending with "welcome to NOTL, you're going to love living here," have been too many to count.

For all of these interactions, we're extremely grateful, and we feel blessed to be in a posi-

tion to live here.

In regard to the somewhat controversial rainbow crosswalk that has been debated, I personally feel it is an unnecessary addition to an already magnificent downtown core. Many shops already have rainbow pride flag stickers on their doors, welcoming gay tourists inside. Do we need to hang rainbow banners all along Queen Street, or fly a rainbow balloon over the town, before certain members of the gay community feel totally accepted? We must remember this is a town for everyone, not just for any one particular group.

I say to anyone from the LGBTQ+ community who has ever experienced bullying, intimidation or discrimination in any form: I'm sorry you had to go through it. It was not deserved — period.

I'd like to end this with a heartfelt thank you to the good people of NOTL for extending such a warm welcome to both my husband and me. Let's all continue this wonderful behaviour, and make everyone else who arrives feel welcome and included.

**Philip Beatty**  
NOTL



Black bears were sighted just days apart in London and Goderich in 2020. (Photo supplied)



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# Chamber clarifies funding, and its role in town

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

Eduardo Lafforgue, president of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, would like residents to have a better understanding of the role of the chamber, and how it's funded. A misunderstanding of some residents' views of the chamber became evident during recent discussions about a municipal accommodation tax, he says.

Some residents believe the chamber is funded by taxpayers, and that the implementation of the accommodation tax would lower residential taxes.

Lafforgue says the Chamber of Commerce is divided into two distinct entities, both non-profit, separately incorporated but to reduce costs, jointly managed. Tourism NOTL, tasked with tourism management and development, is a subsidiary of the chamber. The model offers a financial and management model that reduces overhead and effectively governs the two related activities, led by a volunteer board, to which Lafforgue is responsible.

Tourism NOTL is also the registered Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for NOTL, committed to

the promotion, responsible growth and sustainability of tourism.

While the chamber does receive a small portion of its \$1 million budget from the town, it is in return for the Information Centre at the Fort George bus parking lot, and also provides about \$48,000 in sponsorship for the Icewine Festival, the Peach Celebration and the Candlelight Stroll, all events residents enjoy.

For example, the town contributes \$6,000 for the Peach Celebration, which has a budget of \$120,000.

Chamber membership brings in about eight per cent of revenue, business services to members about six per cent. Event revenues are the main source of income for the chamber and Tourism NOTL, making up more than half. Sponsorships and advertising on chamber media make up almost 30 per cent, with the town paying about seven per cent for the Information Centre.

"I want to be completely transparent, and I do everything I can to be transparent," says Lafforgue.

The tourism strategy is expected to provide information about what visitors to NOTL contribute to the local economy, as well as the

region, and the province, he said.

And that includes the many benefits to residents, including the events they enjoy: the Candlelight Stroll, the Peach Celebration, the Shades of Summer dinners, the Icewine Festival, all of which attract many locals; the selection of restaurants, the Shaw Festival, the wineries, also are enjoyed by residents, but would not survive without tourism, says Lafforgue.

"Residents are not paying more taxes because of these attractions but they are getting benefits just by being residents of NOTL," he says.

Shades of Summer, a dinner organized by the chamber that this year was held in three different locations, was sold out an hour after tickets went on sale.

"Everyone who attended these dinners was delighted, and we were able to showcase Willowbank, the Pumphouse (Arts Centre) and the museum," says Lafforgue.

If, when the tourism strategy is completed, and the recommendations for funding includes a municipal accommodation tax, for accommodations that are five rooms and more, the chamber's Tourism NOTL, as the DMO, would likely be the recipient of 50 per cent of the tax collected,

and would be the distributor of it for tourism marketing, says Lafforgue.

The town, however, could set up another entity to be the DMO and take on that task.

He believes residents feel the tax could offset municipal infrastructure projects they are paying for, but residents use all of the town infrastructure, whereas visitors benefit from only a small portion of roads and other improvement projects.

The tourism strategy would be expected to set out how the tax is to be spent, and which projects it would fund.

It is not expected to lower taxes for residents, and the portion of it distributed to tourism businesses through the DMO would be expected to market the town to visitors.

An important aspect of the tourism strategy, he added, is that an outside, objective moderator should be tasked with deciding who should come to the table to take part in the discussions, representing both businesses and residents, and that there be an opportunity for public discussions.

"This is to be a collaborative process. That is the key word — collaboration."

He did not voice an opinion about a tax on accommodation, nor would

he — his role is to represent the chamber's board.

All he and others, such as Tim Jennings, CEO of the Shaw Festival, have asked for, he says, is that the tax on accommodations of five rooms or more be considered as part of an overall plan with the benefit of wide consultation with

stakeholders and residents, along with the gathering and analysis of information that is necessary to make an informed decision.

That was the motion agreed to by council last month, with the expectation that it could take until 2022 to complete the study.



Eduardo Lafforgue made a presentation to council when he first became president of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce. (Penny Coles)

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# Patience, kindness, compassion called for

Continued from page 3

with a physician's note.

Children who are under 12 years of age, and those under 18 at the arena for participating in sports and recreation activities, are also exempt.

Visitors to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, based on current provincial regulations, do not need proof of vaccination.

In all cases where proof of vaccination is required, some identification, such as a driver's licence or health card, will also be required.

That's until Oct. 22, when an upgraded proof of vaccination that includes a QR code should be available from the province. It will have an app that consumers and businesses can use by then, or a printed PDF as an option, and the process should get easier and faster, says Disero.

For specific questions about town facilities, contact Dan Maksenuk, recreation supervisor, at dan.maksenuk@notl.com.

Residents can also call the town at 905-246-5878, says

Disero, and their question will be directed to the appropriate department.

Paul Dietsch, co-owner of Sandtrap Pub & Grill, admitted to being a little nervous about adding an extra process for people entering the restaurant.

He'd received little information about how it was to be handled, but was going over what he knew about the regulations with staff.

He says he hasn't had issues with overly aggressive customers objecting to wearing masks as they enter the restaurant, and he isn't expecting problems with the proof of vaccination regulation.

His main concern is that the public be educated so they understand the rules and what is required.

"I don't want to have a group of four women arrive for lunch, and find that one of them has forgotten her proof of vaccination. We have to do what we're told. I can't take a chance on inspectors coming in here and finding we're not following regulations."

He believes the rule is a "step in the right direction," to

keep customers and staff safe, but was hoping for more support, such as the provision of signs, to be prepared for the implementation.

"I'm not anticipating any problems. I just hope people are prepared, and have their documents and ID, to make it

easy."

According to provincial regulations regarding proof of vaccination, those under 12 or people with medical exceptions and a doctor's note for proof are exempt.

Places where vaccination proof is required include

restaurants and bars, although not outdoor patios or to pick up take-out food; nightclubs, including the outdoor areas; meeting and event places; sports and fitness facilities (but not including those attending for youth recreation); and sporting events.

Casinos and bingo halls will require vaccination proof, as will theatres, concerts and music festivals.

If you need a copy of your vaccination receipt, go to the provincial vaccine booking portal or the vaccine booking hotline at 1-833-943-3900.

## Flipping burgers for NNS



Rick Wood of the Toronto office of Caldwell Securities flips burgers Saturday at a barbecue held outside the NOTL Caldwell office on Mississauga Street run by Vince Fransecut. It was a fundraiser for the Niagara Nursery School, the alma mater of Fransecut's five-year-old daughter Violet, and whose halls are currently being "torn up" by his son Beau. They were also collecting food and clothing donations for Newark Neighbours. (Mike Balsom)



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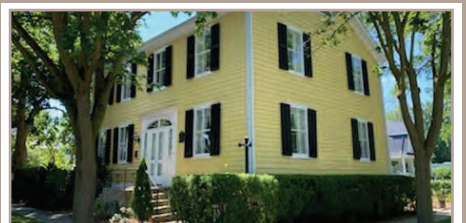
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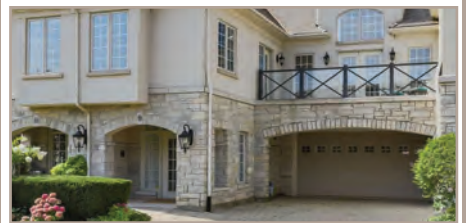
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# Another successful Terry Fox run for NOTL



A group of five families, with parents and kids, gathered together in their Old Town neighbourhood for the second year to participate in their second Terry Fox Run as a group. (Photos supplied)



Raquel Fassler, a cancer survivor, took part in the run with her son Victor, as well as her Old Town friends and neighbours. (Photo supplied)



Local woman Donna Seymour organizes a local run for June's Dream Team, in memory of her friend who died of cancer. The last two years, with no community runs due to COVID, the team began at Seymour's Virgil home and completed a physically distanced walk around her neighbourhood. This year, 22 team members participated and raised more than \$14,000 for cancer research through the Terry Fox Foundation. (Photo supplied)



Joan King, with volunteers Carolyn Dyck and Stacey Ivanchuk, were in Simcoe Park Sunday to greet those who stopped by to check out the photos, and some to run the traditional route. It was a beautiful morning with a good turnout, says King. Although final totals were not known, she expects the run to have raised \$70,000 or more for the Terry Fox Foundation. (David Gilchrist)

## Restaurant chain walks for Terry

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

When Craig McCallum sent out a message to people within the Wind Group to “walk, run or crawl” five kilometres on Sunday for the Terry Fox Foundation, he says he expected he and his wife, and maybe a few others, would be participating.

He was surprised to have 15 people join the group, and also delighted at how much fun they had, he says.

The brand director of Wind Group in Niagara, which includes three brands, East Izakaya, Wind Japanese & Thai,

and Ma Chinese Cuisine, in Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, says the team of employees ran and walked from Simcoe Park. Although there was no official run this year, they chose to take the route on the map Joan King recommended, which is the traditional run route, and 58 minutes later, all met back at the park, raising more than \$500.

This was their first time participating in the run, and were there at the invitation of King, who had met the McCallums at Empty Bowls Charity as a volunteer.

Taking part in the run along with McCallum and

his wife were the CEO of the company, Shane Connolly, and his wife, president Peter Li, regional manager Philip She and many other staff, including family members and children.

McCallum says the Terry Fox Run “has been part of all of our lives and it was a perfect match for our company core values, one of them being passion and another being integrity.”

The Group does community work in St. Catharines at Empty Bowls, Grape and Wine, and the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, and this was an opportunity to reach out to the NOTL community.



The Wind Group chose to participate in this year's NOTL run. (David Gilchrist)



**JOHN BALD**  
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Sean Wright ran the traditional Terry Fox route multiple times to reach his 25-kilometre goal. (David Gilchrist)

## Local man keeps running harder, further for Terry Fox

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

For the last few years, Sean Wright has pushed himself to run further, and raise more money for the Terry Fox Foundation.

This year, he intended to run 25 kilometres, but “a little bit of confusion” meant he ran an extra time around the five-kilometre route.

Wright, now 38, was an 18-year-old Niagara District Secondary School student when he was involved in a collision at Line 1 and Townline Road. The driver of the car he was in lost control, went into the ditch and hit the guardrail. Wright was thrown onto the road from the backseat, and sustained a severe head injury.

He graduated from high school, and worked hard to become a registered massage therapist at college. In recent years, he has been working at 124 Queen, but has been out of work recently due to COVID, although he hopes to return soon.

His first Terry Fox run was in 2016, when he walked five kms.

But then he began training, and in 2018 was able to run 10 kms in 50 minutes. He completed 15 kms in one hour and 10 minutes in 2019, 20 kms in one hour, 39 minutes in 2020, and this year, ran 28.67 kms in two hours, 27 minutes, raising about \$600.

It was hard work, he said, and his mother Patti, who was watching him and counting laps, thought he had one more to go — his parents are Patti and Bob Wright, who retired from full-time ministry in 2015 after 17 years as Rector of St. Mark's.

“My body told me I was going way too far,” he said, but he kept going, determined to reach his goal. “I like running, but I didn't plan that.”

Sean says running runs in his family — his grandfather ran several marathons, his mother was a runner, and his dad a runner and cyclist. So he's been running all his life, although as a sprinter in school, and didn't begin training seriously until recently.

He says when he was growing up, he was “the little scrawny guy,” and came to the realization that he wasn't going to accept that “I can't do it. I can do it.”

He has focused on a positive attitude. “Believe in yourself” is a message he lives by, and would encourage others to as well.

College wasn't easy, because of his brain injury, which makes him forgetful, he says, but he wasn't going to give up.

“I always had the drive to do better, and it took me an extra year, but I finished.”

When he thinks about the most recent run, which was tough, he says, “Terry didn't have to do what he did, but he wanted to. I wanted to


do this. Anything's possible if you try. So I'm trying.”

He remembers his parents telling him they saw Terry Fox on his Marathon of Hope through a small town near Ottawa, and feels now “it's cool to have someone like him to look up to, and to push me.”

He says he's grateful to his friends and Terry Fox supporters, as well as his older brother, Ben, whom he looks up to more than anybody, for helping to push him.

Sunday was Terry's day, he adds, and, “I was kind of running alongside with him.”

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# Local branch recognizes Royal Canadian Legion Week

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

As Royal Canadian Legions across Canada celebrate Legion Week, from Sept. 19 to 25, members

of the local legion have been replacing flags on the graves of veterans to ensure they look fresh.

Al Howse, long-time board and committee member of the legion, says



Legion president, Victor Packard, places a new flag on a veteran's grave in St. Mark's Cemetery. (Photos supplied)

this is the time of year to recognize volunteers doing the work of the organization, and thanking them.

It was also time for Branch 124 to elect a new board, replacing several members who have been serving in their positions for three years.

Over the past year, the local poppy fund raised \$20,877.60. Of that, \$2,223.19 was spent on youth education, \$4,000 more went to the local Air Cadet Squadron, which supports the branch throughout the year, \$11,824 was donated to veteran support, and \$5,679.26 was spent on remembrance.

Last year, the branch received a New Horizons Federal grant to reach out to seniors inside and outside of our branch. The money was used to donate a refrigerator to Newark Neighbours so they can better supply fresh food. The outreach program is also visiting seniors at home, providing technical support, accessing the internet, and connecting them with non-profit groups for clothes and furniture.

Although the grant was only to fund one year of the program, Howse, chair

of that outreach committee, says he hopes it will continue, although concentrating on visiting and other aspects that don't require funding.

The recent news about lost children of residential schools spurred members to raise funds for the Niagara Regional Native Centre, with a donation made following a Canada Day fundraiser.

And although no decision has been made yet, plans are underway for this year's November 11 service to honour those who did not return from fighting for their country.

There is a minimal plan being considered, depending on COVID restrictions, to be held at the Cenotaph, with the hope that a traditional ceremony will be possible, says Howse.

The legion is thanking all 200 businesses that allowed them to put poppy boxes on their counter to distribute poppies, and the many people who donated. Also, they say thank you to all who have continued to support their Thursday fish fry.

"We sincerely hope for better times ahead; in the meantime we will 'Soldier On,'" says Howse.



The current board includes Jackie Dickieson (service officer, sick and visiting, veterans assistance); Chris Toye (treasurer, fish fry chair), Doug Pettit (membership chair); Allan Howse (leadership, cadet liaison, seniors outreach chair); Stan Harrington (youth and education); Al Magnacca (ways and means); Lori Beak (public relations officer, recording secretary); and sitting, Rhys Beak (2nd vice-president, grants and bursaries); Victor Packard (president, honours and awards); and Marg Boldt (1st vice-president, poppy chair).

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Anyone wishing to purchase a wreath for Remembrance Day, please contact the Branch Secretary at 905-468-2353 between 10 am and 2 pm, Monday to Friday, or leave a message with the bar steward.



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# SCHOOLS



## Crossroads Public School



Crossroads Public School takes advantage of outdoor space, and offers indoor physical education classes (below) that are now permitted under provincial and school board regulations. (Photos supplied)



## Royal Oak Community School



Students take advantage of the Royal Oak asynchronous learning program in action. One of the students who is a year-long remote learner is teamed up with his classmates, Kamila Domaradzki and Jacob Logue, for collaborative work from home and school. (Photos supplied)



Royal Oak uses the responsive classroom curriculum to support students' social emotional learning and help students transition to school each day, starting the day in a supportive environment before heading into academic work.



Royal Oak Community School began its intramural sports program outside last week. Once a week, students play a supervised and structured sport to practise their skills. It gives them access to extracurricular activities that have been so limited for children through the pandemic, and they enjoy it.



## St. Michael Catholic School



Students at St. Michael enjoy outdoor time on the playground equipment, which was off-limits last year. (Photos supplied)



Jenson Paugh, Sebastian Ornelas Nevarez, Fabian Ornelas Nevarez between classes.



Angelina La Valle, Leah Luton and Maria Francis spend some time outdoors, where masks are not required.



# Brock's Birthday Bash coming up at Queenston Hts

## Local Staff

Brock's Birthday Bash! The Friends of Fort George is planning a birthday bash to mark the 252nd birthday of Major General Sir Isaac Brock.

It will be held at Brock's Monument on Oct. 6, as the life of the hero of Upper Canada is celebrated with special presentations highlighting his life, and birthday treats, which are being generously donated by one of the members of the Friends of Fort George.

The special day begins at 10 a.m. with a feature talk on the life and times of Brock. At 10:45, cupcakes will be served at the monument, and that will be followed by another feature talk at 11 a.m. on After the Battle of Queenston Heights: What Happened to Brock After the Smoke Cleared.

"This event provides us with a unique opportunity to focus on the life of Brock, and the contributions that he made as head of the civil government

and military, leading up to the War of 1812, as well as his legacy after his death at the Battle of Queenston Heights," says Amanda Gamble, executive direc-

tor of the Friends of Fort George.

The Friends of Fort George are also running a special donation drive in honour of Major General

Sir Isaac Brock. They hope to raise \$1,769 to honour Brock's birthday (Oct. 6, 1769).

All funds raised will support employment and

educational programs at Brock's Monument for the 2022 season. Follow along and help reach their goal at: <https://www.canada-helps.org/en/dn/64588>.

Cost for Brock's Birthday Bash is \$10 per person. Space is limited, so book your spot online at: <https://friendsoffortgeorge.square.site>



Scott Finlay, as Brock, presents feature talks at the monument. (Photo supplied)

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# Russian Mennonites, intergenerational trauma, cultural sensitivity

**Miranda J. Chivers**  
Special to The Local

In 2019, the second week of September was declared Canadian Mennonite Heritage week. This event celebrates our 150 years of contributions to Canada. But who are the Mennonites, and why is this recognition important?

Mennonites are a diversified sect practising varying degrees of social and religious conservativeness, and ethnic traditions. Some hold to heritage alone. Since our immigration timeline stretches from the 1600s to after the Second World War, we self-identify according to either our church affiliation, our ancestors' emigration data, or both.

My grandparents fled to Canada following the Russian Revolution. We're known as Russian Mennonites, and we share a violent record branding us as intergenerational trauma survivors of cultural genocide.

I grew up immersed in clan and church activity, and chomping on traditional foods like roll kuchen, forma worscht, and Kielke met schmaunt fat, while listening to the mesmerizing details of my forebears' terror-filled trek. The insular nature of our community protected refugee secrets from the prying eyes of outsiders. Segregation from the world was encouraged. We needed to stay alert, in case political winds shifted against us again. Vivid traumatic memories kept us bonded.

After leaving Prussia and settling in southern Ukraine during the early 19th century, the Mennonites were no longer welcome under the new communist regime. Labelled as dissidents and foreigners because of their faith, wealth and German language, my grandparents watched anarchists and armies plunder and raze their villages, and torture and murder their loved ones. Employment disappeared, wealth was stolen or devalued, land expropriated, and gravesites violated. Starvation, famine, and dis-

ease took many. The evidence of our existence was quickly obliterated under a blanket of blood-soaked earth.

Ethnic cleansing actively played out under Lenin's scorched earth policies, and then amplified under Stalin. The stalwart were exiled to Siberia or Kazakhstan. Discrimination knew no bounds.

Twenty thousand German-speaking Russian Mennonites fled to the safety of North America. But from 1919 to 1921, racist government policies kept the victims in displaced persons camps abroad. My grandparents waited in Riga, Latvia. Many died without reaching the shores of freedom.

When I traveled to Poland and Ukraine in 2014 to search for a deeper connection to my roots, the blatant evidence of genocide was overwhelming. After visiting my grandfather's primary school, I asked to see the ancestral graves. But neither the village nor the graveyard remain. Barren fields now cover the demolished burial grounds where my great-grandparents lie, and wheat fields deny the memory of the razed villages — a glaring testament to a deliberate political swipe to erase us from Russian soil.

Later, I sat with a profound sense of alienation — feeling inconsequential and separated from the world — the haunting echoes pinging from my childhood. Some things, such as twisted communication, dysfunctional behaviours, and skewed religious rhetoric began to make sense. Although the truth ripped, the visual connection helped heal torn pages in my soul.

The Russian Mennonite story isn't unique. Nor is my experience as a second-generation survivor. All refugees seek sanctuary from discrimination and political violence. Golden promises of new governments offer surety of inclusion and acceptance. But suspicion and fear accompany trauma, and trust isn't rebuilt easily. Mennonites chose to channel this angst into compassionate works. The es-

tablishment of the Mennonite Central Committee during the Russian crisis cemented the creed of charity in our faith. Others should not suffer as we did.

We know that hate has many faces, and differences define. This year, the First Nations crisis awakens our ancient scars. The unmarked and desecrated burial grounds offer evidence of ethnic cleansing in a way that chillingly parallels the Mennonite story. It likely feels familiar to many fugitives from terror-backed regimes.

It's hard to fathom that we were hoodwinked by our adopted country of Canada and led to believe that integration via residential schools was good. But graves don't lie. Generations of Indigenous culture were damaged. And the implications are frightening. Whether deliberate or covert, policies of forced assimilation are tactical wars disguised by progressive thinking. As survivors of terror-filled plots, Russian Mennonites know how quickly powerful persuasions shift societal perspectives. And the catastrophic damage of bigotry lasts for decades.

Psychology now proves the intergenerational effects of prejudice, and the long-term guilt, shame, and anger that mark the trails of addiction, child abuse and domestic violence. Few descendants are left untouched.

Those who know the pain are best suited to help. Our experience gives us a social and educational imperative to teach the lessons learned, because these gruesome acts which portray the worst of human behaviour will not disappear from the planet until we confront and eliminate the fear and hatred behind them. These recent atrocities demand that we speak out to support those who hurt and raise a stop sign to the oppressors. Silence only encourages the perpetrators to repeat the violence. Therefore, healing requires both personal and community action. Ending intolerance needs every voice and recovery demands in-

fluence from those who understand. Words wound, but they also heal.

When breaking news announced the First Nations atrocity here, a somber ceremony in Ukraine simultaneously restored dignity to one Mennonite graveyard there. Recent construction development uncovered headstones bulldozed during the Stalinist era — further evidence of the destructive plot against us.

I sat in stunned shock for weeks before analyzing the list of 86 exhumed markers. Tears, anger, and disgust followed as I verified the monikers in the Mennonite genealogy database. Fourteen were my recorded cousins. Yet this is not the place where my great-grandparents are buried. I pray that the work of locating more sites and identifying the missing graves will persist until all are found. I'm thankful for the formation of the Ukraine Headstone Project to continue this restoration.

My heart also broke while listening to our First Nations grieve after claiming those unmarked graves. Empty promises made by governments that guaranteed protection were violated on these native grounds. This discovery should serve as a warning for us to pay attention to our political leadership and vote carefully. Treading on innocent blood stains all.

Although my backstory differs from the Indigenous, we share deep wounds of bigotry. Mine hides behind my white skin. Still, I'm ashamed about the desecration of sacred soil done by the same country that granted my grandparents sanctuary and gave me life. We all deserve dignity and protection.

At the same time, I'm incredibly grateful for our democratic rights and privileges. But walking out our altruistic platitudes requires more than head nods. Healing wounds comes through active listening and deliberate action. Dismissing the ugly truth only buries it temporarily — because history



Author Miranda J. Chivers (Photo supplied)

proves that blood screams to be found and bones rise from the graves. Yet time blinds us to the traumatic past.

The Russian Mennonite story carries hopeful optimism as well as tragic history. My grandparents warned us to pay attention to current events and secretive governments. And impressed us to care for the less fortunate and advocate for change. But remember, history tends to repeat itself.

Centuries of wars, border shifts, and decimated populations portray both the ugliness of the power hungry and the fierce desire of independent determination. Differences of opinion will always exist. And this is good. Because a healthy democratic society encourages debate. But freedom is never truly free if violence is needed to achieve it. We must protect the vulnerable and find safe ways to reach our aspired goals.

This September, while we gorge on glums vereniki, slurp borscht from our soup spoons, or donate to charities

such as Mennonite Central Committee for their ongoing work with the disadvantaged; or to Friends of Mennonites in Ukraine — to keep our memories alive in our ancestral home; or to the Headstone Project — to revive our genealogical connections; let's be mindful that our freedom to indulge arrived with a hefty price. And let's work on our cultural sensitivity and remember that there are those who still suffer. We are the lucky ones.

*Writing historical fiction as MJ Krause-Chivers, a new fiction series about the Russian Mennonite experience during the Russian Revolution launched Sept. 7, 2021. Russian Mennonite Chronicles: Book One: Katarina's Dark Shadow will be available in Kindle e-book and print on Amazon. Bookstore orders available through Ingram-Spark with this ISBN: 97817751895-5-8.*

Miranda can be reached at [miranda@mirandajchivers.com](mailto:miranda@mirandajchivers.com) or through Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Miranda-J.-Chivers/e/B0791MGZP7>

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# Shaw partners for COVID research, testing

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

When the Shaw Festival wanted to return to in-person rehearsals last spring with the goal of outdoor performances, and hopefully leading to getting back on stage inside this season, they had some help.

McMaster HealthLabs (MHL), a private, not-for-profit team of scientists, doctors and others from McMaster University and the Research Institute of St. Joseph's Hamilton, began an outreach project that would allow for research on workplace testing, while also keeping people in the workplace safe during COVID.

Jodi Gilchrist, research manager, says her team took on six different workplaces, one of them the Shaw Festival.

Team members would go weekly, and then twice a week as the rehearsals and productions made masking and physical distancing impossible for a larger group of people.

The project, which focused on actors who needed to rehearse in-person at first, soon expanded to include other staff.

Working with the Shaw was a way for the HealthLabs to give back to their community, for those working for the theatre and all those who would benefit from seeing a performance, says Gilchrist.

"We reached out to the Shaw to partner with us on this project, to allow actors to get back to work. It's now expanded to ushers, the orchestra, and other staff who come in contact with people and the public."

The project allows for self-testing, overseen by HealthLabs people, who don't have to be doctors or nurses, she explains. The swabs are taken back to the lab for testing, with results available within 24 hours.

Since it was to be done weekly, or even twice a week, the method of swabbing that received provincial approval was for an oral/nasal swab, not as intrusive or uncomfortable as the really deep nasal swab used by health departments, but still a highly effective PCR test.

As the number of staff requiring testing has grown, completely voluntary but with a large uptake, says Gilchrist, about 140 to 180 people at the Shaw are being tested weekly.

In other workplaces, it will be up to the employer to call an end to the project when they decide testing is no longer necessary, but with the Shaw, it's expected to continue until their season finishes, she says.



Jodi Gilchrist and a team of researchers from Research Institute of St. Joseph's - Hamilton / McMaster HealthLabs enjoyed viewing a performance of *Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse* at the Shaw Festival Theatre recently. The group has been involved in a COVID-19 screening program for Shaw workers since May, 2021. In the photo are back row: Ben Smieja, Dr. David Bulir, Julia Maciejewski, Doris Williams, Dr. Marek Smieja; middle row: Sylvia Chong, Jodi Gilchrist, Sarah Marttala, Keltie Baldwin, and front row: Nicole Smieja and Valentina Vera. (Photo supplied)

Gilchrist says she comes from a family who loves theatre, she grew up going to the Shaw, as did her husband and his family, and she has taken their kids to some of the workshops for children.

"Theatre is very important to me," she says.

When her team hired a Shaw actor who was then out of work due to COVID, she said, she "selfishly" saw the Shaw as an organization that could benefit from HealthLabs' work.

"I really wanted to see the return of live theatre. The Shaw has been a big part of my life, and we wanted to give back — that's what HealthLabs is all about. This outreach was designed to get people back to work, and to get life back to normal."

When members of the team were recently offered

tickets to see *Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse*, she was excited to see the production, she says.

"And it happened to be my birthday. It's been a really long 18 months, so it was great to get out as a group. We very much enjoyed ourselves."

For Gilchrist, as much as she loved the play, she says, "I think I enjoyed watching the audience enjoy themselves even more."

"Testing is what we do," she adds, "but in this case, we got to see the humans attached to the testing. We made it possible for these performers to be onstage, and for the audience to enjoy it. It felt nice to be a small part of something really good."

Tim Jennings, CEO of the Shaw, agrees with the importance of the project in getting actors back on stage.

"We began participating in testing work with MHL back in the early spring, as in-person rehearsals began. It let us have confidence to restart, even as we were required to rehearse outdoors and in tiny groups of 10 or less," he says.

"The partnership was created thanks to our planning director, Jeff Cummings, and our COVID compliance manager (a new position to us this year), Alison Peddie, who brokered the relationship for us and oversees it now."

Jennings explains many musicians and all of the actors have to work maskless — which they are allowed to do under the statute — but that comes with increased risks and safety concerns.

"Without this regular PCR testing, that added risk would also create added

stress. Further, the internal knowledge that we would know quickly of a case, possibly even ahead of any potential workplace spread, is huge in ensuring we are able to ensure a safe working environment, and were able to get the shows back up and running and help the local economy restart."

The team at MHL has

been amazing, he says. "We cannot thank them enough, and I for one am thrilled the partnership can be used as part of a study to show the efficacy of regular testing in managing and avoiding workplace spread."

And more great news, he adds, is "to date we have been able to avoid any cases getting into our workplace."

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

NOTL Businesses contact  
**Karen** at **905.641.5335** at [karen@notllocal.com](mailto:karen@notllocal.com)

Businesses outside NOTL contact  
**Julia** at **905.934.1040** at [julia@notllocal.com](mailto:julia@notllocal.com)

**Bricks & Barley**  
Grand Opening Party  
Friday, January 1st  
12-5pm  
1234 Main Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
905-468-1234

**The Irish & Brew Bar**  
Available at **SWAG** HIRE CO.



## Skatepark offers lessons, demonstrations



It was a good turnout at the Virgil Skatepark Saturday, when lessons and demonstrations were offered by 10 instructors from CJ's Skatepark, a non-profit organization out of Mississauga dedicated to promoting skateboard safety. CJ's founder Jay Mandarinov was also on hand to offer tips to youngsters hoping to improve their skateboarding skills. Top left, nine-year-old Oliver Morrison from NOTL gets some pointer from Mandarinov. Above, Crossroads Public School students Max Ruller and Nathan Lambert get some skateboarding tips, and left, six-year-old Evan from St. Catharines takes a lesson from a CJs instructor. Below, skateboarders demonstrate what they can do. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

### LocalHAPPENINGS



#### FISH FRY

Thursday, September 23rd  
4 - 7 p.m.  
TAKEOUT & DINE IN  
CASH ONLY

1 piece \$10  
2 piece \$13  
with fries  
and coleslaw

**Legion**  
BRANCH 124  
NIAGARA ON THE LAKE

Royal Canadian Legion Br. 124 | 410 King St.,  
905-468-2353 | legion124@gmail.com



#### ST. DAVIDS LIONS DRIVE-THRU BBQ

Friday, September 24th • 4 to 7 pm  
1462 YORK RD. ST. DAVIDS  
PLEASE WEAR A MASK WHEN ORDERING/PICKING UP

**COMBO MEALS:** Lions Burger & Fries \$10  
Lions CDN Burger & Fries \$12  
(topped with peameal bacon)  
Lions Peameal Bacon & Fries \$10  
Leo's Hot Dog & Fries \$6

All meals  
come with  
bottled water.  
Add a soft drink  
for \$1

#### PLACE YOUR COMING EVENT COMMUNITY SOCIAL HERE

With or without a border, colour graphics optional.  
Include your Logo! Prices starting at \$20.  
Deadline: Monday 3 p.m. Call Karen 905-641-5335  
or email: classified@notllocal.com



### LocalWORSHIP



Sunday, September 26th

10:00 a.m.  
Worship Gathering -  
In-Person & Online

Message:  
Kevin Bayne -  
All In With Jesus

Our services are also  
streamed online Sunday's  
at 10 AM. Visit our website  
for more information!

www.ccchurch.ca



To advertise your  
*Worship Services*  
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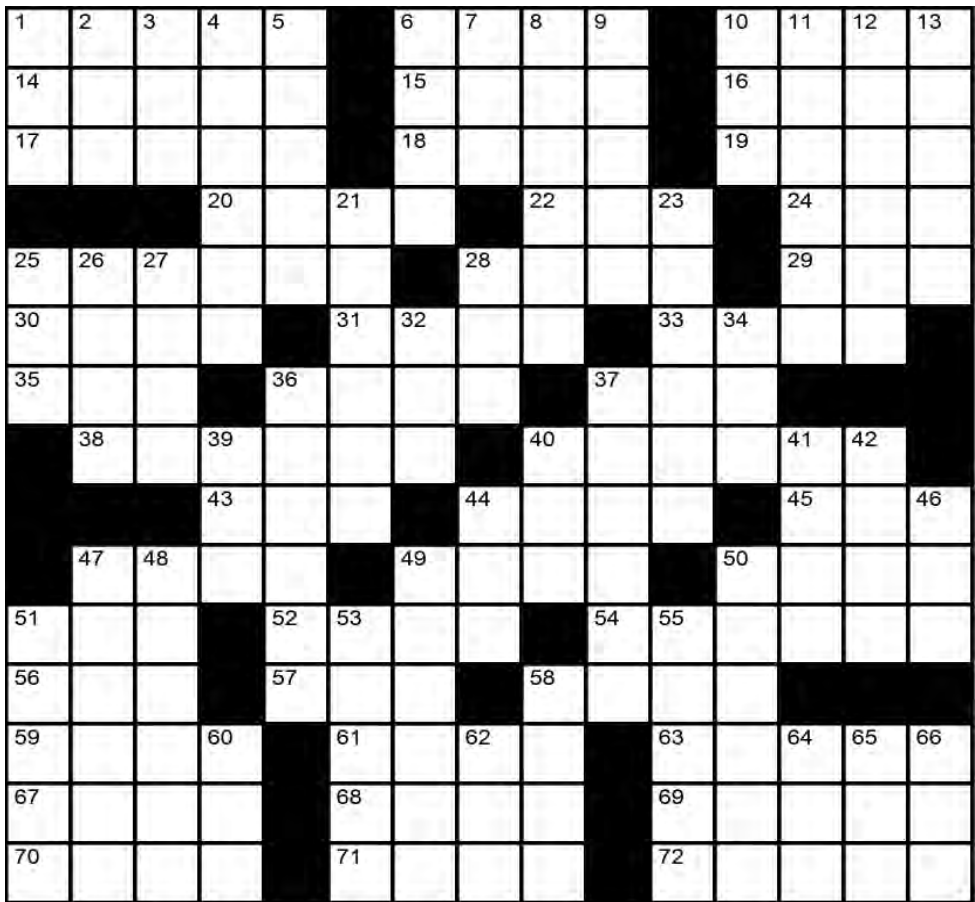


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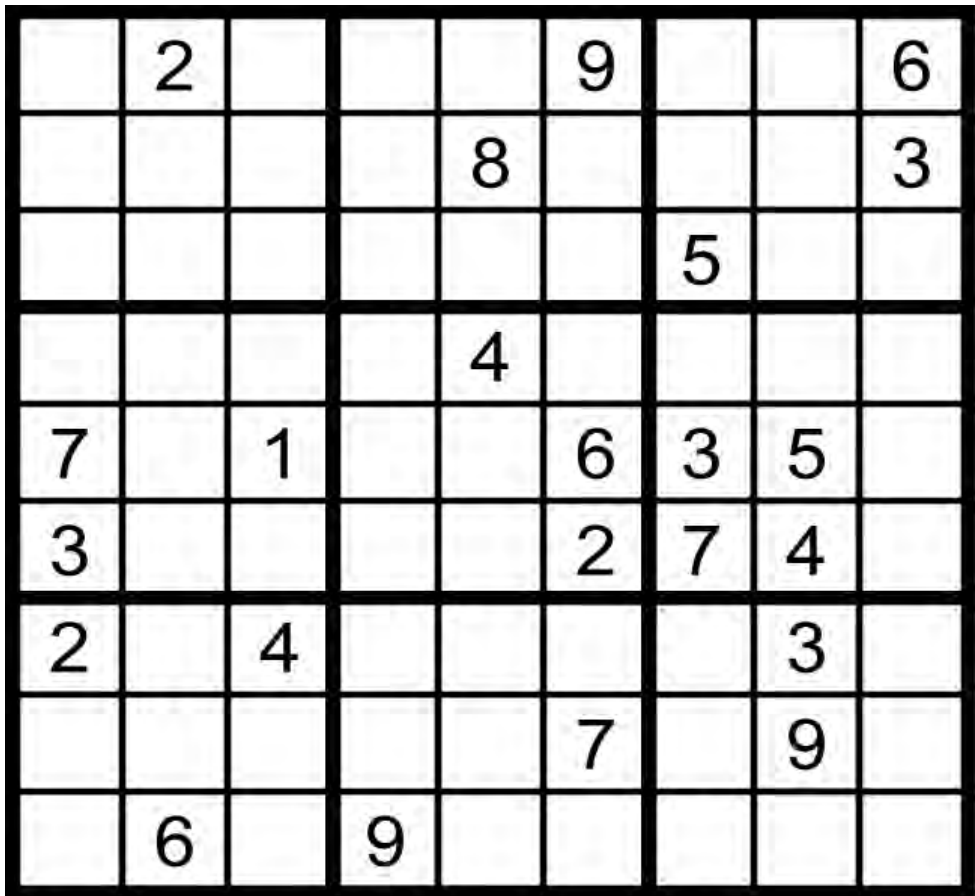


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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU



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

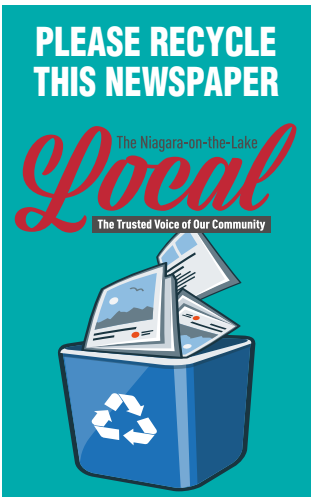


RENTAL WANTED

Professional looking for a winter rental Nov. 1 – April 30th. 2 people plus a gentle, beautiful dog. Great references. Looking to stay in Virgil/NOTL area. **Please call 1-519-982-2258.**

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7 month old gorgeous/gentle/loving pure bred german shepherd. Need loving home for her... email **tigerarrowsmith1@gmail.com** or call **289 821 5467**



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Seven months to one year experience required. High school education required. \$14.39 per hour. Please fax your working resume to **905-646-8099** or email: **yvonne@lakeviewharvesters.com**

NOTICE

**To place an Obituary or  
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julia@notllocal.com or  
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Deadline is Tuesdays at 1 p.m.**

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Deadline: Mondays at 3 p.m.**

PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Across:** 1 Crabs, 6 Bras, 10 Mesa, 14 Act up, 15 Yuma, 16 Plus, 17 Mambo, 18 Team, 19 Hans, 20 Bite, 22 Jot, 24 Ike, 25 Apollo, 28 Roar, 29 Nit, 30 Pale, 31 Your, 33 Even, 35 Rid, 36 Town, 37 Nag, 38 Remote, 40 Metals, 43 I P A, 44 Fits, 45 Oaf, 47 Sway, 49 Arch, 50 Lone, 51 C T A, 52 Ugly, 54 Evoked, 56 Hun, 57 Nil, 58 Pres, 59 A dip, 61 A try, 63 Serve, 67 Rind, 68 Noir, 69 Tidal, 70 Toga, 71 Tome, 72 Stack.  
**Down:** 1 Cam, 2 R C A, 3 A T M, 4 Bubble, 5 Spoil, 6 Byte, 7 Rue, 8 A major, 9 Samoa, 10 M p h, 11 Elaine, 12 Sunk in, 13 Asset, 21 Toyota, 23 Treats, 25 A P R, 26 Pair, 27 Olde, 28 Run, 32 Owe, 34 V G A, 36 Top gun, 37 Nether, 39 Mia, 40 Mic, 41 Look, 42 Sane, 44 Fry, 46 Fed, 47 Studio, 48 Waning, 49 All too, 50 Lose it, 51 Chart, 53 Giant, 55 Vests, 58 Pyre, 60 P D A, 62 Rim, 64 R D A, 65 Vac, 66 Elk.





Predator goal-tender Oskar Spinnars Nordin, seen in goal in Sweden, settled in with his billet family and took to the ice Thursday at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, in preparation for the season opener. (Photos supplied)

## Predators on the ice preparing for opener

**Mike Balsom**  
Special to The Local

The Niagara Predators opened up their main team camp last Thursday at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, with 15 players taking to the ice.

After holding a prospect camp the previous week, coach Andrew Whalen had his first opportunity to gather some key players on the roster to begin preparation for their first season playing out of the Virgil arena.

General manager Johan Eriksson was pleased to finally see some of the team's Swedish imports skating alongside his Canadian signings.

Goaltender Oskar Spinnars Nordin arrived in Toronto from Sweden last Wednesday. He had just one day to settle in with his Virgil billet family before shaking off his jet lag and donning his goalie equipment.

"It felt good," Spinnars Nordin commented about his first time on the MCU Arena surface. "The guys are nice. Friday felt a lot better because the jet lag was coming off."

Getting used to the surface is something all of the international Predators will have to do. International rinks are 15 feet wider than those in North America.

"I just have to get a feeling about the rink because it's so much smaller than in Sweden," Spinnars Nordin said.

"You have to do everything just a little bit faster. Here, all the guys go straight to the net. There's a lot more offence here."

Spinnars Nordin credits Eriksson, also a native of Sweden, for attracting him to Canada to play for the Predators. Last year he manned the net for five games with the Mora IK J20 team, playing in the highest level of the country's junior hockey leagues.

He shouldn't have any problem adjusting to life in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Mora is actually smaller than his new home here, with a population just under 11,000. Mora's Smidjegrav Arena was one of two host sites for the 2007 World Junior Ice Hockey Championships.

He loves the set-up with his host family, the Rivers, in Virgil, who live just a short distance away from the rink.

"They're really nice, the home is really nice," said Spinnars Nordin. "I have a gym downstairs, I can watch highlights of hockey and train and stretch."

Formerly a forward in his early years, he made the switch to netminder full-time at 12 years old. He remembers his father Danne, who also played junior hockey, not being happy with his son's decision. But Oskar was adamant that his hockey future lay in the crease.

"The position is such that everyone can see you," he

told The Local. "If you make a mistake, everybody can see that. You can be the hero, or the one everyone is talking down about. I like the pressure, having the game on your shoulders. Henrik Lundqvist and Carey Price, those are the guys I look up to the most."

The 5'11", 174 pound 19-year-old calls himself adventurous, having already lived away from home for four years to pursue his hockey dreams. His family is all back in Sweden. Oskar, the youngest of three children, is the first to venture to Canada for an extended stay.

"My brother thinks it's cool," he said, "but my sister is a bit worried about it. But she motivates me too. She does like that I'm going out on this adventure."

His parents are planning to visit before the end of 2021.

Spinnars Nordin is hoping the opportunity with the Predators will turn into an invitation to study and play hockey at an American college. He plans to study political science in preparation for a future career in diplomatic services.

GM Eriksson is expecting that Spinnars Nordin's experience at the top ranks of Sweden's junior system will take him to a leadership role with his new team. His partner in goal is another Swede, William Fagemo, whose brother Samuel was drafted in 2019 by the Los Angeles Kings.



Oskar Spinnars Nordin is getting over his jet lag and becoming familiar with the ice size at the Meridian Credit Union Thursday, smaller than what he is accustomed to in Europe.

"He's two years younger than me," Spinnars Nordin said. "It's good that we can talk Swedish to each other, and we can push each other to the next level."

Eriksson is still in the process of assembling the final pieces of the Predators' puzzle to finalize the roster before the Oct. 1 kick-off of their season.

Swedish power forward Emil Eriksson (no relation) was expected to arrive late Sunday evening, while Alexander Insulander, Eriksson's teammate last year with Åker/Strängnäs HC of the Hockeyettan league, was awaiting confirmation of his insurance coverage before he could skate with the team. Joakim

Sjoberg, who is expected to be the Pred's first-line centre, will arrive late this week.

Immigration issues are also delaying the arrival of a few more European players.

Recent local signings include defenceman Josh Davidson of Thorold, Welland's Reese Bisci, and 18-year-old Dawson Walker, who played for the Southern Tier Admirals U18 AAA team in 2019-2020.

Eriksson is hoping to be able to entice a few more players with Junior B experience over to the team. As the local Golden Horseshoe teams in the GOJHL are just wrapping up their training camps, he expects he will be able to pick

up a couple more players who are cut from some of those teams.

"The roster and final line-up 'will not be set until fairly late,' says Eriksson. "I have seven over-ager spots left. Right now I think we have the youngest team in the league. I still want to keep it fairly young, because I want to develop this team for the future."

Practices will continue for the Predators throughout this week.

This Friday will be the first opportunity for the community to see the new team in action. The Predators host the St. George Ravens at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 24. Admission to the exhibition game is free.