Cyclist seriously injured at Townline and Lakeshore Road

A cyclist on Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake was seriously injured Sunday evening after being struck by a Jeep, which continued along Lakeshore, returned, then left the area.

Niagara Regional Police responded to a call of a collision at Lakeshore and Townline Road at 7:19 p.m., and found a 40-year-old man being treated by Niagara EMS paramedics for a serious injury. The man was transported to an out-of-region hospital for further care, a police news release says.

The initial investigation showed a 1999 black Jeep was travelling on Townline Road when it collided with the cyclist at the intersection of Lakeshore Road. The cyclist fell from his bicycle onto the roadway, and the driver continued along Lakeshore, returned, drove by and then left the area, police said. While officers were investigating the collision, the driver came back on foot. Police believed the driver had consumed alcohol, and she was arrested.

Amanda M. Boyle, 50, of St. Catharines has been arrested and charged with impaired operation of a motor vehicle causing bodily harm. Boyle was later released with a future court date. The Jeep has been impounded, and she has been issued an administrative driver’s licence suspension, which is given to everyone charged with similar driving offences, and prohibits Boyle from operating a motor vehicle for 90 days from the date it was issued.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the investigating officers by calling 905-688-4111, option 3, ext. 102220 reference 23-116042.

Members of the public who wish to provide information anonymously can contact Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards to persons who contact the program with information which leads to an arrest.

Virgil woman hoping to bring Jewish community together

Penny Coles
The Local

When Virgil resident Alana Hurov posted on social media that she was looking for a Jewish community in Niagara-on-the-Lake, one in which she could raise her daughter in the Jewish traditions that surrounded her when she was growing up, she was surprised by some of the hateful responses.

That was before Hamas terrorists attacked Israel, and Jews around the world watched atrocities committed, people rounded up, humiliated, women raped and murdered, babies and the elderly slaughtered — horrible pictures that will never be forgotten — and then, photos of others celebrating.

“Those are images that will stay with us a very long time,” Hurov says. She can’t get them out of her head, and likely never will.

And what she has seen — what the world has seen — made her need to help build a Jewish community even more important, she says.

“When we moved here three years ago from Toronto, I didn’t think about giving my daughter a Jewish community to grow up in,” she says.

She has since made some like-minded friends and found some young Jewish families, but there is nothing nearby in the way of Jewish education or programming for kids any closer than Hamilton, nothing that she calls the equivalent of a ‘Sunday school, only on a Saturday.’

There is a conservative synagogue in St. Catharines which she has attended, but it doesn’t have any children’s programming, and she is also hoping to find something more moderate. “I’ve not really found something

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOUR HOME IS WORTH? CALL GREG TODAY FOR A FREE HOME EVALUATION 905.329.3484 GREG SYKES

WHEN YOU CALL GREG, YOU GET GREG!
Dorothy Soo-Wiens a tireless volunteer

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake's tractor parade is just under two months away but Dorothy Soo-Wiens has already been working on the details for at least that long.

Emails, text messages and phone calls to NOTL's farming community went out in early August, and special permit applications have been completed and submitted to the town for review. Her goal is to have 60 brightly decorated tractors work their way through Virgil the evening of Dec. 14.

The parade is just one of the many ways Soo-Wiens contributes to the NOTL community. As the current treasurer for the NOTL Lions Club and an elder at Cornerstone Community Church, she turns up at events all over town. Whether it's baking pies, mailing quilts or feeding farm workers, Soo-Wiens works tirelessly to make the community a better place.

That dedication to her community was ingrained in her not long after she arrived in Canada from Malaysia as a three-year-old with her parents, David and Ivy. The family home in Fort McMurray, Alberta became a revolving door for other family members immigrating to Canada, Soo-Wiens tells The Local. "They sponsored all my aunts and uncles, their spouses and many of my cousins. Of course, when they came over they all stayed with us for months at a time. My mom was one of eight kids, and my dad was one of nine."

David, who was instrumental in starting the Fort McMurray Chinese Association, worked as an instrument technician for Great Canadian Oil Sands. Ivy, meanwhile, was first a server then a cook in a restaurant. Eventually, Dorothy's parents bought their own restaurant and, being the eldest of four, she was tasked with minding her younger siblings.

In Grade 6 a friend invited her to attend a youth group meeting at a local Baptist church. Her faith journey began there, and as she grew in her faith she learned of the importance of being kind, and of loving her neighbours.

Beginning in junior high school Dorothy brought that philosophy to the yearbook club and the grad committee. She played basketball in high school and contributed to other teams by volunteering to be their manager. She also helped to organize intramural sports.

A young Dorothy Soo left Fort McMurray to study political science and communications at Ottawa's Carleton University. That's where she met NOTL native Erwin Wiens.

They married shortly after graduation and when Erwin was hired as an officer with the Peel Regional Police, they moved to Grimsby. The couple inched closer to NOTL, settling in Beamsville, and Erwin caught on with the Hamilton Police. In 2003 they moved to NOTL with their four daughters, buying their first farm on East and West Line.

Dorothy threw herself into farming, running a bed and breakfast at the same time. She soon found herself acting as a surrogate mother to the seasonal workers who would arrive each year to help on the farm.

"My parents were the first family to come to Virgil," Soo-Wiens says. "We were the first family to own a farm in Virgil, and as she grew in her faith she learned of the importance of being kind, and of loving her neighbours."

As the seasons change and autumn arrives, it's important to adapt your eye care routine to the unique challenges this time of year can bring. Here are some eye-care health tips for autumn:

**Protect Against Dryness:** Cooler air and indoor heating systems can contribute to dry eyes.

**Shield from UV Rays:** Wear sunglasses with UV protection whenever you're outdoors to shield your eyes from harmful UV radiation and glare.

**Manage Allergies:** If you're prone to allergies, consider using antihistamine eye drops and taking measures to minimize exposure to allergens.

**Stay Active:** Engage in outdoor activities, when possible, to reduce your exposure to allergens and allergy treatment.

Care for all ages, infants to adults

**Cataracts:** A clouding of the lens of the eye that can cause blurry vision.

**Glaucoma:** A group of eye diseases that can cause damage to the optic nerve and vision loss.

**Macular Degeneration:** A leading cause of vision loss in older adults.

**Retinal Detachment:** A separation of the retina from the underlying tissue that can lead to permanent vision loss.

**Diabetic Eye Disease:** Complications of diabetes that can affect the eye.

**Glaucoma:** A group of eye diseases that can cause damage to the optic nerve and vision loss.

**Macular Degeneration:** A leading cause of vision loss in older adults.

**Retinal Detachment:** A separation of the retina from the underlying tissue that can lead to permanent vision loss.

**Diabetic Eye Disease:** Complications of diabetes that can affect the eye.

**Presbyopia:** A common age-related condition that causes difficulty seeing objects up close.

**Dry Eye:** A common condition that causes dryness, irritation and pain in the eyes.

**Glaucoma:** A group of eye diseases that can cause damage to the optic nerve and vision loss.

**Macular Degeneration:** A leading cause of vision loss in older adults.

**Retinal Detachment:** A separation of the retina from the underlying tissue that can lead to permanent vision loss.

**Diabetic Eye Disease:** Complications of diabetes that can affect the eye.

**Presbyopia:** A common age-related condition that causes difficulty seeing objects up close.

**Dry Eye:** A common condition that causes dryness, irritation and pain in the eyes.

Dorothy Soo-Wiens and Kathy Dyck made pies in September to raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation. (Supplied)
Tractor parade, baking, quilting — it’s a long list

Continued from page 2

It’s a role she plays to this day. “One of the guys, Obama, has been with us so long,” says Soo-Wiens, “he’s like my son. For all of them, I’m sort of their house mother. They have all been with us so long,” says Soo-Wiens. “It’s therapeutic for us. We share health issues, family stuff. We talk, we pray, we give support to each other.”

Each summer she is part of the team that organizes a barbecue for the area’s farmworkers. And every May a group of women gather to bake pies to deliver to the New Hamburg Relief Sale. This fall Dorothy teamed with Kathy Dyck to mobilize a baking group that raised $5,200 to contribute to Joe Pillitteri’s Terry Fox fundraising efforts.

Soo-Wiens has been the treasurer for the NOTL Lions Club for more than 10 years. She and other Lions members hold an Easter food drive each year. She is involved in the Christmas tree sale that takes place in the Cornertown Church parking lot every December, and helps pack donations for Newark Neighbours.

And Dorothy has recently joined the board of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. As for the tractor parade, the idea grew from a news report she and Erwin saw on television one evening. The town of Selkirk, Ontario, held a tractor parade, and Dorothy was transfixed by the images on screen. “We had heard there was not going to be a Santa Claus Parade,” she explains. “When I saw that, I knew we had to do it. I called a few farmer friends, and I think that first year we had about 15 tractors.”

What made this a part of who Soo-Wiens is? “It gives me great joy to give back,” she says. “My faith has a lot to do with that. That’s what made this a part of who I am.”

As for the tractor parade, she says, “I volunteer efforts, Dorothy insists none of it would happen without the support of the many people she works with. And she harbors back to those lessons she learned back in Grade 6 when she first attended that youth group meeting. “It gives me great joy to give back,” she says. “My faith has a lot to do with that. That’s what made this a part of who I am.”

Dorothy and Erwin Wiens, the seasonal worker from Jamaica, drove one of the Wiens’ machines in last year’s tractor parade. (Supplied)
Gates, Zalepa pushing province for nurse practitioner

Penny Coles
The Local

It was more than a year ago that Coun. Sandra O’Connor told her fellow councillors Niagara-on-the-Lake was short a nurse practitioner, and began her quest to remedy the situation.

Although there are two such positions that are part of the Niagara North Family Health Team, she was concerned about the lack of healthcare for those in the community who are not registered patients.

Last Thursday, MPP Wayne Gates and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa sent a joint letter to Premier Doug Ford’s health minister, Sylvia Jones, calling for a nurse practitioner to serve the NOTL community.

O’Connor says she is grateful to have the lord mayor and MPP onside, lobbying the provincial minister of health to pave the way for a nurse practitioner in town who will see residents and visitors who don’t have a local doctor.

“I just hope for a response,” she says.

There was a time in past years when a third nurse practitioner had an office in the former hospital building, down the hall from the doctors’ offices, but who was employed through Niagara Health, with funding from the province.

She could see anyone on a walk-in basis, including visitors and those who didn’t have doctors in town, but she went on maternity leave and didn’t return, and was not replaced.

While the family health team in town, with offices in the Niagara Medical Centre in Virgil and in the new medical building in The Village, have two new physicians, O’Connor says there could be as many as 6,000 people without a doctor.

“Recently, seniors in the community have been forced to travel long distances to different municipalities to get the care they need,” the letter said.

Although the letter has been sent, he planned to personally deliver it to the minister on Monday, either before or after question period.

Gates, and he has used the opportunity of a committee meeting discussing provincial spending to ask Jones about a nurse practitioner for NOTL.

“With a significant primary care shortage, and lack of access to emergency hospital services, Niagara-on-the-Lake needs the ministry to follow through on their promise for nurse practitioner services,” said Gates in the news release announcing the joint letter sent Thursday.

“We know there is a desperate need, and we’ve been promised it’s coming,” he told The Local. “We think we’ve been fair and patient.”

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and MPP Wayne Gates, chatting at a palliative care fundraiser recently, agreed to work together and send a joint letter to the province about a nurse practitioner for NOTL. (Penny Coles)

4
notlocal.com
October 18, 2023
THE NOTL

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and MPP Wayne Gates, chatting at a palliative care fundraiser recently, agreed to work together and send a joint letter to the province about a nurse practitioner for NOTL.

(Penny Coles)

Gates, Zalepa pushing province for nurse practitioner

It was more than a year ago that Coun. Sandra O’Connor told her fellow councillors Niagara-on-the-Lake was short a nurse practitioner, and began her quest to remedy the situation.

Although there are two such positions that are part of the Niagara North Family Health Team, she was concerned about the lack of healthcare for those in the community who are not registered patients.

Last Thursday, MPP Wayne Gates and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa sent a joint letter to Premier Doug Ford’s health minister, Sylvia Jones, calling for a nurse practitioner to serve the NOTL community.

O’Connor says she is grateful to have the lord mayor and MPP onside, lobbying the provincial minister of health to pave the way for a nurse practitioner in town who will see residents and visitors who don’t have a local doctor.

“I just hope for a response,” she says.

There was a time in past years when a third nurse practitioner had an office in the former hospital building, down the hall from the doctors’ offices, but who was employed through Niagara Health, with funding from the province.

She could see anyone on a walk-in basis, including visitors and those who didn’t have doctors in town, but she went on maternity leave and didn’t return, and was not replaced.

While the family health team in town, with offices in the Niagara Medical Centre in Virgil and in the new medical building in The Village, have two new physicians, O’Connor says there could be as many as 6,000 people without a doctor.

“Recently, seniors in the community have been forced to travel long distances to different municipalities to get the care they need,” the letter said.

Although the letter has been sent, he planned to personally deliver it to the minister on Monday, either before or after question period.

The hospital closing “put an extra burden on those needing medical care. This letter between the municipality and the MPP working together is really important,” Gates said, promising that he will continue to work with the town, the province and Niagara Health until there is a nurse practitioner in place in NOTL.

FEATURE LISTING OF THE WEEK

123 WILLIAM STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
OVER 3210 SQ FT OF FINISHED SPACE | STUNNING BUNGALOW | EXTRA LARGE LOT
WALL TO WALL WINDOWS FACING THE REAR YARD

Angelika & Associates
LUXURY REAL ESTATE

#1 FREE HOME EVALUATION
ANGELIKA ZAMMIT
DIRECT 289-214-4394

Penny Coles
The Local

It was more than a year ago that Coun. Sandra O’Connor told her fellow councillors Niagara-on-the-Lake was short a nurse practitioner, and began her quest to remedy the situation.

Although there are two such positions that are part of the Niagara North Family Health Team, she was concerned about the lack of healthcare for those in the community who are not registered patients.

Last Thursday, MPP Wayne Gates and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa sent a joint letter to Premier Doug Ford’s health minister, Sylvia Jones, calling for a nurse practitioner to serve the NOTL community.

O’Connor says she is grateful to have the lord mayor and MPP onside, lobbying the provincial minister of health to pave the way for a nurse practitioner in town who will see residents and visitors who don’t have a local doctor.

“I just hope for a response,” she says.

There was a time in past years when a third nurse practitioner had an office in the former hospital building, down the hall from the doctors’ offices, but who was employed through Niagara Health, with funding from the province.

She could see anyone on a walk-in basis, including visitors and those who didn’t have doctors in town, but she went on maternity leave and didn’t return, and was not replaced.

While the family health team in town, with offices in the Niagara Medical Centre in Virgil and in the new medical building in The Village, have two new physicians, O’Connor says there could be as many as 6,000 people without a doctor.

“Recently, seniors in the community have been forced to travel long distances to different municipalities to get the care they needed. A nurse practitioner position, available to all residents as a walk-in service, is essential to assist these individuals in their time of need.”

It’s not the first letter from Gates, and he has used the opportunity of a committee meeting discussing provincial spending to ask Jones about a nurse practitioner for NOTL.

“With a significant primary care shortage, and lack of access to emergency hospital services, Niagara-on-the-Lake needs the minister to follow through on their promise for nurse practitioner services,” said Gates in the news release announcing the joint letter sent Thursday.

“We know there is a desperate need, and we’ve been promised it’s coming,” he told The Local. “We think we’ve been fair and patient.”

Although the letter has been sent, he planned to personally deliver it to the minister on Monday, either before or after question period.

The hospital closing “put an extra burden on those needing medical care. This letter between the municipality and the MPP working together is really important,” Gates said, promising that he will continue to work with the town, the province and Niagara Health until there is a nurse practitioner in place in NOTL.

FEATURE LISTING OF THE WEEK

123 WILLIAM STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
OVER 3210 SQ FT OF FINISHED SPACE | STUNNING BUNGALOW | EXTRA LARGE LOT
WALL TO WALL WINDOWS FACING THE REAR YARD

Angelika & Associates
LUXURY REAL ESTATE

#1 FREE HOME EVALUATION
ANGELIKA ZAMMIT
DIRECT 289-214-4394

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and MPP Wayne Gates, chatting at a palliative care fundraiser recently, agreed to work together and send a joint letter to the province about a nurse practitioner for NOTL. (Penny Coles)
Rescue dogs matched with veterans, first responders

Sharon Burns
The Local

Starting in November, a new program from Niagara Dog Rescue will match rescued dogs with military personnel and first responders. The dog rescue organization will subsidize the adoption fee and provide other support to strengthen the companionship between the adopter and the rescued dog.

The Companionship Initiative will match rescued dogs with veterans, health professionals, police, firefighters and emergency personnel service, said Ken Osborne, a volunteer who has served in the Canadian Forces for 24 years.

“It’s a new initiative,” he said. “The focus here is to give back to veterans, health professionals and first responders for their service to their community. It benefits both the dogs and first responders.”

The non-profit charity is run solely by volunteers, and is dedicated to helping homeless and unwanted dogs find new homes. They focus on dogs in immediate risk of being euthanized at high kill shelters.

November is veteran month, “and while this is a program that focuses on veterans, first responders, health professionals and so on, it does give us an opportunity to feature veterans,” said Osborne, a retired lawyer with the Office of the Judge Advocate General and a veteran of peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and combat operations in Afghanistan.

On its website, the dog rescue organization acknowledged that “first responders and military personnel contribute immeasurably to the protection of our rights and freedoms, our security, our health, and our well-being and they often serve without recognition, and they willingly endure hardship so that we may live safely, and in peace.”

“Niagara Dog Rescue also understands the importance that dog companionship can bring to our lives, and the lives of veterans, police, firefighters and emergency medical services personnel, and their families. Dogs comfort us, enable us and improve our mental and physical well-being. Many rescued dogs become lifelong, loyal, and treasured members of our family.”

“The initiative entails leveraging adoption fees,” said Osborne, “and includes training.”

A standard adoption fee will be reduced by $50 for eligible first responders and military personnel. The adoption of a puppy will cost $500, and the adoption of an adult dog will cost $345.

The fee covers help the costs associated with rescuing the dog, vetting, boarding, transportation, spaying/neutering, heartworm testing, vaccines and microchipping.

In addition to paying a reduced adoption fee, all eligible veterans, medical professionals and first responders who adopt a rescued dog through the Companionship Initiative will be enrolled in a curated dog training and behavioural support webinar.

Rescue dogs are not to be confined with service dogs. “They’re not support dogs nor service dogs,” explained Osborne. “We do know that dogs provide support and comfort to their owners generally, but this is a rescue adoption initiative which is directed at taking our rescue dogs and moving them to veterans and first responders.”

“When I came to Niagara Dog Rescue as a volunteer, (board member) Rocio Freeman thought that it might be a good opportunity for me to assist in starting up this initiative,” said Osborne, who, with his wife Alison, has two rescue dogs.

There will be events over the course of the year because we do need to fundraise and support the program, but there isn’t going to be a launch event.” Osborne noted that they would like to adopt out five to seven dogs a month through this year-long initiative.

“For us, it’s identifying the veterans or the first responders who are coming forward and looking to adopt dogs and coming to Niagara Dog Rescue. But it really all depends on the support that we get in order to sponsor and subsidize that adoption fee.”

This is entirely a Niagara Dog Rescue initiative. We are looking for grants and support from the community, including from veterans’ groups and associations that support first responders.”

“We’ve had a couple of individuals come forward, as well as companies, who are willing to sponsor a dog for a veteran or a first responder family through the companionship initiative,” Osborne said.

For donation and adoption information, visit companionshipinitiative.ca.

Ken Osborne, a volunteer who has served in the Canadian Forces for 24 years, with rescue dog Meabh. (Supplied)
Live a life of love or hate? All we have to do is choose.

No good comes of hate. Here, in our little corner of the world, we fight hatred in small ways.

We have committees to address diversity, equality and inclusivity. We try — at least most of us try — to teach our children, our future generations, to accept those of all races, all back-grounds, all genders, all abilities.

But that isn’t what we are witnessing on the world stage right now. It has never been. We see humiliating, cruel, murderous violence against nu-merous people. We see conflict based on intolerance. We see hatred. We see evil.

Thankfully, we live in a country that stands up against it. That stands up for human rights.

Canada is standing up for women. The U.S., at least its pres-ident, is standing up for diversity. Around the world, many, many, many, not all countries, are showing their support for Israel.

There is no excuse, and there can be no tolerance for the hatred, the evil we see, the terrorism against civilians, even babies and grandmothers, and the cherishing it acts.

That extreme hate, extreme intolerance, comes from within. In, and it is hard to overcome.

The answer, as Alana Hu-rovski试着告诉我们，是来自一个社区，尽管这个社区根据种族、宗教、性别，来自一个强大的声音，反对仇恨，反对暴力，甚至来自最亲近的家人。它来自爱。

Dorothy Soo-Wiens is fea-tured in this week’s Local for her impressive volunteerism. Her voice also speaks of the im-portance of being kind, of loving her neighbours, a value she demonstrates every day in her community.

In the meantime, our late wife, who was also an ophthalmol-ogist, joined a book club. She used to visit the library frequently. On the other hand, I visited the library’s microfilm reader to re-view historical newspapers.

However, I don’t remember picking up the Burial of the Dead Man’s Wake (by Paul Doeren), a murder mystery in Maine. I’m also enjoying. What I Wish I Said, by local author Jaime Warr, a columnist for the Toronto Star. The various chapters be-gin with what he wrote on a particular subject, followed by his second thoughts about the same subject.

I do remember what it was like when you learned to read?

I grew up in London, Ont. I read a lot in my familyur, but mainly from the Niagara area. Later I returned to my roots, prac-ticed medicine and raised a family with my wife, the late Dr. Nancy Smith. I first became interested in local history as a young boy while visiting my great-aunts and uncles who lived in the family home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and they would fill my imagination with stories of the old days.

I have very early memories of my mother reading to me a little book called Tales of the Three Little Kittens. Later, I was enthralled by my maternal grandfather reading out loud, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck-leberry Finn as well as Treasure Island. When I started reading on my own I enjoyed Enid Bly-ton’s adventure books, and of course the Hardy Boys series. I especially remember Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson.

I have very early memories of my mother reading to me a little book called Tales of the Three Little Kittens. Later, I was enthralled by my maternal grandfather reading out loud, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn as well as Treasure Island. When I started reading on my own I enjoyed Enid Bly-ton’s adventure books, and of course the Hardy Boys series. I especially remember Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson.

No good comes of hate. Here, in our little corner of the world, we fight hatred in small ways.

We have committees to address diversity, equality and inclusivity. We try — at least most of us try — to teach our children, our future generations, to ac-cept those of all races, all back-grounds, all genders, all abilities.

But that isn’t what we are witnessing on the world stage right now. It has never been. We see humiliating, cruel, murderous violence against nu-merous people. We see conflict based on intolerance. We see hatred. We see evil.

Thankfully, we live in a country that stands up against it. That stands up for human rights.

Canada is standing up for women. The U.S., at least its pres-ident, is standing up for diversity. Around the world, many, many, many, not all countries, are showing their support for Israel.

There is no excuse, and there can be no tolerance for the hatred, the evil we see, the terrorism against civilians, even babies and grandmothers, and the cherishing it acts.

That extreme hate, extreme intolerance, comes from within. In, and it is hard to overcome.

The answer, as Alana Hu-rovski试着告诉我们，是来自一个社区，尽管这个社区根据种族、宗教、性别，来自一个强大的声音，反对仇恨，反对暴力，甚至来自最亲近的家人。它来自爱。

Dorothy Soo-Wiens is fea-tured in this week’s Local for her impressive volunteerism. Her voice also speaks of the im-portance of being kind, of loving her neighbours, a value she demonstrates every day in her community.

In the meantime, our late wife, who was also an ophthalmol-ogist, joined a book club. She used to visit the library frequently. On the other hand, I visited the library’s microfilm reader to re-view historical newspapers.

However, I don’t remember picking up the Burial of the Dead Man’s Wake (by Paul Doeren), a murder mystery in Maine. I’m also enjoying. What I Wish I Said, by local author Jaime Warr, a columnist for the Toronto Star. The various chapters be-gin with what he wrote on a particular subject, followed by his second thoughts about the same subject.

I do remember what it was like when you learned to read?

I grew up in London, Ont. I read a lot in my familyur, but mainly from the Niagara area. Later I returned to my roots, prac-ticed medicine and raised a family with my wife, the late Dr. Nancy Smith. I first became interested in local history as a young boy while visiting my great-aunts and uncles who lived in the family home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and they would fill my imagination with stories of the old days.

I have very early memories of my mother reading to me a little book called Tales of the Three Little Kittens. Later, I was enthralled by my maternal grandfather reading out loud, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn as well as Treasure Island. When I started reading on my own I enjoyed Enid Bly-ton’s adventure books, and of course the Hardy Boys series. I especially remember Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson.
Local Letters

Glendale an orphan with no voice

Those of us who live in the Glendale area often refer to our area as the orphan community of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We are separated by the QEW physically and many in NOTL we appear to be a part of St. Catharines. Judging by the letters of folks in Old Town, we seem to serve only one purpose and that is to fund the town with taxes from our commercial and industrial developments as well as the nearby schools or public recreation facilities.

Do I pay a babysitter so I can sit through a four- to five-hour planning meeting or do I give my kids to hockey or dance class?

With no ward system, Glendale has no voice and no hand. To make matters worse, the town actually seems to be actively working against the Glendale taxpayers. The recent town planning committee meeting was structured in such a way as to make it as inconvenient as possible to get specifics on the Glen-Oak development. The development was put last on the agenda although it is one of the largest, if not the largest, development proposal in Niagara-on-the-Lake history.

More importantly, the agenda put 8 after 23 regis-
tering changes on the preced-
ing agenda item alone. That amounts to roughly four hours of public feedback time. In ef-
cit, the meeting began with an ad-
uch more important content.
ance from the town, residents from Old Town.

I would get set up in the me-
body has a right to speak and I sat through three hours of the meeting before being informed there was approximately two more hours of discussion allotted to the single Old Town issue.

The meeting planned with this timeline as the speak-
ers were registered in advance, so no surprise that Glendale was shunted to the late hours.

I get the politics and the fact this development, in whatever form, will go forward regard-
less of any input from Glendale residents. In fact most Glen-
dale residents look forward to increased development of the area. This need not have been such a frustrating issue for the developer if the town had handled the process.

The development size and height request is beyond ridic-
ulous even for a typical develop-
er. However, a developer can request any monetize they wish. It is the role of the town staff and elected leaders to pro-
tect developments from harm-
ing the overall town plan and existing neighbours. How can this happen if the town feels no obligation to the residents?

Especially irritating are comments by the town planner. The planner informs us there was ample notice of the development and residents by and large chose not to attend the open house. In fact, I do not know of a single neighbour who knew of the open house being held. I found out after the open house had started from a neighbour who found out about the day of the meeting but couldn’t make arrangements to attend.

We have a community Facebook page that did not seem to know in advance.

So, what great effort was made to inform area residents of the open house? How about the councillors? Who knew about the open house and made an effort to inform the residents? News media, did you know and write articles to inform residents or were you in the dark too?

Given no knowledge of what notification is required or what any effort was made, how can I know how things went so wrong?

The answer from the town staff seems to be we knew and did not bother to make an ef-
ort to provide feedback at either the open house or the town meeting.

Just so you know, that is completely false.

Mike Macdonald

Local Letters

Thanks for support that ‘has meant everything’

On behalf of the Neumann and Worthy families, we offer our heartfelt thanks to a

community that has provided so much support, love and understanding during these dark days, weeks and now months.

As we grapple with the reality of the loss of our son Liam, that support cannot be overstated. Simply, it has meant everything. Thank you to all who reached out in so many count-

less ways. Thank you.

Babs and Ron

Continued from page 6

I’m currently writing a biography of George Henry Martin Johnson, the six-

teenth-century Chief of the Six Nations. In the 19th century. Many of the records on Indigenous subjects in Canada have been digitized recently, in part be-

cause of the Truth and Recon-

ciliation Commission’s work, and this has been invaluable! I have now gone through tens of thousands of such documents online, which would have been impossible without Canada’s central library and archives.

Q. How did reading as a young person influence you as a doctor and a historian?

Our library was the only one in the area. We had a good friend of my ‘Chief’ Johnson. Pierre Berton’s output was truly remarkable. I once met him at a book launch and he freely admitted that he had three or four researchers — I wish I had those resources.

Q. What is the value of a library?

As I explained, the library has been invaluable for me personally, however, I was so impressed whenever I came into the library to use the micro-

film reader, just how busy the library was: I would witness children of all ages coming ei-

ther with their school class or on their own, excitedly picking out books to take home; some-
times there was a librarian sim-
ply reading to a small group of children, while on other occa-

sions a parent (or grandparent) would be sitting there quietly reading a story to their own child. And whenever I’m at the front desk, I’m impressed by all the coming and going of folks of all ages. I also know of at least one person who comes in regularly to the library just to use the computer. I’m fa-

miliar with others who enjoy the periodicals. No doubt, for some the library provides a ref-

uge — a peaceful, ‘safe’ place to escape from their little apart-

ment or perhaps some social con-

flict.

Q. Do you have a favourite book that you have kept coming back to read again and again?

I’m sure for many, one’s favourite book changes from decade to decade or genre to genre or simply evolves accord-

ing to one’s stage in life. There are so many writing styles and genres in regularly to the library just one person who comes

the coming and going of

families and, after

education and writing history

gained in medicine. As a med-
ical student one learns to take

Q. How did reading as a

young person influence you

as a doctor and a historian?

Now, do you have a favourite

book that you have kept coming

back to read again and again?

I’m sure for many, one’s

favourite book changes from
decade to decade or genre to
genre or simply evolves accord-
ing to one’s stage in life. There
are so many writing styles and
genres

Q. Do you have a favourite
book that you have kept coming
back to read again and again?

W. Do you have a favourite
book that you have kept coming
back to read again and again?

by

Dr. Richard Merritt with his books. (I. Andzans)

event where I could talk and
answer questions about my recent publication — such an

importance to an

institution like a local library that
supports local writers.

STAY IN THE LOOP
If you haven’t already signed up for our daily newsletter, with all the latest headlines from Niagara-on-the-Lake, you’re missing out!

Our Village Media website offers hyperlocal journalism, and much more — we can include in our weekly printed edition, coming to you daily. Keep up to date on local news, weather, gas prices, community updates, news from the province, across the country and more!

If you sign up for our newsletter, it will be delivered to your inbox every afternoon.

Visit www.notllocal.com/daily

October 18, 2023

7
The village of St. Davids has seen massive growth over the last 20 years, with an increase from about 300 homes to about 1,000 new builds.

Cannery Park was the start of development, which has continued with new subdivisions tucked away on both sides of York Road, and Tanbark Road.

Mike Pearseall, past president of the St. Davids Ratepayers Association, says the growth really took off in 2008, with the first phases of Apricot Glen and Peter Secord subdivisions on either side of Four Mile Creek Road, and continued slower growth in the Sandalwood area.

“Around 2012-ish the post office boxes filled up and new subdivisions after that had to go to supermailboxes,” he says. By then, the population was around 1,200, but with about 10 more new subdivisions and some infilling, he puts the population at more than 3,000.

With the exception of the housing bordering Creek Road, many of the new homes are tucked away off the main streets, on roads that didn’t exist a decade ago, so that while it’s not the sleepy little village it was, St. Davids manages to retain its village character, says Pearseall.

While not all residents are in favour of the new development taking place, or of certain aspects of the new subdivisions, growth also comes with some advantages — at one time there was a bank, a family-run general store and a gas station at the four corners, but not much else.

The general store became a gift store, the old firehall became a restaurant much appreciated by locals, and an Avondale replaced the gas station, offering some groceries and a coffee machine.

In recent months, those passing by have seen changes that wouldn’t have occurred without the population growth.

Pearseall says while he hears concerns about specific issues, including the height of the new townhouses behind the Avondale, he senses most residents are pleased with the services that are offered, including the block of four stores that now front York Road — stores he says wouldn’t have survived not that many years ago.

The store owners say they love their location, and are optimistic about the future.

As several of those working in the new businesses told The Local, they hear all the time from customers who will tell them they’ve driven by and admired the storefronts but never stopped. Once they do, they promise they’ll be back.

The store owners also say they see all demographics, from the seniors living nearby to the parents whose children attend St. Davids Public School.

The Junction, “where coffee meets community,” began in Fonthill, where it is much-loved by locals, some of whom have found their way to St. Davids — including owner Tammy Martin. She had taken over the Junction in Fonthill, where it is much-loved by locals, some of whom have found their way to St. Davids — including owner Tammy Martin. She had taken over the Junction in Fonthill, where it is much-loved by locals, some of whom have found their way to NOTL, she was determined that this town that she had always loved to visit should also have a Junction.

The coffee shop and its patios seems to be a big draw, to locals and passers-by, offering a place to sit with coffee and treats that are lauded by those who had stopped by and talked to The Local on Saturday afternoon.

Karen Thorpe and her husband George were having a bite to eat — they had come to St. Davids specifically to visit Junction. Karen lived in Virgil when she was young, and continues to come back decades later to see her family doctor — it was on a trip home from the doctor that she had seen the coffee shop, and wanted to give it a try.

Kristyn Schram lives in a

Continued on page 9

---

Penny Coles
The Local

The Local

Taurus Terrazzo owner Jessica Eedens, her sister Hayley Eedens, Sarah Sinclair and Ronan Pinder.

Kyle Lam cuts Cody Tovey’s hair at the York Barbers Lounge, while Elizabeth Bruce chats. (Photos by Penny Coles)
Continued from page 8

rural area of NOTL, not far from the Port Weller bridge. She and her husband are looking at homes in St. Davids, wanting to downsize, she says, and they like the village. “It’s great for walking, she has friends who live nearby and she really enjoys the community atmosphere — as well as Junction, which she visits often.

Prabhjit Gill has lived in one of the new subdivisions in St. Davids since June, and loves working behind the counter, where she is getting to know the locals. “We moved here from Oakville,” she says. “It was just too crowded. St. Davids, wanting to downsize, owned by Jessica Eedens — as well as Junction, which she visits often.

Eedens, who lived and worked in Niagara Falls, says she often travelled to Fort Erie to visit the Junction. “Id drive there to get away and have a quiet space to get some work done, website, branding, design stuff — now I can just go next door.”

Lisa Tansey moved to St. Davids four years ago, into a house on York Road that needed to be gutted. She would leave the village every morning to go to work in Hamilton to her store, Small Batch Soaps, where she produces the handmade items she sells. She shares the Hamilton space with more than 100 local businesses, she says. When she saw the commercial space being built on York Road, she was excited at the possibility of bringing that business model to St. Davids, on a much smaller scale.

Her Small Batch Soaps opened in May, selling her bath and body products, and other Niagara artisans sharing the space, which now includes organic clothing for kids, cocktail mixes and other unique, handmade gift items.

“We get a lot of support from locals,” she says, and is optimistic about seeing that grow when the new townhouses behind her are occupied.

“The main challenge here is that it’s all brand new, and making people aware of what’s here.”

Anchoring the other end of the block of stores is the York Barbers Lounge — obviously planning to offer more than a hair cut, with a sign on the door indicating it has applied for a liquor licence.

It is part of Hypnotyc Ltd. — which locals will recognize as the hair salon on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil. It’s owned by Shawn Rahbarian. He wasn’t at the Junction regular Kristyn Schram is hoping to move to St. Davids, while Junction regular Kristyn Schram is hoping to move to St. Davids, while Junction regular Kristyn Schram is hoping to move to St. Davids.

Karen and George Thorpe enjoy treats at Junction.

Parking lot and other giftware.

well as interesting plant pots and containers, and deli-

cal support.”

Although it’s decorated to look like a barbershop, they welcome women as well. “We’re all-inclusive, but we don’t do hair colour here,” says Bruce.

“I’ve been in each store,” says Pearsell. “All seem to be doing well. I’ve been to the barber’s, and it’s always busy. And I love the coffee shop — I just wish it would stay open in the evening.” It closes at 4 p.m., along with the other stores, he says. “I’m there at least once a week, at about 3:30, to pick up a coffee.”

If there is a downside to the growth, it could be the region’s decision to install a traffic roundabout. Although understanding the value of roundabouts is part of Pearsell’s job description — he’s an engineer considered an expert on roundabouts — he doesn’t believe the St. Davids intersection will be improved if the region perseveres in its determination to build one there.

“It’s not going to encourage people to stop there,” he says, “it’s going to encourage them to keep going.”

Karen and George Thorpe enjoy treats at Junction.

Prabhjit Gill loves living and working in St. Davids, while Junction regular Kristyn Schram is hoping to move to St. Davids. (Photos by Penny Coles)
Local developer speaks out against town planning policy

Zoning bylaw, Official Plan lead to planning appeals

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

With the town facing a long list of development applications — four public meetings were held last week and five hours were spent talking about them — residents appear to be getting more and more frustrated at what they see as inappropriate builds for Niagara-on-the-Lake, including apartment buildings, subdivisions and hotels.

They are also frustrated at the town staff who support the developments with recommendations to council to approve them, councillors when they approve them and the cost of appeals when they don’t.

Those in opposition fill the council chamber, trying to preserve their neighbourhoods and their own homes from the impact of development, anger such proposals are even considered.

Rainer Hummel is a developer who grew up in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and has faced, and continues to face, opposition from locals.

He explains why he and other developers push and exceed the envelope of what the town zoning bylaw and the Official Plan allow, rather than work within it. And why they usually get what they want.

His current proposal facing opposition is to turn the historic Phillips Estate on Queen Street, covering much of the block between Mississauga Street, into an 81-room hotel that will include a partial fourth floor.

There was a time when he wanted nothing more to do with the estate, which he had already started to convert to an upscale boutique hotel of a caliber that would attract guests who would think, nothing of spending upwards of $2,500 a night. But a music festival project that would have attracted those kinds of guests folded, and the tourists who come to town now for the wineries, restaurants and all of what they offer, are not looking for that kind of accommodation, he says.

An acrimonious divergence, which Hummel says was partly over the estate itself — his wife of the time wanted to live in it, he didn’t — delayed any work on the property for years, other than cutting the grass, and he lost interest in it. “I felt like I’d had enough. It was personal. I decided I didn’t need the negativity in my life any more.”

The attempted sale of the property, he says, brought good offers, some at the full asking price of $15 million, but with conditions that didn’t work out. So now here he is, years later, with an application to the town for a project that brought out almost 30 people who opposed his plans and wanted to speak at last week’s public meeting.

“Does that bother him? Not in the least. “Call us greedy if you want,” he tells The Local. “I truly love what I do. I love the people I work with, amazing people. I go to dinner regularly with lawyers. This is an incredibly creative process.”

There is a simple explanation why he and other developers ask for more than town bylaws and the Official Plan allow, and usually get what they want, he says — they follow provincial legislation.

When councillors oppose their own planning staff recommendations, which have to follow provincial legislation, Hummel points out, the town ends up with expensive appeals that go to the land tribunal, and the developers win.

In an effort to preserve what is important to residents, the town, even with its recently updated Official Plan, has zoning bylaws that won’t hold up against provincial planning legislation, he continues. Although he backs away from saying “never,” he says he hasn’t lost an appeal in 25 years.

“They got the town and Official Plan were passed based on and created by politicians who are put under pressure by unreasonable special interest groups that don’t agree with provincial policy. I go by laws that conform, that are approved by the province. It’s not that complicated.”

“Most appeals would be unnecessary if politicians could create an Official Plan and zoning bylaw that conform to provincial policy,” he adds.

Developers, says Hummel, don’t spend money on projects that won’t get built — it’s too expensive. “No developer would ever apply for something they can’t win. It’s too costly. You can’t take that level of risk. You follow the act that governs planning policy, you follow provincial statutes. That’s what the Ontario Land Tribunal applies, not local bylaws.”

“Town planning staff continues,” he says, “to have an obligation to follow the law, to follow provincial legislation. You can’t just make up your own rules. When professional planners go to work they too love what they do. They don’t want to go against their principles.”

And when politicians go against staff advice, “there are consequences.”

Residents believe developers have a choice, one of which is not to get into a situation that brings such strong opposition over their proposals, by following town policy. But Hummel says that’s not an option in NOTL.

“If I had 100,000 acres, and I said I wanted to build two houses on it, it would be too many. I can never make people happy, ever.”

The biggest concerns from residents when speaking about the Phillips Estate are the fourth floor, and that the parking to be provided is not enough. Hummel dismisses both.

The fourth floor will be set back from the front of the building, and not visible “unless you’re on the second floor of the Charles Hotel” across the street, he says, or maybe from a car on Queen Street, but not to pedestrians on the sidewalk — although neighbours of the property are more concerned about hotel patrons looking down on their backyards.

As for parking, he says he wanted it all under ground, and he thinks what he originally planned for was sufficient, but the town wanted more. He now has a parking lot at street level at the side of the hotel at Simcoe and Johnson Streets with 14 spaces, which he thinks are too many. “They eat up greenspace,” he says, but that was a battle he didn’t want fight.

He is retaining the original front lawn of the estate, preserving greenspace facing Queen Street.

When spending $30 million plus on a project, he says, “I have to create something I believe will be successful, and I like to see a bit of a margin in there to ensure success. I’ve seen projects where the developer didn’t have the muscle, the wherewithal, the tenacity to see it through. Without that you’re going to get beaten up on all sides, until you get to the end and realize you have a design by committee. I don’t quit. The one thing I have is tenacity. And I haven’t lost — least not yet.”
Local Love Recipe presented by:

SPIRIT IN NIAGARA
SOUR SLIMER
2 oz Pear Eau De Vie
1 oz Pear Nectar
0.5 oz Pear Syrup
0.5 oz Lemon juice

Coat one side of a dessert wine glass lightly with pink sugar and set aside. Add the remaining ingredients to a shaker with ice and shake vigorously. Strain into glass.

GLASS: Martini
GARNISH: Pink Sugar, Gummy Worm

HOLIDAY SEASON TICKET PACKAGE
Buy both Lerner and Loewe’s Brigadoon and A Christmas Carol and SAVE 20%
Continued from page 1

that speaks to me. What I’m really looking for is a place to gather, and NOTL doesn’t have that — a place to bring everybody together. I grew up in a small Jewish community, and I think that’s where this need comes from.”

That was her goal before the atrocities began in Israel, she says, and it is even more so now.

“It has been devastat-
ing to watch. There are no words to describe how it feels,” she says, to see that hate and anti-Semitism rise again. “Now is a time for us to come together to support each other. We’re all reach-
ing out to say we’re okay, we’re united.”

And yet, she admits, she’s really not okay. Typically an upbeat, positive person, she says “that is a very dark time for me.”

Hurov says her grand-
mother left Poland as a teen-
ger, leaving her family be-
hind — a family that would be destroyed by the Holo-
caust — a family that would
never happen again, and “so show love when there is
so much hate.”

Hurov has created Jew-
ish community where she
witnessed, she says, “the a day of rest that lasts from sundown on Friday evening through nightfall on Satur-
day night, and begins with a dinner that brings family and friends together, she explains. She is planning on hosting it at the York Road Central Community Church in November.

“The dinner will be focused on bringing everyone together to show support for

Continued on page 13

Kris Dube The Local
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A report brought to Niagara-on-the-Lake council Thurs.

time to required
timelines from the province re-

lators Tuesday morning about

revenue” when it comes to required
timelines from the province re-

Notice is hereby given that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has amended By-Law 4308-09 to establish an all-

way stop at the intersection of Concession 2 Road and Line 3 Road.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Installation of an All-Way Stop at the Intersection of Concession 2 Road and Line 3 Road

Notice is hereby given that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has amended By-Law 4308-09 to establish an all-

way stop at the intersection of Concession 2 Road and Line 3 Road. Currently, only east and west bound traffic on Line 3 Road is required to stop. Based on the amended By-Law, now drivers travelling north and south bound on Concession 2 Road are required to stop as well. Drivers are urged to use extra caution at this intersection as traffic adjusts to the new stop signs.

New stop signs will be erected on October 17, 2023, and enforcement of the all-way stop will commence immediately upon installation.

Those with questions are encouraged to contact Marc Weston, Traffic Engineering Technologist for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake by emailing marci.weston@notl.com or calling (905) 468-3266.

Opinions divided over off-site meetings

A pumpkin and squash farm on East and West Line offers plenty of choice for those stocking up for Halloween — or dinner. (Dave Gilchrist)
Simcoe panel important to town’s history

A commemorative panel at an important site in Niagara-on-the-Lake’s history may have some inaccuracies — but that shouldn’t take away from its significance, according to local historians.

Recently, the town municipal heritage committee received a report in relation to demolition plans for the former Parliament Oak School, which closed in 2015 and was sold to a developer three years later.

Two Sisters Resorts has plans for a 129-suite hotel with a restaurant and other amenities.

And with the surprise of locals, researchers from Stantec, the firm hired by the developer to create a commemoration plan for the site and its history, say the familiar stone panel on an outside wall of the school, marking the property as where one of the first sessions of Upper Canada parliament occurred, could be wrong.

History experts within the local community aren’t disputing the position brought forward by the developer’s team.

Nothing really changes it to be true — or false, says Sarah Kaufman, curator at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

She said there’s an understanding that the government assembled under an oak tree, but it’s never been certain that it’s the one on the former school property.

“It’s not stated that it occurred exactly at that site,” Kaufman told The Local, adding that the meeting of parliament has never been written down, through archival documentation.

It’s possible the property in the Old Town was just used as a spot to highlight this “local lore” in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“I think it was chosen as the site to commemorate that history, but it is not necessarily the actual site where it happened,” she said.

Kaufman also said the town reached out to the museum recently as a result of the claims in the developer’s commemoration plan, which points to the potential mistakes on the stone panel.

Is this the first time the history of the site has been publicly questioned?

Kaufman said it’s possible it’s been discussed in the past, but she doesn’t recall it coming up in the last 13 years with the museum.

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

Possible locations include Navy Hall, Butler’s Barracks, the Freemasons’ Hall, or a tree located under an oak tree at the present-day location of 325 King Street, the site of the school.

“However, it is generally acknowledged that Navy Hall served as the main parliament site of Upper Canada during this time,” says the report.

The second session of the parliament of Upper Canada was held between May 31, 1793, and July 9, 1794, says the report before the committee.

Interpretive material on the concrete panel on the wall of the former school suggests that Simcoe presided upon a session of this parliament in August 1793, and no further sessions of parliament were held until 1794, said the report prepared by Stantec Consulting.

Also, the diary of Eliza Simcoe indicates that she and her husband set sail for Toronto on July 29, 1793, and remained in the Toronto area through September.

“Thus, it is unlikely that any parliamentary proceedings took place under an oak tree at the present-day 325 King Street in August 1793,” the report says.

Because of these findings, the developer wasn’t planning to use the panel as part of its commemoration on the school site.

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

Council has yet to approve the project.

Despite an inability for anyone to confirm whether the plaque says is an error, Kaufman said it should be included in the developer’s plans.

“I think it would be a good community outreach if the property owners maintained the plaque on the site,” said Kaufman.

It’s also possible that a plaque will be placed nearby to clarify that the panel may have incorrect information.

Kaufman supported the idea and noted that the Ontario Heritage Trust is in the process of updating other plaques in the province to “provide more context” about other events.

Ron Dale, a local historian and author, is also familiar with the confusion.

“The idea of parliament meeting under an oak tree on this property is part of the oral history of Niagara-on-the-Lake going back to the late 19th century, and well-established in local lore, whether true or not,” he told The Local, adding that the panel also incorrectly refers to Simcoe as a ‘sir’.

But he believes the story of the meeting at this site must have had some basis in fact.

“The legend may have had the wrong timing of the meeting and perhaps the wrong location, but the event is part of the fabric of the community and may have inspired generations of students who attended the school,” said Dale, who was superintendent of Niagara national historic sites for Parks Canada from 1992 to 2013.

He said it’s possible that on a particularly hot day, the government might have met outdoors near Navy Hall where the Simcoes had large marquees erected.

Dale also suspects that Senator Plumb, who had a “magnificent house” on the Parliament Oak site, may have “spread the story to give more prominence to his property.”

Dale said the panels, historically accurate or not, “have taken on their own value as important community artifacts and should be preserved.”

Kaufman said the Plumb house is an important piece of the property, and that there could be remnants of that structure buried beneath the former school.

Bas-relief panels, the Parliament Oak School sign, bricks from the former school, and a sculpture related to the Underground Railroad, are other components the developer has said will be incorporated into the plans.

Town staff reports cost of an off-site meeting to be $5,000

Continued from page 12

correct or not, the panel on the wall of the former Parliament Oak School is important to the history of NOTL, expert says. (Kris Dube)
‘Spectacular fall’ leads to high-quality grapes

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Ontario’s wine industry gets its flavours from about 80,000 tonnes of grapes that are grown across the province each year — and half of that yield comes from farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Last year was considered a disaster because of wintry weather appearing too early, resulting in the overall harvest being about 50 per cent of what it is in a normal season, explained Erwin Wiens, a local grape grower for almost 30 years, this year’s Grape King and also NOTL’s deputy lord mayor.

But everything is back on track in 2023, and an "above-average" harvest is expected. "The vines came back super strong this year," said Wiens.

The summer brought what could be considered too much rain — but a "spectacular fall" with warm afternoons and cool nights is allowing growers to finish strong, said Wiens, who is about halfway through harvesting his crop for the year before taking it to local wineries, including Peller Estates and Vineland Estates.

"We’re seeing a really nice crop, and the quality is superior this year," said Wiens, adding that dry and warm weather during the day, and cool temperatures overnight help the ripening process.

The season is about 10 days behind schedule and harvesting should be completed by mid-November.

"In the grape industry, the fall is make or break," he said.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is often considered the envy of other growers across the province and all of Canada as the town has a municipal irrigation system that hydrates more than 3,200 hectares of local agricultural land.

The system that started about 35 years ago was "not needed as much" in 2023 because of a lot of rain giving grapevines what they need, said Wiens, who grows six varieties of grapes at his operation. Aidan Buis is part of the team at Glenlake Orchards and Vineyards on Lakeshore Road, working with his uncle Peter and father Kevin.

Their harvest is on pace to be about 2,000 tonnes, and he agrees that warm days in the fall have been extremely helpful this season.

"That really helped progress the ripeness in the berries," he said.

And because of that warmth, he expects there will be some "really cool flavours you don’t typically see" that will end up in wine bottles.

Even though there is a slight delay to a wrap on the final day of harvest, which he expects will be around Nov. 15, the 2023 growing season is going smoothly.

"Everything has been very clean so far — we haven’t seen any rot problems or pest issues," he said.

Buis is studying at Brock University’s Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, wanting to further his knowledge — he’s "starting to fall in love with the business."

One thing he has already learned, Buis said, is that being able to pull from multiple bodies of water, such as the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and the Welland Canal is a “huge” geographic asset.

Although farmers didn’t have to rely on the system as much in 2023, he said in years when they do, it’s important to be able to depend on it, and not to have to deal with emergenc-
Youth collective begins fall session with Halloween party

Sharon Burns
The Local

The NOTL Youth Collective's fall session is kicking off with a Halloween social. "It's the NOTL Youth Collective, with a fun, casual and more. Halloween music, dancing, cookie-decorating station, 'You Dare?' game, BeanBoozer game, a 'Fear Maze', and more. We're going to have a standard program. It's going to ebb and flow based on what else is going on in the community," said Polgrabia.

"We wanted to open the fall season with a fun, casual social event," said Brenda Ferfall. "Youth are asked to register in advance to support planning, and in lieu of admission, bring non-perishable food item donations, such as peanut-free candy, decorations and gift bags. Cash donations are always welcome to help offset costs and get into the Halloween spirit. "We are so grateful to Cornerstone for continuing to allow us to use their Town Campus for youth programs. Their unwavering support for the entire NOTL Youth community by proving this central location is so important, and ensures programs are accessible for everyone," said Polgrabia.

The schedule for this fall's seven-week session will be out soon, and can be found at NOTLYouth.com.

As part of youth collective programming, kids were offered opportunities to give back to their community, including helping out at the 124 on Queen McLaren event.

Kids have fun at one of the first winter sessions.

Kasey and Jayden Polgrabia are ready to party for Halloween. (Photos supplied)
Legion president outlines activities leading to Remembrance Day

Local Staff

The Niagara-on-the-Lake branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will begin its annual poppy campaign Friday, Oct. 27 and continue until Remembrance Day. The legion distributes poppies during that time, which supports veterans and their families.

The poppy flag will be raised Friday, Oct. 27 at the town hall at 9:30 a.m. to bring awareness to the poppy campaign and Remembrance Day. There will be poppy boxes on the counters of more than 200 businesses in town who have graciously agreed to assist, says Legion president Al Howse, as well as members of Branch 124 on the streets with poppies to greet pedestrians.

Other events leading up to Remembrance Day include a free veterans’ dinner at the legion, Saturday Nov. 4. “Anyone who has served in the military is welcome, whether they are a legion member or not,” says Howse. “Just stop by the branch and pick up a ticket at the bar or the office, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.”

Older veterans who need assistance can bring a helper to the dinner, also at no charge.

Anyone not in the military, but who would like to attend can pick up a $20 ticket at the bar or office. As is customary, the legion will be holding a remembrance service at each of three seniors homes — on Nov. 9, 10:30 a.m. at Pleasant Manor, 1 p.m. at Niagara Long Term Care, and 3 p.m. at Upper Canada Lodge.

Remembrance Day services on Nov. 11 will take place starting at 10:50 a.m. on Queen Street in front of the cenotaph, and 2 p.m. at the Queenston cenotaph.

Any group that wishes to participate in the parade, please contact the branch office, says Howse, and those unable to march can join at the cenotaph. Also to those who customarily lay wreaths on Nov. 11, the legion asks that wreath orders are submitted by Nov. 7.

Expected to see Royal Canadian Legion president Al Howse distributing poppies again this year. (File photo)
Monster Bash might be best party of the year

This year’s fundraiser is for Red Roof Retreat

Local Staff

Local couple Shari and Perry Hartwick will be hosting their 10th (almost) annual Monster Bash costume and dance party at Willowbank in Queenston on Oct. 28, in support of Red Roof Retreat.

What started as a Halloween party in their home more than 10 years ago has now grown into a year-ly sold-out costume and dance party at the Willowbank Estate, raising thousands of dollars for local charities.

Initially, funds raised went to KidSport Niagara, a charity near and dear to the Hartwicks that supports families who cannot afford to put their kids in sports.

In 2022, Red Roof Retreat, a local non-profit organization that provides respite and recreational programs for individuals with special needs, was the selected recipient and received $12,000 raised at this sold-out event.

With guests in full costume and music spun by DJ Marinko, this year’s event will not disappoint. “It’s a party like no other,” says Steffanie Bjorgan, executive director of Red Roof Retreat. “Shari and Perry put so much of their time and energy into making this happen every year.” It is set to be another great fundraising event, with this year’s local sponsors including Limited Distillery, Brunch Beverages, Niagara Oast House Brewers, Cosmo Condina Photography, Grape Escape Wine Tours and Carol Perrin of Sotheby’s International Realty Canada.

“We believe that it is important to support our community, and, in a tiny way, make NOTL an even greater place to live,” says Perry, “and what a better way than to throw a big Halloween dance party with all proceeds going to a wonderful local charity.”

Guests who have attended in the past know this to be the best party of the year. A few tickets remain. For more information, visit the Monster Bash information page at redroofretreat.com/monsterbash.

Davey Tree volunteers for installation

Continued from page 16

Sarah Kaufman, “Our new multi-purpose programming space will provide ample room for this and other volunteer driven projects, year-round.”

Local arborist, Davey Tree Expert Company of Canada Ltd., will again be volunteering their invaluable skills to help with the intricate job of hanging the massive poppy nets, starting at the Court House early on the morning of Tuesday, Nov. 1, weather permitting, then moving to the NOTL Museum and finally the Royal Canadian Legion.

The public is encouraged to come and cheer them on. The Poppy Project, as a symbol of remembrance, was created to complement the annual Royal Canadian Legion poppy fundraising campaign. “I have been a volunteer on this project since it began,” says Dee Steele. “For me, this is how I can honour those men and women who fought for our freedom. This is my way of giving back. Their sacrifice should never be forgotten.”

Volunteers Pam Mundy and Judy Thornton prepare for the poppy garden. (Supplied)
Cameras set to roll at Yellow Door Theatre Academy

Mike Balsom
The Local

One is a horror film, another takes on addictions to gambling and alcohol. Both films are in the early stages of planning and are being overseen by instructors Carter Vahrmeyer and Eden Kennedy at Yellow Door Theatre Project’s new Goettler Family Foundation Film Academy. Yellow Door founder and artistic producer Andorlie Hillstrom threw open the doors of their Line 2 studio for a ribbon cutting to officially open the academy, though the 14 students involved have been attending every Friday night for more than a month.

The open house was held formally and publicly recognize the financial support of the Goettler Family Foundation. The new Goettler Foundation Film Academy is designed as a two-year program for students up to age 17, with sessions held every Friday night between September and May from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

“We first supported Yellow Door in 2020, during COVID,” Lauren Goettler explained. “When we saw Red Letter Day (the original film by Leslie Wade that the Goettlers helped fund), we thought it was so good, so we wanted to keep going. The next year we did a play (another Leslie Wade original called Nobody’s Children). These are such great kids and the energy they have when they come together has to be seen to be believed.”

Niagara College graduate Vahrmeyer has been impressed with that energy, as well as the willingness to learn he has seen from the kids, who cover a range of ages.

“It’s cool seeing how the younger ones are learning from some of the older ones as they work in teams,” Vahrmeyer told The Local. “The kids are really enjoying it.”

Before breaking off into their two groups, Vahrmeyer and Kennedy start each Friday night session with a PowerPoint presentation, teaching them the technological basics that go into film production. The lesson that particular evening was on sound equipment. Students were able to get their hands on some microphones they had never seen before.

Following previous lessons on scripting, storyboarding and story creation, Vahrmeyer and Kennedy have allowed the young participants to move on to create their own collective visions.

“They have complete creative control,” Vahrmeyer says. “One group already has their script done, the other is nearly done. Eden and I help guide each group, help push them to get their ideas down. They are very creative kids and the ideas fly out pretty fast. We try to rein them in a bit.”

Maggie Forsyth is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the film academy.

“My parents (David Forsyth and Shannon O’Connor) both work in film,” said the 16-year-old. “I have wanted to work in film, specifically animation, since I was a kid.”

The horror film her group is working on will be shot in the basement at the Line 2 studio.

“It is a really scary looking basement,” she laughed. “We didn’t even know there was a basement there.”

One of the students in Forsyth’s group is Marina Tumanova Martinak.

“We’re calling it The Basement Guy,” said Martinak. “The plot is that there’s someone cleaning here, they hear a noise and they go to investigate. The creature comes up behind them. They get freaked out by the paranormal happenings and run outside to the car, but the creature comes up behind them.”

Eva-Odile Beausoleil is in the other group that is working on a film with a surprisingly complicated and very mature theme.

“Our movie is about a businesswoman who has a gambling and alcohol addiction,” said the 11-year-old. “He finds a suitcase and he unknowingly steals the money from a man, and he flees to another country, where he conquers his addictions.”

Beausoleil said the idea came to her and her fellow students in a brainstorming session when someone shouted out “gambling man.” That stuck, and they created their story around the phrase.

The Ecole elementaire catholique Saint-Antoine student also has a role in the December production of Newsies, to be performed at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.

“All three students display an impressive level of maturity and are extremely busy young people, juggling the demands of schoolwork, other Yellow Door classes and the Friday night film academy sessions.”

“Definitely the technical aspects and how things are really supposed to be done,” he says, “comes from what I learned here. I used to make my own films long before that. A program like this would have been very helpful for me when I was their age.”

Forsyth added that she has learned so much already in a few short weeks, and gains a lot of credit to both Vahrmeyer and Kennedy.

“Eden is so patient,” says Forsyth. “She is lovely, and really helpful. She knows a lot and she’s really amazing. This is such a great program.”

Eva-Odile Beausoleil, Maggie Forsyth, Marina Tumanova Martinak and Eden Kennedy cut the ribbon to open the Film Academy. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Dig Our Roots at the museum

The NOTL Museum held the Dig Our Roots event Saturday, presented by Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Twenty-one wineries took part, serving up 75 different wines. Bri-anne Hawley of Wineries of NOTL chose the museum to host the event to celebrate the rich history of winemaking in NOTL. It was a chance, as well, to showcase the museum, which has just begun its Building History – Strengthening Community campaign to raise $5 million for a renovation and expansion. (Photos by Jack Custens)
NOTL teen pursuing her rock star dreams

Mike Balsom
The Local

Kennedy Von Kat takes the stage at The Warehouse Concert Hall in downtown St. Catharines in front of about 80 hip hop fans. She’s the fourth of six acts to appear this night, following three male rappers and preceding headliners Brandon G and Brandon Hart.

The fact that she’s there to sing rock songs, mostly written by the 16-year-old Niagara-on-the-Lake resident herself, doesn’t faze her in the least. As she stalks the floorboards, belting out her lyrics to a backing track played this night by DJ Young L.A., the crowd roars its approval.

It’s the second show at the venue in five days for the confident young singer, real name Kennedy Horbach, who lives in rural NOTL. The previous Saturday she and her full band opened a show headlined by Welland rock group Otherwives.

Kelsowna, B.C. hip hop artist and impresario Robbie G says Kennedy reached out to him about a year ago with the hope of getting an opening slot for one of his performances. She ended up playing a short set during his You Know This tour last spring, and he continues to be impressed by her talent.

“The first time I saw her I thought she had a voice like Amy Lee from Evanescence,” says the rapper, who has shared the stage with hip hop legends Ice Cube and Jeru the Damaja. “I get goosebumps when I listen to her. She strikes a chord that’s deeper than the surface level. She’s got incredible talent, supportive parents and fans. If she keeps working at it I think she has a bright future.”

Horbach’s stage presence isn’t a new development. She spent many years attending classes at Yellow Door Theatre Project, performing in a number of their plays. Until recently she attended Laura Secord Secondary School as part of their District Niagara Academy of the Arts program. Since January she has been homeschooled with the support of her parents, Kristi and Jon.

Her focus shifted from theatre to music when a family friend, Roger Habel Jr. of Niagara band The Country Junkies, invited her onto the stage to sing a Luke Bryan song.

“It was nerve-wracking,” remembers Horbach. “But when the music kicked in, the nerves just went away. I started having fun, and dancing. It felt good, I felt happy.”

That experience was the impetus to begin singing lessons with local teacher Melissa Marie Shriner, and to start writing her own songs.

“I like to write in my room,” she tells The Local. “I play guitar and have fun. I like to write about my personal experiences, relationships, friendships and mental health things. Anything that feels deep to me, that is meaningful to me.”

Kennedy adds that writing songs is like therapy to her. Instead of spewing her emotions to her family and friends, she expresses them in song.

She counts among her inspirations rock singer-songwriter Jimi Hendrix, who’s dangerous. “I’m in love with a guy and every time I get close to him, I get hurt. She’s in love with a guy who’s dangerous.”

Horbach also offers up a new original called Edward Scissorhands, a song she has been working on with producer Paul Gigliotti, former-ly of the Niagara Falls based pop band Wave. The single will be hitting streaming services on Oct. 31.

“It’s my favourite Tim Burton movie,” Kennedy says of her inspiration for the lyrics. “It’s a real metaphor about relationships. I wrote the song with me as the girl, and every time I get close to him, I get hurt. She’s in love with a guy who’s dangerous.”

She has other songs she’s working on with Gigliotti as well, which will come together in an EP next spring.

In addition to supporting Kennedy’s decision to switch to homeschooling, Kristi and Jon are her biggest fans. They pay for her session work with Gigliotti and are there hanging out at the Warehouse for both shows, beaming with pride as their only children performs a 15-minute set.

In fact, it was mom who initially reached out to Robbie G to convince him to put Kennedy on the bill. Kennedy even takes some of Kristi’s advice in her songwriting, in an attempt to ensure her songs appeal to a broader audience.

“I’m not musically inclined at all,” Kristi says. “I’m always blown away by what she shows me. It’s kind of cool that she trusts us enough to let us listen to her work.”

And the hopeful rock star has a great work ethic, having been put to work in the family greenhouse business from about 12 years old. Horbach says she wakes up early each morning to get her school work out of the way, then puts in full-time hours at Hy- notac Hair Lounge in Virgil during the day. In the evenings she can be found writing music either at home or in the studio with Gigliotti.

She’s not putting all her eggs in one basket, though. Her plan is to attend Cappa School of Hairstyling and Aesthetics in St. Catharines after she graduates.

“I love artistic things,” says Horbach. “I love my job and I love all the people I work with. Working there has been great. It gives me a head start in the career, and it’s given me a chance to see that it’s the right career for me.”

“I just want her to be happy,” Kristi adds. “If this is what she wants, and she’s happy doing it, I’m good with that. If she wants to pursue music, and fulfill a career outside of that at the same time, I’m good with that. I just want Kennedy to do what makes Kennedy happy.”

Kennedy sees how hard her mentors in the music industry work and is trying to follow suit. Robbie G tours constantly, runs a production company called R Evolution Media, and releases new music regularly.

He tells the Local that if Kennedy sticks with it and keeps working hard at her craft, he has no doubt she will be successful.

For Horbach, or Kennedy Von Kat if you will, success in music would be lovely, but that’s not the be-all and end-all about her songwriting.

“It’s to make music for people to help them,” says Horbach. “It would be great to perform big shows to a crowd of people who really love my music, knowing it helped them get through a tough time. It would be really great to be in a crowd of people that are my fans, who love my music, and are going through the same things I am.”
Sheila Rider stops tape on 36-year broadcasting career

Mike Balsom

The Local

September 27 was a difficult day at work for Sheila Rider. “It was really tough,” says the Niagara-on-the-Lake resident about her final day with CTV Television in Toronto. “I knew in my heart, though, that I had made the right decision. You know, it was time to go. I told my boss to hire a couple of young kids. They’re the future.”

Rider retired that day from her role as a senior editorial producer with the national broadcaster. At her retirement gathering her colleagues read some well-wishes from former colleagues Peter Mansbridge and Adrienne Arsenault, both of whom she worked with during her 36-year career. Some of Rider’s former colleagues from her days with CTV Television even showed up at the party.

“She was the BBC and ITV and the newscast. She was involved with breaking the news that Mulroney was about to resign as PM,” says Rider.

“I was in the Ottawa bureau finishing some business when Craig arrived saying that something was going down in town that night,” Rider remembers.

“He had the feeling that Mulroney was resigning. He called his people, I called mine, and together we gathered enough to go to air. We called Toronto and they gave us the go-ahead to break the story.”

Eventually she left CTV for a job as the assignment producer for CBC TV’s The National.

“I was working with so many unbelievable reporters, she says. “Paul Hunter, Adrienne Arsenault, Reg Sherren, Joanna Roumeliotis. I think I brought a bit of a private television sensibility. I once assigned Adrienne to cover a story about a boa constrictor that had gotten loose from a pet store. She loved it.”

Rider produced a series of specials about coping with COVID-19.

“Our craft was always the narrative,” Rider says. “Our craft was always telling the story. It was about helping people understand this unprecedented event. And it did very well.”

Recent social issues also required prompt responses from Rider and her colleagues. She worked on a show called HERstory in Black with senior producer Emily Mills, a series about focusing on successful Black women. She also worked with Indigenous reporter Juanita Taylor when she became the first Inuk journalist to guest-host CBC’s The National.

Only retired now for a few weeks, Rider misses the rush of the television business, missing being on the ground floor for important stories, misses the chance to scratch her creative itch.

One thing she certainly doesn’t miss, though, is the commute from NOTL to Toronto.

“Dave and I didn’t know anybody. It was a horrible day at work for Sheila Rider.

The first person on the ground was Joanna Roumeliotis, remembers Rider. “She called the show, and told us all she could see was dust. She heard this constant beeping sound, and discovered it was from sensors in the packs the firefighters wear to warn them they are going through smoke. But there wasn’t a firefighter anywhere. They were all buried in the rubble. She was devastated.”

During the pandemic Rider produced a series of specials about coping with COVID-19.

“Our craft was always evolving and the CBC, especially for a big organization, is pretty nimble,” she says. “I worked from my kitchen, and I was trusted to come up with the format and the narrative. It was about helping people understand this unprecedented event. And it did very well.”

Recent social issues also required prompt responses from Rider and her colleagues. She worked on a show called HERstory in Black with senior producer Emily Mills, a series about focusing on successful Black women. She also worked with Indigenous reporter Juanita Taylor when she became the first Inuk journalist to guest-host CBC’s The National.

Only retired now for a few weeks, Rider misses the rush of the television business, missing being on the ground floor for important stories, misses the chance to scratch her creative itch.

One thing she certainly doesn’t miss, though, is the commute from NOTL to Toronto.

“We were telling a story, and that’s what I loved at the CBC. They gave me lots of room to create programming. And I also loved mentoring the young kids I worked with.”

When the planes flew into New World Trade Centre buildings, Rider had to get reporters there to cover the nightmare on the ground. It was something no one had any experience doing before.

“She was the ABC and the CBS and the all-girl Branksome Hall company, only three people,” says Rider. “And I couldn’t open any of the envelopes, I couldn’t look at anything until two weeks later.”

Rider’s career brought her into contact with Canadian prime ministers throughout the years, as well as other world leaders while travelling for her job. She produced election coverage many times over and worked with the cream of the crop of Canada’s journalists. She was in the control room during CTV’s coverage of the terrorist attacks and was responsible for some of the network’s most crucial programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Born in Toronto, a teenager Rid- er first attended the all-girl Branksome Hall Private School, then graduated from Jarvis Collegiate. After earning a degree in history and politics from Kingston’s Queen’s University, she planned to travel for three months. But nine months turned into three years when she accepted a position with a public relations firm in London.

“It was a very small company, only three people. And, I wasn’t very good at it. I was a publicist for these authors of mostly unreadable books. But I got to travel with the authors as they were interviewed at the BBC and the Guardian. I saw what happened in those places and I wanted to do that.”

When she returned to Canada she applied for a job at CBC Radio. She was told by an executive producer there that though she did not have a journalism degree, her three years abroad alone meant she was “worldly,” and she got the job.

“I ended up as an associate producer,” Rider recalls. “I would do interviews and edit them. I worked at As It Happened and the old Sunday Morning show, booking guests and writing.”

While working there one day in the early 1980s, Rider ran into a technician named David Eadie, who was wearing a Queen’s University jacket.

“I asked him if he had gone to Queen’s and he said yes,” she laughs. “I told him I had, too, and I guess I guess you’re going to start talking about all the people we might know in common.” I thought he was a jerk.

But not the two, the two eventually became a couple.

Rider got hired away from CBC Radio to help produce an afternoon talk show on CTV Television. She soon shifted over to Canada AM, then was transferred to CTV’s Ottawa bureau, a time she remembers fondly. Her job entailed travelling with Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney and Jean Chretien.

“Mulroney is a lovely man,” says Rider. “And Chretien was so much fun.”

While working with long-time host of CTV’s Question Period, Craig Oliver, in 1993, Rider was involved with breaking the news that Mulroney was about to resign as PM.

“I was in the Ottawa bureau finishing some business when Craig arrived saying that something was going down in town that night,” Rider remembers.

“He had the feeling that Mulroney was resigning. He called his people, I called mine, and together we gathered enough to go to air. We called Toronto and they gave us the go-ahead to break the story.”

Eventually she left CTV for a job as the assignment producer for CBC TV’s The National.

“I was working with so many unbelievable reporters,” she says. “Paul Hunter, Adrienne Arsenault, Reg Sherren, Joanna Roume- liotis. I think I brought a bit of a private television sensibility. I once assigned Adrienne to cover a story about a boa constrictor that had gotten loose from a pet store. She loved it.”

Rider produced a series of specials about coping with COVID-19.

“Our craft was always evolving and the CBC, especially for a big organization, is pretty nimble,” she says. “I worked from my kitchen, and I was trusted to come up with the format and the narrative. It was about helping people understand this unprecedented event. And it did very well.”

Recent social issues also required prompt responses from Rider and her colleagues. She worked on a show called HERstory in Black with senior producer Emily Mills, a series about focusing on successful Black women. She also worked with Indigenous reporter Juanita Taylor when she became the first Inuk journalist to guest-host CBC’s The National.

Only retired now for a few weeks, Rider misses the rush of the television business, missing being on the ground floor for important stories, misses the chance to scratch her creative itch.

One thing she certainly doesn’t miss, though, is the commute from NOTL to Toronto.

“Dave and I didn’t know anybody. It was a horrible day at work for Sheila Rider. “And I would really, really like to give back in some way to this town that has been so good to me,” she says. “I don’t know yet what that looks like, but I know I want to do that in some way.”
First road trip behind them, Preds still learning to win

Mike Balsom  
The Local

After a tough 5-3 loss at home Friday night to the St. George Ravens, the Niagara Predators finally took their first road trip of the season. Though the bus ride there and back was fun, the Preds came home with their third straight Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League loss, 3-1 to the Durham Roadrunners.

“Friday was frustrating,” head coach Kevin Taylor tells The Local. “These guys have to learn how to win. Good teams find a way to win even when they’re not playing well. We haven’t found that guy who will step up and say ‘I’ve got this, boys.’ Is that player on this team? I don’t know yet, but if he is, I have to find him.”

Taylor insists his Predators outplayed the Ravens Friday night in a game that went back and forth scoring-wise in the first period, resulting in a 2-2 tie after 20 minutes. But St. George talled twice in the second, only 40 seconds between goals.

Niagara forward Nicholas Nicotelli was tripped on a mere 20 seconds after the Ravens went up 4-2. He took his penalty shot between two defenders to see us playing in the same game,” says Shane, a first-year sport management student at Brock University. “It was the first time we played against each other.”

The 18-year-old says there was no brotherly chirping during the game, though he did give 21-year-old Jackson, a forward on the Roadrunners.

Shane comes to the Predators from the Greater Toronto Hockey League’s AA York Mills Hockey Club, while Jackson played last year for the Georgina Ice of the Provincial Junior Hockey League.

“It was really cool for my parents and my grandparents to see us playing in the same game,” says Shane. “It was a lot of fun on the bus,” he confirms. “Just messing around, having fun, talking about sports and other things, having a laugh. It wasn’t too serious on the way up. And the post game chicken burgers were great.”

“I forgot to warm them up,” Taylor says of the food. “I get sidetracked and forgot to turn it on. But they still enjoyed them. I think they are all starting to see how much work goes into this team. It was nice seeing how appreciative they were of everything.”

Heading into this week’s practice sessions Taylor was planning to get back to basics.

“Greg (Wilson, assistant coach) and I think we have to get away from all the motivational stuff and get back to the X’s and O’s,” Taylor says. “Centre drive, take the puck to the middle. We’re struggling with guys trying to do too much out there. I’m a firm believer that you can’t run until you can walk, you can’t walk until you can stand, you can’t stand until you can crawl.”

Frena has a similar opinion when asked how he and his teammates might be able to get back into the win column this coming weekend.

“We have a lot of skill on this team,” Frena states. “Obviously we have to work a lot harder to get the puck out there. We have to make the easy passes, keep it simple, stay away from the stretch passes and stop trying to get through three guys. We have to keep our heads up and stick to our strengths.”

After a rare Friday night without a home game, the Predators will try to keep it simple at the Tottenham Community and Fitness Centre Saturday night when they take on the Railers, to whom they fell 5-3 in their season and home opener on Sept. 15. Their next home game at Virgil’s Meridian Credit Union Arena is Friday, Oct. 27, their first time meeting the currently 2-4-0 Northumberland Stars.

Forward Josh Frena looks for the puck in traffic against the Ravens at home Friday night.

Shane Kaplan in Friday night’s game against the St. George Ravens.

Luca Fernandez scored the Preds’ second goal in Friday night’s 5-3 loss.

Goalie Georgi Kotsiaev got his first start in goal this season in the 5-3 loss to the Ravens. (Photos by Mike Balsom)
LocalSPORTS
Lawn bowling carpet mouldy, slippery

Penny Coles
The Local

Members of one of the oldest lawn bowling clubs in Canada have found themselves in a difficult situation with their carpeted surface, one they are not sure how to handle. They have put their bowls away for the season, and are hoping to work out a solution with the town over the winter.

The problem is an aging carpet and an issue with mould on it that needs to be fixed.

Paul McHoull, past president of the club, recalls the move to the new community centre in 2011. The club has a long history of 133 years of bowling on grass — first on the green on the grounds of the Queen’s Royal Hotel, says McHoull, where the park is now, when people came from all over by boat or train to bowl. Its next location was on Regent Street, from 1922 to 2011.

When a member’s vote was taken and the decision made to move from Regent Street, which was town-owned property, to the community centre, “not all members were happy. Some went to other clubs,” says McHoull, but for the most part “members were pretty excited.”

He knows of only two other clubs in Ontario with carpets instead of grass, and when the town was planning the base and carpeting at the community centre, not a lot was known about how to install them, he says.

The carpet was put down in the fall of 2010, with bowlers playing on it for the first time when their season started in 2011 — the club was proud to hold the provincial pairs championship that year, “a pretty big deal,” says McHoull. However, carpets have an expected lifetime, and it was only intended to last about 12 years, so would need to be replaced soon, but there is a question with the base that could be causing the mould problem.

“When large brown spots, slimy and slippery, began appearing on the carpet, McHoull says, members weren’t sure what was causing them. And neither was the town.”

“When the community centre was built, the town didn’t know much about putting in an artificial surface. Nobody in Canada really knew. About a year ago, we started seeing a drainage problem, with water pooling on the carpet.”

Typically, even after a heavy rain, members would be out on the green an hour or two later, but the brown spots where rain had pooled didn’t go away.

In August, they discovered that an Australian lawn bowling expert with a company that installs such carpets in Australia, where most lawn bowling is done on artificial surfaces, came to Etobicoke. He was there to supervise the replacement of a carpet that was installed at the James Garden Lawn Bowling Club in 2006. It was his company that had installed it, and when approached about the problem in NOTL, he agreed to come to town and have a look.

He gave them a report saying the mould is likely rooted in the base, which is made of crushed stone, and which he said should have had some powdered cement added to it when it was installed.

“The problem looks like it’s on the surface, but it could be deeply rooted,” McHoull says. He fears, after speaking to the expert, that steam-cleaning the carpet, as the town has suggested, will not prevent the mould from returning, nor would an expensive replacement — the layers underneath have to be removed and the base relaid. “This constitutes a major job,” he adds, at a ball-park cost of around $500,000. As expensive as that sounds, “are we going to put $125,000 or $150,000 into replacing the carpet?”

Whatever the solution chosen, the club will have to pay a portion of it, he says. The club pays the town $5,000 a year towards costs, and pays to have the carpet cleaned.

McHoull has passed the report along to the town to investigate, and town staff have said they will seek a second opinion.

“We can’t blame the town — there are so many other things they have to spend money on,” he says.

“It all comes down to budget.”

But if the base isn’t replaced, “it will be an ongoing issue. The underlying problem is not being solved.” It is a tough situation.

“A question from The Local to the town’s parks and recreation director, Kevin Turrott, and a request for an interview, brought this response from spokesperson Marah Mirr: “Replacement of the lawn bowling carpet is in the capital budget tentative-ly forecasted in 2026. Staff have investigated the asset condition and are exploring options.”

The lawn bowlers have also contacted MPP Wayne Gates, who visited the club last week to understand the situation, and told members he would look for grants that could help pay for repairs.

The carpet is “still playable,” McHoull says. One side of the lawn bowling surface is fine, but members have been cautioned against putting their weight on a brown spot when they bend down to bowl.

“Some players are worried about spores in the mould, especially those with allergies,” he says.

“I’m afraid of someone slipping, that your foot could go out from under you. We had a member slip on a damp spot and hurt her knee — it made her hobble for a while. We don’t want to see that happen again. We’ll have to be careful when we begin playing again in the spring.”

Paul McHoull demonstrates what he means when he says members have been cautioned against putting their front foot on a brown spot, although the mould covers a good portion of one side of the carpet. (Penny Coles)
There was a good turn-out for short mat bowling when it returned to the community centre Monday.

First-time bowler Jim Brown, attending the first session at the community centre this season, tries his hand with some pointers from some more experienced short mat bowlers.

Pat Rees follows through on her bowl. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Sandi Johnston, who plays both, looks forward to short mat bowling. “I enjoy it, it’s good exercise. It’s fun, challenging, and you can test yourself,” she said.

In the winter months, she noted, many snow birds (people who travel south for part of the winter), play short mat bowling because they can either pay the $90 membership fee, or pay-as-you-play at $4 per game. Two games are played each day.

“You don’t have to commit yourself,” said Johnston, who further explained that when you show up on a Monday or Thursday, your team is decided on a draw. “Every time you play with somebody different, and you can play a different position.”

Short mat bowling uses the same bowls as those used outdoors. Bowls can be rented for $20 a season. In the game, bowls are aimed at the jack in an attempt to get as many of your team bowls closer to the jack than those of your opponent.

Unlike lawn bowling, short mat bowls have to negotiate a small wooden block placed in the middle of the mat. Each game takes about an hour. Johnston thinks it’s a good deal to stay active and add some social time into the winter.

“It’s $90 for the season, which takes you to 50 games if you play two games on Monday and Thursday. That’s pretty good entertainment,” she said. “Please come out and enjoy it. You’re going to have fun, and there’s no judgment,” Johnston added. “Some people are competitive in it, but you don’t have to be experienced in any sport, and it’s something that if you have a good game, it’s celebrated. If you don’t, then the fact that you’re participating is a celebration in itself. It’s just about getting out.”

Games are played Mondays and Thursdays at 1 p.m., leaving time to get “settled in with your mat and bowls,” before the games begin, said Johnston.

Visit notlbowls.ca for more information, or just show up at the Community Centre on a Monday or Thursday afternoon.

Last year’s club had about 50 members, “but they don’t all come out at the same time,” said short mat bowler Paul McHoul. “We would be swamped if they did!” Thirty-six people showed up for the Short Mat Club’s first bowl of the season. Many are summer lawn bowlers, but some are not.

The short mat bowling season goes until April, when, of course, outdoor lawn bowling begins.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.

Sharon Burns
The Local

Lawn bowlers are eager athletes who do not let any time pass between seasons.

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s outdoor lawn bowling season ended Saturday, and the indoor sport known as short mat bowling started Monday at the Community Centre.