



**Mistletoe
Bride:
Two readings,
two locations**
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The 2022-2026 Niagara-on-the-Lake town council was sworn in Tuesday night at the Court House. This term of council includes Tim Balasiuk, Maria Mavridis, Gary Burroughs, Adriana Cater-Vizzari, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens, Wendy Cheropita, Nick Ruller and Sandra O'Connor. At the podium, Marie Louise, an Indigenous Knowledge Helper, delivers a traditional welcoming address. (Mike Balsom)

It's official: New council attends inaugural meeting

Mike Balsom
The Local

With the swearing-in of the new members, the presentation of the chain of office to Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, and the singing of God Save the King (a first time for many in attendance), the new Niagara-on-the-Lake town council became official Tuesday night at the Court House.

There was an optimistic feeling of a new beginning in the air both prior to and after the formal proceedings, as the successful candidates from October's municipal election

mingled with family members, friends, supporters and residents who came to experience their inaugural council meeting.

The evening began with the Parks Canada Fife and Drum Corp marching in and ended with them marching out. Retired Rev. William Roberts, who ran unsuccessfully for the town's seat at Regional Council, delivered the prayer and benediction, and Juliet Dunn sang *O Canada*.

Chief Administrative Officer Marnie Cluckie draped the official chain of office onto Zalepa's shoulders. Asked by The Local after the event how it felt,

Zalepa joked that the chain was "surprisingly heavy."

Acting town clerk Victoria Steele led the nine new members of council through the declaration of office. Then Zalepa's first order of business was to officially appoint re-elected councillor Erwin Wiens as this term's Deputy Lord Mayor. Wiens was also unanimously appointed as chair of the Committee of the Whole, with first-time Coun. Tim Balasiuk as vice-chair.

For his first opportunity to address the community and council, Zalepa looked for inspiration to the words of U.S.

President Thomas Jefferson from 1796.

"There are some great insights from Jefferson," explained Zalepa, "that I believe are amazingly relevant in how we consider the future of our town. Jefferson declared that we are called to undertake the duties of council with sincere consciousness of the task and the responsibility."

Zalepa said Niagara-on-the-Lake is blessed with its past successes, beauty in its geography and the richness of its heritage and history.

"We as councillors are humbled before the magnitude

of the undertaking," he continued, paraphrasing Jefferson. "We shall find the wisdom, the virtue and the zeal upon which to rely. That is my commitment, it was Jeffersons, and I hope it's all of ours."

After expressing thanks to his campaign team, his wife Tammy and other family members, Zalepa recognized former councillors and recently retired ones, including Clare Cameron and Zalepa's predecessor, Betty Disero, who were both in attendance Tuesday.

"I'd like to thank them for their service and tireless dedication for the benefit of the

community," he said. "As we all know, public office is not the easiest. But it's very rewarding, and we really appreciate all of their efforts."

Zalepa then spoke about the process he plans to implement as this council moves forward, as well as some of the issues it needs to tackle over the next four years.

"Councillors have already begun what I think is a fairly robust orientation and training program," Zalepa said. "They will be tasked with focusing on core strategic items and

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Cemetery restoration solutions expensive, elusive

Penny Coles

The Local

Gravestones buried in the Negro Burial Ground, a cemetery that dates back almost 200 years, is not a

unique situation, in this town or others across Ontario, and indeed the country.

When James Russell came to town last spring, having arranged for an expert in ground-penetrating

radar to meet him at the Mississagua Street cemetery, he hoped to learn how many people, mostly early Black settlers, were buried in the cemetery. What the Toronto filmmaker discovered was that in addition to three stones still standing in the cemetery, there are 18 such monuments buried beneath the ground, and with that knowledge, he embarked on a journey to unearth them.

He was assuming that, over time, the stones fell over and sunk in the ground, and they may have — they are not buried far below the surface.

However he now believes town staff charged with maintaining cemeteries have for decades dealt with fallen and broken stones by what he describes as burying them.

Russell says he is “incensed” to learn that graves have been handled with what he considers a lack of respect, and is especially angry that no records were kept of names on stones or mapping of those that had fallen over.

Last week, Russell told The Local, he filed a formal complaint with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), the agency that enforces provincial

burial regulations, that says Niagara-on-the-Lake employees buried headstones in the Negro Burial Ground, in violation of the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, and the Canadian Criminal Code.

Russell was told that since the 1980s to recent years, town staff took steps to preserve the stones by laying them in a shallow pit, the face of the stone level with the ground, and over time dirt and grass would cover it. This action was taken due to a lack of funding to maintain the site and the stones, he was told.

If town staff wanted to preserve the leaning or damaged gravestones in the Negro Burial Ground, Russell said, they would have restored them, or at the very least, created a map of where they had buried them.

Instead, he says, they rendered the Canadians buried in the Negro Burial Ground nameless, “thereby committing a moral and legal indignity.”

His hope is “that the BAO will compel the town of NOTL to unearth, restore and remount the headstones their employees buried not so long ago.”

Although town staff refute that the stones were buried, Russell says “there’s no way that dirt and grass grows completely over headstones after being laid down 40ish years ago. They would have had to dig a trench and cover the headstones.”

There are instances of headstones sinking below the surface, he says,

“but they are heavy marble headstones from more than a hundred years ago.”

One of the definitions of 'bury,' he adds, is to "con-sign to obscurity," and town staff actions "clearly resulted in the headstones being consigned to obscurity."

The Negro Burial Ground, like other cemeteries in town, became the property of the municipality when churches were closed and there was no one else to look after them, says Hans Pauls, who retired in May as facilities supervisor after 36 years as a town employee.

While he is best known for his decades of working in the arena, doing everything from sharpening skates and driving the Zamboni to overseeing the installation of the ice each fall, in the early days of his career, in the 1980s and 90s, he spent some time working on cemetery maintenance.

He describes how crews finding broken headstones lying down, after being shifted upwards by frost and cold each winter, would cut around them, and dig just deep enough to lay the stone down so the face of it was flush with the ground and could still be seen.

"It's what happens when headstones made of soft limestone fall over. Over 20, 25, or 30 years, the grass starts to grow over them, and they become covered," he says. "We were doing the best we could."

There was never a policy or direction from the town, Pauls adds. "There was never a real procedure.

It was just the way things were done,” including at the town’s still-active Lakeshore Cemetery.

He strongly disagrees
that the stones were buried.

“They were never, ever buried. Why would you do that?”

Staff were always trying to be respectful, he adds, and asks, "Who was going to fix them? There were no funds to do that. I'm not saying it's right, but that's the way it is."

They made sure they laid the stones where they fell, but they didn't keep records. "Sometimes the stones were so weathered you couldn't read the inscriptions," he says.

“At Lakeshore Cemetery now there is a map of every grave,” he adds,” but as for the others, if anybody kept records it would be the churches, and who knows where they are now. This is a situation where the town has to take them over when the church is gone, and did that without any historical records, just to maintain them.”

It's not just the Negro Burial Ground where that happened, Pauls says, it was every cemetery in town, including Homer, by the bridge, the one in Virgil beside the school, and every other inactive one the town maintains.

He knows of a couple of stones in the Homer Cemetery that family members have had restored, but that doesn't happen often, and in many cases there is no family left to take that responsibility, he says.

And there are some inactive cemeteries in town that nobody has touched in years, not even to cut the grass, he says.

“I’m the last person standing, in a sense, that knows what has happened in the day, and still happens

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This gravestone has been laid down, and is still visible, like several others in the cemetery beside the former Virgil School. It appears there are others that have been covered with grass, but it's impossible to know without records to indicate how many graves there are in the cemetery. (*Penny Coles*)

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Expert restores many St. Mark's stones, but isn't finished

Penny Coles
The Local

Donald Combe, co-author of *Saints, Stones and Sinners*, is considered a bit of an expert on local cemeteries.

He has learned what is involved in restoration, and how to ensure it's done properly. And he knows how expensive it is.

He and Fred Habermehl wrote the first edition of their book in 1990, at that time dealing only with the cemeteries of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Andrew's and St. Mark's in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In 2013, the book was out of print and they decided to revise it with many additions, identifying historic monuments and stones in

local cemeteries, and telling the stories of past residents of Niagara, as found in the graveyards and burial plots.

"To the best of my knowledge, I think we covered every cemetery in the township," Combe says.

Some of the stones that were completely readable in 1990, "are totally unreadable now, no matter how hard you try. It's just Mother Nature taking over, with the help of acid rain and pollution of the stones."

The early stones were made of marble, next came Queenston limestone, both of which were damaged by acid rain, Combe says, while today's gravestones, mostly granite, "last forever."

As a parishioner of St.

Mark's Church, Combe has also been heavily involved in restoration of monuments in the church cemetery, which is "amongst the most important cemeteries in the province. It has beautiful monuments, beautiful trees, and a beautiful cemetery with tons of history."

About 10 years ago, Wil- lowbank School of Restoration Arts reached out to the church to say it would like to do some restoration of the cemetery stones, many of them damaged by mature trees that fell in a particularly bad storm.

Then along came historic cemetery specialist Alan Ernest, who has undertaken much-needed repairs to veterans' monuments

in the cemetery as part of a program by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and Canada Remembers, an initiative of Veterans Affairs Canada.

When he was finished the work he was commissioned to do, "we desired to ask him to restore some of our other stones," says Combe.

While St. Mark's volunteer Sally Mitchell credits Combe as the most knowledgeable about the cemetery as the church's historian, he credits Mitchell for raising the money needed to make the restoration project possible.

Ernest has spent part of two seasons at St. Mark's, and Combe estimates the church has spent about

\$25,000 each year, which covers restoration of about 20 stones. The work this year was financed mostly through a dinner held at the church to celebrate Combe, who turned 90 during the pandemic and wasn't able to have a party to recognize the milestone birthday.

Restoring monuments is an expensive project, he says, at about \$600 for the smallest stones, with some requiring up to \$2,000 worth of work. But most important, he says, is it has to be done right, by experts who know what they're doing.

"If you don't know what you're doing, don't touch it," he says, something he learned from seeing efforts to restore stones that would

have been better off left alone.

Ernest "does a fabulous job," he adds.

While "we've made an incredible beginning of the project" at St. Mark's, he says, "there is enough work to carry on with restoration for at least another five years, if we have enough interest, and there appears to be enough interest."

Combe says in addition to learning a great deal about stone restoration, "I've tried to find out as much as I can about the people buried in the plots. My feeling is that every stone in every cemetery has at least one story and those stories deserve to be told, as a reminder of the people who are buried there."

Town hoping for cemetery funding from province

Continued from page 2

today," Pauls says, "and is probably what is happening in cemeteries across the province and across Canada."

Russell is hoping to move quickly on the work he has planned in the Negro Burial Ground, but there is a cost involved. It begins with \$9,000 for the research stage by a well-known archeological firm with expertise in cemeteries, and about another \$50,000 for the dig to unearth them, and a plan to conserve them.

Any work to be done at the town-owned cemetery has to be approved by the BAO and by council, and Russell believes the cost is the responsibility of the town.

George Webber, a member of the fundraising committee formed to raise money to unearth gravestones, says committee members see it a little differently — they will be seeking private donations, while working collaboratively with the town to determine its responsibility.

While the original impetus to form the committee was to help finance the project undertaken by Russell, he has distanced himself from the fundraising, as it's become clear that this is a longer-term project than originally anticipated, for work that needs to be done in other cemeteries as well, and includes the town's involvement as owner of those cemeteries.

"We don't want to go to the town operations for tax dollars," Webber says. "There are a lot of priorities for the town. We'd like to raise money privately."

Working with the town, the committee's first objective is "to create a vision

of the project, so members, when seeking donations, can present a clear plan of what the money will be funding.

As well, the town also has a plan to help finance the work that needs to be done in its inactive cemeteries. In addition to working with the fundraising committee, says CAO Marnie Cluckie, NOTL is looking for a commitment for funding from the province.

Cluckie says she has spoken recently to David Voogt, the town's cemetery manager, and confirmed that over decades of broken and fallen gravestones, stones were laid down, although "staff complete regular grounds maintenance at the cemetery to ensure that the face of the headstones can continue to be seen. This includes grass trimming and removal of brush, leaves and other materials," says Cluckie.

"Compounding the

problem is the insufficient funding to deal with cemeteries," when the responsibility of caring for them was downloaded from the province to municipalities, but with no funding to do that job.

"Given the sacred nature of burial grounds, the town always wishes to take every measure to maintain and protect them," continues Cluckie. "In addition, this cemetery (the Negro Burial Ground) has historical and cultural significance, and it is important to ensure ongoing protection and preservation."

The town had already begun working with Russell and the fundraising committee when it asked the province, during the August conference of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), to develop a program "that accurately funds costs associated with taking over and maintaining a cemetery,

and changing legislation to provide relief to municipalities that cannot bear the costs downloaded to overburdened taxpayers," Cluckie told The Local.

Many municipalities have identified challenges they collectively face with maintaining abandoned cemeteries under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act," she says. "Rural municipalities, in par-

ticular, are faced with increased financial burdens and limited resources."

Cluckie says NOTL was not the first, and won't be the last, to make that delegation to AMO asking for funding for cemeteries — a delegation the town chose out of the three they were permitted to make this summer.

The presentation to AMO, which included

NOTL, Lincoln and West Lincoln, asked the province to develop a program to fund the costs of taking over a cemetery, providing relief for rural municipalities that can't afford to look after them.

The provincial representatives take the information away and consider it for the future, but a response isn't expected any time soon, says Cluckie.

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Lord Mayor should speak up: don't let Ford destroy democracy

David Israelson
Special to The Local

Premier Doug Ford is moving fast to destroy democracy in Ontario's municipalities, and Niagara-on-the-Lake's residents and our newly elected Lord Mayor and Council should speak up.

The damaging moves by Ford and his Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Steve Clark should not be underestimated. True, most are aimed at trampling citizens' rights in bigger centres such as Toronto and Ottawa, but Ford's proposed steps could open Niagara-on-the-Lake as well to ugly sprawl and overpriced, unaffordable suburbs.

Ford and Clark's steps are so backward and damaging that it's imperative for new Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Council to condemn them unequivocally, now.

Ford's first proposal, Bill 23, would slash apart Ontario's Greenbelt and destroy valuable farmland, opening wide swaths of unused space to developers while ignoring all the empty lots within cities and towns where good, affordable housing ought to go.

The bill takes minimal steps to streamline and cut red tape to get housing built — which would help. Instead it takes maximum steps to let developers cut down trees, pave over streams, turn parkland into parking lots and put up McMansions.

The second bad Ford idea, Bill 39, would allow the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to ram through bylaws with just one-third of their council's votes. Majority rule? Forget it. If Ford is allowed to impose this dictatorship on Ontario's biggest cities, how long before democracy dies here in NOTL too?

Lord Mayor Zalepa and Council need to speak up fast. True, many of them are just settling in to their new jobs, but this is no time to be silent. It's particularly unsettling to see that Zalepa, who will earn \$79,000 from his twin roles on Town and Regional Councils, believes that the voters elected to him to, as he puts it, "a part-time job."

Niagara-on-the-Lake needs

full leadership and a full voice condemning Ford and Clark's contemptuous moves against peoples' rights, against democracy and against protected greenspace and farmland,

trees, clean air and water.

The Globe and Mail calls Ford's moves "a shot in the heart of democracy." Niagara can't dodge this bullet. We need to stop it. It should be the first

business of our Lord Mayor and Council to condemn these ugly provincial moves.

David Israelson is a writer and non-practising lawyer who lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Winter arrives along with visitors to NOTL



Tourists who arrived by bus Saturday were bundled up for the weather and when asked by photographer David Gilchrist where they were from, they said Mexico. He said they all laughed and agreed they would rather be in Mexico on a day like that.

Christmas comes to Queen Street

Decorating Queen Street will continue this week, but the work has started with the NOTL Chamber of Commerce tree decorating contest. Lindsey Thompson, Jannine Lavoie, Tara Moore, Angela Marotta and Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli of Two Sisters finish their decorating while The Irish Harp has completed a tree outside the Exchange Brewery. (Photos by David Gilchrist)



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NOTL Lions selling Fraser, balsam at Virgil lot



NOTL Lion Terry Flynn shows off two of the largest trees on the lot at Cornerstone Church in Virgil. (Penny Coles)

Penny Coles
The Local

For many years, Lion Terry Flynn has taken three weeks off from his job with Niagara EMS to sell Christmas trees. This year, trees were delivered Nov. 11, with sales not starting until Saturday. But last week, his dad Dave called to tell him his mother Liz was sick, and Terry, with his medical training, hurried to their Niagara Falls home to see what was wrong. An ambulance was called, and she was taken to St. Catharines Hospital, where she died last Thursday at the age of 81, with her family gathered around her. “It seemed like one minute she was washing dishes in the kitchen, and the

next she was gone,” he says, leaving the family devastated, especially Dave, who Liz began dating when she was just 15, and married 63 years ago. Yet Terry, going through a very emotional time and helping the family with arrangements, has been at Cornerstone Church in Virgil selling trees when the lot opened, and will be there when he can, between visitation and the funeral. It’s a job he has taken on for many years, and he is determined to see it through. “It’s been crazy busy,” he says. “Saturday, the sales were the highest we’ve ever had in one day in the history of the club. And we had a lineup right up until 4 p.m.” The club has continued to have challenges getting

enough trees, and this year will have 450 Fraser and balsam firs. “I’d like to have 800,” says Flynn. “I know we could sell that many.” Over the last three years, there has been a shortage of trees, and they sold out quickly. “A lot of the second- and third-generation farmers don’t want to take over the family farm,” he says. And this was just the fourth weekend in November, when typically they would wait until the first weekend in December. Fortunately he was able to order the trees in two deliveries, and although the yard now looks almost empty — with about 200 trees left — there are 120 more to come. The most popular size continues to be the six- to eight-foot trees, and there are some nine to 10 feet.

Although most are Fraser or balsam fir, there are also a few Scotch pines, and something new called white pine, with “softer needles,” which Flynn says he’s looking forward to seeing. In total, the trees range from two feet to 14 feet, he says, the taller ones for those with large foyers and high ceilings. “Christmas is such an important time of year, and we want to make sure we have supplies for the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake,” says Flynn. The smallest trees are \$50. Six to eight feet are \$75 to \$85, and the taller ones, 12 to 14 feet, are \$245. The tree sale, at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd., is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

St. Davids Lions tree lot open, with 650 trees

Penny Coles
The Local

The annual St. Davids Lions Christmas tree sale began Saturday, with the front yard on York Street full of fresh Fraser fir ready

to be decorated for the holidays. This year, 650 trees about five to six feet tall arrived, with a few taller ones, all cut about a week and a half before delivery. “They are all fresh,

green and beautiful,” says Lion Susan Snider. They also have about 20 smaller table-top trees, also Fraser fir, which will go quickly. That’s more than last year, when even with two

suppliers they were only able to get 600 trees, which sold out quickly. About 20 Leos and their parents arrived to help Lions members with the unloading, which was very much appreciated, she

says, and even though their first day open was in the middle of the snow storm, they sold a lot of trees. “People want a real tree, and they’re in the Christmas spirit early this year,” says Snider.

All the trees are \$80, except for the few that are eight to nine feet, which are priced at \$120. The St. Davids Lions Club tree sale, at 1462 York Rd., is open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.



St. Davids Lions, Leos and Leo parents unloaded 650 trees to sell. (Photo supplied)



Leo Mariska Colcuc, Lion Bradd Andersen, Mariska’s mother Miranda Colcuc and Leo Ryan Di Pietro unload trees at the St. Davids Lions Club hall. (Photo supplied)



A St. Davids family, Peter holding Connor with Kyra Nicholson, bought the first tree Saturday, Lion Martin Forester helping them out, on what turned out to be a busy day for the club. (Photo supplied)

EDITORIAL

Cemetery care requires funding solution

Many of us have family members buried far away, their graves marked by headstones chosen with care, inscriptions conveying lives lost of people who were loved, in cemeteries we may not have visited in years. Would we be disappointed to find 25, 30 or more years later, that those headstones are broken? Buried? Invisible, disappeared below the ground?

Indulge me please as I share a personal story, about Georgeville, a hamlet in the Eastern Townships of Quebec with a population of about 500, and

a cemetery at the top of a hill on the main road into the village. Learning about inactive cemeteries from James Russell, Hans Pauls and others made me realize I have no idea if a headstone for family members, buried about 40 years ago in that cemetery overlooking a beautiful body of water called Lake Memphremagog, is still intact and standing. A quick call to the Georgeville Historical Society brought reassurance there is a committee of volunteers who ensure the cemetery is well-maintained, with a

healthy fund to cover the cost of restoring stones when necessary. A member of the historical society even offered to stop by and take a photo for me. However, others might not be so fortunate.

If relatives from away visit a Niagara-on-the-Lake cemetery they could have a very different experience. There are town staff members who cut the grass and do the best they can to maintain the 10 inactive cemeteries, but there is no fund set aside to pay experts to unearth, if necessary, and re-

store broken headstones, a very expensive undertaking, and seemingly no way of knowing how many stones are in need of such work.

This situation is not unique to NOTL. Money is an ongoing issue for graveyard maintenance, and where that money comes from depends on the graveyard. If it is owned by a church with an aging congregation, many of them are struggling to stay open and don't have money for repairs — Christ Church McNab fell into that category. In small mu-

nicipalities where old churches have been closed, some are cared for by municipalities, others by volunteers who look for donations from private sources. Churches such as St. Mark's rally their congregations for fundraisers to cover restoration costs. And in many, probably a large majority of cases, it just doesn't happen. Long-term solutions for expensive grave repairs seem elusive, yet are important. The significance of preserving the stones comes from their contribution to a community's history, for

helping to tell the stories of those who founded and built communities, and are now buried beneath, becoming with time unnamed and invisible.

NOTL is one of the best — if not *the* best — municipalities in the province in the care and pride it takes to preserve its natural, cultural and built heritage. So far, cemeteries haven't been part of those efforts. It seems the time is right for change. It won't be easy and it won't be overnight, but it has to start somewhere.

Penny Coles
The Local

Local VOICES: Niagara transportation, then and now

Sheila Jennings
Special to The Local

There are three Margaret Jennings in my immediate family.

My biological grandmother was Margaret Delve (Madge), who married my

grandfather Sam Jennings. They came to Niagara-on-the-Lake from England in 1952 by ship. Sadly, Madge died in 1964 while only in her 40s, when I was just three years old. Sam subsequently wedded another wonderful Margaret, who went by Marg.



Sheila Jennings' granny was accustomed to driving a tractor on the farm, although not into Virgil, as one local woman was known to do. (Photos supplied)

The other Margaret is my sister Maggie.

This story is about Marg Jennings (formerly Margaret McGinnis). Importantly for this reflection, before Marg married my grandfather, she drove the Niagara-on-the-Lake taxi. As such, she played a significant role in the NOTL community. Everyone in town knew who she was. When I was a young girl living in town, what little I knew of Marg's former life appealed strongly to my sense of curiosity. Particularly since 'lady cab drivers' were not thick on the ground. Not then, and not now.

In an audio clip prepared by the Niagara Historical Society and funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Museums and Technology Fund, Marg's distinctive voice can be heard talking

about NOTL in the past. This includes her noting that her family boarded horses and wagons at their farm when she was a girl. She poetically relays looking out her bedroom window and seeing the nighttime high-beams from fancy car head lamps. Living then at her natal home along the Niagara Parkway (the old mud River Road) she relays that periodically these high-beams flooded her home and surroundings with bright light. She adds about the men at the river, "I remember one of them drove a beautiful big Pierce-Arrow car with headlights that swooped along the fenders."

I'm assuming she refers to a Series 33, with its evocative hood ornament of an archer aiming his arrow. All this was related to illicit activity she saw at the river during prohibition. Men with fancy cars loaded booze onto boats and then hid the cars in nearby barns. Life experiences build on one another and hers were no exception. Marg went on to train with the St. Catharines Transport Section of the Canadian Red Cross and later drove ambulances for the British Red Cross. Notably she was also an Honorary 2nd Lieutenant. As such, driving a taxi cab later on was something she was amply and expertly trained to do.

Thinking about time (and don't it always seem to go) fast forward to the present and I'm returning to live in NOTL 49 years after I left as a child. Of course, I've kept up with the town and its goings on over the intervening time



Barb Lailey (later Barbara Casselman) leans on the door of the Lailey truck.

period, bringing my kids to gather with family over the many years. My youngest son and his wife and my daughter and her husband were recently in town staying with my mother at her home. The town is in our blood.

Further on my return to NOTL, since I no longer drive, the issue of there being no regular licensed and regulated taxi cab service in town has arisen. In this regard, I'm interested to know what happened to the cab service that my Grandma (Marg) Jennings provided to the community. I'm interested to know whether, since then, anyone has applied for a regular cab license in NOTL? And if so, whether their application was denied? And if it was denied, on what basis? It seems odd to me that this gap in an important local means of transportation in a

town of largely seniors has not been properly filled. If folks in NOTL needed a regular cab service back in the 1950s and 1960s, then for sure we need one now.

I find it worthy of recollection that over time, a variety of forms of transportation have been relied upon by folks to get into town, around town and to leave town. As part of our settler history, it is notable that Lieutenant Governor and the adventurous and accomplished wife Elizabeth Simcoe sleighed from Niagara to Detroit in 1793. They met with leaders of the Lenape (Delaware) Indigenous community. Later, from the 1880s up to 1926, Michigan Central Rail transported passengers to boats that went back and forth from NOTL to Toronto. In 1864 rail service ran between Buffalo and NOTL. A Niagara-St Catharines & Toronto Street Railway rolled into town from 1912 to 1931. There was also a tram running between St. Catharines, NOTL and the Falls into the 1950s. Since 1929 there has been an airport in the region, which in 1935 was relocated to within shooting distance of NOTL. A ferry ran also between NOTL and Toronto in my grandparents' day. Their

View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

RV (Netflix, 2006) is film with little to recommend it beyond a silly plot and a beautifully sympathetic performance by Robin Williams. As a father

he decides to take his dysfunctional family on a trip in a rented RV, hoping that they will, once again, become a real family. Everything that could go wrong, goes wrong, but in the end they are all 'nicer people'. Worth seeing.

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

Local

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Please consider donations to Ukraine

It's that time of year when Niagara-on-the-Lake opens its hearts and wallets to generously donate to so many worthy causes and charities too numerous to list — especially for children at Christmas time.

But it's also that time of year where donor fatigue is starting to set in, particularly Ukraine fatigue. This Ukraine fatigue is precisely what Russia's President Vladimir Putin is counting on. The global community is so tired of this war and in many cases, there are calls for Ukraine to compromise with the Russian Federation and to cede Ukrainian territories. These calls are being met with defiant Ukrainian resistance, and rightly so.

In this season for gifting, I don't wish to overwhelm our community with a request for donations, but given the human catastrophe taking place in Ukraine, particularly during the winter, it's important to keep the war in Ukraine once again top of mind.

In the early weeks of Russia's invasion, the whole world was Ukrainian, collectively standing proudly shoulder to shoulder with her national anthem played worldwide at every venue and her blue and yellow flag flying everywhere in the wind.

I'd like to gently remind my NOTL community to once again be Ukrainian and know that in the midst of constant barrages of horrific stories, your donations, including that of your volunteerism, are making a huge difference

in Ukraine even when contributing a small amount.

I have relatives in Ukraine in both the East and West whom I'm in touch with every few days when they're not dodging bombs, missiles, cluster munitions and mines, trying to find a safe haven, particularly those in the East where the worst of the war has largely been confined.

Their message to donors is that although there are so many heartbreaking stories of devastation and atrocities, and their situation looks grim, they are so very grateful for all humanitarian assistance sent their way. Your aid, even small-scale actions, are impactful and helps them survive every day with optimism. They are hopeful, they are resilient, they are inspiring and to them with your donations, the war is winnable. My relatives want you to know that they have good news to share. They are experiencing victories and progress and their vision for the future for the right to freedom and democracy has not diminished, even though they are paying a heavy price in blood.

The city of Kherson, located in my father's birthplace in Kherson region, was recently liberated from months of Russian occupation — nothing short of miraculous. But my cousin's son died at the front defending it. Ukrainians have already won the war morally but are determined for a complete Ukrainian victory and total Russian Federation defeat.

We are all a global communi-

ty connected one way or another that takes care of each other and gives back to affect a world of difference. Your help in whatever form it takes and no matter how big or small, is welcomed, appreciated and Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora is grateful and indebted.

How you can help: You can donate to Canada-Ukraine Foundation at www.cufoundation.ca. The foundation is a reputable and trustworthy institution and ensures the coordination, development, and delivery of assistance to where it's needed most in Ukraine.

You can also assist by buying Ukraine Sovereignty Bonds issued by Ottawa. The proceeds of these bonds will provide financial aid to restore destroyed energy infrastructure, and provide essential services such as pensions, fuel, food security, clothing, medications, rebuild hospitals, schools, etc. You can contact your financial institution or financial advisor on how to purchase these bonds or visit www.canada.ca. You can also contact Chrystyna Tymczyszyn, Parish Secretary at St. John Byzantine Ukrainian Church in St. Catharines at 905-937-3393, Tuesday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or visit the church's website at www.stjohnnuc.com. The church continues to collect medical supplies, hygiene items and new winter gear for their monthly shipment to Ukraine.

**Helen Arsenault
Virgil**

Three generations of strong women

Continued from page 6

farmed fruit was transported to market that way, along with passengers. The ferry trips ended, but happily, a ferry is now being reintroduced in the region. The point here is that for much of the town's history, folks did not need their own car to come and go.

In addition, there were trucks owned by locals, such as those some of my relatives drove for family businesses. My great Aunt Barb was one of them. She undoubtedly gave rides to folks in need of one. Too, there were the

ever-useful tractors. I cherish the photo in which my maternal Granny can be seen driving the tractor on the family farm, where a life was eked out. Although my Granny Lailey (Norah) did not drive her tractor into town, I'm informed that a local woman did. That image is evocative and comforts me somehow.

Last but definitely not least, there was the local taxi cab service provided by my Grandma Jennings. But like so many other useful local transit systems, it's long gone. Today you can fly over NOTL

for fun, but you can't call a regular cab for a medical appointment. This is a call to change that.

I miss these three 'lady drivers'. Independent working women who were influencers of my sister Maggie's and my generation.

I remember Marg from a photo taken at my McGill University graduation in the late 1980s. In it she's smiling, and that's how I remember her. In my mind's eye, a Big Yellow Taxi took my Grandma away. And why not? It is after all a very good way to travel.

Local LETTERS

Ukrainian Help Boutique needs food, clothing

The Ukrainian Help Boutique is completely out of food. If you are able, could you please consider donating any of the following items: flour, sugar, tea, instant coffee, powdered coffee creamer, oatmeal, buckwheat (Kasha), rice, pasta, breakfast cereals, barley, lentils, canned beans, canned tuna or salmon, sardines, canned ham or luncheon meat (spam), dry packaged or canned soups, canned vegetable or fruits.

Please ensure none of these items have expired.

Many of the 300-plus families have arrived in the Niagara area with hardly anything other than the clothes on their back. Some are single mothers here with their children, while their husbands remain in Ukraine fighting.

One of the mothers wants to find work, however, she has nobody to take care of her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter.

Many who arrive here are eager to find housing and get to work to make a living for their families.

The Ukrainian people are, and always have been, hard-working people. Some are seniors who are having a difficult time finding jobs as their age

comes into play.

I have seen a young boy in his teens disappointed he could not get into college this past semester. It was past the deadline, however he took a job with his mother at a hotel. He was at the Help Boutique trying on a pair of second-hand pants and upon leaving was so grateful he was able to find clothes.

Some of the families have been able to find housing and work. Others have no transportation.

Some Ukrainians that arrive to our area, unless they reach out to a Ukrainian church or organization, do not know where to get assistance and some are too proud to ask.

There is nothing in place in our province, such as a main registry. Several Ukrainians have arrived with no assistance and have made it here on their own.

Many NOTLers have been very generous, however, the war is still happening and we cannot forget what they are going through.

Over the last few months, I have received calls and emails from folks who want to donate furniture. Unfortunately, the Help Boutique and the St. John Ukrainian Church have no fa-

cilities to store furniture. When I get a contact, I forward the info or pictures to both of these organizations. If they are at the time assisting a family moving into a new home and can arrange for pickup it works out.

I would like to thank the lady from Oregon who is here for six months helping a family member empty out their home/business. Once a week for the last few weeks she has been dropping off to me mainly unopened boxed items, everything from pots and pans, coffee makers, grills and even soccer balls and basketballs.

This holiday season please remember people from Ukraine. Monetary donations are accepted (cheques can be made out to St. John Ukrainian Church and in the memo line add NIAGARA UCC) to ensure it gets to the Ukrainian immigrants program.

Feel free to call or text 905-468-2325 or email me at donatesunflowersforukraine@gmail.com.

Donations can also be dropped off at The Local office, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road (opposite the town hall in Virgil), most afternoons.

**Betty Knight
Queenston**

Ford's plans to destroy Greenbelt 'shocking'

As a founding member of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society, the oldest farmland preservation group in Canada, established to protect the best farmlands in Canada, Niagara's tiny, climatically favoured tender fruit and grape lands, I am shocked and appalled by Premier Ford's sudden plans to remove some of these unique fruit lands from the Greenbelt.

This is a huge leap back from permanent Niagara fruit land preservation PALS has gained over the last 46 years, at OMB hearings, in the 1984 Niagara Regional Official Plan, and most importantly, in the Greenbelt Legislation and Plan.

In direct contrast, as noted by PALS researcher Dr. John Bacher (PhD) in a detailed brief to the government through the Environmental Registry of On-

tario, "The provincial government land-grab of 7,600 acres from protected Greenbelt lands, without proper consultation and planning, breaks a close to 50-year effort by farmland preservationists and natural area supporters, and will lead to even greater land speculation and bit by bit erosion of Niagara's remaining fruit lands."

**Gracia Janes,
PALS board member**

Thank you to the Goettler Foundation

The description of the scope and purpose of the Goettler Foundation outlined in your Nov. 16 article, 'Goettler Family Foundation donates \$1 million to Wilderness', filled me with hope and gratitude. Gratitude, because it is organizations (and people) like this that truly make a difference in our world. If we all approached everything we did

with that degree of responsibility, care, and faith in our fellow man and community, what a world we would live in. Hope, because this serves as a reminder to us all to be thoughtful, kind and do what we can, individually and collectively, to make our world a better place.

There are many organizations in NOTL that work quietly in the shadows doing

remarkable things for the less obvious parts of our community and the world.

Thank you Goettler Foundation for recognizing their work and their need locally and internationally. We can change the world; not the whole world, but the part we touch.

**Betty Knight
Queenston**

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It will require a global effort to save the planet

Ben Foster
Special to The Local

The environment and climate change is everyone's business, and should be everyone's priority.
No earth, no place to live

for any of us! I am so glad to see it is in the news often, especially these days, with COP27, and with more and more advertisements from large companies working to become carbon neutral
For many years, we have

been destroying the earth and our climate, so we understand there is no quick fix. As a young person looking forward, I feel some reassurance that governments around the world are starting to take this issue seriously and more people in

communities are also trying to do their bit locally, including here in Niagara. This really is something we all have to contribute to save the planet.

I decided to have a look on the town's website and discovered this past term of council has had an Environmental Advisory Committee and there is a Climate Change Adaptation Plan. The town's website promised "The town will demonstrate leadership and innovation to protect the community's natural beauty, charm and heritage against the impacts of climate change today and into the future."

Did you know there was an Environmental Advisory Committee? Or that the town has made the following mitigation efforts to date to help reduce the effects of climate change?:

- Decreased energy use in municipal buildings, facilities and general operations
 - Reduced carbon footprint with LED streetlight conversion project
 - Installed an electric charging station
 - Reduced the use of single-use plastics at town events
 - Water bottle refill stations installed at town facilities
 - Four-stream garbage bins were installed to dispose of organics at town facilities
- Climate change has been

much talked about at school and while I was at St. Michael Elementary School we were asked to write something as part of a project about the environment. At that time I chose to do a project about David Suzuki and wrote this poem.

*Mother Earth has taken
care of us,
And how have we shown
we care?
We've lessened the sound of
the little bee's buzz,
And melted the home of the
polar bear*

*Plants and trees have
not escaped,
Nor have the depths of
all our oceans.
All of these places have
been reshaped,
All done by man's
unthoughtful potions*

*The earth is NOW crying
out "help,"
And NOW needs us more
than ever.
So, we need to try and stop
the big melt,
and make this NOW our
best endeavour*

*Can we listen to the
growing voices
Who will try to show
us the way?
And to be swift on mother
earth's plight,
After all she's done*


*it's only fair
We have life in our skies
and oceans.
We have the life of our living
and lands.
We have the means to undo
man's potions
The future really is
in our hands.*

This year's COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh Green Zone honours the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since 26 COPS, we NOW, as I have been anticipating since my Grade 8 school project, have a far better grasp of the scope of the possible climate problem and what has to be done to properly address it.

On Nov. 20, COP27 closed with a breakthrough agreement to provide "loss and damage" funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters. I personally think that this is great, as people need help after being so badly affected by natural disasters.

If you have anything to say, any ideas to help stop climate change in NOTL let me know. I can be reached at The Local at penny@notllocal.com.

Ben Foster is a co-op high school student working at The Local.



Where is Ben?

Ben Foster, The Local's co-op student, is having fun finding new locations in NOTL. He is asking others if these are areas they are already familiar with. Is this one too easy? If you know where this photo was taken, let Ben know at penny@notllocal.com. The location of last week's 'Where is Ben?' beside an old red pickup truck was identified by Nina Slack and Jake Doerksen as Lakeshore Road, "just before the S-bend going from NOTL to St. Catharines at the end of a firelane," said Nina.

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Niagara
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Arts Centre

Rima and I met a little over 6 years ago. As the newly-elected Chair of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, in an attempt to get to know Rima better, I asked her "what would you do if you discovered you had painted yourself into a corner"?

Rima broke into a slow smile, laughed and said "I would never paint myself into a corner".

Over the years I have learned Rima was right. Why? Because long before she picks up a brush, her thought process begins in the corner and traces the many, prudent, methodical steps it takes to reach the light of the doorway.

Five years later, the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre stands on the threshold of a revitalized visual arts community, offering art for all.

Thank you, Rima. You have the full support of the Board of Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre and the community we serve.

Congratulations
RIMA BOLES
Recipient of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce 2022 Women in Business Award for Cultural Arts

Tara Rosling offering readings of Mistletoe Bride

Penny Coles
The Local

When Tara Rosling and Peter Hinton decided in 2014 to offer a theatrical reading of *The Mistletoe Bride* at Silversmith Brewing Company, they had no idea they were establishing an increasingly popular annual tradition.

Although the pandemic cancelled the 2020 performance, last year Rosling was able to present it virtually. It was well-received, it just wasn't the same experience for her or the viewers — there was “a bit of a disconnect, but it filled a void, and raised a lot of money for Gillian's Place,” she says.

She is looking forward to being back at Silversmith this holiday season, in front of an audience, but plans on again offering a virtual reading “for those who aren't yet comfortable going out,” and also for those who aren't local and would like to see it.

The reading is based on a haunting British folk tale by Jeanette Winterson, and was adapted by Hinton.

Silversmith was the ideal atmosphere for the one-woman performance, with the intimate setting of a dark, century-old church, candles flickering, ambience in abun-



Tara Rosling has done many readings at Silversmith Brewing Company, where *The Mistletoe Bride* has become an annual tradition. (File photo)

dance, and Rosling telling the tale of a dangerous game of hide-and-seek between bride and groom on their wedding night.

That first year, Rosling remembers showing up at Silversmith and being surprised to find it full, she thought of people there for dinner who would soon be leaving. Instead, she discovered they were there for her, and as more arrived, plans were quickly made to add a second reading, and the spill-over crowd was sent away and told to come back later in the evening.

The next year it grew to two readings on each of two nights, then to three readings over three evenings. She has also performed it at other venues, but discovered nowhere is as well-suited for the tale she tells as a warm, cozy pub on a cold winter's night.

This year, there will also be a reading at The Irish Harp, where owner Jovie Joki, who likes to offer entertainment, asked Rosling to bring *The Mistletoe Bride* to her restaurant. The pub atmosphere, Rosling

to get back on stage in front of an audience with the Shaw ensemble next season. The timing allows her to still do *Star Trek*, “which is super fun,” and fit in *The Mistletoe Bride*, a fundraiser for Gillian's Place, which is very important to her.

While Hinton won't be able to work with her on this year's reading, she's performed it often enough to be comfortable doing it on her own, and is looking forward to working again with him at the Shaw, she says.

She's grateful to be able to make decisions about how she wants to spend her time, and take on projects that are not only fulfilling, but allow her to help causes that are important to her, such as the support *The Mistletoe Bride* provides Gillian's Place.

Be prepared for a magical evening, transported back in time with this dark, eerie Christmas story to be told by Rosling at The Irish Harp Dec. 11, and -Silversmith Dec. 20.

Reservations are recommended, and plan to come early to enjoy a pint and a meal before the show.

Call the Irish Harp at 905-468-4443, or Silversmith at 905-468-8447.



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THE SHAW FESTIVAL -
WHITE CHRISTMAS
November 18 - December 23

If you're dreaming of a white Christmas, you won't want to miss this classic holiday favourite. Two soldiers, returning home from a USO song-and-dance team, fall for two sisters in another act. Together, they put on a show to save a Vermont inn. This musical never fails to please: you can't help falling in love with the characters, the dancing and, of course, the singing, especially since the title song is Berlin's most famous and most beloved.

www.shawfest.com

THE SHAW FESTIVAL -
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
November 18 - December 23

Ebenezer Scrooge is back! Nestled in the heart of the ultimate Christmas village, the charming holiday favourite A Christmas Carol returns to the Shaw Festival's Royal George Theatre. It's the perfect annual reminder of what Christmas is all about. Arrive feeling "Bah, humbug!" and leave full of warm, fuzzy Christmas spirit.

www.shawfest.com

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niagaraonthelake.com

SANTA 5K RUN
Sunday, December 18

Grab your family and friends, put on a Santa suit and run an IN-PERSON 5KM race in the very scenic Niagara-on-the-Lake! Santa Suit and chipped timed results included!

santa5k.ca

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(Dec 5) and the Music of a Charlie Brown Christmas (Dec 19). Tickets: \$19 - \$39 + HST / 3-Show Pass: \$99 + HST. niagarajazzfestival.com

HISTORY IN THE VINEYARD Wednesday, November 30 from 5:30 pm

A holiday fundraiser at Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery in support of two wonderful charities, The Friends of Fort George & The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum. Support the preservation of Niagara-on-the-Lake's history with a gourmet meal, silent auction, and your choice of 2 short lectures about our community's unique history. Tickets: \$150 per person, which includes a three course meal and a \$50 tax receipt. notlmuseum.ca

CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND AT THE PILLAR & POST

The Gardens at Pillar and Post turn into a true seasonal wonderland complete with sparkling lights, holiday music, festive snacks, an ice rink, warming fire pits, and holiday movies under the stars. vintage-hotels.com

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE ROTARY HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR Friday, Dec 2 - Saturday, Dec 3 9:30 am to 4:30 pm

If you like interior design, architecture, and seasonal decorations, the annual Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Holiday House Tour is for you. Tour six gorgeous, beautifully decorated homes. Visit local historic and cultural sites; sample complimentary tastings from 3 featured wineries; and enjoy specially priced luncheons and dinners for attendees as well! And all the profits go to charitable causes. niagaraonthelakerotary.ca/page/holiday-house-tour

A MERRY & BRIGHT CHRISTMAS TOUR Friday, Dec 2 & Saturday, Dec 3

A Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake event: Presented by the McArthur Family, an evening indoor/outdoor tour of the seasonally decorated, spectacular McArthur Estate. Enjoy an enchanted tour of the grounds and the first & second floor of the McArthur Estate, exquisitely decorated for the holiday season, with

seasonal lights, live music, Santa & the Grinch, sparkling wine, warm cider, cookies, the Canine Manor, the reindeer stables, children's activities, and more! niagaraonthelakerotary.ca

HOLIDAY MARKET AT THE NIAGARA PUMPHOUSE ART CENTRE December 2 - December 11

Who knew holiday gift-giving could be so much fun! Find unique and hand-made gifts and decor crafted by artisans. To further enhance the shopping experience, holiday helpers and a gift packaging station are available. The opening weekend is part of the Rotary Club Holiday House Tour! Everyone is welcome to make a shopping stop at the Holiday Market. Proceeds from the event benefit children & seniors' programs. holidaymarket.ca

SANTA CLAUS PARADE Saturday, December 10, 11:00 am

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Santa Claus Parade is back! The parade will start at the intersection of King and Centre Street in Old Town and travel throughout its traditional route down Castlereagh, Wellington, Byron/Prideaux, Sim-

coe and Queen Streets. notl.com

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE CHRISTMAS TRACTOR PARADE IN VIRGIL Thursday, December 15, beginning at 6 pm

Starting at the arena in Virgil, this twinkling parade of lights will travel Four Mile Creek Road, past Pleasant Manor, onto Eldon Road, left on Line 1 Road, across Niagara Stone Road to Concession 4, then Line 2, and finally back to the arena. Additionally, consider purchasing a Winemakers' Selection Tasting Pass for \$35. The Tasting Pass allows you to enjoy one tasting of a Winemaker's Selection wine at each participating winery Monday through Friday for the rest of the year. Details: wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com All proceeds for any of the passes sold this month and next will go to the NOTL Farmworker Hub.

SPARKLE AND ICE GALA Friday, January 20, 2023 8:00 pm - 11:00 pm

To commence this wonderful festival, we invite you to the Sparkle and Ice Gala in the ballrooms of

the Old Courthouse. It's a celebration with Niagara-on-the-Lake icewine makers and their VQA wines. Culinary delights will be paired with Niagara-on-the-Lake premium wines. Live entertainment will keep you dancing to the end of the evening's festivities. To end the night there will be a toast outside as you watch the skyline dazzle with fireworks.

For tickets please contact 905-468-1950 or please visit niagaraonthelake.com for more information.

THE ICE WINE FESTIVAL Icewine Village January 21 - 22, 2023 & January 28 - 29, 2023 Saturdays 11 am - 5 pm Sundays Noon - 5 pm

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Icwine Festival takes place over two wintry weekends in January. The gorgeous Heritage District sets the stage for a magical experience. The Icwine Village becomes a historical winter wonderland with delicious icewine from local wineries and delectable food pairings from upscale restaurants. The Icwine Festival will be held outdoors on Queen Street. There

will be free admission to the Icwine Village. niagaraonthelake.com

ICEWINE COCKTAIL COMPETITION Saturday, January 28, 2023 7 pm - 10 pm

The Icwine Cocktail Competition will be in the ballroom of the Old Courthouse. If you've ever wondered what you can do with icewine beyond sipping its sweet nectar, this event is for you. Local wineries will compete to claim this year's trophy with their mixologist-approved icewine cocktails. These cocktails combine the creativity and passion of Niagara-on-the-Lake spirits and icewine. With a DJ, live entertainment, and photo booths it will be a memory to keep. Included with purchase of a ticket you'll be able to try up to 3 cocktails with the opportunity to purchase more, and delicious charcuterie boards to enjoy. You vote on the winning creation and the winner will be announced that evening.

For tickets please contact 905-468-1950 or please visit niagaraonthelake.com for more information.

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Holiday fundraiser for NOTL Cats Rescue

Not-for-profit could use food, litter, cash donations

Penny Coles
The Local

Tanya Rice was introduced to NOTL Cats Rescue about seven years ago when her sister Jeanne organized a 50th birthday for her.

Both women were cat lovers, and when Jeanne learned about the organization during a visit to Pet Valu in Virgil, she decided to ask for donations to NOTL Cats Rescue at the

birthday party instead of gifts.

Rice, who has become one of the organization's committed volunteers, has since assisted with annual fundraisers to help to fulfill its mission: to shelter, nurture and socialize abandoned and homeless cats in a loving, home-like environment until they can be adopted to their forever homes.

Rice recently lost her dear younger sister, a St. Catharines wife and mother just 52

years old who suffered from multiple sclerosis. Jeanne died at home, surrounded by her family, on Remembrance Day, says Rice. It's been a very difficult and emotional time — they lost their father last year, and had their first Christmas without him, and now the family must face Christmas without Jeanne, who loved the holiday.

When Rice first learned about NOTL Cats Rescue about eight years ago, she decided to turn a family Christmas tradition into an event to raise money for the organization. She and her husband

Peter typically held a post-Candlelight Stroll open house at their home, and since they were providing refreshments for their friends, they asked for something in return — a donation to the cat rescue organization she supports. But once the pandemic cancelled the stroll, she looked for other ways to fundraise.

Rice says she was accustomed to making Christmas planters for friends and family, and her husband and sister would joke that she should be charging for them. "I said I couldn't charge family, but I can charge strangers, for a good cause."

So that's what she decided to do. She held a fundraiser of planters last spring, and has decided to go ahead with her plans for this holiday season, in memory of Jeanne.

When her sister's MS was progressing, Rice says she took some time off work so they could spend a lot of time together, "doing a lot of sister bonding stuff together. That's one of the reasons it's very important to me to keep this going — I wouldn't even know about cat rescue if it weren't for her."

With her mother Joyce Ruish and friends Lesley Pranter, Carolyn Greenfield and Sabine Barry, she has made holiday planters and porch gnomes to fill her garage leading up to three sale dates at her home at 456 Line 2 behind Crossroads School: Saturday, Nov. 26, Saturday, Dec. 3 and Sunday, Dec. 4, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. each day.

Rice gives a shout-out to Phil's Your Independent Grocer for the donation of 20 bags of soil, which saved on expenses making the planters.

Rice has also been fostering cats and kittens — NOTL Cats Rescue can never find enough foster families — and she is currently caring for Tessa and Toby, six-month-old bonded siblings, spayed and neutered, vaccinated and microchipped, and looking for a home.

"Adoptions have been down post-pandemic," she says. "People are back to living their lives and travelling."

NOTL Cats Rescue has 25 kittens and cats for adoption this winter — a lot of mouths to feed, says Rice. Anyone interested in fostering them, so important for socializing before they're adopted, will be supplied with everything that is needed: litter, food and toys.

"If there is someone who has room in their home and an open heart to love them, it doesn't have to be forever, and if you want to go away while you're fostering, someone will take them for you," says Rice.

Donations of food, litter, and money of course are all

ways greatly appreciated.

Due to dietary restrictions for some cats, Rice says Performatrin kitten and adult kibble, and Fancy Feast canned food are preferred.

Also important to the cat rescue is any opportunity for education: get your pets spayed or neutered, "and microchipping is so important."

NOTL Cats Rescue also encourages people who have stray cats outside around their homes to provide shelters for the winter, and water — she has a heated water bowl she was given to prevent water from freezing — and she suggests putting a little bit of sugar in the water for extra nutrients.

NOTL Cats Rescue will supply a cat shelter if they have one available, or instructions on how to make one. "Always use straw inside a shelter, not a blanket," adds Rice.

For more information visit <https://notlcats.weebly.com/>



Toby and Tessa are being fostered, and need a permanent home. (Photos supplied)



Porch gnomes will go quickly, and help out a good cause.



Holiday planters made by Tanya Rice, with help from her mother and friends, will be for sale from her Line 2 home.

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Santa and Elf Run raising money for youth campus

Penny Coles

The Local

About 600 Santas and many of his elves are expected to arrive in Simcoe Park a little early for Christmas.

Caroline Polgrabria will be one of those Santas, as will her son Jayden, both taking part in the 5K Santa and Elf Run, organized by VPro, who brought the Santa Run to NOTL last Christmas. Her daughter Kaitlyn will be an elf in the 1K.

Polgrabia ran last year with Jayden, although at 11 years old, she says, he quickly left her in his dust — when her husband was taking photos of Jayden at the finish, “I was nowhere to be seen. He really blew me away,” she says, admitting she didn’t do a lot to prepare for the event.

Although there are competitive runners who take part, this run is not so much about competition as having fun — you don't have to be a runner to participate, she says. Last year she saw people walking, pulling kids in a wagon, or pushing a stroller. "It's hard running on snow and ice. Not even the serious runners are pushing themselves."

As much fun as she had last year, Polgrabia has even



Caroline Polgrabia (centre) and 11-year-old Jayden ran in last year's Santa 5K, and will take part again this year.
(Photo supplied)

more motivation to participate in this year's event. The NOTL Youth Campus, which she has finally seen become a reality after almost a decade of planning, will be the recipient of funds raised from the event.

And Tom Elltoft, a longtime friend and huge supporter of the youth hub, along with Chris Bowron, co-owners of NOTL Realty, have stepped up to sponsor the event.

"It is important at this time of year to find ways to give back to our community, and NOTL youth are certainly at the top of our list," says Elltoft. "We hope everyone will get involved, support the kids and donate generously."

One hundred per cent of the dollars raised by the Elves and Santas go directly to building programs at the NOTL Youth Campus in 2023, says Elltoft.

Polgrabia says it's great to have a third party fundraiser — not only for the revenue it will bring to Youth Campus, but also because when others want to help out, “it feels like they’re saying, ‘you’re on the right track.’ They see that we’re creating a safe, accessible and welcoming space for NOTL kids, and for us, seeing community support confirms the need for what we’re doing.”

Last year's Santa Run, which also started from Simcoe Park and attracted about 250 people, was such a success, even with COVID restrictions, organizer Kelly Arnott began planning for 2022, and the Santa and Elf Run is a result of that.

She recalls at the last minute having to stagger races to reduce the number of people in each event. This year, she can confidently order 600 Santa suits for adult

runners, and would love to have at these that many runners, with chipped timed results, crystal medals that can be used as Christmas ornaments for those who finish, and prizes for the top three runners in each age division.

Kids who participate in the 1K run will be given elf hats.

The town will look beautiful and wintry, and it's the perfect time to get in the Christmas spirit, she says.

And after the event, there will be a breakfast sandwich at The Irish Harp, and Tim Hortons coffee, hot chocolate and Timbits.

Plus, all the Santas get a goodie bag, she says.

VPro has lowered registration fees for the event to direct \$10 toward the NOTL Youth Campus fundraising campaign. As part of the registration process, participants will be required to donate this \$10 towards this youth initiative.

There will also be a collection of non-perishable food and toy donations for Newark Neighbours.

The run will be held Dec. 18, beginning at 10 a.m.

To register, visit <https://raceroster.com/events/2022/57574/notl-realty-ltd-santa-and-elf-run>.

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Yellow Door Theatre Project presents *Nobody's Children*

Mike Balsom
The Local

Yellow Door Theatre Project's newest original production combines the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin with the historical plight of London's 'home

children', many of whom ended up in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Between 1869 and 1932, more than 100,000 children were sent from Britain to Canada through assisted juvenile emigration, according to the Ca-

nadian government. Many were orphans, while others were from poor families living in dire conditions. They were shipped to Canada with the belief that they would find better opportunities.

According to the NOTL

Museum's records, Marie S. Rye began bringing poor young women and girls to Niagara in 1868 to be domestics. A year later she acquired the old courthouse and gaol in NOTL (where Rye Park currently sits) and converted it

into Our Western Home, which became a boarding house for these girls while awaiting their destination to farms in Ontario and Eastern Canada. There, they often lived a life of servitude.

That local angle is a huge bonus for the charitable youth theatre group's founder and artistic producer Andorlie Hillstrom.

"The home children were right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake," says Hillstrom. "It's an extraordinary part of our history. We brushed it under the carpet (back then), so to speak, but it was really quite awful. That was a really serious issue."

Playwright Lezlie Wade and composer Scott Christian have collaborated to combine the two dark tales into an original musical theatre production called *Nobody's Children*. It will make its world-wide premiere, performed by a group of actors between the ages of 10 and 17 years old, on Dec. 7.

Nobody's Children has a definite *Oliver* feel to it. Yes, both stories upon which it is built are dark, but the musical theatre genre gives the creators

the opportunity to lighten up the story, finding the comedic elements as well as the heart for many of the characters.

The musical continues an ongoing partnership that Hillstrom has formed with Wade and Christian to provide a professional theatre experience for her young charges.

At 14 years old, Laura Secord Secondary School student Alex Berghoeff is already a Yellow Door veteran. He values the opportunity to work once again to bring another Wade-Christian creation to life.

"It's so amazing that they let us, these kids, do these plays," Berghoeff tells *The Local*. Hillstrom, he says, "gets these people who make these amazing plays. It's crazy to think that one day other people will do this play, too."

Berghoeff plays Ichabod, who he says undergoes a transformation from a shy, reserved character to an extrovert once he forms a friendship with Mary Sharples, the daughter of a rat catcher. Sharples is played by 12-year-old Parnall Public School

Continued on page 15



Hannah Otta (left) playing Mary Sharples, the daughter of a rat catcher, rehearses with the rest of the ensemble.

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Kids benefit from working with professionals

Continued from page 14

student Hannah Otta.

Otta stepped into the role of Mary when Catherine Dubois successfully auditioned for a role in the upcoming Shaw Festival Theatre production of *White Christmas*. She previously appeared in Wade and Christian's Yellow Door update of the Hansel and Gretel story, as well as in their film *Red Letter Day*.

"It was sad, because I really enjoy working with Catherine," Otta says. "But I felt prepared because I was her understudy. We were all working together, and I had learned the music already."

Otta says Mary is an adventurous, spirited girl from a middle class family. She gets wrapped up with a group of orphans on the streets of London when she takes a detour on Christmas Eve. That's when her friendship with Ichabod is sparked.

The musical straddles two continents, set as it is in both Victorian London and Canada, the final destination of many of the home children.

With the first full

run-through of the Wade-Christian script behind her, Director Kerry Ann Doherty, a Shaw ensemble member and founder of Toronto's theatreSix, is excited with the approach of the play's opening.

"It went really well," she says of Sunday's rehearsal. "Very exciting. It had the usual fits and starts, but overall it's going very well. We learn a lot when we put it all together. We're all really happy."

Doherty doesn't see a huge difference between directing adults and working with younger actors.

"Sometimes you give a note, and they may not understand the instructions," she says. "You may ask them to move upstage, and sometimes you have to be sure they know what's upstage and what's downstage. It requires a few more teaching moments just to make sure everything is understood."

And she praises the work of Wade and Christian.

"They work so well together," says Doherty. "The songs are beautiful and fun. There's lots of comedy,

even though it's a drama.

The comedic moments come out of the realness of the characters. These kids come together and choose to look out for each other. It's really a lovely story about chosen family."

"I think Scott Christian is a brilliant composer," adds Hillstrom. "We are so fortunate to have him.

And I love Lezlie's sense of humour. There are always great things in her writing."

Hillstrom adds that *Nobody's Children*, like all Yellow Door plays, is primarily student-driven. Wade and Christian workshop their plays with the young participants and often make changes to the

script and music based on those sessions.

"But they (the kids) work with professionals," she says. "There is one adult in the show (Christopher Ibrahim plays Mary's father) and all of our designers and our crew are all professionals. That has always been my vision

from the very, very beginning, that these kids get to work with professionals."

The world premiere of *Nobody's Children*, an original Christmas musical, runs Dec. 7 to 10 at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines. Tickets are available through firstontariopac.ca.



Leah Hyatt is Mrs. Tuffelrock and Emily Fulton is Matron Quib in Yellow Door's *Nobody's Children*. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

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Nyanyas selling holiday treats to support African grandmothers



Linda Carleton shows off a tray of holiday ginger cookies like the ones the Nyanyas are selling as a fundraiser. (Photo supplied)

Penny Coles
The Local

The Nyanyas of Niagara are teaming up with Sweets & Swirls Cafe at the Community Centre to sell holiday cookies, a fundraiser to help the Stephen Lewis Foundation's grandmothers' campaign.

The local Nyanyas (Swahili for grandmother) belong to one of more than 260 grandmothers and grandmothers' groups that raise money for the campaign, launched by the Stephen Lewis Foundation in response to the crisis faced by African grandmothers as they struggled to raise millions of children orphaned by AIDS.

Since then, a growing number of grandmothers' groups has raised funds to support the life-enhancing programs run by African grandmothers, and the community-based organizations that support them.

Today, African grandmothers continue to raise the next generation while two pandemics intersect, HIV and AIDS, and COVID-19.

Nyanya Linda Carleton says the fundraiser is similar to last year's holiday cookie sale, but has made some changes to reduce the time and pressure on Erinn Lockard of Sweets & Swirls, who is making the cookies. To keep it simple, she is providing two Christmas varieties, shortbread and ginger cookies, in a nice bag, with 20 cookies for \$20, which can be wonderful treats that

make gifts for family members, friends, neighbours, or to just have on hand to serve guests, while also supporting a great cause.

This is the first fundraiser this year for the group, says Carleton, as the Nyanyas are taking some time to restructure and recruit new members. Terry Mactaggart, one of the founders who has been active in the group since its early days, is taking a step back, and several members have not returned since the pandemic.

Although the group is reorganizing, their goal to help grassroots projects in Africa through the Stephen Lewis Foundation hasn't changed, says Carleton.

In addition to the cookie fundraiser, the Nyanyas are being assisted by Elise Gasbarrino and Style, her pop-up store on King Street, in December.

While the list of Nyanya members includes about 150 names, the group could use new active volunteers, says Carleton.

All orders must be placed through the Nyanyas by Friday, Dec. 9. There are two pickup dates: Thursday, Dec. 15, and Friday, Dec. 16, both days from 2 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Sweets & Swirls in the community centre.

Email nyanyas2018@gmail.com to order, and to e-transfer payment, password 'cookies', or use cash, cheque or debit when picking them up.

The same email can be used for more information or to join the Nyanyas.

Five local women awarded honours for business acumen

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce's Women in Niagara Council distributed their Women in Business Awards last Friday at Club Italia in Niagara Falls. Five women with ties to Niagara-on-the-Lake took home honours during the event.

In the Young Professional category, Stephanie Reis, proprietor and operations and development manager at Ferox Estate Winery, beat out seven other women to take the top honours. She and her winemaker husband Fabian created the winery to make world-class wines. Stephanie handles marketing and sales in addition

to guiding the daily operations of the winery.

Pastry chef and owner of Willow Cakes and Pastries Catherine O'Donnell's innovation and commitment to the art and craft of pastries was part of what earned her the Excellence in Trades Award. O'Donnell is the first female pastry chef to be inducted into the Honour Society of the

Canadian Culinary Federation and continues to teach at Niagara College.

As director of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, Rima Boles' commitment to the community and her efforts to keep the arts alive during the pandemic earned her the WIN Cultural Arts Award. Rima and her team built a virtual arts community which allowed for 22,000 participants to stay connected during COVID-19, and she was able to secure pandemic relief funding, allowing the Pumphouse to provide some services free of charge.

Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli and Angela Marotta took home the Business That Gives Back Award. Since opening their doors in 2014, the sisters have shown their commitment to supporting charities and organizations focused on women, children and

healthcare, including Gillian's Place and Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. As well, they contributed to Niagara College's Marotta Innovation Complex.



Rima Boles won the Women in Business Cultural Arts Award, presented by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce's Women in Niagara Council. (Photos supplied)



The Young Professional category award went to Stephanie Reis.



Catherine O'Donnell of Willow Cakes and Pastries was given the Excellence in Trades Award.



Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli and Angela Marotta took home the Business That Gives Back Award.

Queenston resident shoots Grammy-nominated music film

Mike Balsom
The Local

Filmmaker and visual artist Adam C.K. Vollick's work on Neil Young's most recent full-length film is up for a 2023 Grammy Award.

The Queenston resident, who has had a creative relationship with the legendary Canadian-born singer-songwriter for more than a decade, was director of photography for *A Band A Brotherhood A Barn*. Released in December 2021, the 74-minute film documents Young and his long-time band Crazy Horse recording his 41st album, *Barn*.

The nomination in the Best Music Film category took Vollick by surprise.

"I got a text from Daryl (actor Hannah, Young's wife and director of the documentary) saying we were nominated," Vollick says. "I haven't kept track of how many views it's had on YouTube. I'm really honoured that, however the nomination came to be, we got noticed for it. A lot of heart and soul went into the making of it, and it's kind of a homespun production."

Homespun it most certainly is, shot in and around a rebuilt rustic barn on Young and Hannah's Colorado ranch. The sparse beauty of the mountain-top landscape is accentuated via Vollick's use of time-lapse techniques and wide, sweeping shots. And the many images of the barn exterior itself, set against that vast beauty, illuminate the isolation of band and crew from the hustle and bustle of city life.

"It was a stagecoach stop when America was in its infancy," Vollick explains of the Colorado location. "It's no



Adam C.K. Vollick

small feat to get all that equipment and all those people up a mountain. The mobile recording studio they used is a lead-lined truck. It probably weighs 60,000 pounds. And then to put those guys in that building."

The barn itself is built in a log cabin style. A crew had just finished reconstructing the building on the footprint where it originally stood as many as 150 years ago. Logs were cut and positioned into place, and Vollick says the whole structure had to sit and settle for at least a year before the cracks and crevices between them could be sealed.

Those crevices provided some unique visual oppor-

tunities for the 42-year-old filmmaker. Shards of sunlight shine into the barn providing a unique natural light show as Young, guitarist Nils Lofgren, bassist Billy Talbot and drummer Ralph Molina work out the album's 10 songs along with producer Niko Bolas.

"We knew that we wanted to shoot some performances at a specific time of day," he says. "There was a narrow window of about a half hour when the sun was on its way down where it came through the cracks and illuminated the stage. We got lucky, the stars aligned, pun intended."

Vollick's method for *A Band A Brotherhood A Barn* was the same as it was when he

shot Young's 2019 film *Mountaintop*, which documents his Colorado album that year. He shot everything and anything, even capturing a moment when Young relieves himself outside of the barn. Shot from behind, of course.

"They trust a lot in me to not miss anything," he explains. "The first mission was to make sure I got everything that happened in the studio. Neil doesn't really subscribe to any kind of schedule. You don't know when he's going to show up or when he's going to play music, but you better be ready. I was always on."

Vollick's cameras were perpetually rolling. He set up wide shots of the performance space, allowing him to capture some magic moments, such as when Lofgren escaped to the piano after dinner to plunk out a melody, and the rest of the band gathered around to join in.

And he couldn't resist the many time-lapse sequences of stars shining, water flowing and clouds rolling in the Colorado sky.

Hannah "knows when I'm up there I'm fascinated by the nature of the place," Vollick says. "So they know that I'm going to do that, too. I hand it all in, then the production team takes everything that I shot, line it up against the documentary audio that I recorded. They watch every second and then pull things that are beautiful. It's a sculptural process with Daryl and the editors."

It's the way Young likes it, too. As Vollick says, the 77-year-old goes by the mantra, "it's better to be looking at it than looking for it."

A previous extended collaboration between Vollick and musician-producer Daniel Lanois, formerly of Hamilton, was what led to his work with Young. A chance encounter with the man who helped the

likes of Peter Gabriel, U2 and Bob Dylan create some of their best work, resulted in him becoming Lanois' in-house photographer and video artist. Vollick's first feature-length film was *Here Is What Is*, a document of the recording of the French-Canadian's 2007 album of the same name.

When Lanois was brought in to produce Young's 2010 solo album *Le Noise*, the veteran rocker insisted that Vollick come along with his gear. He co-directed the film of the recording sessions and has been working with Young and Hannah ever since.

A Band A Brotherhood A Barn was a family affair, not just for Young and Hannah, by the way, but also for Vollick and his wife Jess Rice. The former Nashville restaurant owner worked as a chef for the band and crew during the Colorado sessions. At the time, Rice was seven months pregnant with the couple's daughter, Velvet.

The film had a very small theatrical release before being posted in its entirety on the video-sharing website. It's been seen by more than 857,000 people in less than 12 months.

In the Best Music Film category, it's up against films featuring Adele, Billie Eilish, Justin Bieber and Spanish pop-start Rosalía, as well as one called

Jazz Fest: A New Orleans Story.

"We're in good company," Vollick says. "There's a lot of really cool projects on that list. I have to watch them. I'm going to make a point to watch them all for my own education and inspiration."

Perhaps some of that education and inspiration will show up in his future work. Vollick is busy doing post-production on a combination concert film and documentary about drummer Brian Blades' father. He's almost finished work on a music video, partially shot at Camp Cataract in Niagara Falls, for local jazz singer Sarah Jerrom. And he's set to start production on a documentary about Young's beloved long-time manager, the late Elliot Roberts.

And of course, he'll be busy taking lots of video and photographs of Velvet, now 14 months old.

Because Grammy Awards for the category are usually bestowed only upon the artist, director and producer, Vollick isn't sure he'll end up with a golden gramophone statue or get to go to the 2023 awards show in Los Angeles on Feb. 5.

But he's proud to have been a big part of the creative process that led to the finished product.

"Just to be nominated is fantastic," Vollick concludes.



Adam Vollick packing up in the barn after a session had ended. (Jess Rice)



Adam Vollick (left, with the camera) and all four band members on stage, including Neil Young on guitar on the right, and technical guys offstage. (Photo supplied)



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LocalSPORTS

New line sparks Predators' win over Windsor

Mike Balsom
The Local

Playing in his first game with the Niagara Predators, former Pelham Panther Cameron Savoie teamed up with linemates Riley Ellis and Declan Fogarty to lead the way in a 3-1 win over the Windsor Aces at home Friday.

With an assist from Ellis, Fogarty scored what turned out to be the winning goal in the first period. Fogarty also assisted on Savoie's insurance marker 15 seconds into the third period as the Preds avenged last Sunday's 3-1 loss on Windsor's home ice. Jaroslav Dohnal also scored for Niagara.

"We moved a couple things around," head coach Kevin Taylor told The Local about his new number one line for the

game. "He plays really well with Declan. And I thought having Riley out there gives a little of a different dynamic, where he can run the corners and get the puck out to those guys."

"All week in practice we were just going hard," a clearly pleased Savoie said after the game. "Declan is one of my best friends, I've known him since I was four years old. We worked hard to get our chemistry back to the way it was before."

Savoie and Fogarty played together on the Niagara North Stars AAA U18 team in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Since then, their paths had diverged through different postings in the Greater Ontario Junior B Hockey League (GOJHL), Fogarty with Thorold and Welland, Savoie with Pelham.

In addition to playing with



Preds Jaroslav Dohnal aided in the 3-1 win over Windsor at a home game Friday night. (Mike Balsom)

his best friend, the 20-year-old Savoie joins a GMHL team that includes his 18-year-old brother, Nick, with whom he shared a few shifts on Friday night in Virgil.

"I haven't played with him since high school hockey (at Governor Simcoe Secondary)," said Cameron. "We have three pairs of brothers on this team (Warren and Will Krogman and Cole and Riley Ellis are the other pairs). It's fun to play hockey with three sets of brothers. There's great camaraderie."

Taylor was happy with Friday's win, though not ready to celebrate with great enthusiasm.

"We got the win, that's all that matters, really," said an even-keeled head coach. "At the end of the day, it's two points. It wasn't the prettiest win, but it moves us up a bit in the standings."

There was one particular part of the Preds' game that gave Taylor concern. With a 2-0 lead, Niagara squandered three power play opportunities by taking penalties of their own while holding the man advantage. Two of those came while the Aces had players sitting out five-minute majors.

"One (of our penalties) was off a faceoff, a high stick," lamented Taylor. "It seems like when we get the power play, we get more excited. It should be a time when we rest, take our time and control the game. Instead we rush and try to get a quick goal. It doesn't matter whether you get the goal in the first 10 seconds or the last."

The Predators did manage to shut down the league's leading goal scorer, Samuel Senft. That's something they had yet to do this season; in three prior

games against Niagara, the five-foot-ten, 216-pound 21-year-old from Germany has netted six of his 24 goals. His only appearance on Friday's score sheet was for three penalties, including a 10-minute misconduct assessed at the end of the second period.

"He's a good player," acknowledged Taylor, "but he took himself out of the game today. He's a big body. He's huge.

Our guys are just coming to realize they just have to get in his way. I know he got two goals last week, but he really didn't do much. We're not letting him shoot as much as he was."

Windsor brought a skeleton crew again to Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena; only 10 skaters and three goalies made the journey. At one point during the third period the Aces were down to just

three players on the bench.

"Their whole team was tired," Taylor said. "But you know, the top teams in this league walk through them. We're not quite there yet. We play up against the better teams, and play down against others. We should have picked up two points against this team last weekend."

Frustrated after their previous weekend's mixed results (a masterfully-played 6-5 overtime loss to the first place Renegades followed by a tepid 3-1 loss to the eighth place Aces), Taylor and assistants Connor Shipton and Greg Wilson had an important meeting with their squad about team chemistry prior to Tuesday night's practice.

Taylor is hoping a few personnel changes and the shuffling of the lines will provide a much needed spark for the remaining two-thirds of their GMHL campaign. The 3-1 win is the first step in the right direction.

"It was much more positive in the dressing room," Taylor said. "It was all about getting them to take the game more seriously. It was a different atmosphere even on the bench."

Despite the strong showing from the Ellis-Fogarty-Savoie line, Windsor goalie Justin Sheets, who faced 50 shots, was named the game's first star. Cameron Huff manned the Niagara goal, stopping 26 of Windsor's 27 attempts. He may get the start again this Friday with number one goalie Ryan Santini off at least three weeks with an injury suffered in practice this week.

"It was a fluke thing," Taylor explained. "He went to make a poke check and his shoulder just sort of fell out. We can't have Ryan out of the lineup for a long time."

Serendipitously, Niagara has only four games on the schedule during Santini's expected recovery time. He should be available for the last three or four games in December.

The St. George Ravens come to town this Friday at 7:30 p.m. The Predators will be trying to knot up the season series at two wins apiece that night.

"They've been playing well," Taylor said of St. George. "We have to have a good week. It's nice going into a long week with a win, I don't have to sit and dwell on a loss. We will focus on getting everything perfected. We won't introduce anything new, just get them to work on what they've been doing."

And the newest Predator is excited about the possibilities while looking forward to his second game with the team.

"I love everything that we have going so far," said Savoie. "Obviously there are still some things that we can work out. But with practices coming up, and a lot of guys that want to win and are dedicated to winning, it shouldn't be an issue at all."



Declan Fogarty scores what turns out to be the winning goal in the game over Windsor. (Ben Foster)



Preds' Nick Savoie shared a few shifts with his brother Cameron, new to the team. (Mike Balsom)

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10:00 a.m.

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Message:

Kevin Bayne
The Family Tree
Matthew 1:1-16

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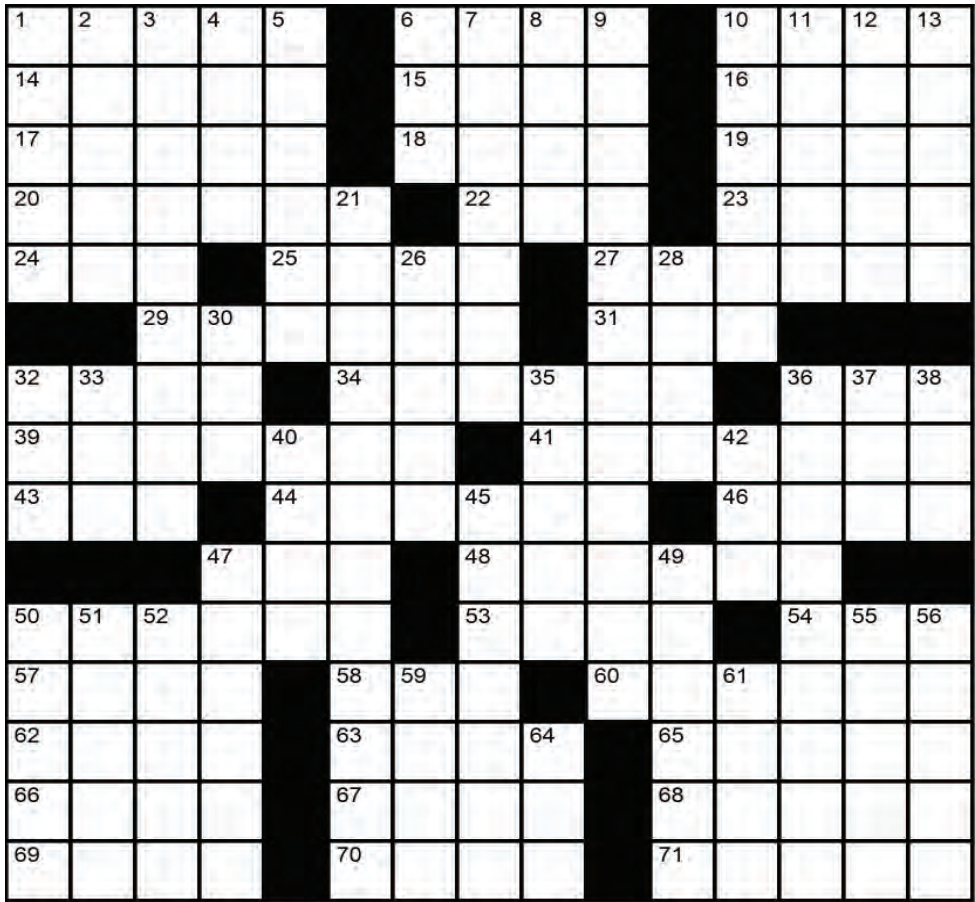
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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU



- Across:**
- 1 With a forward motion
 - 6 Guitarist --- Clapton
 - 10 And others in Rome
 - 14 "BolERO" composer Maurice ---
 - 15 Lead vocalist of U2
 - 16 Sleepless in Seattle director --- Ephron
 - 17 Overweight
 - 18 Embryonic flowers
 - 19 --- Lane, Clark's love
 - 20 Shell lobster
 - 22 Exercise venue
 - 23 --- the ground floor
 - 24 Adeptness
 - 25 A lot
 - 27 Think constantly
 - 29 Badger
 - 31 Beloved
 - 32 Anti-ageist org.
 - 34 Pulpit delivery
 - 36 Cushion
 - 39 Comparatively costly
 - 41 Getting on
 - 43 Chop
 - 44 Base
 - 46 Part
 - 47 Web address
 - 48 Cleared
- Down:**
- 1 Bouquet
 - 2 Toil
 - 3 Brought down
 - 4 Secluded retreat
 - 5 Glows
 - 6 Abate
 - 7 Harsher
 - 8 --- 500, car race
 - 9 Of worldwide scope
 - 10 Sign up
- 50 E.g. Courvoisier
 - 53 Pricey
 - 54 World's largest economy
 - 57 Stock-market debuts
 - 58 Monotonous routine
 - 60 Daytona racing supervisory grp.
 - 62 Established ceremony
 - 63 Workplace regulation agency
 - 65 Imperial sites?
 - 66 Sweet
 - 67 It starts every Sunday
 - 68 Fifty after
 - 69 ---, a plan, a canal, Panama
 - 70 Fictional Ozzie dame
 - 71 Author/astronomer Carl ---
- 11 Common odds ending
 - 12 Operatic solos
 - 13 Endures
 - 21 "A Beautiful Mind" actor
 - 26 Record keeper
 - 28 Deform
 - 30 Emulator
 - 32 Fire residue
 - 33 Consumed
 - 35 Donnybrook
 - 36 Bringing forth
 - 37 Everyone
 - 38 Stain
 - 40 One paid to jump out of perfectly serviceable aircraft
 - 42 Before, poetically
 - 45 Soon afterwards
 - 47 Invisible
 - 49 Areas of land
 - 50 About
 - 51 Anything that stupefies
 - 52 Have to
 - 55 Generous annual visitor
 - 56 Fire-raising
 - 59 Pre-loved
 - 61 Mets' old stadium
 - 64 Alias

SUDOKU SOLUTION

Sudoku solution from November 16, 2022

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

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Local
The Trusted Voice of Our Community

OBITUARY



Gayle Elizabeth Stokes
October 3, 1950 to June 14, 2022

Gayle drew wonderful people to her because she was wonderful and will be dearly missed. She forever enriched the lives of her loving husband Paul Madeley, stepsons Hunter and Bryson, brothers Gary and Bill, son René, their families and her marvellous friends.

INFORMATION SESSION

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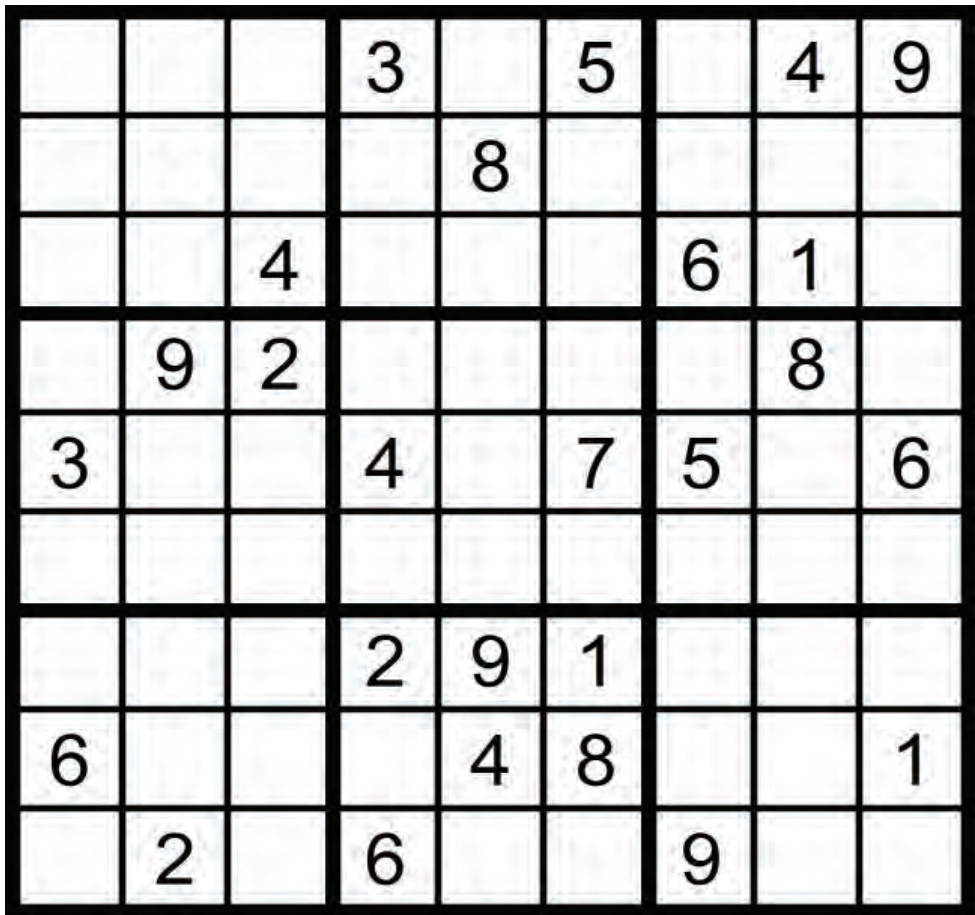
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Deadline is Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

PUZZLE ANSWERS



Across: 1 Along, 6 Eric, 10 Et al, 14 Ravel, 15 Bono, 16 Nora, 17 Obese, 18 Buds, 19 Lois, 20 Mortar, 22 Gym, 23 In at, 24 Art, 25 Much, 27 Obsess, 29 Hassle, 31 Pet, 32 A A R P, 34 Semon, 36 Pad, 39 Steeper, 41 Elderly, 43 Hew, 44 Alkali, 46 Role, 47 U R L, 48 Netted, 50 Cognac, 53 Dear, 54 U S A, 57 I P Os, 58 Rut, 60 N A S C A R, 62 Fite, 63 O S H A, 65 Chins, 66 Cute, 67 Week, 68 Ten to, 69 A man, 70 Edna, 71 Sagan.

Down: 1 Aroma, 2 Labor, 3 Overthrew, 4 Nest, 5 Gleams, 6 Ebb, 7 Rougher, 8 Indy, 9 Cosmopolitan, 10 Enlist, 11 To one, 12 Aras, 13 Lasts, 21 Russell Crowe, 26 Clerk, 28 Bend, 30 Ape, 32 Ash, 33 Ate, 35 Melee, 36 Producing, 37 All, 38 Dye, 40 Para, 42 Ere, 45 And then, 47 Unseen, 49 Tracts, 50 Circa, 51 Opium, 52 Gotta, 55 Santa, 56 Arson, 59 Used, 61 Shea, 64 A k a.

Zalepa promises ‘to strengthen, grow relationships’

Continued from page 1

delivering value-driven plans for staff to implement and to report to council on progress.”

He promised that throughout the next term, the process would include feedback and public engagement from each of the town’s five distinct villages. This will include the creation of regular village open forums, with the focus on improving communication and transparency.

“More listening, less talk,” he summarized.

He went on to list what he feels should be the priorities of this term of council. Number one is economic development. Zalepa feels council must actively seek employment creation investments to bring jobs for residents, including young people, to NOTL, while leveraging the strength and reputation of our agricultural sector.

“We will bring residents, industry, the arts and the town together in a process to work together to build a path for our tourism strategy,” he said.

Service excellence is another focus for Zalepa.

“Our priority will be to improve the town’s capacity in responding to residents’ service requests,” said the new Lord Mayor. “Additionally, we must raise our profile with other governments, in Niagara, at Queen’s Park and in Ottawa, making sure that what is important to you is communicated to these governments.”

He also promised to work toward improved public ame-

nities by finding the gaps and building a plan for future needs. Better access to health care within our town, and ensuring NOTL advocates for increased transportation services as transit becomes regionalized in January, are also part of his plan.

On housing, he said, “Affordability of housing is dysfunctional. We are truly in a housing crisis. We can find solutions and public support to adequately adjust this. I believe we must provide an opportunity for seniors to age in place and for our youth and our local workforce to acquire dwellings in our town.”

Zalepa concluded by promising to strengthen and grow relationships, build trust and provide leadership to council. He pledged to listen and to seek positive outcomes.

“According to Jefferson,” he said, “those governing must adhere to the principle that being rightful must also be reasonable. To council, it will be my priority to ensure that together we provide our CAO with our vision. I will support each of you as we build from this point forward.”

He then turned his attention to the residents both in attendance and watching via live-stream.

“I refer back to Jefferson’s words,” he said. “We commit to listening with the goal of decision-making through transparency, and through uniting our community in common efforts for the common good. Your support is a welcome gift and I thank you for that.”

He continued, “Our promise is to retain your good opinion, conciliate that of others by doing all the good that is in our power to do, and to be instru-

mental in the happiness and the interests of all our residents.”

Zalepa said he is looking forward to the term ahead with anticipation. “I remain focused

on the outcome, to ensure that those that take their oath here tonight return to you in four years stating emphatically that they enjoyed their experience

on council, that their opinions made a difference, that they accomplished what they set out to do, and given the choice they would do it again.”



Coun. Adriana Cater-Vizzari, with Antonia, Gigi, Loretta, Matthew, and her husband Cory. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser chats with Coun. Sandra O'Connor at the inaugural meeting of council at the Court House.



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa delivers his inaugural speech.



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens



Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser with Coun. Tim Balasiuk



Former councillor Clare Cameron and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.



Local grower Bill Falk talks with Coun. Wendy Cheropita.



Coun. Gary Burroughs, the political veteran on council, talks with resident Ken Ganzel.



Coun. Nick Ruller, former fire chief, with Deputy Fire Chief Darren Trostenko.



Couns. Tim Balasiuk and Maria Mavridis, looking very serious during the swearing-in ceremony.