Indigenous veterans honoured at Queenston memorial

When Michele-Elise Burnett helped the dream of the Landscape of Nations Memorial in Queenston Heights become a reality, she and others began planning a ceremony to honour Indigenous veterans.

That came to fruition Saturday, with an Indigenous Veterans’ Day service at the memorial. The date is officially Nov. 8, and the ceremony was planned as close to that day as possible, given other similar events, Burnett says.

The service involved a wreath-laying ceremony, to remember Indigenous veterans and ancestors who helped make this country what it is, she says.

“It as an occasion to honour, acknowledge and reflect on the efforts of Six Nations veterans, something we’ve been working on for years,” says Burnett, a Metis Algonquin, Bear Clan, whose father, grandfather and cousin are veterans. Her cousin, Joe Paquette, was instrumental in forming the Metis Veterans’ Council, her father was a fighter pilot in the Second World War, and her grandfather an artillery soldier in the First World War.

“When we built the memorial, we knew it was going to be a place to reflect and to pay tribute to the sacrifices of Indigenous warriors,” says Burnett.

To see the event unfold and the many people who attended, was “heartwarming and emotional for me. We planned to keep the event small and grow it,” she says.

It was an opportunity “to pay respects to my family, and all the Indigenous veterans who fought for our freedom. The service is a fitting tribute to Six Nations and native allies who have made a difference in the history of Canada,” Burnett was part of the original committee that planned the Landscape of Nations Memorial, which opened in October, 2016. The project was a legacy of the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812, intended to recognize the role of First Nations in the outcome of the war.

Since then, she says, the memorial has been used, by herself and memorial co-chair Tim Johnson, “in so many different ways, with Indigenous education initiatives and tours, as a tool for education and acknowledgment of the Indigenous contribution to that war and others since.”

The memorial, she says, has become an out-

Continued on page 3
Newark preparing to help others at Christmas

Penny Coles
The Local

The food is beginning to pile up at Newark Neighbours, along with some gifts and wrapping paper, in anticipation of ensuring those who may be struggling at this time of year will have a happy Christmas. Single mothers who are hoping for a special meal and gifts for their children, parents who are experiencing hard times and seniors who find it difficult to make ends meet at this time of year will be helped by the generosity of locals and the dedicated efforts of a group of about 35 volunteers, who will make sure those in need will have enough food over the holidays, and some gifts that make the difference between a good Christmas and no Christmas.

Monday morning, the Newark Neighbours parking lot was full and the thrift store was busy. Chair Laura Gibson says a lot of items for the store are dropped off over the weekend, and as volunteers are busy sorting the newly-arrived merchandise, shoppers are hoping to find the best deals. Their shopping dollars help to fund the good work Newark is able to do.

The thrift store area is small, but organized and tidy, with volunteers taking pride in looking after their assigned sections, says Gibson.

In addition to the donations received from the community, the local thrift store and food bank has people who sponsor families at this time of year, buying all that will be needed to deliver a great Christmas. There are about 60 clients expected to require help this year, says food bank manager Marion Ollerhead. Although registration is open until Dec. 10, there are already enough sponsors lined up to help, but there are some food items needed, she says, such as Christmas cookies, cake mixes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and canned mixed vegetables.

Newark will order turkeys from Kent Heritage Farms, so if anyone is planning on donating a turkey, says Ollerhead, please let her know so she can adjust her order.

There may be some in need of help over the holidays who aren’t regular clients of Newark Neighbours, and if they qualify, they will receive assistance, says Ollerhead.

For families with children, one of the volunteers calls when there are kids involved to see what they are hoping to receive at Christmas, and will pass that information on to sponsors. That way there’s a good chance the children will receive at least some of what was on their wish list.

Newark Neighbours was founded in 1971 by Peggy Anderson, who came to Canada as a war bride. In her early years in town, she worked on local farms, where she met several large families who were struggling, and wanted to ensure they didn’t go hungry.

Today, Newark requires evidence of eligibility for those requiring assistance, including proof of income. Newark receives no government funding, using income from its thrift store to help the needy and to pay the bills for the “barn,” as the building is called, located off the Riverbend Inn driveway at 310 John Street East. For more information call 905-468-3519.
Ceremony to remember sacrifices of Indigenous veterans

Continued from page 1

A moment of silence was held to remember the sacrifices of the Six Nations, and Native allies.

“The memorial fills in the gap that has existed in the history of our country,” she says.

“This is a great way to talk about, reflect on and memorialize our veterans who have done so much for our country, and to learn about our history and our culture.”

During Saturday’s opening procession, Burnett carried the flag of the Two Row Wampum, which symbolizes the 1613 agreement between the Haudenosaunee and representatives of the Dutch government, declaring peaceful coexistence. The agreement is considered by the Haudenosaunee to be the basis of all of their subsequent treaties with European and North American governments.

“This is a beautiful flag,” she says, “representing both friendship and respect that is necessary to have peace.”

Behind her in the procession was Métis Brian Kon, carrying the Métis flag, which would be used when they went to war, or for ceremonies representing veterans, she says, and in front, was veteran Darrell Doxtator, with the Hiawatha flag, representing the five original nations of the Haudenosaunee: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca.

The Niagara Parks Commission has been an important part of the story of the memorial and Saturday’s ceremony, says Burnett.

“They have been incredible stewards of our land, and are committed to working with us so that we can tell our story. Tim Johnson and I are very grateful for their support.”

Representing the Town and the Niagara Parks Commission, Lord Mayor Betty Disero was invited to speak at the event. “I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples for millennia. We are grateful for the opportunity to spend time here as we reflect and remember the sacrifices of Indigenous veterans. On these sacred grounds, Native allies fought alongside British and Canadian soldiers to secure victory at the battle of Queenston Heights and other pivotal events throughout the War of 1812,” says Disero.

“Today we remember the fallen, the dedicated, and the faith-keepers whose efforts forged a lasting peace. I can think of no better place to hold this ceremony than here at the Landscape of Nations Memorial.”
Canada Summer Games needs volunteers

Energetic, fit people needed to fill role of Games mascot

Penny Coles
The Local

Canada Games organizers are looking for turtles. Turtle mascots, that is.

The search for volunteers to help with many aspects of the games coming to Niagara in 2021 is ramping up, but one of the first needs is for several people who can put on a turtle costume and go into schools and other events leading up to the games, beginning this month, says Vittoria Wikston, senior manager of marketing and community development for the games.

She is hoping for “a robust group” of up to 20 people who can share mascot duties, based on their availability, she says. They will go into schools through the Catch the Spirit program, and appear in parades and other social activities to help promote the games, right through to the end of the competitions.

Organizers are looking for mascots who are active, physically fit, who can do things such as hit tennis balls or sink a basketball, dance a bit, and be entertaining for students in the 165 Niagara schools, all of which will receive a visit from the mascot, beginning in January.

Mascots must be good with people, like having fun, be upbeat and friendly, and have the ability to “clown around,” says Wikston.

She says school kids in Niagara between the ages of 10 and 18 were asked to submit names and designs for a turtle mascot. A turtle was chosen since there are many species native to the Niagara region, and because Indigenous belief is that a giant turtle created all of North America, and the Niagara Escarpment is the backbone of what they called Turtle Island.

The name and design for the mascot have been selected, Wikston says, and were announced recently at an event in Welland.

Applications for those interested in becoming mascots are online at https://niagara2021.ca/get-involved/volunteering/.

There will be a lot going on in the coming months, including the construction of Canada Games Park, near Brock University, now underway as a legacy project of the games; a new rowing centre at Henley Island; and upgrades to other facilities throughout the region, with funding from all levels of government, says Wikston.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, tennis practices and competitions will take place at White Oaks Tennis Club, and local volunteers are also needed there.

At this point, volunteers are being chosen for key leadership positions, but there will be many more needed as the games get closer — thousands of volunteers will be required for cultural and sporting events.

There is an application on the games website for those who are interested, and in time, there will be more information about what is available and what is required, Wikston says.

Volunteers will be required for events leading up to the games, including competitions, fundraising and alumni events, community and school events and the Torch Relay, and for the games themselves.

Wikston says to check online for more information — anyone interested can leave their name and email address and will be notified as applications are available.
Button sales help offset parade costs

Penny Coles
The Local

An annual tradition supporting the Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade is underway.

Local stores are currently selling parade buttons, designed by a local artist, for a minimum $2 donation.

The men from the sub-committee of Christmas Parade organizers say “minimum,” because they often receive much larger donations in the boxes that hold the buttons, and occasionally have someone put a quarter or less in the slot.

“On parade day, people just hand us money, sometimes $10 or $20,” says Gerry Brand, one of the committee members.

While there are boxes in many stores in town, the men will be out in two busy locations in town, Phil’s valu-mart in Virgil, and Penner’s Building Centre, on Saturday, Nov. 30, selling the buttons themselves.

But the big blitz comes the day of the parade, this year, Saturday, Dec. 16, when they usually sell out.

In past years, buttons have been designed by renowned local artists such as Angie Strauss, Trisha Romance and Tanya Jean Peterson, but recently the committee has worked with the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre to choose a design submitted by a local artist.

This year, the design selected was by Lauren Bosch, a visual arts student at Brock University.

She spent a summer working at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, and learned about the design competition. “I drew something up and sent it to the Town,” she said.

“It’s a slightly stylized drawing of Santa, and will be another collector’s item for those who have collected all of the parade buttons, says Streecker.

But for those who didn’t think of that a decade ago, he adds, “it’s never too late to start a collection.”

The money donated from button sales pays for the transportation costs of the bands, and other costs, next year. There are residents who also donate to the parade, some of them every year, Streecker says.

Next year, committee members hope to have a new sleigh for Santa — the current one is tired-looking, and a new one has been designed. Button donations will help to finance the new sleigh for Santa’s float.

Bob Cheriton, parade organizer, says all the bands have been booked, and entry applications are being accepted for the parade, with a deadline of Nov. 30. Visit notl.org for the application form and also for a PDF of the parade route.

Fire department online map shows monthly calls

Penny Coles
The Local

If you want to know what your fire department volunteers do, check out the fire incidents map on the town website.

Jay Plato, deputy fire chief for Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire and Emergency Services, says the map has been made public recently, to show the number of calls volunteers respond to each month.

Originally, town GIS staff developed a map to help the department track calls, breaking them down into six categories: fire, fire alarms, gas and carbon monoxide, motor vehicle collisions’ assistance, and medical calls. Each call has a symbol which shows on the map where they occurred.

The map was originally intended as a decision-making tool, which could be used to help the department allocate resources as needed.

It is much more efficient to collect data in one location than paper incident reports, he said.

When the tracking map was shown to council, Plato said, it was decided to make it public, to show residents what NOTL fire department volunteers do.

There are now two maps and two online sites: one for internal use, which includes more detail about the incidents, including addresses, the other for the public, which would only show the general area of the incident, to protect residents’ privacy, says Plato.

October’s map and statistics are now available online, and will be updated monthly.

The site includes a pie chart which breaks down the percentage of types of calls monthly. In October, the fewest calls, just six per cent were for fires, with the most calls, 26 per cent, for medical assistance. Fire alarms made up 24 per cent of the calls, 22 per cent were for motor vehicle collisions, 12 per cent were assistance calls, and gas and carbon monoxide were 10 per cent.

To view the map, visit https://www.notl.org/fire_incidents_map.

Deputy Fire Chief Jay Plato says the online map will improve efficiencies in the fire department.

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November 21, 2019

notllocal.com

November 21, 2019

notllocal.com
Enjoy NOTL at its finest

This year, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the season, turning Queen Street into an elegant winter wonderland.

Using the theme of a Victorian Christmas, with beautiful decorations — including natural boughs, garlands, burgundy ribbons and bows, and soft white lights.

Volunteers were recruited, some from service clubs and the NOTL Horticultural Society, and last Friday was a bee-hive of activity along Queen Street, at the gazebo and other select locations.

To top it off, this Sunday, Nov. 24, there will be a community tree-lighting ceremony on Queen Street, at 6 p.m.

Kudos to all who planned and took part in what was a collaborative and community-minded event, and who transformed sections of the Old Town into a magical scene that will be the backdrop for some exciting seasonal events to come — including the Candlelight Stroll, and the best Christmas Parade ever.

We live, work and play in a town that has so much to offer. Its downtown streets may be taken over for about five months of the year by tourists, but this is the time for locals to take back our town.

Let’s plan to shop, eat and drink locally, and celebrate the season by making the most of all the festivities planned for the benefit of residents.

There is lots to do and see, lots of great Christmas shopping, and lots of events to enjoy. There will never be a better time to take back our town.

Penny Coles
The Local

Letter Policy

In response to recent letters The Local has received and not published, we would like to share our letter policy. We encourage residents to submit letters that are respectful and deal with the issue at hand. We will not publish letters that attack individuals. We hope to hear from you soon! Email penny@notllocal.com.

DISTRESS CENTRE
For depression, distress and crisis.
24 hour help line: 905-688-3711

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACCESS
(Toll Free) 1-888-550-5205

GAMBLER’S ANONYMOUS
905-351-1616

KIDS HELP PHONE
Service for youth 416-586-5437
1-800-668-6868 (Crisis Line)
kidshelpphone.ca

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Meetings every Wednesday evening 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.
St. Mark’s Parish Hall 41 Byron St., NOTL
or find a meeting 905-682-2140

ASSAULTED WOMEN’S HELPLINE
Mobile calls to: #SAFE (#7233) 1-866-863-0511 (Toll Free)

CRIME STOPPERS
1-800-222-8477 (TIPS)
niagaratips.com
Text 274637 (CRIMES), keyword: Niagara, then your tip

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

Robert St. Patrick Stevenson was born in Sorel, Que., the son of Lt. John Andrew Stevenson and Mary Addison. He was the grandson of the first rector of St. Mark’s and of Sir John Stevenson, the famed composer. His brother was Judge Stevenson of Haldimand. Robert Stevenson was educated at Upper Canada College, and earned a medical degree in Philadelphia. In the 1871 census, he was shown to be a farmer, and living with his young family at Lake Lodge. His second wife, Mary Brady, whom he married in 1870, did not die till 1922, and she was interred in the Roman Catholic Cemetery at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

Robert Combe
Special to The Local

Based on Motherless Brooklyn as a “film noir,” this stylish Hollywood crime drama transports the viewer not only to another time, in this case, 1957 Brooklyn, but further into an almost surreal world. This long film carefully investigates abuses of power and control, and in doing so, reflects the behaviours of certain contemporary American politicians.

The director was meticulous in every possible way as he allowed his story to develop and unfold. I was mesmerized, but remain uncertain as to whom I would recommend it.

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

Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

This double feature of unnerving stories, I promise, were for me then for those about to read them. My lifestyle and career see me outdoors sev- en days a week, so when I have the space time for original adventures, I usually go in all.

The first time I went ‘all in’ set the tone for the cold, wet, and sometimes painful stories I will now tell you about. In hind- sight, they are all positive stories for me now that were created by time in nature. They come build- ing with valuable lessons, too. I, as I still like to go sometimes, I followed the creek down and off the yard, where it crossed un- der a couple of roads and then broadened out into a beautiful floodplain. It was March, and ice was still sealing the deal in our forests.

When a large tree falls, it takes up the roots and earth

with it, leaving behind a deep depression or hole in the ground where it once vaultantly stood. Sometimes, these holes inevitably fill up with water. They become little ecosystems unto themselves, occasionally a few feet deep.

I accidentally tread on one of these frozen pits and it gave way immediately. My snowsuit and little body perched directly through the ice. I remember the cold water seeping in through percolated cotton and touch- ing my warm body. Slowly, getting heavier, I remember the cold soup up to my chest and my tunnel smell, my nose and head thankfully well above the ice. My feet kicked off the bottom where worms, rotting leaves, and hibernating frogs probably rested. I got out pretty easily, but pretty damned cold.

I apparently developed a strange affinity for this feeling. I learned to gain mastery over mis- ery in outdoor conditions, because misery can beat you up faster than the weather itself sometimes.

I not only found joy, but personal growth and stamina in my years of winter camping, intentionally hiking in storms, hence why I also love the annual Penguin Plunge in NOTL.

Living in Canada, of all places, most of us are fortunate enough to go our entire lives without getting hypothermia.

Here's how you can get it. Go hiking for four days straight in early spring when rain is falling but snow is still on the ground. Sleep alone in the tent, but wake up next to the exact same foe for ev- ery morning – this grey, heavy, bitting pressure of rain and wind that’s waiting outside again. Get directly rained on all day so hard that even your sponsored gear can’t keep you dry. I have been given up on the sit- uation.

Rinse, dry, repeat – minus the dying.

Wake up, eat some cold food, and put on the least wet pair of socks and sweater you can find. The one thing I ex- perience on thatBruce Trail expedition in 2014 was that neither the weather nor I slept that week of the Sun moving from Libra to Scorpio into intense Scorpio just past the equinox. Today, the Moon moves from secretive Scorpio into all-knowing Sagittarius on Friday, Nov. 22, and the New Moon in Sagit- tarius on Tuesday, Nov. 26. And more.

Thursday Nov. 21: On this last full day of Scorpio for 2019 we see the Moon move from discriminating Virgo into balancing Libra just be- fore midnight. It’s a day when Mars and Chiron make a connection which can bring some healing opportunities to those in need of physical help. Or maybe with help at work. The look to me like rowan and Martini Laugh. In, Geonie Haven, celebrates number 74 today. Her acting career has been enduring and rarely fal- tering and she likes Canada a lot with homes in British Co- lumbia and Muskoka.

Friday Nov. 22: The Sun moves from the sexy constellation Scorpio into all know- ing Sagittarius at 9:59 a.m. It’s the start of a month of all things big, especially ideas and deeds. Today, the Moon in Libra adds a friendly and more laid-back edge to the proceedings, but even all push for improvements that are not easy to accept. The Great One, Wayne Gretzky, was inducted into the Hock- ey Hall of Fame on this day in 1999, his jersey, number 99, retired forever by the NHL. And it was Friday Nov. 22, 1963 that John F. Kennedy was shot in Dallas, Texas.

Saturday Nov. 23: While the Moon continues her tran- sit through the sign of Libra, Mercury and Venus and the Sun and Chiron make con- nections that, while some- what stressful, if well-handled promise improved relation- ships, more money and heal- ing of old wounds. This is Wayne Gretzky’s week. On Nov. 23, 1988, he scored his 600th goal! And super quar- terback, Doug Flutie, threw his “Hail Flutie” end-to-end pass for Boston College on this day in 1984.

Sunday Nov. 24: What a mixed bag of events we see in the sky today. First, the Moon moves from laid back Libra into intense Scorpio just past midnight. Then, Venus and Jupiter are together in Scorpio before sunrise, which brings good fortune in relationships for all. Just before noon, Mars in Scorpio is opposite to Ura- nus in Taurus bringing sud- den change which could be dangerous either as in an ac- cident of note – or a warning about a health matter. Later in the day the Sun in Sagittari- us makes a tense connection with Saturn in Capricorn sug- gesting it’s time to come clean with yourself. And finally the Moon and Mercury connect at the same place in the sign of Scorpio bringing a meet- ing of heart and mind. On Sunday, Nov. 24, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald was shot and killed on live TV.

Monday Nov. 25: The changes continue today as Venus moves from outgoing Sagittarius to commanding Capricorn while the Sun in Scorpio makes a stressful connection to Uranus in Tau- rus bringing an opportunity to change direction on some long-term goals. If we are up for the challenge of change. Married with Children star, Christina Applegate turns 48 today.

Tuesday Nov. 26: The Moon moves from secretive Scorpio into sunny Sagittarius today in preparation for the New Moon which happens at 10:05 this morning. It’s the start of a new lunar month, a day of new beginnings where intuition is strong and confi- dence is high. Happy birthday number 102 to the National Hockey League, and it was Nov. 26, 1922 that the brilliant cartoonist who gave us Pea- ratts, Charles M. Shulz, was born. Also Nov. 26, 1922, the discovery of King Tut’s Tomb opened up a new era in fasci- nation with all things ancient Egyptian, an interest that is ongoing even up to today.

Wednesday Nov. 27: Back on June 21, Neptune, plan- et of Pisces and ruler of all things unconscious, began to move in retrograde motion. Today Neptune turns direct, unleashing positive energy and making dreams come true. Bill Nye, the science guy, turns 64 today.

Next week I look at the last week of November, and the start of December. Also the week of the first Quarter Moon in Pisces on Wednes- day, Dec. 4.

And please visit my website www.LookingUpWithBill.com. It all new with a new pod- cast featuring the connections between the planets, the astro- logical signs and the houses of your horoscope. As well the cosmic news for all seven days of the week.

As I said: We are stardust. We are golden. So shine on!
Ed Schellenberg enjoyed community work

Randy Klaassen Special to The Local

Edwin (Ed) Schellenberg, who served on Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Council from 1991 to 1994, died peacefully, surrounded by family, on Nov. 6. Edwin grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan. Varied by family, on Nov. 6. Edwin and Irene's family included children Linda, David, Jeanne, and John. Later, the family expanded to include grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Edwin enjoyed attending events at various school, sport, club and church functions with them. In 1982, Edwin was hired as administrator of Pleasant Manor, in Virgil. For 12 years, he oversaw the growth and development of services for seniors of the community. Facing challenges of expansion of long-term care, Edwin moved on to use his experiences in consulting and management services for non-profits. Before retiring, Edwin was active as a volunteer board member with several church and community charitable organizations, including the NOTL Hospital and Niagara District Health Council. In retirement, his social personality drew him to work as a driver with Niagara Air Bus for a time, and then as a volunteer driver for 18 years with Canadian Red Cross and Canadian Cancer Society.

With a shortage for drivers, Edwin's family encourages anyone interested in volunteering to contact either Red Cross (905-680-4099; ask for volunteer opportunities), or Cancer Society (905-684-6455; ask for volunteer services, Wheels of Hope program).

His funeral service, Nov. 11 at the Bethany Menno-Nite Church, was attended by a cross section of people from churches and the community.

Bjorgman plans to return to tropics

Continued from page 7

Ed Schellenberg at a family celebration. (Randy Klaassen)

The eighth annual Sandtrap Open had the biggest year yet, raising $10,650 that was split between The Ronald McDonald House and the Niagara Children’s Centre. The tournament was held at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, with a sold-out field of 76 golfers. In eight years, the tournament has raised more than $52,000.

Marla Smith (below) of the Niagara Children’s Centre accepted the cheque from Dylan, Colton and Matt Dietzeh at the NCC and Catherine and Ann Marie (above) accepted the cheque from Dylan, Kristen and Matt Dietzeh at the Ronald McDonald House. (Photos supplied)

It was amazing and humbling to go from carrying a massive backpack through rainforest wilderness for days on end, high on life and unfazed, to feeling useless and devoid of basic functioning. The swelling of the brain against my skull and the pain festerling in my joints made lying still and sleeping a nightmare. It wasn't even the sort of sick that you could easily sleep off.

The implications of that mosquito bite in 2016 are circulating my environmental work and projects. Now that I've had Dengue Fever, I am more immune in general to ever enduring it again. The catch is, that if I do, it is likely to be much more severe, and it can be fatal.

Where does that leave me, as someone who is looking to expand my work and influence in the natural world and public realm? I envision community-based eco projects and filming more Hidden Corners in the tropical jewels of the world, in order to showcase the global significance of these planetary lungs. Passion doesn't get the rug pulled from beneath its feet too easily, so I will be back in the tropics shortly.

It blew my mind how one mosquito nearly had me down and out, but nature's little ones can get under your skin in other ways.

Golf tourney benefits kids

The eighth annual Sandtrap Open had the biggest year yet, raising $10,650 that was split between The Ronald McDonald House and the Niagara Children’s Centre. The tournament was held at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, with a sold-out field of 76 golfers. In eight years, the tournament has raised more than $52,000.

Marla Smith (below) of the Niagara Children’s Centre accepted the cheque from Dylan, Colton and Matt Dietzeh at the NCC and Catherine and Ann Marie (above) accepted the cheque from Dylan, Kristen and Matt Dietzeh at the Ronald McDonald House. (Photos supplied)
Learn about medical advances in cancer research

Nobel Prize series continues at NOTL Public Library Tuesdays

Penny Coles
The Local

Dr. Bill Brown, originator of the popular InfoHealth sessions at the library, has another series, this one weekly, to learn about the awarding of the Nobel Prize.

The importance of the “ultimate prize,” he explains, is that it is an annual benchmark of what is happening in the world of academic, cultural, or scientific advances.

This is the second year of the series, “and an excellent way to keep up-to-date with what’s happening in science (physics, chemistry and medicine), and the world’s more controversial prizes — the Peace, Economic and especially Literature prizes.”

For example, Brown says, both this year’s chemistry and economics prize are related to climate change, which demonstrates the importance of the issue on an international stage.

The awarding of the prizes, he says “have a profile. They tackle serious issues, and are used to send a message.”

The Nobel series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library are well-attended, with Brown doing some of the presentations and other experts in relevant fields speaking on others.

The work for which prizes are awarded help people understand the advances in several fields of importance — work that will shape our future, and into the future, “especially the near future,” says Brown, “This is work that will affect us, our children and our grandchildren.”

The Nobel Prize series at the library dealt with economics this week. Brown is talking about the prize for medicine next Tuesday, Nov. 26.

This year’s prize in medicine (or physiology) was won by three people, William G. Kaelin, Peter J. Ratcliffe and Gregg L. Semenza. They won the prize for their work on the molecular underpinnings of the body’s oxygen sensing system, says Brown.

The body’s response to hypoxia is complex and intriguing. The central character is a family of closely related proteins with the uninspiring acronym, HIF, one of thousands of transcription factors — or in English, proteins, capable of activating or suppressing genes. Left to its own devices, HIF activates those genes, which augment energy-generating pathways and inflammatory responses, ” explains Brown. Fortunately, when oxygen levels are normal, the body’s cells destroy HIF through a cascade of chemical reactions — one of which involves von Hippel Lindau protein (pVHL). The latter, in mutated form, increases the risk of a host of highly vascular tumours and other, much more common cancers.

Hence the interest these days in developing drugs which block key molecules in the oxygen sensing system.”

Because HIF transcription factors are so key to systems involved with the body’s response to hypoxia, and beyond that, inflammatory responses and cancer, the Nobel committee awarded this well-deserved prize, says Brown. “But there was more to it than that – these investigators set a high standard for evidence and worked in a collegial fashion. That’s very important in science and life in general.”

On Tuesday, Dec. 5, NOTL resident David Elkins is covering the Peace prize, and the final presentation of the series will be Dec. 10, with Valmai Elkins talking about the prize in literature.

Brown’s presentation on the Nobel prize for medicine Tuesday, Nov. 26 at the NOTL Public Library at 2 p.m.
Six elegant homes on Rotary Christmas tour

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club Holiday House Tour is approaching, tickets are selling quickly and the club is promising the 21st annual event will be bigger and better than ever.

Viewing hours have been extended, the 225th anniversary of St. Andrew’s Church is being celebrated as part of the tour, and six elegant, distinctive homes will be decorated to the hilt and ready for visitors — five in the Old Town, and one not-to-be-missed on McNab Road.

The rural property on the corner of McNab and Church Roads was once a simple pioneer stone house, sitting atop a hill with a valley and creek behind it. The original section, built in 1855, is now a small living room, with 18-inch stone walls intact and part of the decor, along with its original wood floor. It has become part of Nepanthe, a quiet, warm and welcoming estate thus named by current owners Elizabeth Gilbert and Alan Rosselot. They purchased the property after falling in love with it 10 years ago, when the previous owner built the addition and put it up for sale.

The name Nepanthe, when explained by Gilbert, perfectly represents their home and all it means to them.

There is a word, “nepen- the,” mentioned in ancient Greek literature and mythology, which means a “drug of forgetfulness,” and is also known as a place to go where sorrows are forgotten. Gilbert explains. And there is “a wonderful, magical place with gardens on the coast of California called Nepenthe,” she says.

There is also a comic opera by Gilbert (not related, she says) and Sullivan, called Iolanthe, where a fairy marries a mortal, she explains. “My great-grandmother, Anna Caroline Lab, started in Iolanthe at Massey Hall in Toronto, about 1886. With the $100 she earned as an 18-year-old, she bought almost 10 acres of land in Muskoka, and called it Iolanthe. The family cottage stayed in the family for six generations, and almost 100 years. The property in Muskoka is still called Iolanthe. Many of us were truly heartbroken when it was sold,” says Gilbert.

“When we bought this notllocal property, we saw some of the natural beauty and historical feel that our Iolanthe had,” she says.

They combined the names Nepanthe and Iolanthe, and although there is no sign up yet, “the name has certainly settled in to stay for awhile,” she says.

As have Gilbert and Rosselot, their home has somewhat of an eclectic feel — Gilbert jokes about a relative who calls it ‘ecentric’ — filled with furnishings that have meaning to the two of them, that connect to their families. The rooms combine family antiques, modern comfortable seating, and artisan, hand-crafted furniture, all perfectly suited to a home with a mostly traditional feel to it, and a few interesting surprises.

One such surprise is revealed during a tour of the kitchen. Look up, and you will see a truly breathtaking mural on the ceiling, painted by local artist Paul Gosen. It beautifully blends subjects representing important artists throughout history, such as van Gogh’s Starry Night and Salvador Dali’s piano keys, with typical Niagara scenes, such as vineyards and Niagara Falls, in a tribute to the natural charm of the surrounding area.

Each room is a delight, and will be even more so when decorators from Regal Florist and Garden Centre are finished their work. Most of the home, including bedrooms, is on the main floor, allowing visitors a glimpse of most of the rooms, often off limits on the tour, connected by a long, narrow hallway.

Tour guests may also feel a little as if they are touring an art gallery, which in fact they are — Gilbert, a retired science teacher, is also an artist who has spent her years since retirement building a body of art, much of which is displayed in her home.

Her background, she says, is in medical and scientific illustration.

The best way to describe her painting style, she says, “is that I paint to celebrate the natural world. Primarily watercolours, also oils, closeups of nature, wilderness places, and water are my subjects. My inspirations as an artist are many: the Group of Seven, Tom Thomson, Emily Carr and a great many recent and contemporary artists that I’m friends with.”

Her great-grandmother, the actress, was also a watercolour artist, she adds.

While the view of the front of the house is looking up from McNab Road, the house backs down again on a gentle slope to the creek, and a wood-ed area, with hundreds of trees of about 30 different varieties planted by the couple over the last decade that attract all manner of wildlife, says Gilbert.

Skunks, raccoons, fox, muskrats and coyotes can often be seen from the Muskoka chairs outside the glass doors, a great horned owl swoops by occasionally, along with at least five different kinds of woodpeckers, and “all the songbirds you can name.”

“The couple has also tried to eradicate invasive species along the creek, “but that would be a life time of work, I think.”

Regal owner Darrell Boer will decorate the outdoor property, says designer Lindsay Ireland. Regal has participated in the tour from the beginning, and this will be her 14th year decorating for the holiday tour.

It’s a labour of love, given the beautiful homes she has decorated over the years, but it’s also a challenge. It’s important to reflect the owners’ tastes, she says, and she is always

This photograph of the McNab Road home on this year’s Rotary House tour was taken by owner and artist Elizabeth Gilbert, the day after last week’s winter storm. (Elizabeth Gilbert)
Sono’s Cafe home to morning coffee group

Penny Coles
The Local

Sono’s Cafe in Virgil, formerly the Donut Diner, is not without its coffee groups. He has up to four tables often filled in one corner, and a couple in the other, from about 8 a.m. on. Last Friday, there were three tables occupied, two with regulars who meet often in the morning, the third two who popped in for breakfast and joined the conversation. Some of them have been enjoying their coffee in their chosen corner for 20 years or more, when Mahmoud Sono and his wife, with one small boy — now 22, with a 19-year-old brother — opened the Donut Diner in 1996, the first coffee shop with a drive-through in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Of the originals, Bruce Hall, who worked back years about the issues with the new plant, says Hall, which delayed the testing it is now undergoing. Asked if anyone enjoys a Homestead doughnut served at the coffee shop, Bob Thompson is quick to joke, “no, I enjoy two — a long john for each hand.”

Also popular are the fresh, home-made pastries baked at the coffee shop each morning — there is no shortage of choice, although they’re usually gone by noon, says Sono — the early bird gets the doughnut.
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25% off a full set of eyelash extensions or an eyelash lift and tint

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The Momentum Choir will perform at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre this weekend. (Photos supplied)

Momentum choir welcomes St. Davids bongo player

Penny Coles
The Local

The move to St. Davids has worked better than could ever have been expected for Kyle Verhulst. Born with Down syndrome, Kyle is fairly independent and self-sufficient. His parents were worried he would miss his life in Windsor when they moved to Cannery Park. However, today, he is proud to be considered a member of the team at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery, just a short walk from his home in St. Davids.

When Ravine’s Paul Harber heard the 36-year-old was looking for meaningful work, he offered him a place at the winery, gardening, and cleaning tables on the patio. Verhulst loves both jobs, and now, as winter approaches, Harber will find him work inside for the winter, likely in the new conference centre. But mostly, Verhulst loves the interaction with the other staff members. He’s a joker, and they like to kid around with him while he works.

And he can walk to work, which is more than his mother Dianna could have expected or hoped for, she says.

Thanks to Harber, Verhulst has found another direction for his time and talents.

He had a full drum kit in his Windsor home, but when his parents downsized, he also downsized, to bongo drums.

He has now earned a place with Momentum Choir, which Dianna learned about from Harber.

When Kyle learned about the choir, and the fact that it has some drummers — he doesn’t sing — he auditioned, and since September has been one of eight bongo players. "Paul’s so encouraging. He’s been so good with Kyle," Dianna says.

The choir for special needs adults is in its 12th season of performing. Dianna says every time she takes Kyle to a practice, she is amazed at how professional the choir sounds, as a result of artistic director Mendelt Hookestra’s extremely kind and patient, but also very disciplined, approach to its members, she says.

"He is so kind. He expects professionalism, but never with an unkind word. He is so encouraging and his heart is unbelievably big. He demands a lot from the choir, but they love him." The next performance of Momentum Choir is Beginning to See the Light, at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre on Saturday, Nov. 23 at 4 p.m.

Please purchase tickets at www.firstontariopac.com or at the Peanut Mill in St. Catharines.

When you’re doing your Christmas shopping, consider giving the gift of a local discount card.

It’s the perfect gift for anyone who loves to eat, drink, or shop in Niagara-on-the-Lake — and who doesn’t love to. It also offers a great opportunity for recipients who would love to treat themselves, at a discounted price, to anything from a spa treatment to detailing for their vehicle.

If you have friends and family who are complicated, and difficult to buy for, let them do their shopping themselves with a Local card that will offer them specials, and discounts at many great businesses in town.

If they live out of town, it will encourage them to visit, and enjoy all our wonderful town has to offer — a meal at a local restaurant, discounted tastings at several local wineries, and shopping at some of NOTL’s most popular stores. It’s the gift that keeps on giving, for a full year — the card can be dated Dec. 25, and will not expire until Dec. 25, 2020.

If you wish to order a Local discount card online as a gift for someone else, go to the section where you can comment, and use that space to tell us it’s a gift and whose name you want on the card. We’ll then mail it out to you.

You will be able to provide the recipient of the card with a link that will show all the Local business partners, and the monthly discounts they are offering. Visit notllocal.com/membership to order a card online, or stop by The Local office at 1596 Four Mile Creek Rd., across from the Town Hall.
All Wrapped Up

Your Christmas headquarters

Submitted by Just Christmas

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Come in and browse through our assortment of over 5,000 different Christmas items. We have something for everyone on your list. We also offer a wonderful selection of souvenirs to share with family and friends.

Known for our famous hand painted Christmas balls, we can personalize for free while you wait.

Over the years we have developed the most enormous selection of ornaments, that we will personalize for free while you wait.

Visit us at Just Christmas, 34 Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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Speaking of hostess gifts, we have an extensive selection of expressive tea towels. Some that are certain to put some jingle in your bells.

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A sweet Christmas!

Submitted by Maple Leaf Fudge

Since 1978, Maple Leaf Fudge has been located on the prettiest street in Niagara-on-the-Lake, offering the most amazing selection of delectable fudge flavours ever eaten. Our home-made fudge and brittles are made fresh daily, the old fashioned way in copper kettles, and creamed on marble slabs.

We custom blend our secret recipes fresh daily.

If you are a true fudge fanatic, you will really enjoy your visit to Maple Leaf Fudge.

As you enter the store, the aroma of fresh fudge will envelop you. Watching our fudge makers make home-made fudge in our copper kettles makes you realize there is no mass production or pre-made components used in Maple Leaf Fudge.

Newcomers get to enjoy a whole new world of fudge they didn’t know existed, and regulars get to sample new recipes all the time.

We make our batches of fudge and brittle daily, so everything in the store is not only delectable, it is fresh!

Over the years we have developed the most enormous selection of ornaments, that we will personalize for free while you wait.

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**All Wrapped Up**

**Ravine Christmas Market**

Celebrate the holiday season at the Ravine Christmas Market! On Dec 1, beat the rush, and find some one-of-a-kind gifts in a cozy setting, with beautiful views of the vineyard that’s sure to make your spirits bright. Kick off the season by sipping on wine, cider or beer while browsing a selection of hand-picked items from our artisan vendors, all inside our brand-new events center. Some of the products that will be featured include holiday wreaths, handmade jewelry, skincare, ceramics, teas, candles, woodworking creations, knits and much more! The Market will run from 11am – 7pm, $5 entry at the door.

Starting Dec 1, we will be offering our brunch menu on Sundays in our restaurant. Make your reservation today by calling 905 262 8463 or on line through OpenTable. Anyone who dines in the restaurant or makes a purchase in our retail shop on Dec 1, will receive free entry to the Market.

Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery is a timeless destination that is steeped in family legacy and agricultural heritage. Our fifth generation family farm is home to our organic vineyards and winery, award-winning culinary experiences, sprawling kitchen garden and grocery, distinctive event venues, community gatherings, and more. Through the generations of the Lowrey-Harber family who have proudly farmed this land since 1867, Ravine offers our guests ever-evolving experiences, providing a fabric of tastes, scenes and sounds across our 34 acres of beautiful rolling vineyard in the historic village of St. Davids, Ontario.

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**All that glitters is Canadian**

Submitted by VandenDool Jewellers

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– Brian and Mark VandenDool

Owners Brian and Mark VandenDool

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Women offer love, support over early morning coffee

Penny Coles  
The Local

When Angie Van Berkel read about men’s coffee groups in The Local, she contacted the paper to ask if we would be interested in meeting with a group of women who have been meeting once a week for many years.

We weren’t going to ignore a group based on gender — when doing the original story, it seemed odd that there were no women who meet regularly, at least not at coffee shops early in the morning.

This group gathers at 6 a.m. on Sharon VanNoort’s back porch, from about April to October, pushing the outdoor season with a heater. The view, and the birds, are part of the attraction, but when the weather turns cold, as it did last week, they move into a warm kitchen. When they met last Thursday, the smell of chocolate crossants VanNoort pulls from the oven welcomes the five friends who arrive within a few minutes of each other, friends who met last Thursday, the start of the back porch group. “If we didn’t meet at this time of the morning, we wouldn’t be able to meet at all,” says VanNoort. “Everyone is so busy.”

In addition to Van Berkel and VanNoort, the back porch group includes Mar- ion Frendo, Debbie Vreken, Elly Hoff, and Heidi Nickel. And unless one of them is away on vacation, they all make a point of making it for coffee every week.

“We try not to miss it, and if one of the women isn’t here, it’s just not the same,” says VanNoort.

On the table are coffee cups and saucers, cream and sugar tugs, a large coffee ca- rafe, and a bottle of Bailey’s, the rich orange of Irish cream blending with the chocolate.

All the women have jobs, for some volunteer work, as important to them as any paid job. They are women who share faith, family values, and a belief in giving back to their community, helping those less fortunate than themselves.

Frendo runs a thrift store in Niagara Falls. Vrek- en is involved with Chorus Niagara. Some of them vol- unteer with Out of the Cold, or another church program in St. Catharines Van Berkel has convinced them to join, which provides support and friendship to developmental- ly-challenged adults.

Their volunteer work of- ten overlaps, each receiving assistance from the others when needed, to organize events or collect clothes or food.

As would be expected, although there is a lot of laugh- ter and gentle kidding of each other, the conversation is very different than the barrier and light-hearted chatter amongst the men who do coffee and admit, when they’re serious, to trying to solve the world’s problems.

The women’s talk is closer to home. It’s about their adult kids, the ups and downs they ex- perience, and the challenges for those whose kids are liv- ing at home.

It’s about grandkids, who bring joy into their lives. “I did,” says Vreken. “It was melanoma.”

After surgery, she had three weeks of chemotherapy every day, and a year of self-injected needles.

“That came out of this group,” says of the treat- ment that has saved her life, and when she couldn’t walk during that period, they met for coffee.

Then came Frendo’s dis- covery of her own health is- sues. “I was having trouble walking. Ten minutes in will be limping, and I had a weird sensation in my leg.”

When she went for tests to discover the cause, she found out she has Parkinson’s disease.

“That was in 2009, when she would walk, sometimes she’d walk, sometimes not. “But then we grew up,” says Vreken. “We stopped walking and started having coffee.”

Originally they met in the Tim Hortons on Mary Street, where they would see the early morning men’s group. But eventually, VanNoort decided to host her friends, and that is where it has re- mained.

The worst the women have shared, they agreed, was the devastating death of Van Berkel’s son James, in 2005, in a motorcycle accident. He resulted in a trip to Guatemala for her and Freno- do in 2006, with Wells of Hope. “Angie was working out her grief, and she want- ed to do something good, something for others, so we went to Guatemala,” says Frendo.

“When James passed away,” says Van Berkel, “it seemed people around town were losing their children.”

It was a dark time in the community, with the loss of four or five other young adults in motor vehicle col- lisions. Van Berkel reached out to their moms, and they began meeting on a regular basis, offering support for each other.

That, says Frendo, “is what Angie does. She helps others. We know a lot of the same people in this small community,” contin- ues Frendo. “When you lose someone, we’re all touched by it. We share the sadness.”

That included a serious accident for Hoff’s husband — they went through some scary times, and a long re- covery period for him. He’s doing well now, but she had the women around the table for encouragement during a difficult period in her life.

“I loved my father-in- law,” says VanNoort. “When he died these girls arrived at the house with dinner. We look out for each other. I love these women.”

The conversation then turns to the Friendship Group, at Covenant Chris- tian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, where several of the women help out. “Angie stalked us into it,” laughs VanNoort.

Hoff is musical — she plays guitar. Others organize crafts, but the most important role of the support group, which has about 100 cli- ents registered, is to provide friendship.

“And what do we get out of it?” says Van Berkel. “Unconditional love. They just love us so much in that group.”

She puts in a plug for milestone birthdays, the birth of grand- children, or for Van Berkel, her second recently-adopted grandchild; and graduations.

“We’ve shared a lot of good celebrations in each of our lives,” says Frendo.

That brings up a story about how long Hoff and Vreken have known each other. “We carpooled when our kids were in Kindergar- ten,” says Hoff. “We grew up like cousins. None of our family were here (in Cana- da), so we were family.”

The other women were surprised to hear that — although they know each oth- er well, there are still new things to be learned.

They bring out photos then of some of their past milestones celebrated togeth- er, and show off Nickels’ cre- ativity. Her gift to the group is altering photos for fun — they produce a Christmas photo of the women as elves. “It’s my job to make us look good,” laughs Nickels.

Then, as to prove the di- versity of their conversation and support for each other, Van Berkel holds up a winter boot she brought to show the others.

The upper boot of one has separated from the bottom, and these were expensive, name-brand boots, she says, asking if she should write to the manufacturer.

She receives varying ad- vice, and some ribbing — the boots are probably 15 years old, says one of the women, and she laughs and agrees she’s had them for many years.

From life and death to what to do about a pair of boots, these are issues that every woman has both others. They meet weekly, and see each other occasionally as a group outside of VanNoort’s circle. “Our relationships are intertwined by years of shared joy and sadness, and the ev- eryday challenges life brings. They wouldn’t have it any other way.
Grade 8 students Hazel Norris and Molly Shara have been joining Greta Thunberg’s Friday’s For Future Climate Strike, protesting outside the Town Hall. (Penny Coles)

The STREAM TEAM, a dedicated group of intermediate students, worked diligently to plan and deliver a week full of fun and challenges for the students of St. Michael School. Students built bridges out of newspaper to support textbooks, and fences of KEVA planks to hold five little pumpkins. The fun continued with racing VEX robots, coding Micro-bits and learning our letters and numbers with Ozobots. Staff and students spent time in reflection answering the question, “what gifts do I bring to our school community,” closing out the week by dancing in our ‘spooky’ gym on Black & Orange day.

More than 30 students responded to that call. In addition to an education campaign to understand all forms of recycling and a year-long battery drive, the team will begin to explore water sustainability on this planet and enlighten our school community.

This year students will lead our school’s ECO Team. Inspired by Greta Thunberg and her movement to save our environment, Grade 8 students Hazel and Tannin recently hosted their first meeting inviting students in Grades 3 to 8 to take up the cause.

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Queen Street decorations celebrate the season

Penny Coles
The Local

A walk, or drive, along Queen Street Friday would have shown the downtown sidewalks busier than usual at this time of year.

Despite a chill in the air, the sun was shining and the mood was festive as local volunteers joined in decorating the town for Christmas.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake partnered with the Chamber of Commerce, which in past years has taken on the decorating, to organize a community-wide winter initiative called Celebrate the Season, a local winter event intended to encourage community engagement and inspire creativity, with residents and business owners out on the street decorating.

Lord Mayor Betty Diexample says the idea came to her when Debi Pratt mentioned volunteers used to decorate the street decades ago.

Celebrate the Season includes all the holiday events, beginning with the Candlelight Stroll, and including January events, such as the Icewine Festival.

The Christmas Committee, a sub-committee of Communities in Bloom, is comprised of residents and representatives from the Town and the Chamber of Commerce, has been meeting for months to plan the event. Members of the NOTL Horticultural Society and the St. Davids Lions Clubs were also involved.

In keeping with Niagara-on-the-Lake’s history, the theme of the decorations and the celebration is a Victorian Christmas, featuring natural boughs and garlands, burgundy ribbon and soft white lights.

Residents have been making and contributing decorations themselves prior to Friday, and many were out on the day of decorating, putting boughs together with bows, and helping to decorate.

The Communities in Bloom committee will be awarding prizes to the best-decorated homes in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The contest will consider daytime and nighttime decorations and will take place between Nov. 15, 2019, and December 15, 2019, and winners will be announced in local papers. Nominations can be made after Nov. 15, on the Town’s Join the Conversation website.

Travis Cairns of Desjardins Insurance, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society, the St. Davids Lions Club and Brenda McArthur were major sponsors of the decorating event.

Volunteers Cam Cropper and Barbara Boese put boughs together for the Court House windows, while Derek Robins takes a ride to the top floor to place them. (Photos by Penny Coles)

Kevin Turcotte says one set of three deer will be placed in each of the five municipalities for Christmas selfies. The locations are being kept a surprise, for residents to find.

Dorothy Wiens of the NOTL Horticultural Society, and Rosy Reeve decorate the wrought iron fence in front of the Phillips Estate at the corner of Queen Street and Mississauga Street. Property owner Rainer Hummel paid for the decorations, Wiens said.

Rene Bertschi, official photographer of the decorating event, with Irene and Bob Bader, NOTL Horticultural Society members, enjoy a moment of sunshine at the gazebo, which they decorated.

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Trees recently planted on Queen Street at the end of Mississauga Street were decorated by NOTL Horticultural Society Friday, with help from town staff.
Nancy Smith
Special to The Local

Music Niagara Festival's inaugural ChoralFest had a triumphant launch last Saturday night, as more than 185 people turned out to hear the Elmer Iseler Singers. “It was a stunning concert that literally ended on a high note as the Iseler Singers and the audience raised their voices together in a jubilant rendition of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus,” says board chair Margot Hickson. “It reminded me of the fun we’re going to have at the Nov. 23 Sing-Along Messiah concert, with a fabulous 75-member choir and a full symphony orchestra.”

Lord Mayor Betty Disero spoke at the opening concert and commended artistic director Atis Bankas for founding Music Niagara Festival more than 21 years ago. She talked about the importance of the festival to the town, and the work Bankas has done in teaching up-and-coming musicians, saying, “we wouldn’t have such talented musicians without the efforts of Atis and others…”

ChoralFest runs through Nov. 25, and includes a diverse group of choirs, musical genres and experiences. On Friday, Nov. 22, the Victoria Scholars, an internationally-acclaimed, award-winning, all-male choir performs at Our Lady of Peace Church in Niagara Falls. Bankas says he believes “men’s choirs have become a rare but not-to-be-missed phenomena.” He says he’s particularly impressed by the Victoria Scholars. “They have a noble and distinguished history, and their voices have the clarity and balance-of-sound characteristic of Renaissance music. But they feature works from many different eras, as well as contemporary pieces in a variety of styles. It is a unique, not-to-be-missed program in one of the oldest and most beautiful churches in Ontario.”

ChoralFest is also showcasing many interesting children’s choirs, including the Celaya Conservatory Children’s Choir from Mexico. Bankas can’t say enough about Celaya. “I heard them sing in Mexico last Christmas, and was taken by their sincerity, the musicality of their performance and the outstanding sonority of their voices. The repertoire will range from traditional Mexican music to religious and familiar classical music. I encourage everyone to come and hear these talented Mexican children perform at St. Mark’s, which marks their very first trip to Canada, and first experience with our northern climate. Let’s support them by attending the performance.”

On Nov. 24, the Laura Secord Concert Choir performs at St. Mark’s Church. Recognized as a local treasure, the choir has earned accolades from music critics throughout North America and Europe. They’ve toured with international headliners, including Meesha Brueggergosman, Joe Seeley, Kenny Rogers and Molly Johnson, among others.

ChoralFest closes on Nov. 25, with one of the leading children’s choirs in the world, the Hamilton Children’s Choir. Former Music Niagara Performance Academy alumni, and Juillard student, Jasmin Linn will also perform at this concert, playing a rare John-Baptiste Vuillaume “Messiah” Violin awarded to her by the Canada Council Instrument Bank for three years.

The Celaya Conservatory Children’s Choir will also make an appearance at this very special finale to ChoralFest.

For tickets and more information, visit musicniagara.org, shawfest.com or the Shaw Festival box office.
Terry Fallis talks of his new book at Wine and Words

It’s a story about a golfer, and so much more

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Fountain pens, lake Temagami, the Burj Al Arab, Toronto author Terry Fallis. The two-time winner of the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour was at Palatine Hills Estate Winery last Wednesday to talk about and read from The Albatross. It was the second event in the NOTL Public Library’s 2019-2020 Wine and Words series. His seventh novel follows Adam Coryell’s reluctant rise up the PGA ranks to become the number one golfer in the world. Though he wants to be a writer, Coryell, through one of his high school teachers, discovers his measurements match the formula set out by a Swedish kinesiologist, pointing to a natural ability to swing a golf club. The catch, though, is that he can’t practise his swing. That would ruin his natural ability, which he nurtures with the help of his teacher. The concept is, of course, total fiction, but one that came for Fallis long before his first novel, The Best Laid Plans, was published in 2008. “It’s sort of rooted in an idea I had as a kid,” he said. “I remember thinking, I’m really skinny, surely there is a sport that would be good at, because I have a body like this. I never really found it. Maybe I would have been a world champion if a la black jack player if I was able to play that sport.” With his high school teacher by his side, Coryell learns how to play the game at the Toronto Ladies Golf Club. He rises through the ranks of high school golf, winning the Ontario championship. This earns him a scholarship to Stanford University, where he majors in creative writing, all while winning tournaments after tournament in the NCAA. He caps off his collegiate golf career by winning the Masters as an amateur. Fallis is one of the few authors in the Wine and Words series who comes prepared with a PowerPoint presentation about his novel. He used the slides to explain how he weaves many of his favourite things into his novel. Coryell’s love of fountain pens, for instance, comes from his own hobby. “I am a fountain pen nerd,” Fallis admits. “I have a modest collection of fountain pens that I have gathered over the years. To me, it’s a tangible link to writers of a bygone age.” Though he uses a computer to type his novels, Fallis says his original notes and outlines are usually written with one of the 14 fountain pens in his collection.

Fallis first took up golf in Grade 8, and says he has spent 45 years trying to work on his own swing. He regaled the audience with stories of his annual men’s golf trip with his brother and some friends. The albatross of the title, of course, has a double meaning. Fallis explained that Adami’s talent for the game is the albatross around his neck, but he also chose it for its golf meaning — an albatross is a rare score of three-under-par or a double eagle. Fallis assured the guests that his accomplishment has never been achieved. He revealed that his favourite novel of all time is A Prayer for Owen Meany, and that he once had to turn down a chance to have dinner with its author, John Irving. Irving pops up early in the novel as Coryell and his high school girlfriend travel across town for a reading by the author. Two pivotal scenes in The Albatross revolve around experiences from Fallis’ own life. He spent much of his childhood summering on Lake Temagami, working as a camp counsellor. His own run-in with a bear while on a canoe trip is recounted as the climax to Adams solo trip to a very same lake. He is there to contemplate his next move after winning millions of dollars on the PGA tour. The major turning point of the novel occurs at the Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, the luxury hotel in Dubai. Similar to his own experiences at the nearby Burj Khalifa, Coryell is asked to hit golf balls off a helipad for a promotion. Though Fallis, of course, did nothing of the sort, he chose the setting after participating in an author’s panel at the hotel. He humorously described the frustrating experience of trying to follow along with a discussion that was transpiring in a language he did not understand.

Though The Albatross is about a golfer, Fallis was adamant it’s not about golf. Coryell’s natural talent for the game earns him scads of money, but his heart is already engaging in other ways. “If it’s not our career, because we’re really short-changing the game if we are not pursuing that which makes us happy,” he said.

The sold-out crowd at Palatine was enthralled with Fallis’ natural sense of humour, and his ease at holding the audience’s attention. “He’s a favourite of the community,” said Krase. “When they see his name, a lot of people comment on how excited they are to see him.” This is his third appearance at the Wine and Words series. “That audience was elated to learn Fallis has signed a new two-book deal with McClelland & Stewart that will bring back Angus McClintock, the reluctant MP featured in his first two novels, The Best Laid Plans and Aye, Angus.”

The next event in the Wine and Words series, featuring Jennifer Robson, is also sold out. “Tickets remain available for Samra Zafar in March, and Gaye Zachary in April.”
Christmas is coming

At Cornerstone Community Church on Hunter Road Saturday, at its annual Christmas with Heart event, Ken Bartel holds up one of his wife’s handmade Christmas wreaths. Proceeds from the market are donated to Ronald McDonald House in Hamilton and Konyabari Harvest School in Burundi, Africa. (Photos by Fred Mercnik)

Marco Letlow was selling poinsettias at the St. David’s Lioness Christmas Holiday Market. Proceeds go back to the community.

Mori Gardens had their annual Christmas Palooza event this weekend. Ashawi Henry holds a Christmas planter created at the garden centre, while Miguel Mori takes a minute out of the busy weekend to relax in Santa’s sleigh.

Local Happenings

AA Meeting

Every Wednesday evening, at 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.
at St. Mark’s Parish Hall
41 Byron St.
Niagara-on-the-Lake

To advertise your event in Local Happenings
Contact classified@notllocal.com
Visit us online at: www.notllocal.com

Christmas Market At Grace

November 23 @ 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Grace United Church, 222 Victoria Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake

Ubuntu Niagara

November 23 @ 7:00 p.m.
Ubuntu Niagara proudly presents DESPAIR TO HOPE: The Power of Human Connection
WomEnchant Chorus & Drummers - Laura Thompson, Artistic Director. Sammy Jackson, Guest Soloist.

Famous and Infamous

November 25 @ 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
On the fourth Monday of the month the Niagara Historical Museum offers a free community day and the popular Famous & Infamous biography series open to all. On Nov. 25, Craig Tallman will talk about Clementine Churchill.

First Ontario Performing Arts Centre

November 27
Rheostatics

November 29
The Barra MacNeils
An East Coast Christmas

November 30
Surfin’ Safari
The Ultimate Beach Party Tribute

December 1
Toronto Northern Lights Christmas Show

December 4
The Men of the Deeps
Christmas in the Mines

www.FirstOntarioPAC.ca

Black Friday Garage Sale

Unique Italian themed “Black Friday” garage and moving out sale. Famous NOTL Inn. Where: 225 King St., NOTL When: Friday/Saturday/Sunday November 29-30, & December 1 Time: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Call Karen 905-641-5335 or email: classified@notllocal.com
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needed from approximately March 25, 2020 to the end of September 2020.

No experience needed but must enjoy working in an agricultural environment in all weather conditions. Must be available 7 days a week. Heavy lifting and ladder climbing will be required. Duties also include pruning, weeding, hoeing and picking strawberries (8 weeks), thinning and picking plums and peaches. Pay is minimum wage ($14.00 per hour) and own transportation is a must.

Call or fax resume to 905-682-6417
Only candidates to be interviewed will be contacted.

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or call Karen at 905.641.5335
Deadline: Mondays at 3 p.m.

SUDOKU PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across:
1. Opposite of neither
5. Protect
10. “Four and twenty blackbirds baked in...”
14. On the ocean
15. Publish
16. Route
17. Via
18. Serviced
20. Cotton Club setting
22. Jam-toree
23. Up
25. Intelligence agency
26. Not traded on a stock exchange
28. Top guns
30. Ethnic
35. In favor
36. Acknowledges
38. State animal of Maine
39. The Sultan of Swat
41. Talent seeker
43. Shuttle operator
44. Behaved
46. Wished
48. Best
49. Accidental dive
51. Feels
52. Some foreign government heads

53. Except
55. Comic — Martin
57. Light metal
62. Knuckleheads
65. Suspension
68. Duration
69. Untrue
70. Egyptian dancing girl
71. Dabbling duck
72. Abstractions
73. Dip slowly

Down:
1. Tub
2. Workplace regulation agency
3. Unglazed brownish-red earthenware
4. Pula
5. Ingenious sales devices
6. World’s largest economy
7. Expression of incredulity
8. Scrap
9. Despise
10. Patched
11. Small lake
12. U N nuclear watchdog
13. Swirl
14. Warning signal
21. Touchdown forecasts
24. German state
26. O founder
27. Temporary peace
29. Single-masted sailboat
31. Electrically charged particle
32. Maritime refugees
33. Tea-growing Indian states
34. Inclines
37. Southern hemisphere constellation
40. “He’d make a lovely corpse” (Dickens: “Martin Chuzzlewit”)
42. 1,000% off
44. Acted
45. Hoped
46. Hoped
48. Tan
49. Ruth
50. P Ms
51. Puny
52. P Ms
53. Acted
54. Rural
55. Steve
56. P Ms
57. Aluminum
58. Header
59. Urea
60. Mall
61. Mile
62. Lobe
63. Tame
64. Snap
65. Moratorium
66. Use
67. Lobe
68. Lobe
69. Lobe
70. Lobe
71. Lobe
72. Lobe

SUDOKU PUZZLE

Across:
6. 6
7. 7
9. 9
2. 2

5. 5
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4. 4

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6. 6

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3

Down:
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9. 9

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

Across:
1. Both, 5 Guard, 10 A
debit, 13 Eddy, 19 Alarm, 21 E
desest, 10 Arid, 11 Pond, 12 I
down:
10. Hauls, 5 Gimmicks,

24. Hauls, 5 Gimmicks,

4. Hauls, 5 Gimmicks,

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86. Hauls, 5 Gimmicks,
Red Roof’s Gifts from the Heart campaign underway

Local Staff

Give a gift that feels good this holiday season, by joining Red Roof Retreat in celebrating their ninth annual Gifts from the Heart Campaign.

This year’s campaign goal will allow Red Roof to provide another year of respite and recreational programs for children and young adults with special needs in the Niagara Region.

Red Roof Retreat’s Gifts from the Heart campaign evolved out of the Arthur Dalfen Gift Matching Challenge in 2011. At that time, the goal was to turn $10,000 into $20,000, however the campaign was so successful, bringing in $60,000, they decided to keep it going.

The following year it was relaunched as the Gifts from the Heart campaign and continued with the same goal of $60,000.

This year’s campaign will continue through to the first week of January. Past generous supporters have made a difference to the 150 children and adults by keeping programs affordable to families, sustaining current programs and addressing wait lists, teaching more children and adults by developing new programs to meet their needs, helping families stay strong by supporting their needs, and giving special needs children and adults a place they can call a home away from home.

Donating is easy, says Red Roof’s special events coordinator Claire Ellisworth. Visit their website at www.redroofretreat.com/giftsfromtheheart/ to make an online donation, or call the office at 289-868-9800. “Every donation large or small helps Red Roof to continue to improve our programs and serve more families,” she says.

“Throughout Niagara there are more than 3,500 families with special needs,”

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