

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



Honouring
our volunteer
firefighters
**pages
13 to 20**

The trusted voice of our community.

notllocal.com OCTOBER 3, 2019 Volume 1 • Issue 38

Attention-getters

Business men in suits with their cafe racer bikes came to Niagara to parade down Queen Street Sunday. They parked in front of the Royal George Theatre, garnering attention from onlookers for their elegant attire and their old motorcycles, transformed into works of art. (Fred Mercnik)



Climate change rally attracts energetic crowd

Penny Coles
The Local

The message was clear.

Something needs to be done, and done now.

About 60 people gathered on the Court House steps Friday, and on the sidewalk of Queen Street, joining in one of many rallies which occurred across Canada Friday.

The Global Climate Protest, which saw millions of people turn out in countries around the world, was in part inspired by teen Greta Thunberg, who protested climate change in Sweden about a year ago. She encouraged youth to organize school

strikes, as part of a movement called Fridays for Future.

When local senior Cynthia Rand heard about a rally planned in St. Catharines, she says, it didn't seem right to drive her car to a protest for climate change, so she quickly organized one to be held in NOTL.

When she arrived, she was astonished by the turn-out waiting for her.

"I thought I'd be here, sitting on the Court House steps by myself, with one little sign," she said.

"I was absolutely amazed."

She underestimated the power of group emails and social media.

Her husband, along with several of her friends and acquaintances, sent out emails, while others, including Julia Buxton Cox, administrator of NOTL Today, a popular Facebook page, notified followers of the protest.

Many arrived on foot or bicycle, with signs optimistically proclaiming "you can make a difference," urging change to protect animals, trees and humans, and the Amazon rainforest, one saying "Make love, not CO₂."

The thrill for many was the arrival of students from Royal Oak Community



A crowd of climate change protesters, including students from the Royal Oak Community School, gathered on the steps of the Court House Friday. (Penny Coles)

Continued on page 4



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Residents turn out to talk about healthy community

Penny Coles
The Local

Members of the Town's Wellness Committee, determined to find out what "wellness" means to the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, held two public forums last Thursday to do just that.

The results of a survey online and the input from 54 residents who attended the public forums, will inform recommendations the committee will make to council in November, with work expected to begin in the new year, said chair Cindy Grant.

What she hoped to hear at the forum, she said in her introduction, "is no complaints. What we want to hear is 'this could be improved, and here is an idea of how it could be improved.'"

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, also a member of the new Town committee, MC'd the event, telling those gathered of the importance of three pillars needed to provide a healthy community: a good official plan, a strategic plan, and an economic plan. They all go together, she said. "The healthier the economy is, the better the Town is able to provide community services for residents of all ages."

She spoke of the need for

day care, affordable housing and public transit as components of a healthy community, as well as infrastructure that encourages an active community, such as the Upper Canada Heritage Trail and the Bob Howse Trail, the need for seniors buildings for those who want to downsize, and other needs that could be discovered through communication with the Community Wellness Committee.

The delay in construction of the Crossroads Medical Centre is a concern to many residents, she said, assuring them doctors in the Niagara Medical Clinic in Virgil and in the basement of the former hospital building in NOTL will be able to stay where they are until the new clinic is ready for occupancy.

Committee member Paul Jurbala spoke of the extensive research the committee has done to date. He explained community wellness as referring to a high quality of life, and the desire to have programs and policies in place to support that goal.

He spoke of demographics — not surprisingly, a recent census showed NOTL having the highest percentage of seniors in Niagara — and of some disparity in the community in terms of

wealth and marginalization, defined as lower income, which is most predominate in the rural area.

He also suggested one of the areas the committee was concerned about is how to pay more attention to the youth and young adults in the community. The number of young people has remained relatively flat, the question being, "where are they coming from and how do we keep them here?"

With a committee member at each table, residents were asked to address each of eight different categories within its framework: healthy community; community vitality, which includes transportation; culture and leisure; democratic engagement; environment; education; time use; and living standards, which touches on the need for affordable apartments for seniors.

Different amounts of time were spent on each category, depending on the need for improvements — for example, culture and leisure is an area where the committee feels NOTL already does well.

Each table of residents came up with different suggestions, and that information was noted to be combined into a summary that would be sent to those who



M.J. McGraw and Margret Walker talk about issues affecting quality of life in NOTL, including life-long learning and affordable housing for seniors, while Community Wellness Committee member Paul Jurbala takes notes. (Penny Coles)

participated, to give them an opportunity to see what was said and add anything new they felt had been missed.

At one table in the afternoon session were Jurbala, Old Town residents M.J. McGraw and Margret Walker, and Jim Fisher and Yuksel Oren, both of whom live on York Road.

Talking about the need for better transportation and connectivity in the community, it was suggested that although they are costly, more bike lanes or bike paths are needed to encourage safe cycling. "There are so many bikes on the road now. It's become very dangerous for some people to be on certain roads," said Fisher, who lives on one of the most dangerous roads for cyclists, with no shoulders to ride on.

McGraw said she's concerned about seniors being isolated, specifically those in

rural areas who don't drive and don't have access to transportation. For those seniors, especially some who are receiving palliative care, she said, having a bus to take them around town would be a "huge contribution to a healthier community."

During a discussion about culture and leisure, several people agreed they are impressed with the wide range of services the library delivers, the number of informal groups who meet for a diverse range of activities and the many educational programs.

With a bus stopping at its doorstep, the library helps get seniors out of the house, one participant remarked. "The ability to learn new things, is huge for mental health. The library is a hub in the community."

But if you live in the village of St. Davids, "that's

about as far away as you can get," Fisher added.

Fisher, who lives nearer to Queenston, said residents in his neighbourhood tend to use more services in Niagara Falls, a more convenient drive.

In a discussion about recreational facilities, many mentioned Niagara-on-the-Lake does a great job with its pools, arenas, and parks.

"There are people who would really like an indoor pool," said Walker. It would be a wonderful thing to have in town, she said, "but in my opinion, it would be at the bottom of the list. It would be expensive to build and maintain."

Others agreed there are indoor pools not far away in Niagara Falls and St. Catharines.

Continued on page 3

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376 Mary St., Niagara-on-the-Lake
nancy.bailey@evrealestate.com | 905-371-4234
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Calling all Santas

Local Staff

Niagara-on-the-Lake seems the perfect place to seek out a jolly, bearded, grandfatherly-type gentleman who might like to spend some quality time with kids.

Donavin Delaney, the set manager of the Pen Centre, is looking for some Santas for

the mall's Christmas court.

In a perfect world, Santa would have a real beard, although it doesn't have to be white, Delaney says — colouring can be altered. Also no need for a big Santa belly, which can also be added.

The full suit will be provided, except for black boots.

Delaney says he has one Santa lined up, and would

be happy to find two or three who can rotate.

"What I'd really like is someone who is the grandfather-type, who loves the Christmas season, and is touched by the Christmas spirit. Someone who identifies with the character."

For more information contact him at donavindelaney@gmail.com.



Diverse ideas and common themes discussed

Continued from page 2

One of the discussions was about education, “but think broader than schools,” said Jurbala to his group. “Think about lifeline learning and the broader aspects of education.”

McGraw mentioned the former high school used to offer evening courses that

were well-attended.

“I’d like to find a way to bring them back. It wouldn’t have to be in a school — they can be held anywhere. The college or university could organize them off-campus. They could be in a church basement.”

If Niagara College or Brock University were invited to offer classes in town,

they would do an assessment to see what the community wants, she said. “We can’t rely on Town staff to do the inviting. We’d have to get a group of like-minded people together to organize it.”

In a discussion about the environment, Fisher and Oren, both on the north side of York Road with vineyards behind them, objected to

the constant noise from bird bangers, calling them “explosive devices.” For about three months of the year, the propane-powered bird bangers go off from a half-hour before sunrise until a half hour after sunset, said Fisher, suggesting the Town should be looking at alternatives, including netting.

The two men also said

there should be some research done on the use of pesticides and how they affect the health of residents living near orchards and vineyards. “No one is talking about the air quality in NOTL from spraying,” said Fisher.

When the conversation moved to affordable housing, Walker said it’s badly needed for seniors who live in the Old Town and want to stay there.

“I would love to see a seniors development that’s affordable,” said Walker. “A lot of Old Town residents don’t want to move to Virgil.”

McGraw suggested a workshop dedicated solely to the topic of affordable housing.

“We need to be looking 10 to 15 years into the future.”

Grant, who walked around the room listening to the conversations at both sessions, said she heard a variety of diverse ideas, as well as some overlapping suggestions.

Noise problems were a common thread, she said, and more than one group spoke of health concerns from agricultural spraying.

That’s an issue for the Town to decide on how to proceed, she said.

There was talk of the need for better communication and awareness — for instance, many residents talking about transportation didn’t know there is a town bus that connects with Glendale, and then to other municipalities.

Also the 211 community information service, a great resource which provides the answers to all kinds of questions, is unknown to many, she said.

One of the recommendations the committee is likely to make to the Town is for something similar to the blue pages in phone books, that would detail the many local services and organizations and contact information. While some of that is available in the Community Awareness booklet published by the Town, it’s not nearly as detailed as it could be, Grant said.

Affordable housing and assisted living needs were also themes that were thoroughly discussed, she said.

While Grant would have liked better attendance, she said, “we were very pleased with the results. The energy in the room was good, the noise level was high, and the people who were there were truly engaged.”



Cindy Grant, chair of the Community Wellness Committee, listens in on some of the conversations at the community centre public forum Thursday afternoon. (Penny Coles)

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Message from protesters: act now

Continued from page 1

School. School director Julia Cain Murray had heard about it Thursday evening, and Friday morning students worked quickly to make signs before walking from their Wellington Avenue school rooms to the Court House.

"It was lovely to have the kids there, and the Shaw actors," said Rand.

"It's not a joyful occasion, especially for the kids. I'd imagine they're full of foreboding. I can remember Tom, my middle child, worrying about nuclear energy at the age of 10. Kids worry about these things."

Student Maya Gazzard asked for the opportunity to speak. "This planet is in need of change. We need to act now, or never," she said, carrying a sign that proclaimed, "The time for action is now."

Rand said it's understandable individuals feel what they do doesn't really matter, and worry about other things that are important, "but not as important as this."

What is needed to slow global warming, she said, "is big government action, and big corporations and boards of directors to get involved. They have the power."

But in the meantime, the small decisions and actions of individuals are also import-

ant, she says.

Rand said she began seriously thinking about global warming about 10 years ago. "It's been a little cloud for me, there in the background, for quite a while. Now it's a big cloud."

"We have to think local, and we have to all do our part in saving the planet," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero, also speaking to the school children about needing to do something to protect their future.

Buxton Cox said she was thrilled with the turnout, especially having the kids from Royal Oak join the protest. "The group of Shaw actors was a bonus — we didn't even know they were going to be there," she added.

She and her husband Dave wrote a rally cry the evening before, which boosted the energy level and helped motivate the crowd to get into the spirit of the protest:

"I don't know but I've been told, a healthy planet is better than gold."

Here's what I know the science told, we have to fix it before we get old.

Here's what I know the science told, the great big icebergs need to be cold.

Here's what I know the science told, we need to act and we need to be bold.

Here's what I know the



Protest organizer Cynthia Rand thanked Lord Mayor Betty Disero for attending the protest, while Disero thanked Rand for organizing it. (Photos by Penny Coles)

science told, heat is rising and we need it to hold.

Here's what I know the science told, Act NOW so our kids can grow old!"

Rand said she hopes the enthusiasm and energy generated on Queen Street Friday morning can continue, with the students who were there, and also with the parents of the students. With a federal election approaching, votes can influence governments to take the big steps, she added.

She's voting Green.



Brian Barker, federal NDP candidate for the Niagara Falls riding, and Green candidate Sandra O'Connor speak about the need to stop global warming at Friday's Queen Street protest.

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St. Davids swimming pool design revised

Changes made in response to residents' comments

Penny Coles
The Local

A revised design for the new St. Davids Pool is now posted online, for residents to have a look at and make comments to the Town.

At a meeting in July at the St. Davids Lions hall about 50 people turned out to have their first glimpse of what a new swimming pool could look like, and were asked to speak up about what they liked and didn't like.

They have done so, and the architect, pool designer and parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte, after hearing and reading their comments, showed a revised set of plans to residents last week.

The St. Davids Lions built the original pool, and turned it and the property over to the Town when they could no

longer afford to operate and maintain it. That was more than 50 years ago, but they also signed a 99-year lease and have 45 years left to go on it.

The Lions are concerned about preserving the green space of the park, the mature trees on the property, and retaining a layout for the pool that will allow for the annual carnival to continue.

The revised design shows the pool still sitting back on the property, with the front of it facing York Road. The new change rooms and office space are shown behind the pool, with washrooms accessible from outside the pool complex for those using the rest of the park and tennis courts, says Turcotte.

That was a request from several residents, and it makes sense, allowing the washrooms to be used outside of



The new design includes washrooms accessible from outside the pool complex. The playground equipment will be moved to the south side of the pool. (Rendering supplied)

the short season the pool is open, similar to Memorial Park, Turcotte says.

The first design was for a pool with four lanes, but res-

idents have said they'd like to see six, so the revised renderings show six lanes. The "beach entrance," with a gradual slope into the pool for youngsters in the shallow area, has been enlarged, says Turcotte. The "blue sail" area to provide some shade is still included in the design.

The rounded bench area in the original design has been eliminated because of safety concerns about the difficulty of guarding the area, but there is still a bench for those who want to sit in the

water and chat, says Turcotte.

The change-room building is still shown as a family-friendly universal change room, which was well-supported by many of the residents, he says. Playground equipment will be on the south side of the pool.

The budget has been pegged at \$3 million to \$3.5 million, says Turcotte.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero and some of the councillors have seen the design, which will likely be shown to council

as they discuss next year's budget, along with a detailed cost analysis. The Town is also expected to apply for a provincial grant this fall, and will be forming a fundraising committee to augment funding from the Town and Province, if the grant application is successful.

Residents are encouraged to check out the revised design and site plan and to express their opinions on the town's website at jointheconversationnotl.org/st-davids-park-and-pool.

Firefighters called to Line 1

Local Staff

When Niagara-on-the-Lake firefighters were dispatched to Line 1 last Thursday, they thought they were going to a structure fire that had been reported by a neighbour.

Niagara Regional Police went to the address for the same reason, says Fire Chief Nick Ruller.

But firefighters couldn't access the burn from Line 1 — it was in a field they accessed from Concession 4, he said.

It wasn't a structure fire,

and it wasn't a permitted outdoor agricultural burn, it was someone burning debris.

It was the site of an open-air burn pile, commonly used by a nursery operator on his property, but in this case, because it was debris being burned, it was not permitted, Ruller said.

"They had called for permission to burn, but it was outside the guidelines for a permitted burn. It was clear it was debris."

Ruller said although the police had dismantled a marijuana grow-op in near-

by greenhouses the week before, "I don't think there is any connection (between the fire and the grow-op)."

Uniform officers were also called to the area of Line 1 Road and Concession 4 last Thursday for a structure fire, says NRP media relations officer Stephanie Sabourin.

"When officers arrived, they activated the Guns, Gangs and Grows Unit for further investigation due to the presence of cannabis plants," she says.

No charges have been laid.

All-candidates meeting at St. Davids Lions Hall

Local Staff

The St. Davids Ratepayers Association is hosting an all-candidates meeting Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 6 p.m. at the St. Davids

Lions Club on York Road.

Depending on the number of participants, the event should end no later than 8 p.m. Candidates will be asked to make a short, prepared statement,

to be followed by questions generated by the association's executive.

A brief recess will be followed by questions from the public.

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EDITORIAL

This is the time to say thanks to volunteer firefighters

Fire Prevention Week in Ontario begins Sunday, with a theme this year of “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape.”

The message is aimed at educating members of the public about the small but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe, by making a home escape plan and practising it.

It’s a good message we can all take to heart.

But to us, the real heroes are our volunteer firefighters, who also don’t wear capes, but live and work in this community, volunteering their time and occasionally risking their lives to help keep their friends and neighbours all safe.

It’s a difficult, risky job they do. It’s 24/7, 365 days of the year. It takes them away from their work and family time, not only to answer fire calls but for the weekly training sessions and special drills they do throughout the year, such as practising how to extract someone from their vehicle with the jaws of life, or how to rescue someone who has fallen in the gorge or the Niagara River.

Volunteer firefighters are

called out to do so much more than put out fires. They are usually the first at the scene of a motor vehicle collision, sometimes coming to the aid of seriously injured victims. In this small community, it’s not unusual for a firefighter to come across a friend, neighbour or even loved one who has been injured, or worse.

They are also often the first responders to a medical emergency, and again, it may be to come to the aid of someone they know well, someone they love.

These men and women are the true heroes of this community. And we can help make their jobs easier and safer by making that suggested escape plan. By making sure we have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. By driving carefully, driving sober, and obeying speed limits. By pulling over when we see flashing green lights, which mean a volunteer firefighter is on the way to an emergency.

And we can take this opportunity to say thank you to them for being willing to put themselves in harm’s way, for the good of their community.

That’s a heck of a thing to

ask of a volunteer. A heck of a responsibility for them to take on when they have husbands and wives and children of their own waiting for them to get home safely.

For that reason, we should also say thank you to their families. Many nights, while some of you are at home, comfortable and safe, enjoying a good meal with your spouse or partner, helping your kids with homework or snuggled up watching your favourite show on Netflix, the town’s volunteer firefighters have left the warmth of their homes and their families, possibly on their way to a dangerous situation to help others in their community. Without the support of their families, they couldn’t do it.

This town is very fortunate indeed to have such a caring, passionate and dedicated group of firefighters, volunteers who are committed to constantly improving and practising their skills so that when the fire station alarm sounds, they are ready to put their lives on the line for the sake of the community.

Penny Coles
The Local

LOCAL FINDS



IN
Memory of
SARAH ANN
Daughter of
HANNAH and
THOMAS B.
TRACY Troop
Sergeant Major
in the Kings Dragoon-
Guards, who died on the
19th of July 1840
in the 7th year of her
Age

Sad tale of spirit not at peace

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

This much-visited stone in St. Mark’s Cemetery memorializes Sarah Ann Tracy, a little girl whose ghost haunts Fort George. According to some who have seen her in blockhouse two, she walks about in a white gown and follows visitors to the Fort. She does not appear malicious, but her spirit is surely not at rest. Shortly after Sarah Ann’s death, the family moved to Kingston, and apparently became prosperous as the family plot and monument in Catarqui Cemetery is prominent. Sarah Ann must have been a special child to have warranted such an elegant and costly monument.

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A Man Goes to the Movies

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Anyone who “hustles” to improve himself/herself is a “go-getter” and is admired; however, a hustler generally refers to a prostitute and the meaning becomes negative.

This film examines the lives of four hustlers who hustle to improve their lives. Under all the bravura, they are fragile women who have

been hurt and hardened by life, and see nothing especially wrong in duping the types of men who have hurt many as they climbed the ladders of success. The women are intelligent and smart and they succeed big time. The conclusion of the story brings retribution, but the audience must decide if it is just.

Good film not just because there is much glitz,

glamour and a look at a world unknown to most, but above all, the audience is left with lots to think about.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to movies. His Facebook reviews have become popular with his friends and followers, and he has graciously agreed to share his opinions through “short and sweet” exclusives for The Local.



Hustlers is considered by some to be a career-defining role for Jennifer Lopez.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, L0S 1T0

Editor:
Penny Coles
penny@notllocal.com
905-246-5878

Publisher:
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local

Graphic Designer:
Rosie Gowell
composing@notllocal.com

Advertising Sales:
Karen Skeoch
karen@notllocal.com • 905-641-5335

Julia Coles
julia@notllocal.com • 905-934-1040

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

COMMENT LETTERS

Another way to look at Maria Rye and Our Western Home

First of all, thank you very much for recognizing the 150th anniversary of the first small group of British Home Children to arrive in Canada at Niagara-on-the-Lake, brought by Maria Rye the first week of November 1869.

BHC descendants, advo-

cates and authors such as myself campaigned for years, even decades, to have this long-forgotten chapter of Canadian history recovered in our collective memory. We were thrilled last year when Parliament proclaimed Sept. 28 national British Home Child Day, which as

it happens is also my birthday. My grandfather Cyril William Joyce was one of these children brought to Western Canada (Alberta) in 1926. I wrote about his journey and many other BHC stories in Laying the Children's Ghosts to Rest: Canada's Home Children in the West.

It must be pointed out, however, that Maria Rye would not today be someone parents would be comfortable entrusting their children to. Keep in mind that most of the BHC were not orphans but had either lost one parent to death or had parents incapable of supporting them. This was decades before any sort of social welfare or unemployment insurance system was in place. Many parents found themselves facing a Sophie's Choice of another kind: try to struggle on in a merciless labour market, or give up their children to the care of strangers in a foreign land. Many of them would never see their children again.

In a forthcoming article of mine to be published in the British Home Children in Canada Newsletter about Rye, a disturbing picture emerges of someone less concerned with "hoping to offer them better lives" than with earning a profit from child immigration. A speech she gave in 1870 before the National Associ-

ation for the Promotion of Social Science in England focused on the economics of child poverty rather than any burning desire to alleviate their suffering. A Liverpool physician pointed out that Rye had already saved the city's ratepayers £5,000, the cost of maintaining the children in British orphanages from eight years of age to 18. According to New Lives for Old, published by the UK National Archives, "doubts about her work had surfaced as far back as 1868, when William Dixon, a Canadian immigration agent based in Britain, had condemned her organization." Historian Roy Parker reveals that she earned a profit after public subsidies in Britain that amounted to as much as £5 per child. Assuming three shiploads of 100 children per year multiplied by £5 and adjusted for inflation, Rye today would be earning £177,000 per year (\$288,829 Cdn.), a substantial income.

Rye seems to have been a woman with little feeling for children and a very harsh con-

cept of discipline. Parker in his book Uprooted describes the case of Annie Thompson, age 10, who was placed in solitary confinement for some infraction and given only bread and water for several days. She was beaten with the back of a brush, and when she escaped, was allowed to "remain out all night during one of the coldest nights in a Canadian winter. Fortunately, the girl had been sheltered at a nearby house where she had sought refuge." It was reports like this that prompted the British Local Government Board to send Andrew Doyle to Canada to inspect these and other children's homes in 1874.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is to be congratulated for honouring the sesquicentennial of the first shipment of these children in their community. These children made an indelible contribution to our nation and should never be forgotten again.

Sean Arthur (Art) Joyce



Auchterlonie on Astrology

**Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local**

Welcome to the first full week of October pronouncements from Auchterlonie on Astrology.

This is the week of the First Quarter Moon in Capricorn on Saturday, Oct 5. It's an especially hard First Quarter Moon with lots of activity in the sky as we move towards the Full Moon in Aries, which doesn't occur until Sunday, Oct. 13.

Thursday, Oct. 3 sees the Moon continue in Sagittarius as Pluto turns from retrograde to Direct Motion in the early morning. Pluto has been retrograde since April 24, so five months of step two in a deep and personal matter is now able to take a third step, and hopefully a step in the right direction now that we know our inner motives better.

The Andy Griffith Show was first aired from Mayberry, North Carolina on Oct. 3, 1960. Gwen Stefani celebrates the big 5-0 today.

Friday, Oct. 4, the Moon moves from Sagittarius into Capricorn early Friday morning and Mars moves into Libra early as well. So while emotions go from fiery to earthy, our physical drive changes subtly from earthy to airy. And the Moon and Mars also make a Square aspect in the middle of the afternoon, suggesting a showdown which may leave some feeling drained. Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian Calendar on this date in 1582. It's the calendar we still use today. And Susan Sarandon celebrates number 73 today as well.

Saturday, Oct. 5, is the day of the First Quarter Moon in Capricorn – an especially difficult Quarter Moon because it's the

First, but also because Libra (the Sun) and Capricorn (the Moon) are Cardinal Signs of the Zodiac, meaning they are prone to exert themselves strongly. Also, the Moon is nearly perfectly in the same spot in the sky as Saturn and Pluto – adding elements of questions involving security and motivation in need of resolution. The date of Oct. 5, 1582 does not exist in Poland, Portugal, and Spain because of the switch to the Gregorian calendar the day before. And Super Mario Lemieux was born Oct. 5, 1965.

Sunday, Oct. 6, the Moon is in the same place in the sky as Pluto in Capricorn this afternoon suggesting a day of serious emotions and deep connections to willpower. Things lighten up tonight when the Moon moves in the Sign of the Water Bearer – Aquarius. Aquarius, like Gemini and Libra is an Air Sign. It is the Air Sign that rejuvenates the air by making it moist again. Faith Hill married Tim McGraw on this day in 1996. And inventor George Westinghouse was born Oct. 6, 1846.

Monday, Oct. 7 is a day of surprises and challenges. Surprises as Mercury in Scorpio opposes Uranus in Taurus in the early a.m. hours. A hidden cost is revealed? A windfall comes to light? Both? The challenges are thanks to the Sun in Libra Square to Saturn in Capricorn. There is nothing to fear if you are not kidding yourself. Happy Birthday to Fox News – 23 today. And on a brighter note – to Yo Yo Ma, celebrating number 64.

Tuesday, Oct. 8, the Moon in Aquarius is busy until this afternoon when it gets a sweet boost from Jupiter in Sagittarius. News of a trip or a gift for somebody! And Venus moves

from her home sign of Libra into Scorpio about the same time. It's a subtle change that will play out over the next few weeks. Oct. 8, 1956 saw Don Larsen of the New York Yankees pitch the first perfect game in World Series history against the Brooklyn Dodgers. One year later, on this same day, the Dodgers announced they were moving to Los Angeles.

Wednesday, Oct. 9, the Moon moves from Aquarius into Pisces in the noon hour, setting up a busy day of mixed influences, from positive relationship developments to stressed-out energy reserves, but with the Sun and Pluto making a connection late tonight, a stressful situation can be resolved for good. Leif Erikson became the first European to set foot in North America on Oct. 8, in the year 1000. The Beatles' John Lennon was born in Liverpool, England on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 1940.

Next week is the week of the Full Moon in Aries and more. Remember, we are all made of stardust. Shine on!

The Podcast version of Auchterlonie on Astrology contains more information than the version which appears here in The Local. For the past few weeks I have been sharing my story of why I became interested in astrology. Starting last week, I have been devoting four weeks to explaining the uncanny astronomical parallels between 1776 and 2008, the American Revolution and the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the rise of Donald Trump.

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

LETTERS

Masks part of strategy

A. Smith in his/her letter to the editor 'Why Don't Vegan Protesters Provide Their Names?' (The Local, Sept. 19) asks are ['protesters'] "allowed to even wear masks?"

The Criminal Code of Canada makes it an offence to wear a mask or other disguise to conceal one's identity while taking part in a riot or an unlawful assembly...I doubt that four individuals holding computer screens could be classed as a riot or unlawful assembly.

Anonymous for the Voiceless calls these displays Cubes of Truth — it is a peaceful street activism that employs direct action with the public. Forming a cube, they use the computer screens to display videos (actual videos taken on actual farms about the way farmed animals are actually treated in this country). If it is a 'sick fear tactic' by showing pigs on factory farms as A. Smith claims, she/he should probably talk to the factory

farms where these things go on.

Contrary to A. Smith's analysis, the wearing of the masks during the display of the video clips is a proven strategy, to have people concentrate on the video and not the individual person in the 'Cube'. It results in people spending more time viewing the video rather than engaging with the person holding the computer screen. And further, the masks are a take-off on the movie 'V for Vendetta' where a benevolent (not malevolent) Guy Fawkes ends the movie with a fire-work display over the House of Commons. The mask now represents a clear embodiment of the ideals of freedom and social justice. A. Smith should watch the movie and maybe come away with a different viewpoint.

Given that 665 million animals are killed as 'food' in Canada each year, we need to work on that egregious issue, especially considering the en-

vironmental, health and ethical concerns implicit in factory farming. While it may concern A. Smith that 'maybe' someone's shoes were leather and ergo, they may be held together by horse glue ... I think it may be of greater importance to recognize the catastrophe that the meat-eating culture brings to bear on the individual animals, the planet earth and on the very health of those who eat meat.

And finally, I wish I had a nickel for every time I heard that old chestnut that begins with words to the effect of "... why aren't they protesting (fill in the blank) instead of (fill in the blank)..." In A. Smith's case, I can assure him or her, that there are clear attempts by campaigners regarding the fate of the Budweiser horses and yes indeed the outcome of young goats in goat yoga who outlive their usefulness as they grow into full size goats and are then often sent to slaughter.

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Local girl featured in latest Munsch story

Penny Coles
The Local

Like so many youngsters, Georgia Grebenc loves Robert Munsch stories, and has her favourites.

Her new favourite is about a little girl named Georgia, who looks just like her.

The local four-year-old has become a character in Munsch's latest book, *Sounds Like Christmas*, which was released Tuesday.

Georgia's mother, Jennifer, says her daughter looks at the pictures in the book and knows the little girl is her, but really doesn't understand the significance of being the main character in a book by one of the most famous Canadian children's authors.

"Georgia is beyond excited to be featured in this new book and cannot wait to share it with all her new friends at St. Michael School," says Jennifer.

"She's happy to see herself in the book, but she doesn't understand that book will be read by millions of other kids."

The other main character in the book is three-year-old Lincoln Grebenc, Georgia's cousin, who lives in Ottawa.

The story of how two

cousins who live hundreds of miles apart came to be in a Robert Munsch story is an interesting one, although not that unusual to those who know how the writer chooses his characters.

Munsch came to Canada in 1975 to work at the preschool at the University of Guelph. He has lived there ever since. During that time, he would turn up at libraries and schools and tell stories to kids, developing a reputation as a great storyteller. He would make up his stories in front of the children and refine them through repeated tellings, and eventually began writing them down.

Jennifer Grebenc's mother, Sharon Bruder, met him while she too was working at the university, and when he started publishing his stories, she began helping him out with administrative duties.

More than 30 years ago she went to work for him full-time as his administrative assistant. Now, she says, she looks after everything from book-keeping to fan mail for him.

"It's been an interesting and fulfilling time," says Bruder.

"He's been great to work for. I don't know too many

people who love their job the way I love my job. I keep telling him as long as I can keep coming to work, I'll be there."

She has suffered some health issues recently, but Munsch has also had his share of health problems, and she couldn't ask for a more understanding employer, she says.

Bruder says she started asking him when he was going to use her kids in one of his books years ago, when her kids were young.

That never happened, but she's as excited and proud as could be to have her two beautiful grandchildren featured in one of his stories.

To suit the stories, he's had to make them a little older — Georgia is a seven-year-old in *Sounds like Christmas* — but the resemblance in the drawing to the little girl from NOTL is unmistakable.

His stories don't have recurring characters. He bases each character in each new book on the children to whom he first told the story.

Bruder says when Munsch began telling his stories to groups of kids, he would pick out a child

Continued on page 9



Georgia Grebenc, from NOTL, is pretty excited to have a little girl who looks like her, and has the same name, in a book by Robert Munsch. Her grandparents and cousin are also part of the story. (Photo supplied)



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About 100 more books to go

Continued from page 8

in the audience to talk to, and get their name. When he got around to writing the story, he would use that name for his main character, and dedicate the book to them.

When the book is published, he tries to find that child — often an adult now — to let them know they are in one of his books. She has helped him track down kids from as far away as Alberta.

He has 65 books published, and about 100 stories he's still working on, says Bruder. "Due to his health, he no longer goes out and tells stories, but spends his time working on the ones he made up over the years."

His other new book, *Bear for Breakfast*, is a story inspired by a boy named Donovan, a first-grader in La Loche, Saskatchewan, a Chippewyan community in northern Saskatchewan.

When Munsch visited in 1990 and asked what the kids liked to eat, Donovan said that he liked to eat bear.

The exceptions with the naming of characters, says Bruder, are the four books he wrote and named after his own four kids, and this Christmas book, with Georgia and Lincoln.

Jennifer and her sister Stephanie grew up on Munsch books, and have met him many times over the years. He became like family, Jennifer says — her mother would look after his house when he was away.

So of course she began reading his books to Georgia, who would have said until recently that her favourite is *Mud Puddle*.

Bruder finds an interesting twist to the dedication of the book, which is "For Georgia Grace Grebenc, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario; Lincoln Joseph Grebenc, Ottawa, Ontario; and Sharon Bruder, Guelph, Ontario."

What might confuse

readers, says Bruder, is that the two Grebencs, who are featured in the same book, live miles away from each other.

She and her husband are also featured in the story — Georgia and Lincoln are at their grandparents' house, trimming their Christmas tree.

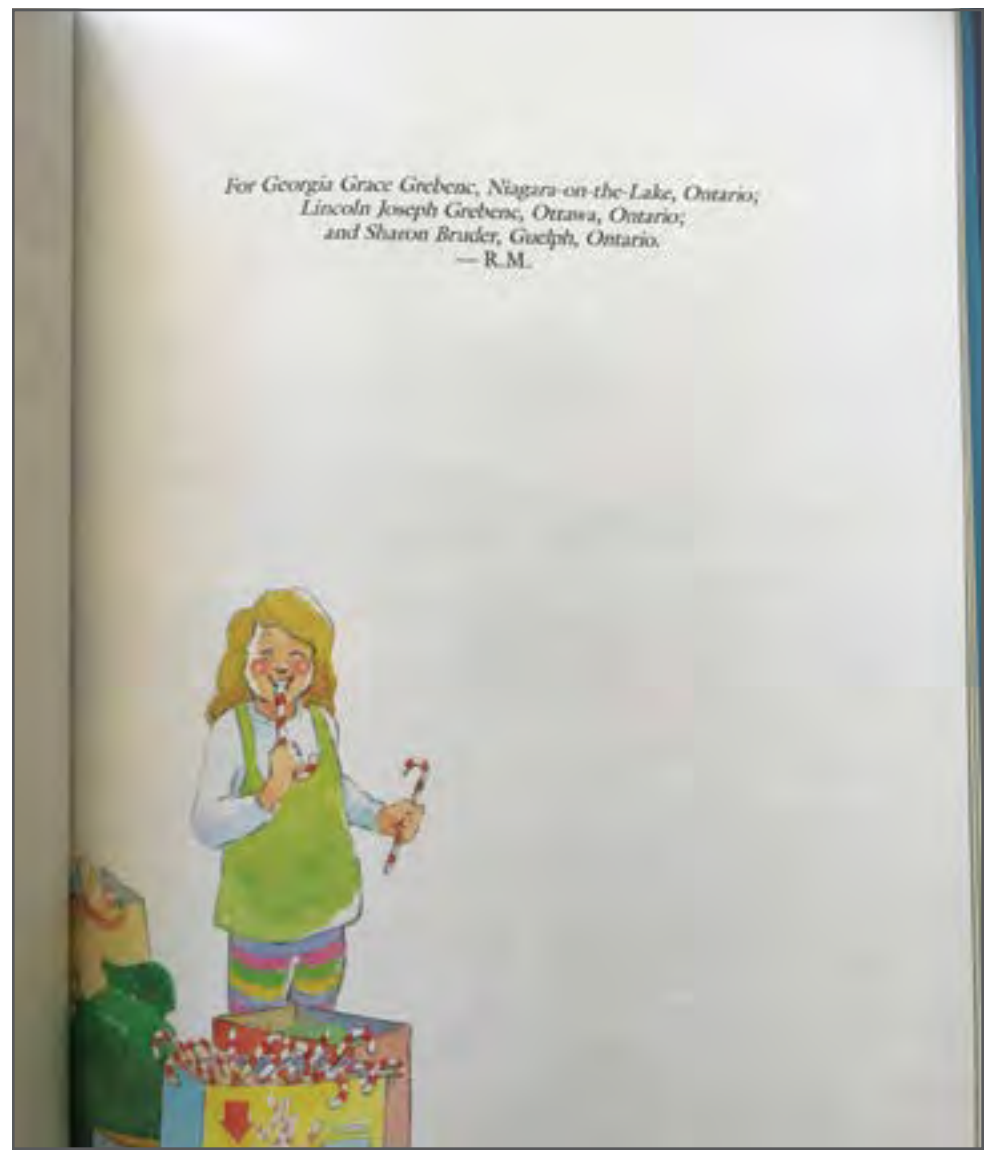
Georgia's father, Andrew, grew up in NOTL, and his cousin Alex, Lincoln's father, in Ottawa.

Stephanie and Jennifer Grebenc are from Guelph, but Jennifer moved to NOTL and married Andrew, and when Alex came for a visit, met Stephanie, who was at Brock University at the time.

"Two sisters married two cousins," explains Bruder.

The joke in the family is that Georgia now has a little sister, and Lincoln has a little brother.

"He's just going to have to write another book about a little girl and boy so they can be in it," says Jennifer.



Sounds of Christmas is dedicated to Georgia Grebenc, her cousin Lincoln and her grandmother. (Photo supplied)



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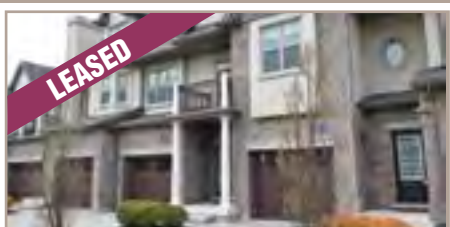
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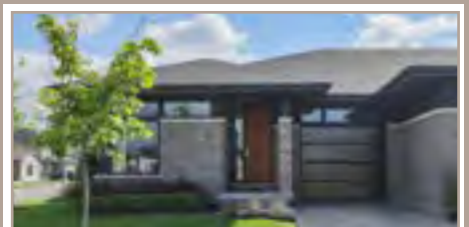
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Local author wins literary marathon

Penny Coles
The Local

There's a reason it's called a marathon.

Sharon Frayne spent 72 hours this summer feverishly writing more than 40,000 words in a competition that offered her a chance at being taken on by a literary agent and an inside track to a Canadian publishing house.

She knew it would require strength, both physical and mental, and a great deal of preparation, but she felt her time had come to take a stab at it.

And she was right. A published author and a member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Writers Circle, Frayne came first in the category of fiction for young adults in the Muskoka Novel Marathon in Huntsville this July.

The competition was founded 18 years ago to sup-

port the Muskoka Literacy Council, and now also funds the area YMCA literary programs, a cause which is enticing to writers.

The prize is also a strong attraction — a win helps shortcut the traditional path to having a book published.

"It's so difficult to even have your book looked at by a publishing company," says Frayne.

The setting of her novel, *A Chain of Broken Hearts*, moves from Huntsville to Niagara-on-the-Lake and back to the Muskoka town, two communities that have much in common.

While Huntsville is situated in cottage country, it has also won awards for being friendly and welcoming, is a high-ranked tourist destination and a Communities in Bloom winner.

But for Frayne, the common denominator that made

her want to incorporate both as the background for her story is her love of both areas, and the role they have played in her life.

She grew up in Niagara, but from her earliest years summered with her family in Muskoka.

Although she left for a career in education — she taught high school visual arts and English, and then became a principal at a Halton high school — when she retired, she came back to Niagara to rejoin her family, she said.

When Frayne was a baby, her parents bought a place just outside Bala, in Muskoka, which became her second home. "My heart has always been very close to that area," she said.

She and her husband, Bill French now divide their time between NOTL and a cottage south of Rosseau, on Dys-on Lake. "These are two of

the most beautiful places in the world. How can you beat them as a setting for a novel?" says Frayne.

Living on the edge of Rye Park also is an important influencing factor in her novel.

Her last book, *Caught between the Walls*, is a collection of short stories, mostly fiction but based on local historical events and characters. One of the stories is about Maria Rye and Our Western Home, the orphanage for young girls that was operated from a building of the former courthouse, where Rye Street Heritage Park is now.

Sept. 28 is now recognized as National British Home Child Day, and this year the 150th anniversary was commemorated. But although the story of British children coming to Canada is fairly well publicized, the history of the building where it all began is not generally known to the public, says Frayne,

It is also the setting for the famous story of Solomon Moseby, who played such a significant role in early local and national history — it was from that same building that he escaped in 1837, as a Kentucky slave owner was attempting to reclaim him, accusing him of being a horse thief.

Rye purchased the former courthouse building in 1868, and turned it into a facility for girls who were brought from England, either because they were orphans or their parents were unable to look after them. Some of the girls were adopted, but most were trained to work as household servants or clerks in stores. Almost 4,000 girls were relocated through the home, says



Sharon Frayne, photographed in Muskoka, hopes to have her book published. (Heather Douglas)

Frayne, and some girls' lives were dramatically improved, others suffered abuse.

Before writing that earlier short story, Frayne did a great deal of research on the subject of Maria Rye and the children she brought to Canada, which helped her to flesh out the tale she told in the novel she wrote during the marathon.

Without giving too much away, she describes a present-day school field trip for a group of Huntsville Grade 8 students, who travel to NOTL. But because of a situation that befalls one of the girls, she ends up living in the past, in the group home that was established by Rye in 1869. Life for the main character becomes very different from anything she has experienced up to that point, until she is able to return to Huntsville in the present, says Frayne.

It is her background in ed-

ucation that made her choose to write both *Caught between the Walls* and *A Chain of Broken Hearts* as historical fiction for young adults, she says.

She wanted the books to teach students something about Canadian history that isn't well-covered in the school curriculum, while at the same time giving young people something they could relate to.

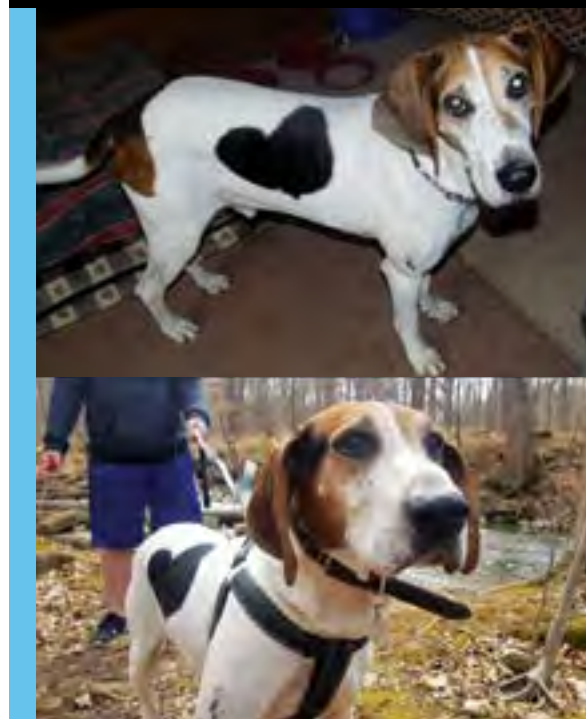
"I wanted to show the kids of today what life was like for those girls who were sold as indentured students. When I wrote it, I was trying to picture what it would have been like for those young girls, compared to today."

It was also an opportunity to show young adults that life for immigrants to Canada is nothing new, "that immigrants have been coming to the present, says Frayne.

Continued on page 11

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REAL ESTATE WILLS BUSINESS

Frayne has six weeks to polish book

Continued from page 10

Canada for a long time, and conditions have been hard for them for a long time. People have come here from different situations, but everyone has come from somewhere.”

A Chain of Broken Hearts is aimed at students in Grades 7, 8 and 9, but could lead to sequels about the same group of students as they go on to high school, to appeal to older kids and adults, says Frayne.

surprising, such as the suggestion from one woman that she wanted her character to be pregnant.

Although Frayne’s first reaction was this was going to be a challenge in a story about young girls on a school field trip, “it gave me a real impetus to think about the plot.” Since some of the girls who came to Niagara in the 1800s were raped, the pregnancy became an important feature of the story.

the building that was the site of the G8 Summit in 2010 — Frayne felt confident she was as prepared as she could be.

Her notes contained enough details about the plot, characters and dates to keep her on track, she says.

“I think that’s probably one of the reasons I was successful. I had the story in my head — I just had to get it out. Some people can sit down and write from scratch, but that’s not the way I work”

She had contemplated entering the competition in past years, but never felt her writing was quite at the level she wanted it to be.

After retirement, with more time to give to her craft, she worked very hard on her writing. “It didn’t come as easily as I thought it would. I took all kinds of courses, entered a lot of writing competitions, and in the last six months, I started to do well. I felt I had hit my stride.”

So, with confidence, she prepared for the competition.

“Life is short. If you have some burning goal, you have to grab it by the horns and go with it, and I’m glad I did.”

She also knew she would have to be strong to combat the grueling task of getting her words down quickly in an intense, sleep-deprived environment.

Despite being the oldest of the writers who surrounded her for 72 hours, she felt she handled the physical and mental strain well.

She had set up a cot in a hallway of the building, and while some fell asleep at their computers, when she thought she would pass out, she took short naps on the cot — catching about two to three hours “of very broken sleep” each of the two nights.

She took short breaks to

“ Life is short. If you have some burning goal, you have to grab it by the horns and go with it, and I’m glad I did. ”

Sharon Frayne

In the six months leading up to the writing marathon, she says she put other aspects of her life on hold while she concentrated on preparing for the words she would write during her 72 hours in the Muskoka contest.

In addition to the research she had already done for the historic context, she developed a plot — the most important part of the story — and the characters.

Since fundraising is an essential part of entering the contest, she asked her fellow members of the Writers’ Circle for donations, promising she would use their names in her book in return for \$100 for Muskoka literacy projects.

She also asked each of the donors to describe their namesake’s characteristics. Some of those answers were

“My years of working in schools helped a lot. I’ve been on 12 Grade 8 field trips, and travelled with a high school band. I do know how kids can act on these trips. Things don’t always go smoothly — something always happens.”

She also drew on what she remembered about some of the kids she taught, and knew well. “That made it really fun to write, and I think it helped to bring a richness to it, that I could picture these kids, as well as the quirky details some of the people in NOTL wanted me to write about.”

Armed with an interesting, thoroughly-developed story stored in her head, and the one page of notes each of the 40 writers were allowed to take with them into the writing room at the Active Living Centre in Huntsville — in



On Saturday evening, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake joined more than 100 landmarks and venues throughout Canada and the UK in Beacons of Light, a tribute to mark the 150th anniversary of the first arrival of British Home Children to Canada. Writer Sharon Frayne, was in Rye Park to see the plaque commemorating Maria Rye and Our Western Home lit up. There she met Mary Arnold of St. Catharines, whose mother was a British Home Child, brought to Canada in 1912 to a settlement home in Peterborough. (Bill French)

get food she could eat while she worked, and outside of her two naps, she says, “when I really felt I was on the verge of collapse, I went outside and jumped in the Muskoka River to wake up.”

Emotionally, it was tough, she says. She broke down a few times on the last day — the subject matter of the story was difficult, and she was exhausted. It took her several days to recuperate. But she has no regrets. She is confident she told a good story, and the comments from the judges reinforced that.

“I hope you go forward and get this novel published,” said one judge. Her story was described as “powerful,” with “really sympathetic characters,” and a style that is “clean and crisp.”

She won the competition against some very accomplished, published writers, and now she has six weeks to polish what she wrote.

She is promised at least that a literary agent will put it before a Canadian publisher, although there is no guarantee it will be accepted for printing.

If it isn’t, she won’t give up. It’s a novel she hopes and ex-

pects will resonate with young teens who are feeling alone, and going through difficult times.

“Many children at that age have a lot of the same angst and concern as the main character. Like her, young people have a lot of mixed emotions, all kinds of issues to face, and are trying to fit in. I wanted young people to identify with what she is going through. I wanted her to have this incredible experience, and come out of it stronger at the other end,” says Frayne.

“It’s a novel I’d want my granddaughter to read.”



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Rotary fashion show to help eradicate polio

Penny Coles
The Local

Polio is close to being eradicated, thanks to the efforts of the Rotary International campaign, but there are still a small number of cases each year in difficult-to-reach areas, and some money is needed for more vaccinations before being able to declare polio has disappeared for good.

The Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake is organiz-

ing a Fall Fashion Show to support the End Polio Now campaign.

Rotary has been working to eradicate polio for more than 30 years, and has made incredible progress in the fight to rid the world of it forever. As a founding partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, Rotary has helped to reduce polio cases by more than 99.9 per cent.

"Rotary International is absolutely committed to seeing it through," says Lynne

LeGallais, one of the fashion show organizers.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation matches Rotary proceeds for polio eradication with \$2 for each \$1 raised, she says.

Pamela Wilson, a local Rotary member who contracted polio as a young girl, will speak at the fashion show.

She explains that there are two countries that have had polio cases in the last three years: Pakistan and Afghanistan.

To declare those countries polio-free, there have to have been three years with no reported cases. In Pakistan, there were four cases in 2016, none in 2017, and none in 2018.

"We have to hope there are none this year," says Wilson.

Afghanistan had 13 cases in 2016, 14 in 2017 and 21 last year.

"Both have high mountain ranges, with nomadic people crossing borders,"

explains Wilson. "There are vaccinations being carried out, but some children are being missed."

There are refrigerated trucks and volunteers from those countries going into the mountains to vaccinate, as well as a laboratory truck to help track down where the polio virus is in the water and eliminate it, she says.

Wilson was five years old when she contracted polio in 1953. That year, families from Toronto were taking their children to Lake Simcoe, to escape the polio outbreak. For Wilson, it was too late — she spent three months in the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, alone and afraid, separated from her parents. There were no visitors allowed.

She remembers vividly having the very high fever that accompanies the disease, which attacks muscles, and the long rehabilitation in Thistletown, an area of Toronto, where she stayed for almost a year surrounded by other children also recovering from polio.

The vaccine came to Canada the following year, she says.

"Polio is preventable," says Wilson. "We just have to make sure even in this country that children are vaccinated."

The Fall Fashion Show

will take place on Sunday, Oct. 20, from 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the newly renovated Gate House Hotel on Queen Street.

LeGallais says the Rotary Club is partnering with Joy Kassai-Molon of Queen Street's Bella Grace Boutique, which is arranging the fashion show, and Steven Treadwell, who is providing a three-course lunch at the Gate House.

The lunch includes sparkling, white and red wine, and tea and coffee.

The fashion show features the Joseph Ribkoff fall and winter collection, with hats provided by Beau Chapeau, says LeGallais.

"There is no runway — models will be weaving their way through the tables, so we can feel the fabric and see the designs up close. It makes it very approachable."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, an active Rotary member, will be the Master of Ceremonies.

Rotary member Jeannie Manning and Scandinavian exchange student Frida Neilsen will be among those modelling Bella Grace fashions.

"We are thrilled Frida will be able to take part in the show," says LeGallais.

Tickets are \$80, and are available at Bella Grace Boutique, 118 Queen St.



Ann Cosford of Bella Grace, and Rotary member Pamela Wilson, model store fashions in preparation for the fundraising fashion show. Cosford, 80, has managed the store since it opened. Red is one of the popular colours this fall, she says. (Penny Coles)

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from Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Members of Council

Honouring our VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Message from the Fire Chief: We salute our Volunteer Firefighters

Each and every day, Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire & Emergency Services volunteer firefighters provide exceptional service to the residents and visitors of our beautiful town. Whether it is responding to calls at any hour of the day, participating in training, inspecting and maintaining equipment, or delivering public education programs, our volunteers continuously demonstrate their professionalism and commitment to our community.

I would like to thank The NOTL Local for ensuring that our local volunteer firefighters are recognized for their significant contribution to the community, and their interest in covering Fire Prevention Week 2019. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is "Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape!" When the smoke alarms sound, everyone must know where to go – that is why it is so important for everyone to have working smoke alarms

and to develop and practice a home fire escape plan. In the event of a fire, you may only have seconds to escape your home. Practice your home fire escape plan and make sure everyone can get out safely. In August of this year, our organization suffered an incredible loss of a 34-year member, Captain Michael Vriens. Captain Vriens' line-of-duty-death was a result of an illness that was directly related to his service as a volunteer firefighter in our

community. Sadly, Mike's illness highlights the risks faced by our firefighters on any given day. As Thanksgiving approaches, and we gather with family and friends, I would like to express my gratitude for the incredible work that our volunteer firefighters do every day. They are moms and dads, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters. They are committed to their community, and to each other. **Nick Ruller**
Fire Chief & CEMC



Nick Ruller - Fire Chief

Stopping for flashing green lights a courtesy

Penny Coles
The Local

There are still residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake who aren't sure what flashing green lights mean when they see them in a private vehicle, says Fire Chief Nick Ruller. You don't legally have to pull over, as you do for fire trucks, ambulances and police, but if it's safe to pull over, it's considered an aid to our local volunteer firefighters who are in their personal vehicle

on their way to an emergency situation. Provincial legislation allows firefighters to display a flashing green light when responding to emergencies. Adoption of its use is strictly voluntary by Ontario municipalities. According to the legislation, the purpose of flashing green lights is to help other drivers recognize a firefighter en-route to an emergency and be courteous and yield the right-of-way.



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Jay Plato - Acting Deputy Chief,
Nick Ruller - Fire Chief,
Brad Disher - Fire Prevention Officer,
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Honouring our VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

NOTL department loses committed volunteer

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire Department lost one of their most committed volunteers this year, a firefighter who made a huge impact on the department, and is still mourned by those who knew him.

Michael Vriens was a life-long resident and strong supporter of Niagara-on-the-Lake, both as an employee of the Town roads department for 35 years, and a dedicated volunteer firefighter for almost that long, reaching the rank of captain with Station 1, the Old Town department.

He died July 27 at Hospice Niagara, after a courageous seven-year battle with cancer.

The impact Vriens has had on the department and the community “is not defined by one single act,” says Fire Chief Nick Ruller, who spoke at the funeral service that was held in the Old Town firehall, “rather 34 years of purposeful and meaningful interactions, leaving an incredible void in our lives.”

Ruller first met Vriens more than 20 years ago, on a winter day on Concession 6.

“He stopped for us in the

Town truck to help pull our car out of the ditch during a winter storm,” said Ruller.

Stopping to help someone was not unusual for Vriens, said his brother John — he was always ready to help someone in need.

When Ruller joined the Old Town fire station just out of high school, where Vriens was one of the captains, Ruller got to know him better.

“Mike’s ability to influence and connect with firefighters and officers is what made him one of the most esteemed officers in the department,” he said.

When Vriens’ illness prevented him from answering fire calls, he continued to attend association meetings, Monday night training, Christmas parties for the kids, and fundraising events, said Ruller, who often saw Vriens’ bicycle at the entrance to the Anderson Lane station, where he would leave it before heading over to the community centre to work out at the fitness studio. Vriens wasn’t about to let his illness get the better of him, Ruller said. “He demonstrated incredible courage as he fought for years, setting an example of what true bravery is.”

John Vriens remembers his youngest brother as someone who loved his hometown.

The family lived first on Gate Street and then Butler. Mike went to St. Vincent de Paul, St. Michael and then Niagara District Secondary School, and took other courses on his own time to improve his skills, including programs on road management and firefighting.

“He never wanted to leave town. He loved it right to the end,” said John.

Six and a half years ago, Mike developed glioblastoma multiforme, a cancer that affects the brain, and the same kind that took the life of Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip, said John, a retired firefighter from the City of St. Catharines who developed an interest in firefighting as a career when he volunteered in the NOTL department.

It’s also one of the cancers listed by the provincial WSIB as an occupational disease for firefighters, although, John said, safety procedures have been greatly enhanced in recent decades.

After Mike became too sick to work or drive, he asked John to take him for drives around town. “He just wanted to see how the town was changing,” John said.

Mike’s brother-in-law, Dieter Unruh, recalled that Mike would ask to turn around once they reached the floral clock on the Niagara River Parkway.

“Why? We realized this was the turnaround point for town vehicles, because this is where NOTL ends. There was just no need to go any farther.”

Both Mike’s brother and brother-in-law spoke of him as a friendly, outgoing guy who would love to talk to people, often about the history of the town.

“He used to ride his bike around town,” said John, “and we would joke that he never got anywhere. He was always stopping to talk to so many people.”

“Mike was the guy who was always willing to help. He was a part of many projects and events,” said Unruh. “He was witty, had a great sense of humour, and a special smirk that was always there when he thought something was really funny.”

Although he was loved and respected by fellow firefighters, it was a two-way street, said John.

“He loved the service, the people he worked with. He loved the camaraderie of the fire department. He loved sharing his skills and knowledge with others.”

And he was courageous to the end, said John.

“People who knew him wouldn’t be surprised by that. He was brave fighting fires, and he was brave fighting the disease.”

“He is one of the most beloved and respected pub-



Mike Vriens

lic servants that we have ever had,” said Ruller. “His service spoke for itself. He didn’t do it to be recognized by others, but the reality is that he was recognized for his leadership, and he deserved it.”

He is greatly missed by his family; daughter Riah and partner Ryan, brother Gary and his wife Nancy, sister

Corinne and her husband Dieter, brother John and his wife Susan, Carol and her son Kevin. Ashley, Steve, Brandon, Nicole, Matthew, Kayla, Jonathan, Cassandra, Kyle, Noah, Westin, and Hannah remember Uncle Michael fondly. His large extended family misses him dearly.

NOTL firefighters support MD Canada

For more than 65 years, firefighters across the country have participated in Fill the Boot, a fundraising campaign in support of Muscular Dystrophy Canada.

This year, Niagara-on-the-Lake firefighters raised almost \$10,000 for their Fill the Boot campaign, which is held the same day as the Peach Celebration on Queen Street.

Local firefighters presented a cheque for \$9,936 recently, in support of the programs and services of the MD association.

The partnership between the agency and firefighters is a

long-standing tradition, helping to generate revenue and raise awareness about neuromuscular disorders, and the need for funding to support programs and services for individuals and families. Firefighters, says the Muscular Dystrophy Canada organization, are their largest network of supporters.

The goal of Muscular Dystrophy Canada is to raise \$100 million by 2020, as a total since firefighters’ support began in 1954, says Carrie Fisher, manager of firefighter relations. “Our founders approached firefighters for support, and they an-

swered the call for help, raising over \$200,000 to fund our first research projects. Since then, firefighters have continued to raise money for our organization, pledging ‘until there’s a cure, there’s us.’ This year marks our 65th year of partnership, and we are so proud of all we’ve accomplished together.”

More than \$91 million has been raised to date, she says, with about 600 fire departments across Canada hosting an event or giving a donation to the MD association each year.

“Money raised goes towards programs and research that support our mission to enhance the lives of those affected by a neuromuscular disorder, including families in the Niagara Region,” says Fisher.

Volunteer firefighters of Station 1 in the Old Town began supporting the Fill the Boot campaign in 1971, says local volunteer Vic Martens.

They’ve been on Queen Street the same Saturday in August ever since, and have raised \$280,100 to date.

When the Peach Celebration began closing off Queen Street on the same day as the local boot

drive, firefighters weren’t sure what to expect, but it turned out to be an advantage for the fundraiser, says Martens, with more people, both local and visitors, on the street that day.

Each end of the street has

volunteer firefighters out filling their boots, and while the fundraiser began with just Station 1 volunteers, it’s now expanding to include all stations, says Martens.

It takes about 20 to 25 volunteers to man the boots, some

who are there for the entire day, others who put in as much time as they can.

“It’s the middle of summer, and there’s a lot going on, so we can use all the help we can get.”



Niagara-on-the-Lake volunteer firefighters present a cheque for almost \$10,000 to Muscular Dystrophy Canada. (Fred Mercnik)

Bringing neighbours and firefighters together

Members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire Department want to sit down for a chat with their neighbours.

They are inviting residents to join them at McDonald’s, Monday, Oct. 7, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., “for coffee and conversation. No agendas or speeches, just a chance to ask

questions, voice concerns and get to know the firefighters in your neighbourhood,” says a release from the fire department.

Those who meet with firefighters at McDonald’s on Niagara Stone Road Monday morning can enjoy a free small coffee.

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You

DISTRICT 1

— OLD TOWN —



DISTRICT 1 - OLD TOWN

(Names not in order) Mike Mitchell - Captain, Jason Edgecombe - Lieutenant, Firefighters: Steve Baxter, Jeremy Froese, Dan Gordon, Mike Hassim, Ray Hunter, Todd Loney, Vic Martens, Jim Maw, Mark Polgrabia, Natasha Theobald, Adam Ward, Jason Williams (All district photos by Fred Mercnik)

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— ST. DAVIDS —



DISTRICT 2 - ST. DAVIDS

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— VIRGIL —



DISTRICT 3 - VIRGIL

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— QUEENSTON —



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DISTRICT 5

— GLENDALE —



DISTRICT 5 - GLENDALE

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Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Debi Pratt will be honoured at the Women in Business Awards for her 40-plus years of achievement in the wine industry.

The woman who, alongside Donald Ziraldo and Karl Kaiser, was a pioneer in the development of the Niagara, Ontario and Canadian wine industries, is the recipient of the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award.

The awards recognize women for their accomplishments in business, leadership and contributions to the Niagara community. The organizer and host of the event is the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce (GNCC), through its Women in Niagara (WIN) Council.

When she answered the call from Mishka Balsom, president of the GNCC, Pratt says she was stunned and, yes, a little speechless. Aware of the achievements of the most recent women to receive the award, Betty-Lou Souter and Margie Spence, Pratt says it is a true honour to be mentioned in their company.

Now retired from her role in marketing and public relations with Inniskillin Wines, then Vincor and Constellation Brands, Debi reflects on her years working with Ziraldo and Kaiser in the nascent local industry, as the trio pushed hard to convince the world that Niagara could produce excellent, world class wines.

In 1974, Debi Pratt was an elementary school teacher, working at the old Brockview School, located at Line 3 and Concession 1, where the Croatia Hall currently sits. She spent 11 years there. When that school closed, Pratt followed the staff and students to Laura Secord Memorial School in Queenston, where she taught for another five years.

Along the way, she met, and began dating, Donald Ziraldo, just as he and Kaiser were beginning to explore the possibilities of growing vinifera grapes in Niagara.

"I would sit and listen to them talking about the wine industry," she says, "and I found it fascinating, and refreshing. I knew nothing about it, but quickly became eager to learn more."

As a teacher, her summers off allowed her to begin helping out in the nursery. As the winery grew, she began to take on a bigger role. "What I learned is that Donald and I worked so well in business that we forgot about

the dating part."

Against her father's wishes, Pratt decided to leave the teaching profession and instead work for Inniskillin full time. It was a leap of blind faith, inspired by the out-sized personalities of the two men, whom she calls "polar opposites."

Ziraldo was the agronomist, experienced in viticulture, while Kaiser was the technical one, a knowledgeable winemaker, who could talk about anything and everything. Pratt found her niche in sales and marketing, but credits her 16 years in the classroom as the key to her success in business.

"I found that I had a million transferrable skills. What I learned as a teacher is very applicable to business. Marketing people need to understand that they need to educate the consumer. You're not selling them a bottle of wine and telling them how it's going to change their life. You're helping them understand why they might like it, or why they might not like it."

The core challenge in those days was fighting against the stigma that Canada couldn't produce wines to compete against those produced in Europe. Pratt said much of her time was spent teaching people exactly why we could grow good grapes here.

She remembers those early days, at events where she would hear people disparage Canadian wines. She borrowed a line from the Ford Motor Company, as she would approach people and say "excuse me, but have you tried a Canadian wine lately?" It wasn't an aggressive approach, but one that drew upon her teaching experience, as she would gently coax naysayers into trying wines that they otherwise would have ignored.

As Inniskillin found more and more success, other wineries began to sprout up in the area. Pratt was instrumental in bringing them together to work toward a common cause. The "Group of Seven Wineries" in Niagara-on-the-Lake was formed, sharing ideas for promoting Niagara as a bonafide wine-making region, with Debi spearheading the efforts.

"You can promote your own winery," she says, "but you always have to be an ambassador for the wine industry as a whole."

Whether it was icewine, the VQA designation, or simply increasing Niagara's profile across the country and beyond, Pratt says working together as an industry was, and continues to be, a

key element for success.

Pratt, Ziraldo and Kaiser pioneered other partnerships along the way. Today, it's second nature for wineries to work with chefs, sommeliers and front-line staff in restaurants and hotels, in an effort to improve the entire dining experience. But that wasn't always the case, and Pratt says it was an important factor in the expansion of the industry.

Nicole Regehr, spokesperson for the Women in Business Awards, says she was surprised Pratt had not already received their Lifetime Achievement Award. "Debi was a really obvious choice," says Regehr. "Previous winners were all pioneers in their fields, and Debi Pratt really fits that mould. It was a unanimous decision for our committee this year."

The Women in Niagara Council's mandate is to provide opportunities for women in business, whether it be through mentorship or education.

That's a role Pratt has embraced since her retirement in 2014. She decided to retire, she says, because for so long she really never had any time for herself. But even today, she is very eager to continue giving of her time to help others move forward and "grab the baton."

"I've taken on more of an advisory role," says Pratt. "I'm still there to assist anyone who needs me. I enjoy speaking to Brock and Niagara students, and it's fascinating to meet with newcomers to the industry, many who come in with little business experience. And I don't charge them for my advice. I'm not doing it to make money."

Pratt is heartened by the progress women have made in business, particularly in the wine industry, since her pioneering days. She points to the successes of Lydia Tomek, Sue-Ann Staff, Heidi Fielding and Meg McGrath, all heavily involved in all aspects of Niagara wineries.

"I'm inspired by the women who have stepped up in hospitality, tourism and winemaking to help fill in the parity gap," she says. "They continue to bring strength, knowledge and experience to the industry."

Along with her advisory efforts, Pratt is a member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Fund Committee, an arm of the Niagara Community Foundation. In that role, she works to bring donations to the community, putting funds into local organizations such as Red Roof Retreat and Bravo Niagara!.



Debi Pratt (Photo supplied)

As she prepares to deliver her acceptance speech, Pratt wants to ensure she does her homework. She sees the opportunity to address the attendees at the luncheon as a huge responsibility.

"I want to be clear with my messaging that the lessons I learned can help those coming up. I am being given a platform to share the tools and strategies that worked for me. I want to provide strong advice for those wom-

en who are coming up and in the midst of creating new businesses.

"People like Shannon Passero are great examples. Women who do their homework, and go above and beyond to give back to their community. I want to be sure to recognize others who are doing it right in today's business world, which is a much different one than the one I came up in."

Forever a teacher, wheth-

er in the classroom, in the wine industry, or as a mentor to other business people, it's clear Pratt looks forward to educating those in the audience at the Women in Business Awards, as she accepts the honour that seems made for her.

The Women in Business Awards will be held Friday, Nov. 8, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Niagara Falls Marriott on the Falls. Tickets are available through eventbrite.ca.

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Jack Hunter's daughter, Laurie Hunter-Rees, donated some of her father's medals and photos for the museum display. (Randy Klaassen)

Veteran Jack Hunter remembered in museum exhibit

**Randy Klaassen
Special to The Local**

The late Jack Hunter, a Second World War veteran, is featured in an exhibit at The

Niagara Military Museum. 'C' Force – The Hong Kong Story, which opened Saturday, is an initiative of Eugene Labiuk, the museum's director of research and

archives. It is intended as a means of featuring the volunteers of the Niagara Peninsula who served in Hong Kong. Hunter, a life-long resident of Virgil, served as

quartermaster on board the HMCS Prince Robert, which entered Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour in August, 1945, prior to the Japanese surrender. After hostilities ceased, the Prince Robert assisted with returning Canadian prisoners of war from the conflict back to Canada.

officer of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, at the opening of the exhibit. He expressed appreciation to Labiuk for the seven years of research, culminating in remembering Canada's military role in Hong Kong. While researching Niagara's involvement in Hong Kong,

bilia and photos for the exhibit. "Dad always told people, 'Nobody would be interested in what I did during the war.' He would be surprised to see the interest today, and the recognition his role had in returning Canadian soldiers home after the war," she told those gathered for the opening.

Items of Hunter's on display include his sailor's hat, with locations and dates of where the Prince Robert sailed, and photos — some issued by the Royal Canadian Navy, and others from his personal collection.

The exhibit will be on display until April 2020, at the Niagara Military Museum on Victoria Avenue in Niagara Falls. Following that, the exhibit will be on tour to various locations.

Hunter died peacefully at his home in July 2017, and was laid to rest at Niagara-on-the-Lake's Lakeshore Cemetery.

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The exhibit is not about glorifying the war, but remembering the sacrifices of the past...

Lt.-Col. Bernard Nehring

"The exhibit is not about glorifying the war, but remembering the sacrifices of the past that have allowed us the freedoms we enjoy today," said Lt.-Col. Bernard Nehring, past commanding Labiuk came across reference to Hunter's book, "Quartermaster Jack," which eventually led him to a conversation with Hunter's daughter, Laurie Hunter-Rees. Hunter-Rees was excited to loan memora-

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InfoHealth session to talk about family health teams

Dr. Bill Brown
Special to The Local

Twenty years ago, family health care was in crisis.

Too few medical students were entering family practice to sustain primary care in Canada. The result in Ontario was that the chairs of five university departments of family health met with the Province in 2002 to reimagine family practice.

The goal was to coax more medical students into primary care by changing the way family physicians are funded and care for their patients. Up to that time, most health care was delivered by solo fee-for-service physicians working out of their own office with little or no support staff, except for a receptionist and a nurse. The work was lonely, exhausting and by comparison with their specialist colleagues, poorly paid.

The new model offered to sweeten the pill for prospective family physicians by offering better remuneration, a collaborative team model for practice including several other family physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses with special expertise in matters such as diabetes, cognitive care, psychological problems, specialist care as needed for patients and help in navigating a sometimes opaque health care system.

From the first, the idea was to provide a broad range of services tailored to the community's needs, round-the-clock coverage in some form, coordination of care, support for the terminally

ill, and in short, provide for most of the needs of their patients.

Most of us are more or less happy with the FHT model. However, there are caveats. FHTs are expensive – very expensive. After all, there's a lot of support staff to support.

Then there's the matter of showing that all those add-on services actually achieve what they hope to achieve, or believe they are achieving. Sometimes there's more 'belief' here than evidence-based medicine to support the added support.

There's also the matter of getting in touch with anyone. Many patients find it's hard to contact their family physician or a nurse practitioner. And out-of-hours coverage has morphed into walk-in or urgent-care clinics, sometimes scattered all over the community or by default the nearest ER.

These and changes to the way physicians and the FHT are funded, were the subject of the first instalment on the FHT InfoHealth session, which was well and fairly presented in June by four McMaster medical students – Hannah Kearney, Michelle Murdock, George Hu and Yazid Bhatena, and their mentor, Dr. Jorin Lukings. That material is still available for viewing on Cogeco's On-Demand service and worthwhile reviewing before you come to the second instalment on the FHT, presented by the same team on Wednesday, Oct. 9 at 2 p.m. in the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library. Plan on being there.



Paranormal activity surrounds Fort George National Historic Site, and some believe is most powerful in October. (Photo supplied)

Meet the ghosts of Fort George this fall

Local Staff

In addition to being one of the prettiest towns in Canada, Niagara-on-the-Lake is commonly referred to as the most haunted, says Amanda Gamble of the Friends of Fort George.

The most prevalent tales of paranormal activity surround Fort George National Historic Site, says

Gamble, the executive director of the Friends.

"There have been hundreds of reports of paranormal sightings at Fort George, ranging from the benevolent spirit of a little girl named Sarah Ann to a more ominous presence simply known as The Watcher."

This October, when some believe "supernatural forces are most powerful, and the barrier between

this world and the next is at its weakest," Fort George will be holding its special Halloween Tours.

The two-hour walking tour includes stories too frightening to be told on the summer tours, and opens a building, the Officers' Quarters, usually off limits to the Ghost Tour.

Halloween tour dates are Oct. 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 30, and 31.

Tickets are \$25 per

person and must be purchased in advance. Call the Friends of Fort George Gift Shop at 905-468-6621 to order.


For more information, call the gift shop or email giftshop@friendsoffort-george.ca.

Proceeds from the Fort George Ghost tours help to support student summer employment opportunities at Fort George and Brock's Monument.



Dr. Bill Brown

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Fluffy and Fay read stories about acceptance and inclusivity to children at the NOTL Public Library, as part of the nation-wide Culture Days event. (Kim Wade)

Fay and Fluffy's Storytime delights youngsters

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library celebrated Culture Days with fun and flare Saturday, featuring Fay and Fluffy's Storytime.

Fay Slift and Fluffy Souffle are drag performers who combine their performance art with their experience as child educators. In a video interview for Today's Parent, Fay explained that "bringing drag performers together with little kids is a kind of perfect relationship. It's kind of like drag performers are clowns, right? They play things up, they are over the top. They are like a cartoon come to life."

Fay is right. As soon as the duo entered the library, the children were enchanted. Fay's bright orange corkscrew curls and sequined-rainbow floor-length gown, accessorized with satin lilac evening gloves, were a delight to the eyes, while Fluffy's voluminous lavender wig, tied-dyed bat wing blouse and dinosaur leggings enhanced the whimsical mood.

As Fay and Fluffy introduced themselves, they emphasized how lucky we are in Niagara-on-the-Lake to have such a beautiful library and community centre complex. They also pointed out that libraries are wonderful,

safe spaces where ideas and creativity are encouraged and everyone is welcome.

This introduction led into their first book, *All Are Welcome*, by Alexandra Penfold, which is about diversity and inclusivity. This New York Times bestseller is about a school where all children are welcome and diversity is accepted and celebrated.

The next book was *Except When They Don't*, by Laura Gehl. The story begins by outlining all the activities boys and girls like, but stresses how anyone can participate and enjoy all of these activities, regardless of their gender. The overarching message is to decide for yourself what you love to do. This story also stresses individuality. When it's over, Fay reiterates the message by adding, "be exactly who you are," and "decide what you love to do."

These positive messages are at the heart of Fay and Fluffy's Storytime. The children reacted positively to the stories, many spontaneously sharing their own ideas and experiences.

After a couple of stories, there was an opportunity for more audience participation. Kids got a chance to sing about how happy they were by clapping their hands and stomping their feet.

Next Fay and Fluffy introduced a newly published

book, *What Riley Wore*, by Elana K. Arnold, which follows a child named Riley who matches each outfit to an occasion and not to the expectations of others. Another song and another book follow the story of Riley. *The Family Book*, by Todd Parr, published in 2003, explores all the different types of families in our neighbourhoods. Finally, parents and children were treated to the beautiful tenor of Fay, during the reading/singing of *I Am Invited to a Party*, by Mo Willems, from the much-loved *Elephant and Piggie* series. They all had a chance to "party, party, party," before they danced around to "*Shake Our Sillies Out*." It was then time to take a few photos and say good-bye to Fay and Fluffy.

Fay and Fluffy's Storytime was as entertaining for the adults as it was for the children. The rapport between the two performers is obvious as they easily bounce quips and jokes back and forth. Fluffy explains that, "we are dear friends and our genuine love of reading and working with children shine through. It truly is a magical experience."

Both have considerable experience educating children. Fay has been an educator for more than 22 years and currently is a Kindergarten teacher with the To-

ronto District School Board, and Fluffy is a cultural performer as well as having many years of experience as a child-care provider.

Fluffy explained that when Fay saw a news segment about Drag Queen Story Hour in 2015, she was inspired to do the same. "She wanted to continue combining her work as a performer and educator and Storytime is that. She contacted Glad Day Bookshop and together we did our first event with the two of us and a few local authors."

That event took place at the Yorkville Public Library in June, 2016. Since then they have been sharing stories with children and their families in the Toronto area, including appearances at the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Harbourfront Centre, and the Toronto Film Festival. They have also taken their show on the road by making appearances at public libraries in surrounding areas such as Caledon, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Their motto, Reading is FUN-damental, highlights how Fay and Fluffy focus on making reading fun through books, songs and lots of laughs. Fay hopes that what "the kids get out of storytime is an opportunity to see that things that are different aren't scary and that things that are different are

amazing."

One goal of Culture Days is to "eliminate barriers to access and participation, and stimulate understanding, appreciation and exploration of arts and culture – so that every person in the country has a deeper connection with themselves, their communities, and Canada." Fay and Fluffy hope to deepen this connection of diversity and culture through their Storytime events. As Fluffy explains, "creating inclusive spaces is at the heart of what we aspire to do. We received a comment fairly early on from a parent who said 'there aren't a lot of places where we can take our gender non-conforming child, and our autistic child, and they are not only accepted, but celebrated.'"

Fay believes that "what is so incredible about the reading is that you get families from all sorts of backgrounds and experiences and relationships and gender identities and everything. To see that diversity in people needs to be celebrated. And the more we are exposed to that, the more comfortable we are with each other."

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library supports this idea and promoted the event by stating that, "We especially want to support families with LGBTQ2S

parent(s) and gender variant children, and read culturally diverse books, by providing a supportive and inclusive environment focused on fun. Everyone is welcome."

"In the three years that we've been doing Storytimes we have noticed an impact far beyond what we could have imagined. While we started out believing it was about literacy and diversity, it has turned out to be so much more. We have experienced so many moments with people coming up to us after Storytime and thanking us for the way they have felt. It has happened with someone who was adopted, with a single parent, and with same sex parents," says Fluffy.

Storytime was part of the Culture Days weekend celebration, a national event held annually at the end of September. This year's theme was creativity, the arts and well-being. Events were held all across the country with each province highlighting their own cultural events.

According to Fluffy, "we have brought Queer and Ally families together, where they have forged new friendships. We've made incredible connections wherever we go."

It was easy to tell that Fay and Fluffy forged new friendships at the library Saturday.

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The Eco Club at St. Davids school has begun their second annual Ontario Schools Battery Recycling Challenge.

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cell batteries, and tape the positive and negative terminals on nine and six-volt batteries, before dropping them off at the school.

We are unfortunately unable to accept lithium or rechargeable batteries at this time, but encourage you to find your nearest recycling center, in order to keep batteries out of our landfills (makethedrop.ca).

Thank you in advance for any support from the community in our initiative to make our planet a cleaner place for our children.



Asher Pratt and Eva Bell were the first St. Davids Kindergarten students to bring batteries to add to our recycling bin! Great work! (Photo supplied)



Capri Mazzarelli, Nico Mazzarelli, and Parwez Sidhu had fun with Mad Science at the St. Davids Fun Fair Saturday. (Fred Mercnik)



Miranda Colcuc from Alpine Nurseries was one of the local businesses supporting St. Davids School's Fun Fair. (Fred Mercnik)



The St. Davids Eco Club members, 2019/2020 (Photo supplied)

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October 8 @ 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.

A performance in words and song celebrating 225 years of community history at St. Andrew's Church, 323 Simcoe Street. Written & Directed by Barbara Worthy, featuring Aaron Berger, Laurel Minnes and Edwin Conroy Jr.. Free admission. Generously funded by the Niagara Region.

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IN NIAGARA

October 9 @ 7 p.m.

University Women in Niagara. Wednesday, October 9, 2019, 7pm in The Simpson Room, NOTL Community Centre. Speaker - David Hemmings, local author, and President of The Niagara Historical Society. Topic: "Family History". Public is welcome. For info call: (905) 468-1785

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- Across:**

1 Not strapped
5 Mining passage
9 Welding flash
12 Disgraced comic
13 U2 lead vocalist
14 Major health scare of 2002-03
16 Chip dip
17 1 for H, or 2 for He
18 "Yo!"
19 Anger
20 Teeny amount
22 Hearst kidnap org.
24 Observe
25 Dough dispenser
26 Fingerboard bars
28 Hobble
31 Not-for-profit TV spot
34 Angel dust
35 In which two dozen merles were found
36 Run at low speed
38 Kernel
42 CD- ---
43 Type of bottle with one surface
44 Owing
45 Afloat on the ocean
47 Touchdown forecasts
48 Big brute
49 Whey-faced
51 Type of joint
53 TV host --- Seacrest
54 49-er
57 "--- Love You" (Beatles hit)
59 100 square meters
- 60 Sir ---, Arthurian knight
63 Now let me think ...
64 Small snub-nosed dog
67 Smurf in red
69 Kvetch
71 --- ear and out ...
73 Visit
74 Doctor imprisoned on the Dry Tortugas
75 Stay still, at sea
76 Catastrophic occurrence
77 Approximately
78 Patron saint of sailors

Down:

1 Laugh loudly
2 The Apple --- (Tasmanian nickname)
3 Parent company of Simon & Schuster
4 Big hotel name
5 --- hair day
6 --- Lemon, female barnstormer and navigator
7 Getaway places
8 Utensil
9 Bat wood
10 Hike
11 Undercroft
12 Forensic TV franchise
15 "Simon ---"
21 Signal booster
23 Home of one Super Bowl team, briefly
25 Emulate
27 Turntable speed measure
28 Yuri Zhivago's love
- 29 NASDAQ debuts
30 Silent actor
32 It's not quite as fine as clay
33 "A weasel hath not such --- of spleen ..." (Shakespeare, "Henry IV" Pt. I)
34 Author
37 Brightest Simpson
39 Nervously irritable
40 Ambience
41 Typical Hunger Games devotee
43 Range of knowledge
46 Wonderment
48 "Either you do it --- will!"
50 Presumably unicorns missed it
52 Air-pollution measure
54 Hikers' helpers
55 In a snit
56 Land between China and India
58 "... ---, though your heart is aching ..."
61 Magazine contents
62 It's --- move
63 Reverse
64 "The United States themselves are essentially the greatest ---" (Walt Whitman)
65 " ... and --- dust shalt thou return." (Genesis)
66 Bygone GM brand
68 Bridge agreement
70 Lifeblood of TV and the web
72 "--- sine numine" (Colorado's motto)

IN MEMORIAM



May the peace that comes from the memories of a love shared, comfort you.
Remember them with a Loving Tribute.

Contact: classified@notllocal.com or call 905-641-5335

OBITUARY



DYCK, Elisabeth – entered into her eternal rest, peacefully, with family at her side, at Heritage Place in Virgil on Saturday, September 28, 2019. Elisabeth Dyck, aged 95 years, loving wife of the late Henry Dyck (2014). Loving mother of Elizabeth (Denis) Wiebe, Henry (Nettie), John (Kathy), Neta (Ron) Willms, and Martin. Also survived by many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Elisabeth was the second oldest of 8 siblings: Maria deceased, John (missing in action), Anna, Willy, Henry deceased, Margaret, and Peter.

The family will receive friends at Cornerstone Community Church, 1570 Niagara Stone Road, Virgil, on Thursday, October 3rd from 5–8 p.m. and Friday, October 4th from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 10:30 a.m. If desired, memorial donations to Radiant Care Pleasant Manor or The Gideons would be appreciated. A special thank you to all Heritage Place staff for their excellent, loving, and compassionate care during mom's stay in long-term care. Online condolences at tallmanfuneralhomes.ca.

SUDOKU PUZZLE

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

LAST WEEK'S SUDOKU ANSWERS

Answer from September 26, 2019

64 Poem, 65 Unto, 66 Geo, 68 Aye, 70 Ads, 72 Nil.
54 Maps, 55 Irate, 56 Nepal, 58 Smille, 61 Armo, 62 Your, 63 Undo,
39 Edgy, 40 Aura, 41 Teen, 43 Ken, 46 Awe, 48 Or I, 50 Ark, 52 P m,
27 R p m, 28 Lara, 29 P Os, 30 Mime, 32 Silt, 33 A deal, 34 Pen, 37 Lisa,
9 Ash, 10 Raise, 11 Crypt, 12 C S I, 15 Says, 21 Amp, 23 A F C, 25 Ape,
Down: 1 Roar, 2 Isle, 3 C B S, 4 Hyatt, 5 A bad, 6 Dot, 7 Inms, 8 Tool,
73 Stay, 74 Mudd, 75 Lie to, 76 E L E, 77 Or so, 78 Elmo.
57 PS I, 59 Are, 60 Kay, 63 Urm, 64 Pug, 67 Papa, 69 Moan, 71 In one,
44 Due, 45 Asea, 47 E T As, 48 Oyre, 49 Wan, 51 Lap, 53 Ryan, 54 Miner,
28 Lmp, 31 P S A, 34 PCP, 35 A pie, 36 Idle, 38 Meat, 42 R-O-M, 43 Klein,
17 At No, 18 Hlya, 19 Ire, 20 Tad, 22 S L A, 24 Spy, 25 A T M, 26 Frets,
Across: 1 Rich, 5 Adit, 9 Arc, 12 Cosby, 13 Bono, 14 S A R S, 16 Salsa,

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

Thunderhawks Jr. Bs to take year sabbatical

Andy Boldt
Assistant Coach
Special to The Local

Due to a lack of community support, transitioning players and inflexible scheduling, the Niagara Thunderhawks Jr. B Lacrosse team will be taking a sabbatical for the 2020 season.

Past and present success hasn't seemed to get the support of our community. The Thunderhawks were one of the lowest fan-supported teams in the whole 24-team league, especially compared to centres with a similar population.

Contrary to these difficulties, NOTL has been able to produce a number of elite lacrosse players over the past 50 years. A number of them have reached Ontario and Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame stature, won national championships, played professionally and represented Canada on the world stage.

August, 2019, saw Chris Weier and Zach Belter win the Minto cup with the Orangeville Northmen after the Thunderhawks were elim-

inated in the first round of playoffs. They and a few other players will probably be leaving the Thunderhawks to play at the Jr. A level next season.

September saw alumnus John Wagner, drafted by the New York Riptide of the National Lacrosse League. John grew up playing lacrosse for NOTL Minor Thunderhawks and upon graduation headed to Marquette University, played for the U19 Team Canada team and played for Brooklin in the Major Series of Lacrosse.

September also saw current player Michael Wilson, attending Canisius College and playing defence for the Golden Griffins, invited to the U19 Team Canada tryouts. This is a huge honour to be one of 64 players from all across Canada to be considered for the team. Wilson also grew up playing in the minor ranks for NOTL and moved to Jr. B the last two seasons to hone his skills and add to his natural abilities.

Due to the Thunderhawks' geographical location, the team is only able to

take players coming up from NOTL Minor Lacrosse and College players from the U.S. Although skilled, a large proportion of the U.S. players have difficulty transitioning from field lacrosse to the box lacrosse game, reducing the number coming to play. Also, the past three seasons saw the number of minor players willing to play Jr. B drastically decline. The 2020 season sees less than a handful of minor players moving into the Jr. B ranks.

After requests by staff to the league to modify the schedule to meet the changing environment of players at college and university were denied, the opportunity to have a viable team was eliminated. Players in U.S. colleges aren't available to play until the middle of May. This, however, at minimum, is six games into the season. This isn't new for the Thunderhawks, but due to a low number of upcoming players capable of playing at the Jr. B level, the team could be out of the playoff race by mid season. Not the ideal situation the team staff were willing to take on. For this reason, the team is taking a one-year sabbatical to bolster their position for the 2021 season.

There is a plan. The NOTL Minor intermediate team has always been a development team for the Jr. Bs. The 2020 season will not be the exception. With the help of last season's intermediate coaches, Jr. B managerial staff and one of their coaches, the Intermediate staff will attempt to put together a team which will be able to resurrect the Jr. Bs for the 2021 season.

The Thunderhawks would like to invite all players wanting to play Jr. B in 2021 to sign up for the 2020 intermediates through the NOTL Minor League webpage at <https://niagaralacrosse.com/> after the new year.



John Wagner #97, has recently been drafted in the National Lacrosse League, thanks in part to his early experience with the Thunderhawks. (Photo supplied)

To our 2019 sponsors of the Thunderhawks, we thank you for years of continued support. We invite you, and any new sponsors, to continue that support of the Thunderhawks' future by sponsoring the Intermediate team. Contact Dave Mines through the Jr. B web-

site, <https://thunderhawksjrb.ca/>, for more information.

To our community and the alumni, for any future team to be successful, requires volunteers. We implore you to remember your years of playing for the Thunderhawks and recognize it requires a lot

of hands doing lots of jobs in order to get a team to run. If 2021 is going to be a success, it will be determined by the number of behind-the-scenes supporters we can arrange. Go to <https://thunderhawksjrb.ca/register-an-alumni/> to add your support.



Ryan Wagner is a National Lacrosse League player who grew up playing lacrosse in NOTL. (Photo supplied)

Harvest time



It's harvest time, and the van der Laar fruit stand on the Niagara River Parkway had lots of beautiful fresh local fruit for sale this weekend. (Fred Mercnik)

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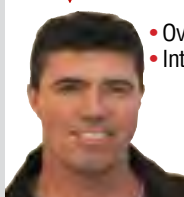


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