



Grape harvest
expected to be
be a good one

page 14

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Ron Clavier, Alana Hurov and Josh Perlstein gathered at Simcoe Park and spoke of concern for family and friends. Clavier said his relatives in Israel had confirmed they were safe, and that none of his family members had been called in to fight for the Israel Defence Forces at that point. Perlstein, 35, originally from Toronto, said a friend living in Israel had retired from the forces but was called to duty against Hamas. He too had confirmed he was safe at that time. (Mike Balsom)

Cyclist seriously injured at Townline and Lakeshore Road

Local Staff

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. 1022200 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.

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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.

"These 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

Continued on page 12



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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, making 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 the country. "My parents were the first from their families to come 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 oldest 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.



Dorothy Soo-Wiens and Luanne Kulchar in May at Cornerstone Church on Hunter Road package pies to be delivered to the New Hamburg Fairgrounds for the annual Mennonite Relief Sale. (File photo)



Dorothy Soo-Wiens and Kathy Dyck made pies in September to raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation. (Supplied)



Art Viola, with Erwin and Dorothy Wiens, collecting food for the NOTL Lions food drive for Newark Neighbours. (Supplied)

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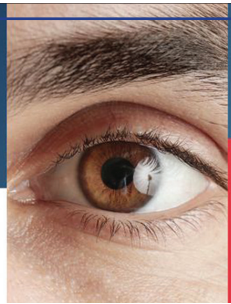
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Autumn
Eye Care
tips

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 soak up natural light and enjoy the autumn scenery.




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Continued on page 3

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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 become an extension of our family. And we've been to Jamaica to meet their families, too."

As the girls got older, she became involved in their activities. Three of their daughters played in the Niagara Falls Rapids hockey program. Dorothy volunteered as a trainer for a number of their teams and sat on the club's executive. When they played soccer she volunteered to work the concession stand at Memorial Park. And she also helped coach a NOTL girl's lacrosse

team to an Ontario championship in 2010.

At Cornerstone, Soo-Wiens was part of a group that started the church's women's ministry shortly after the family moved to NOTL.

"We help provide food for funerals," she explains. "I work with the hospitality director, Carol Wiens. We gather a team of volunteers together and put the whole reception on for the families. There's a real need to help the families who have lost a loved one."

Then there's the quilting group she is a part of. They make quilts for the Newark Neighbours Christmas food hampers, and send many to reserves in Northern Ontario through the Mennonite Central Committee. Some have also been sent overseas to Tur-

key and Ukraine.

"There are about 15 to 20 of us who get together," 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 Cornerstone Church parking lot every December, and helps pack stockings for donations to 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 (2021) we had about 19 tractors. None of us really knew

what we were doing, but it turned out to be spectacular."

She was adamant that NOTL's tractor parade take place in Virgil, the epicentre of the town's farming community. And she insisted that it encompass Pleasant Manor as part of its route.

"I called their recreation director," says Soo-Wiens. "It's in the evening, and many seniors don't like to go out in the dark. So I wanted to bring the parade to them. We've heard from many people about how great it is to watch the parade with their mothers from the balcony there."

Last year's parade more than doubled the number of tractors involved to 39, making Soo-Wiens' target of 60 this year a reasonable goal. While others pilot a couple of

the Wiens family's machines in the parade, Dorothy and Erwin will be at the Virgil Sports Park organizing all of the entries.

"It brings people so much joy," she says.

About her collective volunteer efforts, Dorothy insists none of it would happen without the support of the many people she works with. And she harkens 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. I believe we all have that responsibility to help our neighbours. I don't do any of this because I have to. It's because I want to."



Once pandemic restrictions were lifted and people were allowed to gather, Dorothy Soo-Wiens (fourth from left) and a group of women quickly got together and made 11 quilts for Newark Neighbours to distribute with Christmas hampers. (File photo)



Baraka Allen ('Obama'), with Dorothy and Erwin Wiens. The seasonal worker from Jamaica drove one of the Wiens' machines in last year's tractor parade. (Supplied)



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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 rostered 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



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)

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.

She has maintained since she began pushing for the return of the nurse practitioner that although healthcare falls under provincial jurisdic-

tion, municipalities have a role to play in advocating for the healthcare needs of their community.

While it seems the health ministry is supportive and funding is in place, it isn't clear what the hold-up is.

"A year ago, it seemed like there was a commitment from Minister Jones to the town," Gates told The Local, "and I've met with Gary (Zalepa) three or four times since then. We decided on a joint letter, hoping the local MPP and the town working together might help get a positive response."

Niagara-on-the-Lake has a high population of senior residents, with approximately 36.2 per cent of the town's population 65 years and over, the letter says, and "seniors in our community deserve access to healthcare that is publicly available and easily accessible." And as a popular tourist destination and place to retire, "additional nurse practitioner services for Niagara-on-the-Lake are critical to help ensure everyone who lives, works or visits the community will have access to the care they need," the letter said.

"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 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." 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.



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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 service personnel, 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 at 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 peace-keeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and combat operations in Afghanistan.

On its website, the dog rescue organization acknowl-

edged that “first responders and military personnel contribute immensely 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 \$350 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 helps cover 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 confused 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) Roci 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)

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EDITORIAL

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 backgrounds, all genders, all abilities or disabilities. We stand up to discrimination. We show respect for others. Mostly. Most of us believe in inclusivity, and do our best to live it. But that isn't what we are witnessing on the world stage right now. It never has been. We see humiliating, cruel, murderous violence against innocent 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 Israel. The U.S., at least its president, is standing up for Israel. Around the world, many, although 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 cheering it attracts. That extreme hate, extreme intolerance, comes from within. And it is hard to overcome. The answer, as Alana Hurrov is trying to show us, comes from a united community, regardless of race, religion, gender. It comes from a strong voice, against hatred, and against discrimination of any kind. It comes from love. Dorothy Soo-Wiens is featured in this week's Local for her impressive volunteerism. Her voice also speaks of the importance of being kind, and of loving her neighbours, a value she demonstrates every day in her community. We in our little corner cannot do much to change what we are witnessing around the world. But we can start by embracing all in our community. By showing, teaching and living with love, not hate. So simplistic, so easy to say, and also, really, so easy to do. It is, after all, a choice. **Penny Coles**
The Local

Library interview with Dr. Richard Merritt

Susan Elliott
Library Board Member

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library board and staff are interested in exploring the special place books, reading, storytelling and libraries hold in the hearts of our community members. The power of the written and spoken word, the enchantment of libraries and childhood memories of time spent with books, creates a profound tapestry of emotions and experiences. This questionnaire prompts introspection and reflection, offering a unique lens through which to examine the bond between readers and their connection to books, storytelling and libraries.

Watch this space for interviews with an array of interesting community members.

This week's Niagara-on-

the-Lake Library questionnaire is with local historian Dr. Richard D. Merritt, the author of *On Common Ground* and *Training for Armageddon*.

An ophthalmologist by profession, he has had a lifelong interest in Niagara's history. He is currently writing a narrative biography of Six Nations Chief George Henry Martin Johnson, Teyonhekwen, father of celebrated poet Pauline Johnson. In 2017 he was named a Living Landmark by the Niagara Foundation for his contributions to heritage preservation in Niagara.

Q. What kinds of books are you reading now?

Usually I read a book connected with my research, and at the same time something completely unrelated. Right now it just happens to be *Tecumseh's Bones* (by Guy St-Denis. I just

finished *Dead Man's Wake* (by Paul Doiron), a murder mystery set in Maine. I'm also enjoying *What I Wish I Said*, by local author Jaime Watt, a columnist for the Toronto Star. The various chapters begin with what he wrote on a particular subject, followed by his 'second thoughts' about the same subject.

Q. Do you remember what it was like when you learned to read?

I grew up in London, Ont., but my family was originally from the Niagara area. Later I returned to my roots, practised 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-great aunts and uncle 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 with sewn words on cloth pages called *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 Blyton's adventure books, and of course the Hardy Boys series. I especially remember *Paddle to the Sea* by Holling B. Hollings — I really loved that book and I still do!

I also recall some books my father liked — the *British Chum's Boy's Annuals*.

My dad had enjoyed them in the '20s and '30s and happily passed them on to me. They were big books, on cheap paper but they had some colourful illustrations and wonderful stories that boys could relate to.

Q. What do you remember about going to the library?

There was a large downtown library in London, Ont. However, I don't remember going to the library so much

to take out books as there was a lending library in our public school. At about 12 years of age, an aunt gave me a family tree and that really piqued my interest in family and local history. I started visiting the local history section of the local library — the first of many such expeditions to reference libraries in Canada and the United States since. Of course, the Internet and digitized records have revolutionized such research practices.

Q. Where does your love of reading come from?

I have to say that when I was growing up, the education system in Ontario was pretty remarkable. When I think of the literature we were exposed to — Shakespeare, Dickens, Hemingway, Conrad and so forth as part of the high school curriculum — I still read them over again. However, when I got into pre-med at Western U, I simply had no time to read anything other than scientific/medical textbooks through my 10 plus years of post-high school education. Occasionally I'd pick up a James Bond paperback just for diversion, but

quite simply I didn't have time for casual reading.

After I finally finished my formal education and became a practising ophthalmologist, I had a bit more time to pursue further my interest in the rich heritage of the Niagara area. In the meantime, my late wife, who was also an ophthalmologist, joined a book club. She would come home with recommendations which I would occasionally read as well.

Q. What do you like about libraries?

I use the inter-library loan service, which allows me to obtain books and microfilm tapes from other libraries. This has been extremely helpful. I have also spent many hours on our library's microfilm reader to review the library's extensive collection of microfilms on local subjects. Fortunately, Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa has now digitized many of their old microfilm tapes as well as many other records in their collection and these are now readily available on the Internet, which I can access at home.

Continued on page 7

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View from the couch

Donald Combe

Special to The Local

This tense courtroom drama, *The Burial* (Prime, 2023) is based on true events. It is the tale of a once-successful

funeral home owner fallen on hard times and his attempts to save his business from a corporate behemoth. It is engrossing drama at its best.

Donald Combe is a retired English teacher who loves to

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



Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week, Margaret Tarnowski tells us, Ben was standing on the bridge across the lily pond in the Pillar and Post's Monet's Garden, a favourite wedding venue which is open to the public.

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

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

Publisher:
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local

Village Media Regional Publisher (online sales)
John Hammill
john@villagemedia.ca
905-988-5599 ext 1157

Advertising Sales:
Joy Sanguedolce - NOTL
joy@notllocal.com
416-817-0920

Julia Coles - outside NOTL
julia@notllocal.com
905-934-1040

Graphic Designer: **Rosie Gowsell**
composing@notllocal.com

News Tips: news@notllocal.com

notllocal.com facebook.com/notllocal instagram.com/thenotllocal @thenotllocal

St. Davids growth brings services residents enjoy

Penny Coles
The Local

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 Pearsall, 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 supermail-boxes,” 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 Pearsall.

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.

Pearsall 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



Lisa Tansley of Small Batch Soaps.

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, she says, but once she retired 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 pass-

ers-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



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



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



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Store owners love their York Road location

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 reminds me of Old Oakville — it's nice and quiet, and the people are so friendly, so welcoming, both the people from St. Davids, and those who are just passing through.”

Next door to the Junction is Taurus Terrazzo, owned by Jessica Eedens and specializing in handmade refillable candle jars and containers, and delicately scented or unscented candles to refill them, as well as interesting plant pots and other giftware.

She was based in Stamford Green, she says, and

wanted some space for a retail store where she would also have room for production. “I saw this and loved that it was part of a community. Everything lined up, and I knew we had to jump on it.”

The developers of the block “were careful about curating the four stores, to make sure we all fit,” she says, “and they did a really good job of it. We all complement each other.”

Eedens, who lived and worked in Niagara Falls, says she often travelled to Fonthill to visit the Junction. “I'd 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 Tansley 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, with 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 trendy barbershop Saturday afternoon to talk to The Local, but his daughter, Elizabeth Bruce, was.

“He's always wanted to branch out with a barbershop, but he didn't find the right place, until he saw

this and jumped on it,” she says. “We've been busy with walk-in clients, lots of parents who walk their kids to school, and then tell their friends. We've had great local 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 Pearsall. “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 Pearsall'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.”



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)



Karen and George Thorpe enjoy treats at Junction.

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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, angry 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 Mississagua 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 it has to offer, are not looking for that kind of accommodation, he says.

An acrimonious divorce, 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 oppose 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



Rainer Hummel (Supplied)

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.

"The town bylaws 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 Hum-

mel, 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, he continues, "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 Inn" 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 underground, 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 to 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 — at least not yet."

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‘We’re all afraid of what’s next’ — even here

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 is even more so now.

“It has been devastating 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 reaching 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 “this is a very dark time for me.”

Hurov says her grandmother left Poland as a teenager, leaving her family behind — a family that would be destroyed by the Holocaust, leaving her grandmother the only survivor. Her grandfather watched his mother raped, she says.

“This brings me back to the Holocaust, my grand-

father fleeing in the middle of the night. It’s a part of my history and my people.”

Her mother grew up in Winnipeg, bullied because of her religion, and although Hurov was raised in a Jewish community where she should have felt safe, she says she hated that she was Jewish, and feared she too would be bullied.

“I don’t want that fear and hate for my daughter. I want her to feel the support of her community, a community that stands united, where everybody feels love for each other.”

Others who have been in town longer than Hurov estimate there may be 150 Jewish people in NOTL, possibly more, she says, and she wants to find a way to bring them together. Her first plan of action is a Friday night Shabbat dinner — Shabbat is a day of rest that lasts from sundown on Friday evening through nightfall on Saturday 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

our Jewish community, and all those who have been affected by war and atrocities.”

She has family in Israel, and friends who have family in Gaza, she says. “It breaks my heart to see people in Gaza without homes, and people in Israel who are terrified.”

And of course there is the fear of what might happen right here, in response to calls “to kill all Jews, eliminate all Jews. Police are

aware of it, they are on high alert, and we’re all afraid of what’s next. But I feel I have to have a voice, and bring people together to support each other.”

The Jewish community, she says, “needs to have a strong voice. Everyone I’ve talked to, we’re all deeply concerned.”

“I really don’t understand why people would side with a terrorist organization,” she continues. “It’s

mind-blowing that anyone would support terrorism, and not speak up against it.”

In spite of what she has witnessed, she says, “there is no hate inside me. I want people to love each other. I want the world to be rid of hatred.”

And she wants her daughter to grow up in community that celebrates the traditions she loves, that she hopes will continue for a

long time to come.

“I want her to be proud, not afraid.”

It’s especially important now, she says, to be stronger together, united against all people who are marginalized, to show the world this will never happen again, and “to show love when there is so much hate.”

Hurov has created Jewish in Niagara on Facebook: visit [facebook.com/groups/1449841038894175](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1449841038894175).

Lots to choose from



A pumpkin and squash farm on East and West Line offers plenty of choice for those stocking up for Halloween — or dinner. (Dave Gilchrist)



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 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 Marci 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

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

A report brought to Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors Tuesday morning about costs associated with moving meetings to sites other than town hall was met with mixed reactions from councillors.

Recently, Coun. Gary Burroughs raised concerns about public meetings and their agendas being too full, with dozens of people being registered as speakers. Residents have ended up not giving their presentations due to the meetings going late into the evening — as well as some finding the process of speaking virtually confusing, he said.

Burroughs has said staff should remove non-contentious development applications from agendas and let them “expire” when it comes to required timelines from the province related to the scheduling of public meetings.

He also wants to see the community centre used as a venue for discussion about developments that draw a lot of public attention.

During Tuesday’s committee-of-the-whole meeting, a report was provided by staff to outline what would be re-

quired if a meeting were to be relocated from the council chamber to the community centre.

The report says one meeting at the community centre would cost about \$5,000.

Staff says the community centre is not equipped for council meetings, and that hiring a company to handle additional microphones and equipment, plus running a livestream, would be more than \$3,400 for one meeting.

It would also result in more than \$1,400 of staff overtime, plus a rental fee of the centre of more than \$400.

But Burroughs suggested that he may look for support from the rest of council to see the town set aside funds to accommodate off-site meetings.

“I’d prefer to be spending money on our capital budget that we’re doing right now and fixing that so that public meetings can be held for the public at the community centre,” said Burroughs.

The community centre auditorium can hold 569 people, but has 300 seats, reads the staff report.

The council chambers at town hall can seat 58 members of the public, not including councillors, staff and the press.

Chief administrative of-

ficer Marnie Cluckie said the report before council Tuesday is meant to address questions about costs associated with off-site meetings.

“It’s simply to provide information in that regard,” she said.

Staff will also create a draft off-site meeting policy, which would include a list of criteria to be considered when council is faced with a decision about moving to another location.

Questions raised by Burroughs regarding changes to how public meeting agendas are formatted will be addressed in another report coming to council next week, said Cluckie.

Coun. Maria Mavridis isn’t on the same page as Burroughs.

“I don’t know if moving them to a bigger venue is the answer,” she said, adding that she believes people register as speakers possibly without any intention of actually speaking — but only to put their name on one side of the discussion.

“A lot of people register to speak, and that’s just to make a point,” she said.

Mavridis also suggested the town should enforce a rule that individuals who share their opinions are only allowed to provide “new information,” and not repeat ar-

Continued on page 13

Simcoe panel important to town's history

Kris Dube
The Local
Local Journalism
Initiative Reporter

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.

In August, the town's 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 to the surprise of locals, researchers from Stantec, the firm hired by the developer to create a commemoration plan for the site and its artifacts, 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 confirms 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 just not stated that it occurred exactly at that site," Kaufman told The Local, adding that the meeting of parliament has never been proven 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 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 her 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 tent 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, at the former school site under the shade of an oak tree.

"However, both the House of Assembly and Legislative Council were prorogued on July 9, 1793, and no further sessions of parliament were held until 1794," said the report prepared by Stantec Consulting.

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

"Therefore, it is unlikely that any parliamentary proceeding took place under an oak tree at 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 what the panel says is an error, Kaufman said it should be included in the developer's plans.

"I think it would be 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

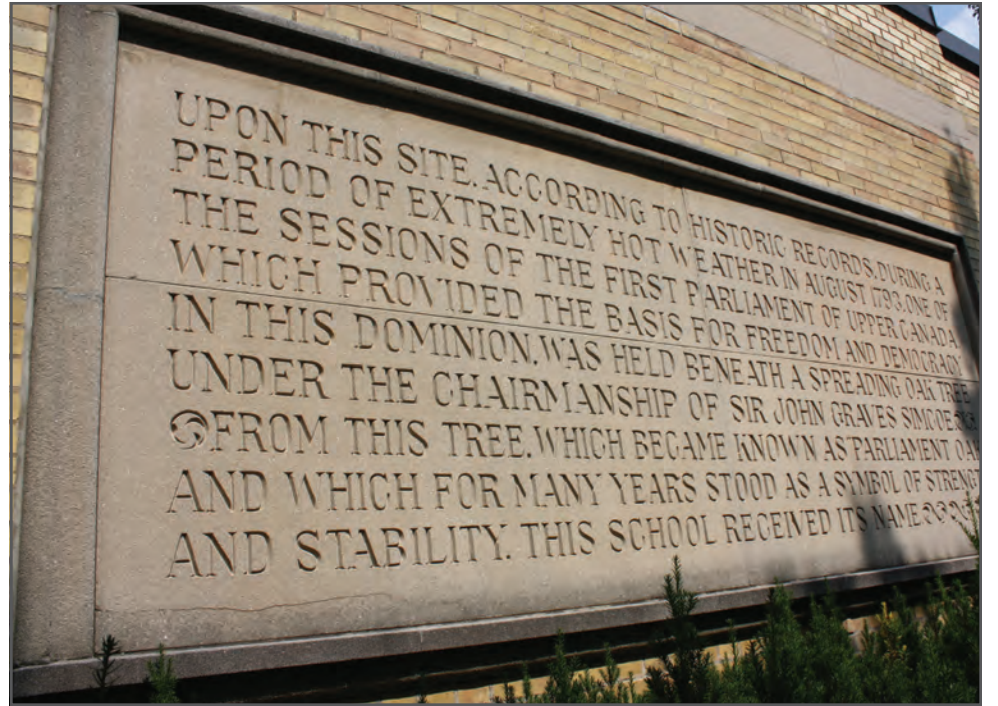
the wrong timing of the meeting and perhaps the wrong location, but the event is part of the fabric of the community and may have inspired generations of students who attended the school," said Dale, who was superintendent of Niagara national historic sites for Parks Canada from 1992 to 2013.

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 marquis tents erected.

He 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



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)

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 Un-

derground 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

guments and points that have already been raised.

She also said it's "hard to control a crowd when they're that big," referring to hundreds of people piling into the community centre.

Coun. Adriana Vizari asked if the \$5,000 price tag would also apply to venues in other villages when projects come up related to places like Glendale or St. Davids.

Cluckie said using another facility in one of those places

would likely come at a similar cost.

"It would have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, depending where we go," she said.

Late last year, the province enacted its More Homes Built Faster Act, which is part of Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan and aims to see 1.5 million new homes built in Ontario by 2031.

That, along with the town and Niagara Region's official plans, which are guided by provincial legislation, all need

to be taken into consideration, said Coun. Erwin Wiens, who believes educating the public about the planning process and how it works should be a priority.

He said there are examples of public meetings in other municipalities being relocated to larger sites, and that Niagara-on-the-Lake should be cautious.

"It's generally a negative outcome," he said. Wiens also said it's a common occurrence when major developments are being scrutinized by the public

that "emotions get in the way of the factual basis of good planning."

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said the main concern is that residents want to "feel as though they're being heard."

She hopes the town can "look at ways in which we might be able to find some efficiencies," and also assure the public that written submissions and comments are not ignored by council and staff.

No decision was made Tuesday, with the report received for information.

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‘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 super 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 it or break it,” 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.



Cheers to a great harvest: Grape King Erwin Wiens, shown in his vineyard on the day of his installation, says this year an “above-average” harvest is expected. (Denis Cahill)



Aidan Buis of Glenlake Orchards and Vineyards watches over the grape harvest. (Supplied)

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 emergen-

cies related to dry weather.

“It’s never a worry if we know we have to water our entire farm — we just may have to work a little more,” he said referring to the infrastructure that needs to be set up when watering.

According to the Grape Growers of Ontario, there are 500 farmers in the province who operate more than 7,200 hectares of vineyards.

Fall Fun Fest hosted by Fine Estates Team



At the Fine Estates Team’s Four Mile Creek Road office on Saturday, owner Andrew Perrie hosted a Fall Fun Fest for the community. There were drinks for adults and kids, pumpkin carving with pumpkins provided by Phil’s Your Independent, and colouring as well as a bouncy castle. The fun captured in photographs from the event include (clockwise from top left): Jon and Rory Muste, with Evan Giessler in the brown jacket behind them, trying out the bouncy castle. Colouring are Jayde Ormsby and Theo Cauhi. At the pumpkin carving table are (on the left side) Blake Simons-Whyte, Ben Simons-Whyte, Delilah Colvin and her mom Amanda Colvin, Kaia Lee, and (on the right side) Theo Cauhi, Eleanor Colvin, and Kade and Hudson Perrie. Outside the office, Andrew Perrie poses for a photo with his wife Gabriella, and Hudson, Jagger and Kade. (Penny Coles)



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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 for Niagara-on-the-Lake youth.

On Saturday, Oct. 21, the youth collective will host a Halloween social at its Cornerstone Community Church site on Niagara Stone Road. Young people will test their courage with the 'Do You Dare?' game, BeanBoozled game, a 'Fear Maze', a cookie-decorating station, Halloween music, dancing and more.

"We wanted to open the fall season with a fun, casual social event," said Brenda Ferguson, programming lead for the collective. "Now that everyone has transitioned into their fall schedules, we plan to build on the success of our winter and spring sessions by continuing to ensure there are safe and welcoming spaces for all NOTL youth."

"We literally just launched in January," said Caroline Polgrabia, a planning committee member. "The premise of the group was to really try and shine a light on youth and youth programming and obviously the youth role in the community. We want to give youth more profile and fill the gaps on the things that the kids wanted in our community that didn't exist."

The collective has already provided local youth with a plethora of programming options. While it has offered drop-in centres, Polgrabia

said the group found more success with themed registered programs such as cooking class and chess club. The Raspberry PI Microcontroller Workshop was a huge hit, she said, and they hope to offer it again with Ben Higgins at the helm.

"We know that we're going to be working again with Big Brothers Big Sisters to present the Go Girls program," added Polgrabia. They also plan to offer first aid and babysitting certification programs this fall.

"We're going to build on the things that were really successful. Most of the programming which takes place this fall is going to be registered social programs, because those are kind of the gaps we are seeing in the community," said Polgrabia.

"That's where we've been headed. We don't think 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."

The collective has a close eye on working with all community partners and with the town on their new family and youth programming. "We are excited and very thankful to the council for the enhanced focus on families and youth," said Polgrabia.

"Let's see what we can make happen together to support NOTL families. There is still a lot of work to do and many conversations needed. This is a wonderful step in the right direction," she added.

The Halloween social is



Kaitlyn and Jayden Polgrabia are ready to party for Halloween. (Photos supplied)

open for students of all ages. Volunteers ask that parents or guardians of youth in Grades 5 and under stay to supervise their children.

This event is being offered free because of the strong community support the group has experienced to date. Families are asked to register in advance to support planning, and in lieu of admission, bring a non-perishable food item donations to support the NOTL Youth Collective 'Gives Back' program.

Polgrabia explained the

Give Back program as an opportunity for youth to be responsible "within the community and to give back when there's an opportunity." On Valentine's Day, for example, young people created Valentine's Day cards which were dropped off at local retirement centres. "It's the idea of making sure that they (youth) understand that they have a role to play in the community to give back and contribute."

The collective could use some help with volunteers for the Halloween event, and do-

nations, such as peanut-free candy, decorations and gift bags. Cash donations are always welcome to help offset this and other event expenses. Contact Brenda at programs.notlyouth@gmail.com.

The event will be held at the Cornerstone Community Church Town Campus at 1570 Niagara Stone Road from 6 to 8 p.m., Oct. 21. Families can pre-register for the Halloween event at <https://forms.gle/oTVCH-QRk8epQqGQ88>. Youth are encouraged to wear costumes

and get into the Halloween spirit.

"We are so grateful to Cornerstone for continuing to allow us to use their Town Campus for youth programming. Their unwavering support for the entire NOTL Youth community by providing 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.



Last spring, youth collective volunteers organized an outing for kids to experience lawn bowling at the community centre, aided by club members.



Kids have fun at one of the first winter sessions.



An open house to share news of the youth collective and programming ideas was held in October 2022. With winter and spring sessions under their belt, volunteers are gearing up for fall.

Poppy Project volunteers prepare for Nov. 1 installation

Local Staff

The Poppy Project continues to grow! Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum volunteers are preparing to once again create a stunning display of poppies on their Castlereagh Street building and at the Court House on Queen Street, leading up to Remembrance Day, and this year are also planning

an expanded display at the Royal Canadian Legion on King Street. The installation is expected to take place at all three sites on Nov. 1. The displays will consist of multi-cascading nets of poppies, a poppy garden honouring local veterans, and poppy wreaths displayed by local businesses. The poppies are made, and this week

volunteers are attaching them to the nets that will drape the buildings. The Poppy Project represents hundreds of hours of hand labour by a team of 40-plus local volunteers, popularly known as The Poppy Brigade. Now in its third year, the brigade, under the direction of co-ordinator Barbara Worthy, has become an accomplished and efficient

army of knitters, crocheters and sewers. For eight weeks in the fall, these volunteers meet to ensure all aspects of the project are completed and ready for installation. “Our amazing volunteers created more than 2,000 poppies again this year,” says Worthy. “So now they have created more than 6,000 poppies. And the wreath ladies

once again braved poison ivy and rose thorns to harvest and dry even more grape vines for the dozens of wreaths.” The museum is bustling at its seams when the brigade is at work, with much of the museum’s temporary exhibits pushed aside to make room for the 14-foot-long nets, boxes of vines and flowers, signs, cables, screws and moun-

tains of zip ties, to the intrigue and amazement of visitors, adds Worthy. “This is a perfect example of how our museum expansion will enable these projects to be undertaken without any disruption to the public’s enjoyment of our current exhibits,” says the museum’s managing director

Continued on page 17



The Poppy Project is being expanded for Royal Canadian Legion hall, requiring more poppies and nets. (Photos supplied)



‘The Poppy Brigade’ is hard at work at the NOTL Museum attaching poppies to nets for the installation at the Royal Canadian Legion.



Volunteers help make the poppy nets.

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, and accepts donations to its poppy trust fund, 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 at 1 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 be submitted by Nov. 7.



Expect 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 yearly 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.



Shari and Perry Hartwick at last year's bash at Willowbank Estate. (Photos supplied)

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 Mu-

seum, and then 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)



Perry Hartwick, Red Roof Retreat's Steffanie Bjorgan and Shari Hartwick know how to throw a party.

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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 Vahrmeier 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 to 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 Lezlie 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 Lezlie 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 Vahrmeier 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," Vahrmeier told The Local. "The kids are really enjoying it."

Before breaking off into their two groups, Vahrmeier and Kennedy start each Friday night session with a PowerPoint presentation, teaching them the technological basics that go into film production. The lesson this 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 arc creation, Vahrmeier and Kennedy have allowed the young participants to move on to create their own collective visions.

"They have complete creative control," Vahrmeier 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 down there is stalking 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 businessman who has a gambling and alcohol addiction," said the 11-year-old. "He finds a suitcase full of money, and puts it all on



Carter Vahrmeier, Eva-Odile Beausoleil, Maggie Forsyth, Marina Tumanova Martinak and Eden Kennedy check out some sound gear for the evening's session.

a poker game and loses it. But he unknowingly stole 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 has been involved with Yellow Door for around five years, having appeared in *The Little Mermaid*, *Shrek* and *Mary Poppins*. She 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.

"A lot of these kids are part

of the theatre program as well," Vahrmeier told The Local. "They have a really good understanding about how humans work. They're pretty mature for their age in how they see the world."

Vahrmeier says he brings a lot of what he studied in Niagara College's cinematography and film/television production program to the Yellow Door academy.

"Definitely the technical aspects and how things are really supposed to be done," he says, "comes from what I learned there. 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 gives a lot of credit to both Vahrmeier 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."



Edén Kennedy, Vaughn Goettler, Lauren Goettler, Andorlie Hillstrom and Carter Vahrmeier cut the ribbon to open the Film Academy. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



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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. Brianne 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 Custers)

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 Robbie 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.

Kelowna, 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."



Kennedy Von Kat performing at The Warehouse Concert Hall in St. Catharines recently. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

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 young pop-rockers Maggie Lindemann and Nessa Barrett, as well as bands such as Paramore, Chase Atlantic, and Linkin Park. And yes, Evanescence is on that list. She includes a cover of that band's biggest hit *Bring Me to Life* in her Warehouse shows.

Horbach also offers up a new original called *Edward Scissorhands*, a song she has been working on with producer Paul Gigliotti, formerly 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 child 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 Hypnotic 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 there, 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 it. 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.

"I want 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."



Kennedy Von Kat with promoter and hip hop artist Robbie G.



Kennedy Von Kat hitting a high note.

Shelia 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 CBC Television in Toronto. “I knew in my heart, though, that I had made the right decision. You know when it’s 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 journalists Peter Mansbridge and Adrienne Arseneault, 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.

“It was lovely, I love these people, I loved the job,” says Rider in the living room of her Old Town home. “I never liked the focus on me. I held it together, but I cried all the way home. I was just a mess. 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 CBC’s 9/11 coverage and was responsible for some of the network’s most crucial programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Born in Toronto, a teen-aged Rider 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.

Those three 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,” she laughs. “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 ITV 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



Sheila Rider in her Old Town home. (Mike Balsom)

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 Happens* 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 he had,” she laughs. “I told him I had, too, and he said ‘I guess you’re going to start talking about all the people we might know in common.’ I thought he was a jerk.”

Jerk or not, 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

longtime 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 Arseneault, Reg Sherren, Ioanna 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.”

She produced *The National* with Peter Mansbridge for many years, and ended up working with the station’s Specials unit, with Lloyd Robertson and Ian Hanomansing, among others.

Rider is proud of the work she did with Mansbridge, as well as of her more recent years producing current affairs and special programs.

“I think I was able to create narratives around our programming,” she says. “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 York’s World Trade Centre buildings, Rider had to get reporters there to cover the nightmare on the ground. It was something no one there had any experience doing before.

“The first person on the ground was Ioanna 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 to 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, misses 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.

She and Eadie moved to town with their young son Jake in 2004, following her parents Bill and Pat and her brothers, Peter and the late Hamish. Shortly after the move, the family was dealing with Sheila’s breast cancer diagnosis. David left CBC Radio at the time to help her deal with her treatments.

“Jake was just four,” she says. “Dave and I didn’t know anybody. It was a horrible time. But our neighbours were so supportive. They just knocked on my door, they brought us food and took me to painting classes when I could barely walk. I knew right then that it was the people that made this a beautiful town.”

When she was ready to return to work, her bosses

at CBC were very generous, assigning her jobs that allowed her to work four days a week. She would drive up to begin her week, stay with Jake’s godparents in Toronto, and come back to NOTL for the weekend.

“When I produced *The National* I would do that three nights a week, and the fourth day was for prep,” she says. “That meant I didn’t have to be there all week. And they always let me work on a lot of my special projects at home. But it was tough on Jake, I missed his hockey and soccer games and many other things.”

Jake is now attending Acadia University, and the family owns some land on an island off Cape Breton. They would like to build on that land, but that won’t happen soon. Meanwhile Rider plays tennis regularly at the NOTL Tennis Club and is open to some part-time work where she might be able to exercise her ongoing love of creating a narrative.

She’s already receiving calls from some of those younger CBC staffers that she mentored, and says she will never turn down a chance to help any of them with their questions.

“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 tallied twice in the second, only 40 seconds between goals.

Niagara forward Nicholas Nicoletti was tripped a mere 20 seconds after the Ravens went up 4-2. He tucked his penalty shot between Ravens' goalie Nikolay Ershov's legs to narrow the gap. But despite outshooting St. George 16-8 in the third period, the Preds were unable to bounce back.

"We dominated them," Taylor says of the St. George game. "We had the puck at least 60 per cent of the time. We just couldn't put it into the net."

Having lost against the Roadrunners 3-2 just eight days earlier, Taylor was hoping to get some revenge with their first visit to the Del Park Homes Centre in Oshtawa.

"I thought we played

okay in the first period," says Taylor, though the Preds gave up a goal just 1:09 after the opening faceoff. "I think we outplayed them in the second, and in the third we dominated them. There was about 12 minutes left in the third period and the ice was still wet in our own end."

Ethan Culp got the lone Predators goal in the second period after taking a pass from teammate Shane Kaplan, who was playing against his older brother 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, 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, who is studying business at Toronto Metropolitan University, a nice, clean hit at one point. Jackson picked up an assist in the game on the opening goal.

Since he came down to Niagara to attend Brock, Shane claims that the Predators were an obvious choice for him.

"They're a great organization," he tells The Local. "A great team. I love it here. I just want to keep playing as long as I can at the highest level that I can. I'm just taking it one year at a time."

With the Roadrunners up 2-1 just past the midway point of the second period Saturday, Niagara-on-the-Lake native Josh Fre-

na took a tripping penalty that resulted in Durham's insurance goal.

"It was my first penalty," Frena says. "I went to take the body, and I just got stuck behind his back leg. I got called for the knee. I was kind of upset. After they went up 3-1 it made it harder to get back into it. I was mad at myself for that."

Frena, for one, is happy to have experienced his first road trip with his teammates after two previous away games were cancelled.

"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 got 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.



Goalie Georgii Kodzaev got his first start in goal this season in the 5-3 loss to the Ravens. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



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

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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- Across:**

1 Wander

5 White or Blue African river

9 Ahura ---, Zoroastrian Supreme Being

14 "... Marching --- war ..." (Sabine Baring-Gould)

15 Downright dastardly

16 Sherlock seeks them

17 Supercelebrity

18 Immeasurably long periods

19 Heavenly supporter

20 Causes house moves in California?

23 "... Venus sets --- Mercury can rise" (Pope)

24 Some

25 For each

26 Piece on earth?

28 Timber management

33 Lay

34 Wedding attendant

35 Weeding implement

36 Ironclad Mrs. Rice encrypted some FBI database entries

40 GWB, to GHWB

41 Quaintly ancient

42 Flag

43 Really?

46 "In your dreams!"
- 47 It never gets off the ground in Australia

48 Home to Jaguars but not Panthers

49 A decade

52 Sub rosa

58 Found in rings and bulbs

59 "Battle Hymn of the Republic" author

60 Pennsylvania resident famous in February

61 Fatty acid, for example

62 And the rest

63 Kansas movie barker

64 Corporate bigwigs

65 Century note

66 Double-click, perhaps
- 11 Bantu language

12 Distribute cards

13 Helper, for short

21 Model --- Campbell

22 Bender

27 "Solaris" author Stanislaw ---

28 Golfer who won three British Opens and three Masters

29 Giant people-eater

30 Place to find a bargain

31 Staffs

32 Triumphant cry

33 28 Down is one of them

34 Friends

36 "--- : Miami" (CBS hit)

37 Still in dreamland

38 Superior herring?

39 "Halt! --- fire!"

44 Valiant

45 They're made in reparation

46 Far away from home

48 Up in arms

50 Cream of the crop

51 It can run while you walk

52 Flat-fish

53 Multi-user computer operating system

54 About to go off?

55 "--- Call Me MISTER Tibbs!"

56 Jot

57 "He's --- no good"

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Sudoku solution from Oct. 18, 2023

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

Across: 1 Roam, 5 Nile, 9 Mazda, 14 As to, 15 Evil, 16 Clues, 17 Icon, 18 Eons, 19 Atlas, 20 San Andreas Fault, 23 Ere, 24 Any, 25 Per, 26 Plot, 28 Forestry, 33 Poem, 34 Page, 35 Hoe, 36 Criminal records, 40 Son, 41 Olde, 42 Irs, 43 Is that so, 46 As if, 47 Emu, 48 A F C, 49 Ten, 52 Surreptitiously, 58 Onion, 59 Howe, 60 Phil, 61 Lipid, 62 Et al, 63 Toto, 64 Execs, 65 Yard, 66 Open.

Down: 1 Raise, 2 Oscar, 3 At one point, 4 Mona, 5 Needn't, 6 Ivory, 7 Line, 8 Elsa, 9 McAfee, 10 Altars, 11 Zulu, 12 Deal, 13 Asst, 21 Naom, 22 Spree, 27 Lem, 28 Faldo, 29 Ogre, 30 Thrift shop, 31 Rods, 32 Yes, 33 Pros, 34 Pais, 36 C S I, 37 Not up, 38 Cisco, 39 Or I, 44 Heroic, 45 Amends, 46 Afraid, 48 At war, 50 Elite, 51 Nylon, 52 Sole, 53 UNIX, 54 Ripe, 55 They, 56 Iota, 57 Up to.

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The Niagara-on-the-Lake *Local*

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

Short mat bowling provides exercise and social time

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. 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 notlbowl.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 McHoull. "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.



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



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.



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