agara Stone Road in Virgil to Community Church on Niagara in Virgil. Would like at a drop-in centre about what activities they local teens to begin thinking to work out, that she wants ized, with just a few details opening a youth hub real close to seeing her goal of Youth campus has a location, kids' input needed.
Affordable housing, park and rides needed

Continued from page 1

Glendale development, litigation with developers, traffic and parking, tourism growth, noise from tourism events, housing shortages, short-term rentals and taxes were all hot topics.

Development

Council candidate Tim Balasik introduced himself as a life-long resident of NOTL interested in community planning, business and agricultural preservation, and the creation of a recreational plan and a tourism strategy. Asked about the unprecedented growth and significant development in Glendale, he said he thinks of the area “as our front door.”

A number of residents agree with the district plan in place, “which is huge,” he said, and the planned development “is not going to be a small community: It’s slated for another 15,000 residents, double what we have now.” The plan includes green space, parks, a main street and housing for people coming to the area, and will also provide an opportunity to create “a real great space” for people coming to Niagara.

Parking

Incumbent Allan Bisback, spoke of the many challenges faced by this term of council, with plummeting revenue around to various places. “When we have had 12 years of tourism as an economic driver, there to NOTL, and visitors from other businesses which might be happy to participate so people in town ‘could be ferried around to various places’

Residents could also use a hop-on hop-off service to get to the grocery store, he said, and if elected, he will be pressing council to get this done.

Gary Burroughs, who has been a lord mayor, regional chair and a town councillor, is hoping for another term at the council table. He spoke of the town changing, and as a long-time resident and former business owner in the hospitality industry, said he wants to ensure it changes for the better.

Continued on page 3

Balasik stepped up with a caution that it would be “unfortunate” to plan a parking station to accommodate people travelling by hovercraft, “when we don’t know whether or not this Hoverlukin is going to hap-

He suggested holding off on building parking lots and taking over green space. “We could wait on that and see what other options are coming down the pipe.”

Balancing needs of tourism and residents, affordable housing

Gary Burroughs, who has been a lord mayor, regional chair and a town councilor, is hoping for another term at the council table. He spoke of the town changing, and as a long-time resident and former business owner in the hospitality industry, said he wants to ensure it changes for the better.

Asked about balancing the needs of residents and tourism in relation to special events, such as concerts and fireworks
‘Everything about life in NOTL is about balance’

“Everything we have in NOTL is about balance,” said Mell. He spoke about events completely disappearing during COVID, and how much he enjoyed sitting at a friends house recently and hearing music from the Jackson-Triggs Amphitheatre, picturing everyone smiling and enjoying the music. “I think we do have to have some kind of restrictions when we consider this within our community,” with so many residents living close to event venues, but added “we need to appreciate why we moved here, all the things we want to enjoy, and what NOTL has to offer.”

Council candidate Nick Ruller, a former fire chief of NOTL, who with his wife is raising four children in Virgil, also addressed that balance when questioned about it specifically in regard to the wine industry, so it sustains a viable agricultural base and expands the town visitation experience.

Mell spoke of the need for a tourism strategy that would include the agricultural industry, and engaging residents “in identifying what is appropriate and what is complementary to the existing neighbourhoods.” It’s no secret there have been no complaints about music and fireworks, he said. “We need to approach it with an empathic perspective,” and ensure improvements that contribute “to the overall quality of life.”

Mayoral candidate Vaughn Goettler also weighed in, cautioning complaining about a winery if it’s following the noise bylaws, and suggesting if the winery and its concerts were there first, “we have to be careful where we pick to live.”

Adriana Cater-Vizzari introduced herself as “the rookie candidate,” with a strong desire to contribute to the leadership of the community. She spoke of growth in NOTL, including St. Davids, where she lives with her husband and four children. Her village “has more than tripled in size in the last decade. While this growth is exciting, it must be carefully managed,” with a growth strategy that is “strong, sustainable and balanced that takes into account all of NOTL.”

Her question addressed affordable housing “in a timely manner,” especially for those working in the service industry. She agreed with the importance of growing affordable housing, and suggested the town must look to upper levels of government for funding, for guidance on what the numbers should be, and how they will support the town — the solution has to go beyond municipal policies.

Ruller added to Cater-Vizzari’s comments, saying “what we really need is a mixture of housing,” that will include long-term rentals for service industry staff. “There are implications and unintended consequences of not having a good mixture of available rental housing, and we’ve seen that before.”

Short-term rentals impact the availability of long-term rentals, he said. “There’s definitely an opportunity to look at those as they are intertwined. There are direct relationships between the two and if we don’t get a handle on long-term rental housing availability we are affecting the sustainability of the various industries we’re trying to support here.”

Incumbent Wendy Cheropita, who introduced herself as someone with solid business skills, and experience in marketing and branding, also spoke to the issue of affordable housing, saying long-term rentals are being turned into short-term accommodations. Asked what she would do about short-term rentals, she said they can be a blessing, when great Bath families are involved or local companies are managing them, and they offer “a variety of options for visitors when they’re travelling here.” On the other hand, there are a small number of “really bad actors” running them, or trying to get away without licensing them. Council has instituted a program called Granicus that goes after those that are unlicensed, which had numbered more than 100, and “now we’re down to just a couple.”

She also spoke of a new bylaw, not yet passed, that will address issues that have been annoying people, such as those with pools and hot tubs, and intended consequences.

“Everything about life in NOTL is about balance”

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Continued on page 4

Continued from page 2

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Short-term rentals supported, with cautions

Continued from page 3

owners who don’t live in NOTL. Bisback, who with his wife ran a B&B in town for 10 years, offered his perspective — that hosted Airbnb improve the experience in NOTL, with owners and operators actually acting as a concierge for NOTL, and offering "a much-improved, different experience than some some of the hotels provide."

Burrroughs, who sat on the short-term rental committee, which came up with 33 recommendations for a new bylaw in a July 2021 report, said “it’s time we did something about it,” including making the important distinction between hosted and unhosted rentals, as described in the new bylaw. "I was so pleased with it," he said. "In many ways, it's only the beginning here."

Mel, with a wine tour company and a family member with a bed and breakfast, was also asked about short-term rentals, and how to work with them to ensure dialogue and consultation. "There is an issue of "demonizing the problem rather than trying to seek a viable solution," he said. Short-term rentals are a "key part of our culture. Not everybody that comes to NOTL wants to stay in a hotel or a B&B. We have a lot of families that want to visit, that want to stay for a whole week." NOTL also wants a diverse group of visitors, he added. "We understand the fear of hollowing out neighbourhoods, "but I do feel we can tackle this in a more sustainable way," suggesting a limit to licences in some areas. "I think we can make sure that the balance of short-term rentals and residents can be addressed fairly."

Betty Disero, hoping for a second term, talked about the important balance of businesses, tourism and residents, including support of art and culture. "We need more upscale tourism to make sure it works for tourists and residents," she said.

Asked about protecting tourism into the future, she spoke of the tourism strategy and a collaborative effort with all stakeholders, businesses, tourism operators and residents, and dealing with issues such as parking, traffic and accountable accommodations that take care of their properties and don’t let people have big parties, as opposed to one person renting it and inviting 20 of their friends.

With respect to traffic and parking, she said, "I’m thrilled to have worked with Chris Morgan on the HoberLink project,” with an electric shuttle coming into NOTL bringing people who will be renting bicycles, walking tours and, and getting a massive amount of traffic off local highways and streets.

She also spoke of an educational hub to keep high school students in NOTL and assisted living for seniors. "So taking all of that into account should help our tourism industry and residents live compatibly."

Katherine Reid, a council candidate from Queenston, introduced herself as a university graduate with a degree in geography and statistics.

"One of her solutions for balancing tourism is to take it further abroad by supporting agribusinesses, including wineries, craft breweries and farm markets. They need more recognition and to be easier to locate, she said, and putting those small businesses on the map would take tourists to locations where they won't be such a bother to residents."

Erwin Wiens, hoping for a second term on council, is "born and bred in NOTL and married to my wife Dorothy for 31 years — we've been a team throughout this whole journey," he said by way of introduction. He was also asked about tourism: is it an asset or detriment to the taxpayer? "It’s an asset, he said. "You can see it by the flowers we have downtown, you can see it by the orchards and the vineyards, you can see it by the Niagara Parkway that you drive down, you can see it in the Old Town, you can see it everywhere."

Compared to any other town in North America, it’s the prettiest, as a direct result of tourism. “We don’t exist without tourism. Grapes don’t exist if we don’t have wineries. There’s nothing else we can do with them. The flowers downtown are paid for by tourism. Taxes are expensive based on the mill rate, but relative to what’s happening and what you get for it.”

Tourism “made us prosperous and it made us strong, and we made a beautiful place for families,” he said. “We should be welcoming people to share what we have. We should be looking at it as something that is vibrant and exciting, with blessings beyond what we deserve.”

"And that’s what we have to keep looking at, not as one in isolation, but as one industry taking something away. We’re all contributing, and everyone matters."

Mayoral candidate Gary Zalepa, entrepreneur and businessperson now with an executive role for a national real estate company that’s given him leadership experience, was asked about developing stricter bylaws rather than hiring additional bylaw officers for stricter enforcement.

“It’s the definition of insanity, to do something over and over again,” he said. "Government writes some rules, and they go well, that didn’t work, so we’re just going to write some more rules, and then when that doesn’t work we’re looking at writing some more rules. I have a big problem with that. If you really want something to be enforced and you’re writing a rule for a reason, you have to actually put the resources in to stand behind it.”

When the community says a particular item is worthy of a bylaw, “then I think they want it enforced. And it’s incumbent upon us as a council to ensure we resource staff adequately, and we provide them with the training and the resources necessary to properly navigate that with the offender.”

Cater-Vizari added that increasing bylaws shows stakeholders feel unrepresented, because they feel that’s the only way they can have a voice, and be heard. A well-rounded council can make a difference, and make residents feel they can turn to council members to

Continued on page 8
Always keen to break new grounds, Ironwood Cider will be hosting its first Oktoberfest event featuring local eats and drinks on October 15th and 16th. Joining Ironwood are local wine producer Palatine Hills and St. Catharines-based Dragan Brewing, where there will be Oktoberfest themed libation available at the event – unique one-off German-inspired cider and beer.

On the food front, the event will feature traditional German dishes prepared by Chef Hos at District Tapas Bar, and with the focus of bringing diverse flavours, Ironwood is excited to have well-known food truck operators Jamaican Patty Shack and The Runaway Greek joining. In addition to food and drinks, there will also be live music and games running through the day.

Formerly known as Sunnybrook Farm, Ironwood Cider House was launched earlier this year with the vision of bringing more diversity into the region. A long-time cidemaker in the region, Ironwood is committed to making contemporary-style cider that explores flavours from all forms of cultures. It hopes that its Lakeshore Oktoberfest would act as a catalyst in bringing more diversity and showcasing its offering to visitors.

Ironwood Cider House would not be complete without its food partner, The District Tapas Bar. Located on St. Paul St. in St. Catharines, the restaurant is known for its internationally inspired small-plate menu. Proprietor Chef Hos comes from a family of rich culinary background and moved back home a few years back to pursue his passion of creating international flavours. Prior to founding The District, he was the regional chef of Scaddabush, overseeing the food operation of the entire chain.

The menu features crowd favorites from caramelized onion and rosemary hummus to sesame teriyaki brussels sprouts. Achieving authenticity in a contemporary offering is no easy task, however, it’s a challenge that Chef Hos craves, as it allows him to put a different spin on classic dishes. The kitchen is opened from 11 AM to 6 PM everyday of the week and delivers an international experience that is a rare find in the region.
Municipal elections have most direct impact

It’s always been a puzzle that many people are more interested in federal and provincial elections than elections that decide who will make decisions closest to home.

Although issues dealt with by upper levels of government might seem more important — they certainly have an impact on more voters — municipal, and in our case, regional decisions can literally affect what happens in our backyards, and can very directly impact our quality of life. Pools. Fences. Building a bigger deck — or your neighbour building a bigger deck. Whether you can play pickleball in a sports park.

Think of all the issues candidates have talked about in recent weeks, and whether they matter to you. For example, zoning bylaws and contentious planning might put you to sleep — until a house on your street, even beside you, in your quaint little neighbourhood of bungalows or cottages, is torn down, to be replaced with a three-storey home that stretches as close as possible to lot lines, with windows that either look into yours or down on your backyard.

Scotland and London. The Duchess is a tragically maligned figure manipulated by the Duke, the law and a society that supports men and their foibles while treating women less sympathetically.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to go to movies. Until he resumes going to theatres, he has graciously agreed to share his opinions, through “short and sweet” reviews, of Netflix series and movies for “The Local.”

Those are obvious examples. Other issues that have been discussed, if you think about them, might not seem important to you now, but could one day — even within the next four years.

Your neighbours next door might decide to downsize, their house is sold and turned into a short-term rental with a hot tub or pool, and an absentee landlord allows it to be rented out for a bachelor or bachelorette party. You wouldn’t be the first person in town to find yourself in that predicament.

Other issues such as transit, recreational facilities and garbage collection can impact our lives significantly.

So while it might be hard to distinguish who to vote for, and reading about such issues and how the candidates prioritize them seems a sure-fire way to enjoy a long nap, if you don’t pay attention, you could run into problems when it’s too late to do anything about them.

While this isn’t a plug for any specific candidate, one councillor said something recently that seems a good way to look at voting. Expect our candidates to be ambitious.

Raise expectations. Look for good listeners, willing to collaborate to get things done. Council members don’t need to be experts on everything, nor do they have to agree — they may each bring something different to the table.

And as we make decisions sometimes that aren’t perfect, we choose the best option available for the best results, and in the case of councillors, for the most amount of people.

Collaboration was mentioned often at the recent candidates’ meeting, likely because there hasn’t been enough of it in this last term of council. Look at candidates you respect as people, and trust to work collaboratively for the best results. “Getting to the table with preconceived notions without assessing options is not a recipe for success.”

That was from Allan Bisback, and it’s a good way to look at candidates. Are they willing to listen, to residents and others at the council table? Collaboration may mean compromise, but that’s not a bad way to solve problems.

Another good point made in regards to voting was from Nick Ruller. This is paraphrasing what he said at the Royal George, that rather than voting for someone because they are “from here,” remember those not “from here” can be just as passionate about the community. Look for candidates who value what Niagara-on-the-Lake was, the quality of life it offers, and are committed to protecting what makes it so special, Ruller suggested.

That probably describes every candidate, but the point is, learn about each of them, make your choices, and vote. It may be as simple as deciding who seems most likely to follow through on their promises.

Advance polls are Saturday, Oct. 8 at St. Davids Public School on York Road, Wednesday, Oct. 12 at the municipal office on Four Mile Creek Road in Virgil, Saturday, Oct. 15 at the community centre, and Wednesday, Oct. 19 at the municipal office.

All advance polls are open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information visit: www.nofc.com/council-governments/elections

Letters! We want letters!

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

The Local will print letters in the election in the Oct. 12 edition, but not the week of Oct. 19, the edition before the election.

Water ceremony at Navy Hall

An event to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement was held at Navy Hall last week. Theodore Too, Great Lakes Guide and ambassador of SWIM, DRINK, FISH made an appearance offshore. A traditional birch bark canoe, crafted by Chuck Commanda, master canoe builder was on display and launched during the event and used as part of the water ceremony and the Inaagami (clear water) Project, an initiative to protect the Great Lakes. Those who participated came away with a much deeper understanding of Indigenous views and caring for our water resources. (David Gilchrist)

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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

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Donald Combe Special to The Local

A Very British Scandal (Prime 2022) is a mini series about the marriage and its breakdown of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, set in 1963.

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905-688-3711

Keep up to date with your local news. Get notified instantly when news is posted. Free to sign up.

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Niagara-on-the-Lake residents want candidates to promise that the town’s tourism strategy will be strongly focused on residents, a brand making NOTL first a great place to live and second a nice place to visit. decently measuring success by the benefits that a smart tourism strategy can bring to the residents, while reducing the nuisance of high volume tourism.

The tourism industry should want a focused strategy that stops wasting their marketing dollars attracting large, uneconomic and disruptive crowds. The greedy industry should share are our goal of not turning Niagara-on-the-Lake into a mini Niagara Falls Clifton Hill amusement/party space or an over-crowded Toronto. All councillors should want to please as many constituents as possible and not be distracted by loud boisterous local and nonlocal special interests.

Instead the industry has convinced some town councillors that are for reelection such as Gary Burroughs, Wendy Cherokeepita and Erwin Wiens to increase tourism for questionable economic benefit and damage to the quality of our lives. These councillors obstructed and delayed the implementation of the MAT and other measures.

The economic benefits of tourism to the town have been overinflated. The town receives absolutely no share of HST, income tax, corporate tax or other taxes from tourism. The majority of property taxes come from residents. The share of property taxes that the town receives directly from tourism is very small compared to the expense and disruption it causes. There are many unfilled jobs and the industry fails to pay living wages to people that have to commute long distances to work here. Why should NOTL taxpayers subsidize unauthorized greenhouse gases?

Like the opioid industry that funded studies to show they caused no harm, some members of the tourism industry have funded a study they tout taking place claiming high-volume tourism is not a problem and can continue to grow forever.

It is time to end the charade and that why residents for Sustainable Tourism supports candidates that will represent the people.

Bruce Gitleman
Spokesperson
Residents for Sustainable Tourism

The debate at the Royal George proved that there is a distinct contrast between the two incumbent, Betty Disero and Gary Zalepa, versus Vaughan Goettler. A vote for Toronto veteran politician Disero means more of the same and damage to the quality of our lives. If one listened closely, Goettler indicated that the province frowns upon the Disero style of governance and will show no patience for the still yet-to-be-approved Official Plan, meaning a provincial takeover of the town is on the horizon.

Goettler gave the people of NOTL a warning, but it likely was overshadowed by Disero’s angry dema- nour with her knee jerk reaction to the criticism of her wanting to manage the town’s business through litigation, same as her embarrassing dispute with her neighbour; all at the cost of taxpayers locally.

Warning: a vote for Disero will be a vote for amalgamation, where NOTL will be a part of the City of Niagara Falls and lose its status as an independent town.

Collectively, by falling asleep at the wheel and also by linging management of the town over the last four years, Disero and Zalepa have set the stage for a takeover by the province. Goettler appears to have the plan to save NOTL from the train wreck leadership that has gotten us here. I don’t think that local citizens have the appe- tite for ongoing litigation and a divisive council, and there is no place for bullies or anger at the coun- cil table either. People are too smart for that. People need transparent, accountable, and respectful civil servants. Somebody needs to remind Disero that she is a civil servant first and to that this town is not a pri- vate business. Time to vote for Goettler.

Peter Rusin
St Davids

Poles provide obstacles for emergency vehicles

I felt I needed to put in my opinion in regards to the poles put in through St Davids. As I was driving through St Davids, I had a thought and am wondering if those who approved these idiotic posts did as well. These barriers not only hold up traffic going through the town if someone is turning left. What if an emergency vehicle where to be behind a row of vehicles and could not get by because there is no where to pull off the road to let them go through? Ev- ery second counts in an emergency, does it not? I think it’s time we vote in a mayor and town council that can use their com- mon sense and not waste taxpayer money on ill- conceived fixes to a non- existent problem.

Jeannette Etherington
NOTL

Answer to Mary Duddy and Grace United Church

I am pleased to report that several of our congregation members at Grace United Church read with interest James Russell’s letter to the editor (The Local, Sept.28) regarding Mary Duddy’s grave.

If Mr. Russell had written to the church directly rather than in a public plat- form, he would have learned that although Mary Duddy was a member of the Grace congregation at one time, there is no record at the church of her being buried in our cemetery. However, there is a memorial plaque in the church inscribed, ‘In Mem- ory of Molly Duddy & Hope Wick’s bequest from Sister Matilda Jane Duddy Miller, so one can assume that she was an active member of the congregation.

We understand that Mary was known as ‘Molly’ by sev- eral of her friends. We suggest Mr. Russell’s future searches should cover both names.

A long-time member of the congregation recalls well that Mary reportedly had two sisters, one of whom lived in Buffalo. The other one reportedly nursed in To- ronto, and later moved back to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The long-time parishioner recognises that Molly, as they knew her, was never buried in the Grace cemetery and would have been buried somewhere else. To confirm this, some years ago the records of Grace United were sent to the United Church Archives in Toronto, convenient for Mr. Russell, who lives in Toronto, if he wants to do a detailed search.

Mr. Russell should be aware that in all cemeteries the upkeep and repair of the headstones, which are pur- chased by the family members, are the responsibility of the members of the deceased’s own family. To use Mr. Rus- sell’s own words, we are all ‘shocked and saddened’ by the lack of interest which members of some families have in keeping intact their tributes to their departed. We note that this situation is not unique to Grace but is wide- spread in Ontario cemeteries, and is indeed very sad.

And if Mr. Russell had done research on Mary Dud- dy’s tenure at our local library he would have learned, from the library’s own website, that the late Genda Molson’s term exceeded that of Mary Dud- dy by a considerable number of years. However, a fine pho- tograph of Mary Duddy is also displayed on that website. We are pleased that we have been able to enlighten Mr. Russell and wish him well in his quest.

John G. Sayers
Trustee, Grace United Church

Candidate meeting showed clear distinctions

The debate at the Royal George proved that there is a distinct contrast between the two incumbent, Betty Disero and Gary Zalepa, versus Vaughan Goettler. A vote for Toronto veteran politician Disero means more of the same and damage to the quality of our lives. If one listened closely, Goettler indicated that the province frowns upon the Disero style of governance and will show no patience for the still yet-to-be-approved Official Plan, meaning a provincial takeover of the town is on the horizon.

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Jeannette Etherington
NOTL
Lawsuits, development guidelines, taxes debated

Continued from page 4

represent them if they have an issue, rather than requiring new bylaws.

Lawsuits

Mayoral candidate Vaughn Goettler talked about people — seniors who need long-term care, youth who need jobs, business owners who need staff, and staff who can’t afford to live in town. He spoke of the need for housing and transportation for them, and a strategy to attract upscale tourism.

Asked whether the money the town spends on litigation with developers “is a loss to the town or a necessary evil,” Goettler said, “I see it as both. Winding up in litigation is a failure of communication, and usually comes from “an unclear set of guidelines and enforcement of those guidelines,” he said. “We have to fight for things that we believe in. But we need to make sure everybody has the rules clear at the beginning” if the rules are clearly enforced, and supported by an official plan, “people know the rules of the game.” Developers are members of our community, have families here, and people who work for them work here, he said. “They do not to causes just like all the rest of us. So I don’t see why we can’t have a community development program that collaborates with our developers, and embraces them as part of our social fabric. If we don’t get it right, it’s up to us, and I’ll make sure we have clear rules.”

Disero disagreed with his stance, saying some lawsuits are “slip and fall” normal for municipalities. But “the one everybody talks about” is a result of council deciding to designate part of the Randwood Estate as heritage, and “immediately the developer came forward, took us to court, took us to the Conservation Review Board, took us to LPAT (the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal). Our council has been responding and trying to protect those heritage areas from over-development. It’s not that we want to fight, and it’s not that we can negotiate it. What are we going to say? Okay, take half of the heritage and leave the other half? We had to defend our town, our heritage and the culture of our town.”

About a second big lawsuit, she said, “If a member of our council hadn’t sent a letter or an email to (developer) Rainer Hammed, he would not have a case to sue. Again, I’m not giving him money to blackmail our town.”

She told The Local after the meeting — some in the audience were confused about what she was referring to — that her comment referred to the internal control bylaw passed at a special council meeting held just days after the 2018 election, and the email “damaged the town.” Hummel told The Local the email was sent months after the lawsuit was filed, and would not have affected his decision to sue.

Zalepa also responded to the question about litigation, saying the town “has abdicated the responsibility to set really clear growth policies, and my colleague candidate got it right in the fact that when the council and government of the day says to you, ‘I’m going to do my best to fight and protect for you,’ but they haven’t done the work to get the policies and the plans in place to successfully protect you then they’re actually just feeding you a line, and they’re spending your money, just to make you feel better.” They know they’re not going to win, she added, “so you have to get up in front of it, get the policies done well. We need to work together as a community to identify what those policies can be, and be very clear with the development community what this town wants.”

Taxes and tax rebates

A.J. Harlond

A question about taxes, with 22 per cent coming from the general levy on commercial taxes, the highest percentage of any municipality in Niagara, while the residential general taxation levy was the lowest proportional percentage of any municipality in Niagara, stunned him.

“I feel I probably don’t have all the information I need to give you a credible answer,” he said, admitting to being very green. “But what we need to do is work collaboratively with our unique skill sets to offer solutions. By building a team in my business we get great answers. I hope you stay with me on this venture.”

McCallum rose to respond to the question, saying the larger portion of taxes in NOTL goes to the region, based on assessment. “We need to press the region. We are the third largest taxpayer to the region and we need to get more services for what we pay.”

Council candidate Maria Mavridis introduced herself as a long-time resident with family businesses in town. She has a daughter at Crossroads Public School, and said she would like to see more balanced recreational activities planned for both young and older residents. “Our youth are the future of this town, and while we preserve the past, we need to also ensure that we set a future of the next generation.”

In response to a question about Heritage District home and commercial property owners receiving grants from the heritage tax rebate, she said she supports them. She has worked with a few local business owners in the Heritage District, and although the program is in place, “there’s a lot more that needs to be done to firm it up.”

It would allow business owners to fix and restore their buildings “with money that would come back to us. There are a lot of buildings on Queen Street that do need a little bit of maintenance, and we would all benefit from it, not just visitors, but residents as well.”

“Tin in support of any credit the government wants to give,” she added.

Meet and greet with GARY ZALEPA

Candidate for Lord Mayor

Common sense leadership for Niagara-on-the-Lake

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Thursday, October 6

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Four Mile Creek Road

and

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For more information visit: friendsfortorgette.org or call 905-466-6601

THE BATTLE OF QUEENSTON HEIGHTS

Saturday, October 15, 2022, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Brock’s Monument open 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Join our costumed interpreters for battle site tours at 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 12:00 pm, 1:00 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm

Book your tour at: friendsfortorgette.square.site

200 pm – Battle of Queenston Heights Re-enactment

An re-enactment of the historic battle which helped form the nation of Canada, followed by a moment of Silence.

A REENACTMENT IN RECOGNITION OF THE 210TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF QUEENSTON HEIGHTS

October 5, 2022

www.NOTLlocal.com

THE NOTL local
Family's past, future generations behind desire to preserve town

Tim Balasiuk
Council Candidate

Having the privilege of growing up in the hospitality and tourism industry, I have had the fortunate opportunity of being raised in a community that has seen tremendous growth in all sectors, agriculture to hospitality. Having worked myself at a number of local hotels and wineries, including the Pillar & Post, which was founded by my grandfather in the 1970s — he had a vision to convert the former canning factory to a hotel. Seeing the value of future tourism in our community is something that is in my blood. My grandfather had a passion for doing things right, and because of this I am interested in running for council. Not only do I feel like I owe it to my family, but also to my community. If I have the opportunity to have a say in the future of Niagara-on-the-Lake I feel obligated to play a part in it. I currently reside in town with my wife Michelle of 15 years, also a lifelong resident. My wife and I are both entrepreneurs, owner and operators of Puddle Niagara, which we founded 10 years ago. Seasonally our company hosts summer kids camps, teaching kids about water safety on the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, while providing access to the water for locals and tourists alike.

I love this town, and strongly feel a responsibility for preserving it, both in recognition of my family’s role in its history but also my desire to make it the best it can be for future generations.

My name is Tim Balasiuk and I seek your support Oct. 24.

tim4notl.com

Transportation, tourism, recreation need clear plans

Allan Bisback
Council Candidate

My name is Allan Bisback, and I am currently serving on your council. Raised in southern Ontario, during my working career, I was responsible for deploying significant change throughout the organizations. That included thoroughly understanding the challenges, collaborating with all the interested parties, and ensuring action was taken. I have used those same skills on behalf of our residents this past four years. We need a town council who listens and collaborates to achieve the best outcome for the most people. One that makes well-informed decisions, and that works with our residents, no matter where they live in Niagara-on-the-Lake. While we don’t need to agree, council members need to read their briefs, attend, and debate. My track record the past four years demonstrates I take the role seriously. I make decisions based on facts, not emotion.

I would like to be a champion for all the residents of NOTL and help move our community in the right direction. I am asking your support as town councillor: abisback@bell.net

Home 905.468.8550
Cell 289.241.9977
allanabisback.com

Family’s past, future generations behind desire to preserve town

Allan Bisback

The Highest Total Volume of Local Sales for the Past Decade

Highest volume in Niagara-on-the-Lake from 01/01/2011 to 09/21/2021. Source MLS.

Christopher Bowron*** ........................................ 905.468.2269
Kim Elliott** ...................................................... 905.330.9011
Randall Armstrong* ........................................... 905.651.2977
Victoria Bolstad* .................................................... 905.941.3708
Philip Bowron* ...................................................... 905.346.7625
Bonnie Grimm* ..................................................... 905.468.1056
Nicole Vanderperk* ................................................ 905.941.4460

Viviane Elliott* ...................................................... 905.468.2142
Travessa Elliott* ..................................................... 905.380.8012
Jane Elliott* ......................................................... 905.568.8276
Cheryl Cameron* ................................................... 905.341.2597
Sarah Gladie* ....................................................... 905.655.2458
Linda Williams* ..................................................... 905.491.3420
Caroline Polgrabia* ................................................ 905.933.4983

Patricia Atherton* ................................................... 905.933.4983
Weston Millar* ...................................................... 905.213.6641
Giovanni Rodriguez Martinez* ........................ 905.328.2145
Polly Watson* ....................................................... 905.246.3387

***Broker of Record ** Broker of Sales Representative

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**Rely on me for good governance, collaboration and civility**

Adriana Cater-Vizzari, with Gigi, Antonia, Loretta, Matthew, and her husband Cory.

Adriana Cater-Vizzari  
Council Candidate

Many people have asked why I want to be part of our town council, and why now. Community building is who I am; and connecting with and being in service of people, especially when it comes to the betterment of our community, is what I do best. I love this town and I am deeply committed to its well-being both today and in the future.

I live in St. Davids with my husband Cory and our four children. (Yes, I am a mom of four and yes, I have time for this.) Niagara-on-the-Lake has seen and continues to see exponential growth. While this growth is exciting, it must be carefully managed. Managing growth while preserving the heritage that makes our town so special, is a critical task. A formal growth strategy — one that is strong, sustainable and balanced, and that takes into account all of Niagara-on-the-Lake — is essential. St. Davids has more than tripled in size in the last decade, yet currently lacks representation on council. This needs to change.

What can you rely on me for? You can rely on me to prioritize good governance on council, this includes collaboration and civility both on council and with town staff. You can also rely on me to raise awareness, listen, and advocate; to ensure an equitable process where all interests are accounted for and all information has been gathered when it comes to the issues that matter to you and our town. You can rely on me to respond when you reach out, and to get you an answer.

I am community driven and action oriented. I have the interest, energy and skill-set to act on your behalf and it would be a privilege to do so.

adrianacatervizzari.com  
a cv.notl@gmail.com  
289-236-0670

Gary Burroughs  
Council Candidate

For more than 50 years, I have lived, worked and raised my family in Niagara-on-the-Lake. During that time I owned and operated the Oban Inn, where we enjoyed serving many members of the community and their families. I was drawn into politics as lord mayor (2000-2010), regional councillor (2010-2018), and as town councillor (2018-2022). Throughout the past 22 years of service, I have developed a deep and valuable understanding of our strengths and challenges.

At this point we are at a critical stage. We must immediately address the Official Plan, including revisions to the zoning bylaw with streetscape, the transportation plan to address parking and traffic, the tourism strategy to navigate this changing industry, and clarification on the new municipal accommodation tax (MAT).

Growth must be better managed so developers are clear on what the town expects and requires. Significant changes to proposed plans cannot continue to be adjusted once plans have been approved. The town must address development issues at Randwood, Parliament Oak School, as well as the old hospital site.

We must support tourism by ensuring our visitors stay at our lodgings, eat at our restaurants, enjoy our wineries and visit our historic sites, including the Shaw Festival Theatre. We must also manage the impact of tourism, including short term rentals.

World-class farms, nurseries, vineyards and wineries, continue to thrive in our rural areas. We must support them on issues including viability, threats (such as phragmites), the protection of water sources and the enforcement of land fill regulations.

Over the years we have managed to navigate NOTL through pressures of progress and immense change. Today, however, these threats have never been greater. I have the context with which to meet these challenges and I will dedicate myself to working together to lead this town into the future. Please vote for me on Oct. 24.

905-658-8717  
b urroughs2.gary@gmail.com

Gary Burroughs  

Adriana Cater-Vizzari  

Right time. Right choice for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

VOTE

Vaughn Goettel  
Lord Mayor

Accountable Leadership  
Financial Integrity  
Preserving NOTL Heritage

My Three Key Priorities

- Save NOTL from amalgamation and becoming a suburb of Niagara Falls.
- Tourism Strategy addressing traffic, parking and related issues; promoting Agriculture and safe bicycle tourism.
- Community development including amenities for Seniors and Youth, housing and local school solutions.

www.vaughngoingettler.com
Alistair (AJ) Harlond

I am proud to highlight my background in brand management and education, national accounts, company strategy. The experience helped me build valuable business skills and shaped my personal integrity. I then spent six years leading the branding and marketing strategy for the Ontario wine industry, delivering growth and over $5 million in annual marketing funding from the province. For seven years I have been a small business strategic planning consultant. I am committed to preserving our heritage, neighbourhood character, farmland, and cultural resources that make Niagara-on-the-Lake a great place to live, raise a family, and retire. I have learned so much in the past four years, and want to put the experience to good use. I am proud to highlight four accomplishments. I took a tough stand to create a bylaw to stop cannabis from growing here to protect valuable farmland and residential communities. I proposed the successful Town Ambassador Program, rather than hire more bylaw officers. As co-chair of the strategic planning committee I took a leadership role to ensure that customer service and preservation of heritage became a priority, and I collaborated with residents throughout the community leading to improved road safety. If elected I will be a champion for creating a community vision to define what we want to build and where we want to build it. Our community needs senior’s residences, rental apartments for retirees, services and schools for families. You have told me that you want to see the big issues prioritized, like fixing the planning policies to preserve our neighbourhood character. We can do that by implementing the Community Permit Planning System, expanding the heritage district, and returning to contextual zoning. Residents and council need a voice in the decision-making process at the region to tackle the current situation in St.Davids. The Glendale development will impact all of us. Let’s ensure it is something we can all be proud of. Council needs to complete outstanding projects like the short-term rental bylaw, and the tourism strategy to address issues and protect quality of life. I want to keep tax increases low, and ensure funding is there for major infrastructure projects. I will use my experience wisely.

Worldwide, wine is the world’s most popular alcoholic beverage, with the wine industry delivering over $5 million in annual marketing funding from the province. For seven years I have been a small business strategic planning consultant. I am committed to preserving our heritage, neighbourhood character, farmland, and cultural resources that make Niagara-on-the-Lake a great place to live, raise a family, and retire. I have learned so much in the past four years, and want to put the experience to good use. I am proud to highlight four accomplishments. I took a tough stand to create a bylaw to stop cannabis from growing here to protect valuable farmland and residential communities. I proposed the successful Town Ambassador Program, rather than hire more bylaw officers. As co-chair of the strategic planning committee I took a leadership role to ensure that customer service and preservation of heritage became a priority, and I collaborated with residents throughout the community leading to improved road safety.

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Wendy Cheropita

I was born and raised in Niagara, and earned a business degree, with post-graduate studies in strategic planning and finance. I spent 20 years in leadership roles with top global wine companies, including roles in education, national accounts, brand management and strategy. The experience helped me build valuable business skills and shaped my personal integrity. I then spent six years leading the branding and marketing strategy for the Ontario wine industry, delivering growth and over $5 million in annual marketing funding from the province. For seven years I have been a small business strategic planning consultant. I am committed to preserving our heritage, neighbourhood character, farmland, and cultural resources that make Niagara-on-the-Lake a great place to live, raise a family, and retire. I have learned so much in the past four years, and want to put the experience to good use. I am proud to highlight four accomplishments. I took a tough stand to create a bylaw to stop cannabis from growing here to protect valuable farmland and residential communities. I proposed the successful Town Ambassador Program, rather than hire more bylaw officers. As co-chair of the strategic planning committee I took a leadership role to ensure that customer service and preservation of heritage became a priority, and I collaborated with residents throughout the community leading to improved road safety.

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Priorities: balanced tourism, families, culture, heritage

Maria Mavridis
Council Candidate

I moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake 30 years ago. My family has owned and operated businesses on Queen Street for just as long. After graduating from Niagara District Secondary School, I studied business marketing. I have lived in Old Town, Glenelde and presently in Virgil where my daughter Hope attends Crossroads School.

I have volunteered in the community through the Niagara Nursery School board, the NOTL Museum fundraising committee, and as an advisor on the Lord Mayor’s Youth Advisory Committee, and continue to raise funds for Niagara charities with Anchor Niagara.

I believe that we are one community, and all decisions at council should be made collaboratively with input from residents, business owners and tourism partners.

My priorities for this town are a balanced tourism sector, young families, and preserving our culture and heritage, which includes our agricultural community.

I am very excited and supportive of the new NOTL Youth Hub and would like to see a more balanced recreational activities plan for both young and older residents.

Our youth are the future of this town and while we preserve the past, we need to ensure that we set a future for the next generation.

info@mariamavridis.com
www.mariamavridis.com

Innovation, financial responsibility, tough decisions

John McCallum
Council Candidate

I am very excited and supportive of the new NOTL Youth Hub and would like to see a more balanced recreational activities plan for both young and older residents.

Our youth are the future of this town and while we preserve the past, we need to ensure that we set a future for the next generation.

www.johnmccallumnotl.com
905-468-0812

Mell offers rational voice, common sense, consistency

Richard Mell
Council Candidate

I am so thankful to have lived and worked in Niagara-on-the-Lake for the past 12 years, and would be grateful for the opportunity to represent all of the residents and small businesses within our community.

As co-owner of Grape Escape Wine Tours, and also a real estate broker with Sotheby’s International Realty Canada, I will be a strong advocate for preserving the communities’ unique history and heritage, whilst planning for our future generations with sustainable growth.

I currently live on York Road in St Davids with my partner Karl, and our Newfoundland dog Junior.

I was driven to run for town council by my passion for our entire community. This is not about what I want to do as a town councillor, it is about you! I want to be the very best representative for the community that I can be. My role as town councillor will be to listen to your concerns, amplify your voices, and ensure that they are heard and addressed in the most efficient and effective way possible.

I would like to add a rational voice, guided by common sense and consistency, that is also capable of seeing things through multiple lenses to reach the best outcome. My focus and strategy would be to move away from the reactive approach that we often see, and be proactive and address some of the systematic failures and weaknesses that appear to cause so many concerns for our residents.

We live in a very special part of the world, and we need people who are willing to represent our residents and businesses that are as passionate about the Niagara-on-the-Lake as I am. I would sincerely appreciate your support on Oct. 24. Please reach out anytime with any questions you may have.

info@richardmellnotl.com
Sandra O’Connor
Council Candidate

It has been a privilege to serve you on council for two-plus years. I raised in the Niagara region and completed my bachelor’s degree in geography and urban planning at Brock University. Over my career, I acquired experience in management and consultancy for multiple scientific organizations in the government, private sector, professional associations, and academia. In particular, running my own geomatics consulting company gave me experience in developing, growing and maintaining a successful business.

I have always been at the service of my community, from neighbourhood community association president, member of professional organizations, to various municipal committees. I believe in giving back and supporting people.

My family is very supportive – daughter Kelly, son-in-law Christian, stepdaughter Clare and stepson Neil.

My priorities: sustainable community by balancing growth needs with environmental health and heritage; finalize the Official Plan; complete secondary plans and zoning by-laws, including contextual zoning and variable density; ensure that all plans are complementary; explore extending the heritage district and designations; protect agricultural land; consider low impact development and green infrastructure; increase our tree canopy and ensure adequate green spaces in the urban environment; implement the NOTL Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and ensure new infrastructure projects use engineering standards for increased climate parameters; create environmental policy based on evidence.

In healthcare: finalize transition plan for nurse practitioner and walk-in clinic and advocate for future infrastructure needs for our Town to thrive.

Sustainable tourism: a balance of socio-cultural, economic and environmental elements; complete the NOTL Tourism Strategy document, addressing the needs of residents, visitors, industry, and environment; fully implement the MAT; explore hop-on hop-off shuttle for tourists with parking outside of Old Town; implement traffic-calming features to increase safety; strengthen bylaw enforcement; and examine short-term rental density; increasing enforcement.

Vote for Sandra, vote for NOTL’s future while respecting the past.

sandraoconnor.ca Facebook: sandraoconnornotl

Katherine Reid
Council Candidate

I enjoy helping others and making the community a better place to live. While in school, I developed a passion for keeping agricultural land viable and maintaining a safe environment. I studied geography and statistics at McMaster University. I feel I can have a good understanding for the town planning department. Spending most of my spare time volunteering, I comprehend the needs of the community.

I have taken a step back from some of my Lions activities to concentrate on the town and help the community I live in.

I was on the town’s agriculture and safety committees and I enjoy my time learning more at each meeting. I have been to many of the open houses and respect the views and desires of the residents.

I am a person concerned about preserving the cultural and historical heritage of the town. I want to support agri-tourism, especially with the smaller producers. I want to see Niagara-on-the-Lake stay one of Canada’s prettiest towns.

I am a winemaker, and have worked in NOTL since 1981. I received the 2015 town volunteer award for working with youth, as I have been involved in many projects with Lions. They include effective speaking and being the provincial LEO chair, and I ran several successful conferences across Ontario. I received the international award for this work. I have worked with youth, seniors and small businesses and would like to continue to help them and their needs. I have lived in Old Town on William Street and now live in Queenston.

I may be moving slowly while I wait for my new hip, so I understand the delays in the health system personally.

My name is Katherine Reid and I would appreciate your vote on Oct. 24.

905-401-1689
winemakerkathy@gmail.com
message Facebook page
Leadership experience and track record of success

Nick Ruller  
Council Candidate

I am excited to be afforded the opportunity to continue to serve the community that I have lived in for most of my life and the place my family considers home. A lifelong learner, I have completed a Master of Arts in leadership through the University of Guelph, a graduate certificate from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill in community preparedness and disaster management, and am a graduate of Ryerson University’s politics and public administration program. Recently, I completed a certificate program in diversity and inclusion through Cornell University. I am also the recipient of the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal, issued by the Governor General of Canada. I look forward to working with our lord mayor, councillors, community stakeholders, and our committed team of staff and volunteers. Strong municipal leadership is a by-product of elected officials with attributes, characteristics, values, and qualities that will contribute to the short-term and long-term well-being of their community.

While out canvassing and speaking with members of the community, I am hearing many speak to the need for candidates that are “from here.” While I can appreciate this sentiment, I think a better description of what is desired is candidates that value what Niagara-on-the-Lake was, have an appreciation for the unique quality of life that it offers, and are committed to protecting the very elements that have made it so special to all of us. That being said, many who are not “from here” also share this very same appreciation for our community.

My experience leading complex organizations and my strong understanding of municipal operations, my track record of success, and my longstanding roots in our community will be vital to our future success. Furthermore, I have demonstrated throughout my life strong character and moral conviction. I am committed to building high-performing teams and have proven myself as a fierce advocate of continuous improvement through citizen-centric service delivery.

On Oct. 24, don’t vote for me because I am “from here,” vote for me because I exhibit the characteristics, attributes, values, and qualities that are critical for effective municipal leadership. www.nickruller.com nick.ruller@gmail.com 416-712-0580

Advocate for agriculture, sustainable budget, collaboration

Erwin Wiens  
Council Candidate

Born and raised in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I attended elementary and high school in town before going to Carleton University, where I met Dorothy. We have four daughters and just last year welcomed a son-in-law into the family.

I grew up in a farming family and now farm 90 acres of grapes. In 2020 I retired from the Hamilton Police Service with 31 years service, including five years at Peel. I have been a board member of the Grape Growers of Ontario since 2015 and also serving on the board of the Grape and Wine Festival until 2021. Dorothy and I are members of the Niagara Lions Club where I serve as the president, and we are members of Cornerstone Community Church.

Currently I chair the regional irrigation committee and the GGO sustainability committee. I sit on the Town agriculture and irrigation committees and am on the craft winery sustainability committee.

As a town councillor for the past four years, I have strived to represent the entire town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. My knowledge in law enforcement, farming and as a current councillor will continue to be an asset with my unique skill set. I am a strong advocate for farming and will continue to champion the Greenbelt and a sustainable irrigation system.

I will continue the dialogue on a holistic tourism industry that listens to all voices and acts for a healthy and vibrant town for residents, businesses and tourists. Furthermore, I have 22 years background in fiscally responsible budgets. The town requires a sustainable budget that represents the responsible and prudent use of the taxpayer purse. I also have many years of experience collaborating with municipal, regional, provincial and federal representatives. These relationships will benefit town strategies moving into the future. www.erwinwienfordnotl.ca

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Teens will have ‘blank space’ to create their area

Continued from page 1

children want to offer pro-
grams for their age groups, she says, but for now the drop-in centre is for kids in Grade 7 to 12.

The committee members are thinking about groups such as Mindful Mondays, when they could invite someone from Pathstone to talk about mental health, or Tech Tuesday that could offer robotics or tech class-
es, Wednesdays could be a day to invite people from the Shaw Festival, Yellow Door Theatre Project or Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre to offer classes, and Thoughtful Thursdays could be focused on life skills for kids who want their Smart Serve, first aid, ba-
cis cooking lessons, simple car mechanics, or anything else they are interested in learning.

They are considering offering some medical and mental health services, but won’t rush into that, fearing they might scare kids away.

They are also planning a cafe, to offer a quiet space should some kids want to do homework, and possibly bringing in a couple of tutors to provide help.

“Once we started talking to people, there were all sorts of interesting ideas, but if the kids just want a place to hang out, with parental guidance, that’s okay. Youth are leading this.”

The goal for their first full semester, which will likely start in the new year, is for 200 unique kids’ visits. “And once the kids start to see the space, they’ll be able to give us lots of ideas.”

Polgrabia grew up in town, attending Parliament Oak and Niagara District Secondary School. She was living in Toronto and work-
ing for the province when she decided to come home and raise her children in NOTL, envisioning them following her footsteps through the halls of the two schools she attended.

In the planning stages are programs such as Mindful Mondays, when they could invite someone from Pathstone to talk about mental health, or Tech Tuesday that could offer robotics or tech classes, Wednesdays could be focused on life skills for kids who want their Smart Serve, first aid, basic cooking lessons, simple car mechanics, or anything else they are interested in learning.

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Instead, those schools closed, and she has spent sever-

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Popular tractor procession returns this year

Penny Coles
The Local

Following the wildly popular and quickly organized tractor parade put together by Dorothy Soo Wiens and Erwin Wiens last year, the farming couple said they'd do it again and it would be bigger and better.

That's a promise they are keeping. Based on the success of last year's Christmas Tractor Processional, they are organizing the second annual event, to be held Thursday, Dec. 15, beginning at 6 p.m.

"At this point we have about 30 tractors entered into the parade," says Dorothy.

The Christmas Parade is back to the format we all love, as is the traditional route through Old Town streets.

The parade will be held Saturday, Dec. 10, beginning at 11 a.m. at King and Centre Streets, and will travel down Castlecoagh to Wellington, along Byron/Prideaux to Simcoe and then along Queen Street, finishing at the Clock Tower.

Parking is limited on parade day. Streets are closed, and parking spaces fill up quickly, so plan ahead.

This year's Honourary Parade Marshal is the Grape Growers of Ontario who are celebrating their 75th anniversary.

"We know many people who live at Pleasant Manor and it really brought them joy to be able to watch the processional from their balconies. It was race for them to be able to just step out from where they live to enjoy this. We also heard from many friends whose parents live at Pleasant Manor how much they loved the processional."

"After it was underway, Dorothy says she and Erwin watch the tractors as they came back into the arena parking lot, where it had started, "and we loved hearing the squeals of delight from the children of families lining the streets. Well, I should say the adults were really enjoying the tractors as well."

There was so much joy and happiness that evening, she says, "it really made our hearts so full."

Last year's tractor procession was organized in a matter of two weeks, and might just have been the hit of the Christmas season.

Once the couple decided what they were going do, they reached out to their farming friends and received immediate support. However, they were amazed at the vehicles that pulled into the Virgil arena parking lot, all decked out in their Christmas glitz.

"There were 19 tractors of various shapes and sizes, says Dorothy, and one of the farmers in the parade said he felt there had to be more than 1,000 people lining both sides of the streets of the route through Virgil to watch. Balconies at Pleasant Manor were full of people, residents and families, who had some of the best views of the parade, which will follow the same route this year."

Dorothy and Erwin stayed at the arena to marshal the vehicles, and were receiving calls all evening congratulating them on organizing such a successful event.

"We had so much fun that night," Dorothy said last year. "I had one person telling me he wanted to buy a tractor so he can be in the parade next year," she laughs, "and a few people ask if they can come out in decorated riding lawn mowers."

A Niagara Regional Police officer was on-hand to help, leading the way and stopping traffic at each street as the tractors moved along the route.

A NOTL fire department ladder truck brought up the rear of the parade.

Virgil, she says, was the perfect place for a tractor parade.

"It's the heart of the farming community, the hub, where farmers come to buy all their supplies. It's where farmers meet and shop. There couldn't be a better place for it."

Last year's parade of tractors was a great success, but this year's procession will be bigger and better than ever. (File photo)
In a world that may seem designed for the young, getting older can feel like you’re becoming invisible. But, of course, you don’t simply stop having fun as you age. Here are some tips to help keep you on your toes to take advantage of the best years of your life.

1. Make a bucket list
   Though it may be a bit cliché, making a list of things you want to accomplish in the remainder of your life can be a great exercise to understand your priorities, and your desired retirement style. Even if you don’t draft a detailed list, give it some thought: Do you crave adventure and new activities, or are you looking forward to slowing down and relaxing? Maybe a bit of both? Recognizing these broad goals can help you realize what will bring you the most fun and enjoyment as you’re making plans.

2. Find fun fitness
   Physical activity is crucial to your overall health and wellness, and it is never too late to get started. In fact, in retirement you may be able to devote more time to activity than you ever did in the past. Whether you walk just half the golf course, dance in the kitchen or join a traditional fitness class, the key is to try out different activities to find one you enjoy. Don’t be afraid to make modifications for ability if you’re worried about injuries.

3. Get connected online
   If you’re not totally comfortable on the internet, you’re not alone. But it can be a great resource to enrich your social life and help maintain your independence. Try getting your grandkids to teach you their favourite online video games; join social media and participate in groups and forums and reconnect with family and friends you normally call once a year. Just be sure to take the time to brush up on how stay cyber safe. Scammers often target older adults assuming they are more vulnerable. So, prove them wrong, and watch out for red flags like strange or threatening requests. Don’t give out personal information like your address, social insurance number or mother’s maiden name and never send money to someone you’ve only met online. Some scammers will target seniors pretending to be a family member. So if you get an urgent message from a relative in need, reach out to them through another means like by telephone to verify it’s really them.

If anyone requests something sensitive, block them and report them to the platform you’re on.

Find more information at GetCyberSafe.ca.

www.newscanada.com

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(NC) Participating in social media networks like Facebook, Instagram or even TikTok later in life can be great fun – a rewarding way to reconnect with far-flung family and old friends – maybe your friends are even begging you to take part.

However, navigating the social niceties can be a bit perplexing for some of us who came of age without the internet. To help give you a leg up, here are a few handy dos and don’ts for interacting with others online.

Do: Use punctuation and emojis
- Without facial expressions or tone of voice, punctuation like an exclamation point or emoji smiley face can help express a positive attitude.
- Conversely, a one word reply with a period may indicate displeasure.
- Several emojis or exclamation points is overkill so keep it light.

Do: Ignore a message or request from a stranger
- It may feel impolite, but ignoring a stranger’s message online is a normal and safe choice.
- Unsolicited messages or requests from strangers often turn out to be scams. The person may threaten you or solicit you for money or personal information. So, it’s best not to engage.

Do: Check your facts
- With lots of misinformation circulating on the web, take information you see with a grain of salt.
- It’s nothing personal to go to the source of a friend’s post or investigate it further on reputable sites.

Don’t: Post something you wouldn’t say in public
- Being kind should be a no-brainer, but it can be easy to forget yourself over on the internet.
- As a rule, don’t say something online you wouldn’t say to the person’s face in public.

Don’t: Sign your name on direct messages
- It’s not necessary or expected. The person will know who you are based on your profile or account.
- If it’s the first time ever you’re messaging the person, then you should certainly say who you are at the start, but not as a sign off.

Don’t: Overshare
- A few pics of your pets may be a nice diversion, but no one wants to know every detail.
- In fact, sharing too much online can be a security risk. Many cyber criminals are on the lookout for information they can use to personalize scams so you’re more likely to fall for them.

Find more information on how to stay safe on social at GetCyberSafe.ca.

www.newscanada.com

Celebrate Seniors Golden Years Guide

Social media etiquette: What’s rude online?

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Royal Henley
Retirement Community by Signature
Harmony Personal Care Services is pleased to celebrate their first anniversary of providing optimal care throughout the Niagara Region.

After working many years together at West Park Health Care Centre in Toronto, Njeri Mugwe and Tanya Dorvil (co-founders and co-directors of Harmony), relocated to Niagara Region with their families in 2015. They shared the 24hr care of a beloved caregiver for 5 years. Upon his passing during the pandemic, and at the urging of their client's family, Njeri and Tanya made the decision to begin a new chapter in their caregiving journey. With over 38 years combined experience in the healthcare industry, Harmony Personal Care Services was launched in October 2021.

Over the course of the last year, Harmony is pleased to have formed a team of PSWs who deliver optimal care with respect, compassion and empathy. They strive to enhance the quality of life for seniors and their families, in every caregiving experience. The directors and PSWs recognize the importance of maintaining dignity, independence, and choice for the client, building care plans that are individualized to the client's needs. Besides offering quality caregiving services to clients and their families in home, Harmony has been busy in the following areas over the last year:

- Providing staffing solutions – Harmony has staff available to fill in as needed in various care facilities
- Assisted at Covid 19 vaccine clinics within the Niagara Community
- Trained various members of our staff as UCP's (uncertified care providers), enabling them to administer medications at various care facilities
- Made their presence known in the Region by vending and conducting meet and greets at various markets.

To learn more about Harmony Personal Care Services Inc. and how they may be able to assist you or your loved one, please reach out to their 24hr phone line at 905-347-CARE (2273), or visit their website at www.harmonypcs.com. They can also be found on facebook.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

“My father received over 5 years of exceptional care from the team at Harmony Personal Care Services. His care was top notch and a cut above the rest. His wish was to stay in his home and thanks to the team at Harmony PCS this was made possible.”

We can help with:

- Personal Care & Daily Living Activities
- Medical Comfort & Support
- Errands and Travel Accompaniment
- Senior Home Support
- Respite

Pictured are co-founders Njeri and Tanya, experienced professionals in home care.
William Kagesheongai was the fire keeper of the ceremonial fire burning behind the Meridian Centre during the eighth Traditional Powwow.

Intertribal Dancers of all ages, in their ceremonial regalia, turned the Meridian Centre into a colourful sight reflecting Indigenous culture. (Penny Coles)
Town recognizes Truth and Reconciliation Day

Penny Coles
The Local

On Friday, after hosting a Truth & Reconciliation Day flag-raising ceremony at the town hall for members of council, staff and the public, those attending were encouraged to take a reflective walk around the track at the Virgil Sports Park.

After the flag-raising, three members of the large group of women who make up the Strong Water Singers, Shyann Jenkins, Emely Velazquez and Sabrina Shawana, performed the Healing Song. Shawana spoke of how hard that day can be for her, a day that is supposed to be about healing. Although it brings awareness to the plight of Indigenous families who lost their children to residential schools and honours survivors, it has to be combined with action, she says.

Her father was a residential school survivor, and his life after that experience was very difficult, the impact of his early years affecting the lives of his children. As a result, she has struggled with her own demons. After the graves of children were discovered at residential schools, she says, “their spirits have been set free. They’ve been found.”

Shawana says she appreciates that land acknowledgements are included in events such as the flag-raising.

“It is good to hear the acknowledgement that this land we are standing on is our land, and that people recognize that.”

Emely Velazquez, Shyann Jenkins and Sabrina Shawana of the Strong Water Singers performed The Healing Song at the town hall in Virgil Friday, after the flag had been raised to recognize National Truth and Reconciliation Day. (Penny Coles)

Niagara-on-the-Lake

PUBLIC NOTICES

Resident parking permits and dog licenses are now available for purchase/pick up from the Town Municipal Offices at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil. Please fill out the appropriate application form from our website www.notl.com and drop off the completed form with your payment at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road in one of our drop boxes.

Resident Parking Permits

Parking Permits are available exclusively to residents of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and entitles the holder to one hour of free parking at any parking machine in the Heritage District. Please note a valid piece of identification must be shown as proof of address in order to obtain a permit. Permits are valid for the vehicle identified, by licence plate number shown on the face of the permit only and are non-transferable.

Permits issued are valid from January 1 to December 31 of any given year. Residents must therefore renew the permit each year.

The current resident parking permit fee is $21.00, this fee is subject to change effective January 1, 2023.

Dog Licenses

All dogs must be licensed by January 1, 2023. If you purchase a dog license before December 23, 2022, you will receive a $10 discount off the annual licensing fee. Save an additional $10 by providing proof that your dog has been spayed or neutered. You must provide proof of current rabies vaccination at time of purchase to obtain a license.

The current annual licensing fees are $23.00 for an altered dog or $33.00 for an unaltered dog, these fees are subject to change effective January 1, 2023.

Please note Town offices will be closed for the holiday season as of Friday, December 23, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. and will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

Election Day: Monday, October 24, 2022

Lord Mayor
One (1) to be elected at large
Betty DISERO
Vaughn GOETTLER
Gary ZALEPA

Town Councillor
Eight (8) to be elected at large
Tim BALASIUK
Allan BISBACK
Gary BURROUGHS
Adriana CATER (VIZZARI)
Wendy CHROPITA
Alistair (AJ) HARLOND
Maria MAVRIDIS
John William MCCALLUM
Richard MELL
Sandra O’CONNOR
Katherine REID
Nick RULLER
Erwin WIENS

Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir Trustee
Melinda CHARTRAND
(ACCLAIMED)

Proxy Voting & Voting by Mail

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

Voter Notification Cards

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

Where & When to Vote

Advance Polls
(10 a.m. - 8 p.m.)
Saturday, October 8
St. Davids Public School
(1344 York Road)
Wednesday, October 12
Municipal Office
(1593 Four Mile Creek Road)
Saturday, October 15
Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre
(14 Anderson Lane)
Wednesday, October 19
Municipal Office
(1593 Four Mile Creek Road)

qualified electors are welcome to vote at any Niagara-on-the-Lake polling location
Royal Oak students learned about Indigenous contributions to Canada and the War of 1812 during their visit to the Landscape of Nations, a memorial dedicated to the contributions and sacrifices made by Six Nations and Native Allies on Queenston Heights.

Grade 7/8 students led the tour through the memorial, sharing their in-depth knowledge they've gained studying history in Canada from 1800-1850, with a lens to Indigenous perspectives and contributions. Students, Sienna Rey, Preston Bowslaugh, Mia Philips, Marlo Higgins and Ilias Dritsacos, touch and smell sweet grass from the Memory Circle.

Recognizing Indigenous contributions to War of 1812

Royal Oak Community School students visited Queenston Heights and the Landscape of Nations on Truth and Reconciliation Day. (Photos supplied)
St. Davids Public School’s Every Child Matters Tree stands tall in the foyer. The leaves are hands traced and cut out by all students in Kindergarten to Grade 6, and the bark was illustrated by Grade 7s and 8s, who used images, words and phrases that represent their learning on the impact the residential school system had, and still has, on Indigenous children and families. Students Mina, Cameron, Grade 7 teacher Ms. Arnold and Faith helped decorate the tree.

A close-up of St. Davids Public School Every Child Matters tree, features hands and ‘bark’ created by all students in the school from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

Ms. Komandanski’s Grade 3 class at Crossroads Public School designed orange shirts illustrating what matters to them. (Photos supplied)

Ms. Kent’s Grade 1 class at Crossroads Public School traced their own handprints and created an orange heart to recognize that Every Child Matters.

Mrs. Inglis’ Grade 1/2 class created a Water is Life banner as part of a series of lessons created by the DSBN Indigenous Education Department and the book Nibi’s Water Song, by Sunshine Tedasco.
Live Not-So-Late Shows offer comedy, music

Mike Balsom  
The Local

After a successful run of three on-line performances in 2021, Music Niagara Festi-vals’ Not-So-Late Show returns Wednesday, October 12, this time in front of a live audience. The variety show will once again be hosted by Niagara-on-the-Lake comedian Joe Pilli- terry, with musical sidekicks Col-in Maier and Quartetto Gelato as the house band. The guests for the first of two 2022 shows will be jazz and rhythm-and-blues duo Louise and Mark Camilleri, or LCM for short.

Maier, who directed last year’s productions, says getting the three episodes in the can in 2021 makes the team more than ready to take on doing the show for a live audience for the first time. “What really made it hard work,” says the oboist and band leader, “is we had never done it before. The first episode we filmed, we discovered what we needed to do to make it show. It got easier with each episode.

Now that we know the format, the style and the comfort level we each have, this live show should be really fun.”

The Not-So-Late Show will begin with a performance by Quartetto Gelato – Maier on oboe, vocal and musical saw, violinist and vocalist Konstantin Popović, Matti Pulkki on accor-dion and cellist Kirk Starkey. After three or four tunes that could encompass any of the quartet’s repertoire of tangos, kipper and kleiner songs and classical music, Pillitteri will take the stage for an opening monolo-gue la Jimmy Fallon or David Lettermen. Then the Camillers will sit down with the host to talk about their life in music.

After intermission, Louise and Mark will perform with St. Catharines drummer Mark Innes and Ross McIntyre, a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident, on bass. And Quartetto Gelato will join them during this part of the evening.

Quartetto Gelato had per-formed at a fundraiser in Toron-to that also included a set by the Camillers. He was impressed with the upbeat, jazzy style that they bring to familiar tunes, so he booked them for the program to bring something a little differ-ent than what Music Niagara audi-ences may have heard before. Toronto resident Louise, and Mark Camilleri bring a fascinating and varied musi-cal background to the perfor-mance at Club Roma. Louise is an actor, singer and dancer with extensive experience in musical theatre, including a run on Broadway in Showboat and three different productions of the Abba musical Mamma Mia. She and Mark met during her audition for Sids – The Musical in Stirling, Ontario. Louise’s pianist husband also has a long list of theatre credits, and has played with, conducted or been musical director for the likes of Paul Anka, Andrea Bo-cellli, Celine Dion, David Foster, Il Divo, The Priests and the Ten-ors. As well, he runs Imagine Sound Studios, a popular re-cording facility in Toronto.

The Camilleri’s repertoire of tangos, classics to jazz standards and disco-era hits. “We’re like the Toronto ver-sion of (American jazz duo) Tuck and Patti,” says Mark, who promises a 45-minute high-en-ergy set during that second half of the Not-So-Late Show. “We do a mix of everything,” adds Louise. “One of the tunes will be an original musical the-aatre number that we switch up and turn into a reggae tune. We give it the Camilleri twist, we kind of take songs we like and put our own spin on it, from jazz to Latin. We love to go across the board and make it our own.”

The duo is no stranger to the talk show format, having done a few virtual performances during COVID where they would play some music and also sit for an in-terview. Besides stories about jug-ling their creative pursuits with raising two boys, Louise might touch on her other love, pro-moting a healthy, natural lifestyle through her books, courses, sem-inars and a natural product line.

For his part, Maier is really looking forward to the chance to stretch out with the full R&B band. “We’ve played with orchestras, choirs, string ensem-bles,” Maier says, “but one thing we’ve never done is play with an R&B or jazz band. We do play some jazzy songs. But we’ve never had a real bass or real drums. When you bring that, it’s going to be so much fun. Maybe we’ll walk away feeling that we need to do it more often.”

Colin Maier will perform with Quartetto Gelato as the Not-So-Late Show’s house band.

Maier came on board with Music Niagara in 2021, help-ing to produce that year’s sea-son of shows, but he officially took on the role of production manager this past July, when the non-profit organization received an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. It’s been a boon to the lifelong musician who grew up in Calgary.

“For me it’s so fun. I love getting to do this kind of work,” says the gypsy and klezmer songs and Latin. We love to go across the board and make it our own.”

The local forerunner of Quartetto Gelato, Peter de Sotto, will be one of them. He’s well- loved and well-known by the Niagara community. We’re working on a couple more guests, too. There will be a lot of variety on that show.”

Tickets for the Oct. 12 epis-ode of the Not-So-Late Show are $40 plus HST, and include hors d’oeuvres. A cash bar will be avail-able. It starts at 7:30 p.m. in an intimate cabaret setting at Club Roma in St. Catharines. Visit mu-sicniagara.org for information.

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“To me it’s so fun. I love getting to do this kind of work. My whole career I’ve kind of fallen into roles like this. I’m used to doing all those things, making decisions. Being involved on this level with Music Niagara, with their active audience, it will feature a holiday theme, and at least one guest is already booked.

“We’ll have multiple guests for that one,” Maier explains. “It looks like the original founder of Quartetto Gelato, Peter de Sotto, will be one of them. He’s well-loved and well-known by the Niagara community. We’re working on a couple more guests, too. There will be a lot of variety on that show.”

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**Black Walnut Dark Balsamic**
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**Cranberry Pear White Balsamic**
- Free with $55 purchase Oct 8th & 9th
  50% off Oct 10th - 14th
  (limit 2 per customer)

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Speed dating takes courage, worth the effort

Penny Coles
The Local

After two successful events designed to help people develop friendships or possibly even find a partner, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library is continuing its quest to encourage social connections. Although the library's speed-dating events are advertised as a way to "find love among the stacks," public engagement co-ordinator Debbie Krause says they have been designed to fulfill one of the library’s goals of building new connections, and are not necessarily about finding romance — they can just be a fun way to meet new people.

The most recent session invited those aged 60 to 75, and went really well, she says, and the "positive-vibe" encouraged library staff to organize two new sessions, although for different age groups.

Krause says she sensed it took a lot of courage for people to come to the recent event — three men who registered didn’t show up — but the participants were told if there had been a match. Then it was left up to them to decide whether to make a further connection.

In addition to being more receptive to the event, women who participated were also more willing to talk to the Local, and those who did all reported a positive experience, said she would do it again, and would encourage others to try it.

Sue told The Local she had already had her "person," and new widowed, thought maybe there could be another person out there for her. She was looking at the event as an opportunity to meet a new friend, "maybe someone to go out for dinner with, for a whole date." She found some of the men "really engaged in conversation, and the five minutes would be really quick." She would do it again, and encourages others thinking about it to go for it. "You have to have faith in yourself. You can walk away afterwards — you have nothing to lose. You’re chatting with men and women who are basically in the same situation." She would choose it over trying to find a match online, she says. "You have five minutes face-to-face. That means so much. And it was a nice experience." 

Although she didn’t want to reveal whether there was any follow-up, she says, "I’m completely okay with it turned out." Agreeing to first names only, Sue told The Local she has had a challenging few years, dealing with grief and COVID isolation. "This was a really unique and positive experience. All of us were willing to step forward and meet with someone who was willing to talk to The Local about the event. She was looking at the event as an opportunity to meet a new friend, "maybe someone to go out for dinner with, for a whole date." She found some of the men "really engaged in conversation, and the five minutes would be really quick." She would do it again, and encourages others thinking about it to go for it. "You have to have faith in yourself. You can walk away afterwards — you have nothing to lose. You’re chatting with men and women who are basically in the same situation." She would choose it over trying to find a match online, she says. "You have five minutes face-to-face. That means so much. And it was a nice experience." 

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Austin Kirkby: family and farming were her passions

Mike Balsom
The Local

Former Niagara-on-the-Lake councillor Austin Kirkby is being remembered as a tenacious fighter for every cause she felt was right. Since she lost her battle with cancer early this week, tributes have been pouring in from both current and former councillors about the 79-year-old's dedication to her community, thoroughness and meticulousness, as well as her ability to build teams during her 15 years in the council chambers.

Kirkby was a fighter right to the end. But as hard as she worked for the town, and for the local farming community, her three daughters stress that she worked a thousand times harder for her family.

Kirkby first faced cancer in the mid-1990s, during her first term as an elected official in a town she had already been serving since the 1950s, when her parents James Richardson and Dorothea Dobie moved to Niagara.

“The Dobie family had a flower shop in Toronto’s explains Kirkby’s daughter Katie Overstrom. “So Dorothea ran Richard- son Florists on Gage Street and also on Queen Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Mom was the helper, while her sister Janice was the creative person. Mom would do the deliveries, and when she married my dad he helped with the deliveries on weekends.”

Austin first caught John Kirkby’s eye while he was in Grade 8 at Niagara District Secondary School. He mustered up his courage to ask her out when they both attended a teen dance the following year at the old Hardy Manor Hall in the Chautauqua area of town.

The couple was married in 1963, and moved to John’s family farm, which had been in the Kirkby family for three generations. Austin immediately earned the respect of her in-laws with her work ethic and willingness to take on any job to keep the ten- der fruit operation running like clockwork.

As well, John was a volunteer firefighter in town, during a time when people had to answer their phones, pager and other modern forms of technol- ogy. Austin was one of the fire- fighting her family.

“We were the beneficiaries of that passion,” Katie says. “Us, and her six grandchildren, and I’m sure her three grand-chil- dren, too. She always known a family business. She instilled her entrepreneurial spirit in us. We were always told when we were working in the barn that every peach we pack has our name on it.”

“And we don’t go home at 5 p.m. like the workers do,” the eldest daughter, Susan Janzen, adds, with a chuckle.

John and in well, agree their parents were true equals on the farm and in their relationships from the day one, and I was home so she could feel some comfort. She got elected, and was never the high vote-getter. The farming community, though, realized that she was really someone they could trust.

 Fellow grape-grower Jamie Slingerland, who was on council with Austin when she was first running in 1992, says the agricultural community still owes her a debt to this day.

“She was a well-known voice at the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and at the region,” Slingerland says. “If there was an agricultural issue, Austin was right on top of it. She was fully involved. When she decided she was going to do something, she did with dogged determination. She served the agricultural community and the municipal- ity very well.”

Current councillor Erwin Wiens, also a farmer, tells The Local she “had a mind like a steel trap.” Before he ran for his seat on council he turned to her for advice.

“I went to see her to find out what it was all about,” he says. “She was an inspiration to me. She truly worked so hard for agri- culture. It’s hard for anybody to hold a candle to what she did.”

Wiens goes on to add that Austin was a pioneer for water rights long before the current concern for global warming, and that rural NOTL would not have an irrigation system if it wasn’t for her advocacy.

“I’ve been working on the irrigation now for about eight years, all the way up to the lakes,” Wiens says. “I don’t do anything on that without the work that she did first. None of this would be going on now if she didn’t do what she did back then. And she balanced all of that with her com- mitment to the entire communi- ty, and being a mom and raising three wonderful daughters.”

Youngest daughter Becki Kirkby-Arnold remembers her mom being so meticulous in her preparation for council meetings that other councilors would turn to her on Mondays to get tips on how to speed up or seek clarification on agenda matters.

Her commitment to her job wasn’t just about her husband, who says she put in full-time hours while also driving the tractor on the farm and putting in full-time sweat equity hours performing challenging physical labour. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1994, she ar- ranged to have her chemotherapy treatments on Tuesdays so she wouldn’t miss any Monday council meetings.

Though she was the only woman on council, it wasn’t long before she had earned the respect of her male counterparts, just like she had among the farming community, who took a warm to warming up to the idea of having a woman lead the charge.

Austin beat the first bout with cancer, but a broken clavicle in 1999 to the discovery of the disease’s return.

“They discovered bladder cancer,” Katie says, “and it had metastasized. She was already a cancer survivor, she had that mentality. She was going to do whatever it took to stay alive, but our parents knew the farm was going to be too much. They made the very bold decision to sell the farm and they moved to Vineland.”

The three girls all agree their mom’s last three years were surely difficult, but in a way the move to Vineland allowed her to concentrate more on her family, and worry less about the NOTL council that both she and John worked so hard for throughout their lives.

“She didn’t get involved in politics at all,” John laughs. “In fact, I’m sure neither of us could name anyone on council in Vine-eland!”

She started on another round of chemotherapy, and when that didn’t seem to be working, they moved on to immunotherapy. In April, 2020, Austin was told she had only a couple of months to live. That month, Susan, Katie, and Becki organized a drive-by birthday party for their mom, and she was showered at the number of people who turned up to pay- tribute.

And, like the fighter she al- ways was, Austin then discov- ered that the immunotherapy had done its job, and the cancer had shrunk, granting her more time.

She continued to throw her- self into family life, attending her grandchildren’s hockey, lacrosse, track and field competitions right up until her last week. She had the chance to meet her new- est grand-granddaughter, and was able to know before she passed that another was on the way.

Her daughters suspect their mom was ready to go after she finally completed her last task about three weeks ago.

“She had to get the book- work done for the farm,” says Katie. “She handed off the book- work for the last seven years, so that we would understand it all.”

“I am a controller for a com- pany,” adds Susan, “and I told her she didn’t have to do all the work for the accountant, but she insisted.”

“And she made sure my dad knew how to cook and clean,” adds Katie.

John and all three daughters were there with Austin when she passed away, and they agree she had a tremendous amount of peace in her life that her work here was done.

The family will hold a private interment ceremony later this week. A celebration of Austin Kirkby’s life is being planned for the Upper Canada Hall at the Pillar and Post for Oct. 16. Dona- tions in her name can be made to the Walker Family Cancer Centre.

Austin Kirkby and her girls, Katie, Beckie and Susan.

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Niagara College opens Saundra Patterson Memorial Garden

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara College president emeritus Dan Patterson could not resist visiting the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus named for him last Friday afternoon. He was supposed to wait until the Monday afternoon dedication ceremony for the new Saundra Patterson Memorial Garden in the upper courtyard facing the Niagara Escarpment. “I was so embarrassed,” he told The Local Monday. “I came over like a little kid. I had to see what was going on. My jaw dropped because they had planted all these mums with their rich colours all wrapped around the garden. It was spectacular.”

Carrie Zimmerman, Niagara landscape program coordinator who oversaw the student-designed and built project, wasn’t surprised to see the beloved president, who served in that role for 25 years, show up early. “He was involved throughout the process,” she explained. “There was this one moment this spring where there were piles of gravel and bricks all over the place, he said ‘Carrie, I don’t know, and I reminded him he had to wait for it to all come together. For him to show up last week to see all the details pulled together, there were a few tears. His expression was overwhelming.”

Known informally as The First Lady of Niagara College, Saundra Patterson was often seen on campus alongside her husband, attending many events every year and almost every single convocation during his tenure as president. Saundra had a special affinity for the landscape and horticultural departments at the college, both housed at the NOTL campus. In fact, Zimmerman joked that each year when they were preparing for their annual plant sale in the campus greenhouse, she only knew they were ready to open their doors once Saundra had toured and given her nod of approval.

The couple’s central St. Catharines home features a beautiful backyard garden overlooking a ravine. Saundra meticulously tended to the space where her daughter Christine got married this past summer. Dan retired from the college in late 2019, and Saundra lost a battle with cancer in January, 2021.

The college announced plans to honour Saundra’s memory through the creation of a student-designed memorial garden, led by Niagara’s School of Environment and Horticulture along with staff from the teaching greenhouse.

Since then, a total of $89,000 in donations was raised, $50,000 of which went toward the new garden, the rest earmarked to support students through the Saundra Patterson Horticultural Bursary Fund. The college’s unveiling was Monday’s unveiling was the first of a new cultural Bursary Fund. The couple’s central St. Catharines home features a beautiful backyard garden overlooking a ravine. Saundra Patterson is shouting ‘Bravo!’ from above.”

Though Patterson says he will definitely not be like the lead character in the 1939 film Goodbye Mr. Chips, he admits that Kennedy and maybe some of the students may see a little bit more of him around campus now that the garden is completed. “I will constantly visit and tend to the garden here at the college,” he laughed. “I will make sure, though, to visit mostly on the weekends, so as not to interrupt the flow of learning. To be able to come here and to reflect is so special and inspiring to me.”

The design for the garden was by student Alice Lee, who understood it was to be a reflection of who Saundra Patterson was. More than 150 students worked alongside staff throughout the past year to create the memorial garden.

Dan Patterson, president emeritus of Niagara College, praised the garden dedicated to his wife Saundra as “a living legacy.” (Photos by Mike Balsom)
Nature provides us with primal sound therapy

Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Like a song that makes your hair stand on end, there is music all around us in the natural world. Surprisingly, the feelings you experience in the presence of a babbling brook, a crackling fire, or the call of a loon are buried deep inside our DNA blueprint.

Niagara Escarpment and its various watercourses offer incredibly peaceful sound escapes for adventurous hikers. (Photos by Owen Bjorgan)

A recent sunset canoe ride in the Martindale Pond in St. Catharines reminded me how an innocent sound can present such an influential and instinctively enjoyable moment.

Why do such audible experiences generally make us feel good and grounded?

I’ve written about how natural landscapes can inspire musical ideas for the human mind, and that will always be the case. Another fascinating concept is how particular sounds make us feel in our bones and our brains.

You know what I mean. You don’t have to be outdoorsy to sit by a waterfall or trickling creek and feel relaxed. Running water, fire, and a sunset are some of the few remaining subjects in life that can captivate humans in a state devoid of phones or their surroundings, and beckon us to dive comfortably inward.

The sound of moving water triggers a human response of safety and security, as it psychologically commands our presence to the most important life-sustaining feature we know. We drink it, we fish it, we bathe in it, while some cultures baptize or cast away their dead into the double hydrogen and oxygen combo.

Wind, created by pressurized difference in air masses that can be hundreds of thousands of square kilometres, rustles the leaves of trees and transports pollen and nutrients around the world. Wind can be jarring and tiring, or it can be a welcome relief of heat and humid stubbornness.

Our ancestors understood the winds of change, and could read the room on what type of mood the weather was about to bestow in advance. A fire causes humans to sit in a circle, the most effective and primal communication arrangement our species has ever known. The cracking of burning carbon bonds keep us looking, listening, and thinking. From cavemen to politicians, we find ourselves sitting in various forms of circles and arches around a central point of energy and focus. Such energy once cooked our food, kept us warm, and scared off predatory threats while we sustained our livelihoods. It is no wonder we love a good backyard fire in a modern world.

Now that we have covered the classics of wind, earth, water, and fire, I will share the moment which led me to this point.

My canoe, Old Baldy, which has been featured in past articles for The Local, was recently taken on a sunset paddle atop the glassy waters of Martindale Pond. The woman I was canoeing with froze in appreciation for a moment, and remarked at the sounds of the weeds gently dragging against the hull of the aluminum canoe.

There was a gentle fizzle and hiss as the plant matter grazed the canoe bottom, yet it was the loudest sound you could hear across the stillness of the water. It made us both stop and discuss how that sound spoke to us, and how humans deserve to take the time to escape our manufactured world.

We would all benefit by allowing ourselves the pleasure of getting back to the basics of benevolent, effortless, and easily accessible primal sound therapies that exist in nature.
Riley Ellis took a five minute boarding penalty.

Defenceman Guy Manco opened the scoring 12 minutes in.

Goal of the weekend ten Sunday with his third the scoring for the Predators.

Two more goals would have at them again. But again, middle, we went right back because we clogged up the blue line area. And "we only sent one guy in to session, " explained Taylor, puck in, and they got possession.

we got a little sloppy, and we missed our opportunity in Virgil.

"we only sent one guy in to session, " explained Taylor, "we finished strong Friday, controlling the game for the last eight minutes." Taylor reflected. "There was no worry about losing that game. We carried that momentum into Sunday's game."

The Predators are back on home ice this Friday against last year's South Division champs the Durham Bulls. It's a game that Taylor says will be a huge test for the team, and also holds some personal importance to him.

"They have a dangerous power play," he told The Local. "They've blown out a couple of teams, too. We need to clog the middle and stay out of the penalty box. If we do that we can beat them. This is my old team, too. I was a part owner of this team. It's a huge game for me. I really want to win this one."

Game time Friday is 7:30 p.m. at the Meridian Credit Union Arena. The Predators are beginning a food drive that night to support Newark Neighbours and encourage fans to bring some non-perishable food products to the game.
We Give Thanks...

On behalf of the Staff and Board of the Foundation for International Development Assistance (FIDA) and productive cooperatives Haiti (pCH) we extend our gratitude for the presence and generous support of all those who attended, sponsored, and bid on auction items at the FIDA Fall Fundraising Event for Haiti held on September 15th.

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