



Hendriks
Independent
marks a new
beginning
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Working with Seniors Award:
Tim Taylor (Santa Tim)



Working with Youth / Education Award:
Caitlyn Neufeld



Volunteer under 16:
Samantha Fretz



Volunteer under 30:
Carrie Robinson



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award:
Niki Walker



Council Appreciation Award:
Joan King



Environmental Efforts:
Kyra Simone



Sports and Recreation Award:
Rosemary Goodwin



Community and Civic Engagement Award:
Jim and Marilyn Armstrong



Culture Award:
Lise Andreana

2021 Volunteer Awards

After a year without them, due to COVID, the town has brought back its volunteer awards to recognize those in the community who have made a positive impact on Niagara-on-the-Lake. "The volunteers in our community are such an important part of NOTL, and we are extremely fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers in this town. I am always so impressed and feel so grateful for the residents we have in this community," said Lord Mayor Betty Disero in announcing the awards. For story, please see page 2 & 3.

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Joan King given special award created just for her

Penny Coles
The Local

After a year's absence, town awards were handed out at Monday night's virtual meeting, recognizing 11 deserving volunteers.

Although it wasn't quite the same as the in-person celebrations of the past, town staff and council did their best to make it an appropriately celebratory occasion for those chosen to be recognized at the town's presentation, with recipients recording their thanks ahead of time to be presented as part of the visual ceremony.

One special award was created specifically for Joan King, based on the nominations received about her.

Called the Council Appreciation Award, its intention was to highlight "an individual who has reached extensive milestones in their commitment to the Niagara-on-the-Lake community,

who takes great leadership with events, and whose desire and initiative to give back are seen through their outstanding volunteer efforts," explained Lord Mayor Betty Disero.

King was nominated for her organization of the Terry Fox run, which has raised more than \$1 million since the first in 1991. She also volunteers for other events in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including a Christmas stocking project for seniors in long-term care homes, now underway for the second year.

"Joan's dedication to the Niagara-on-the-Lake community, her drive for town improvements and her passion for people, make her the perfect candidate for this special award," said Disero.

King said when she received an email from the town about the award she had to read it a few times, thinking it must be a mistake.

"Then it registered that

the town is actually honouring me with a special volunteer recognition. I was overwhelmed with gratitude to think I was selected. I don't volunteer to receive recognition, I volunteer because I am passionate about what I do, and what I believe in. I am very fortunate to be in the company of so many admirable and inspirational volunteers here in NOTL who have helped me shape my way of thinking, and believing that each and every one of us has the potential to make a difference."

King said when she first retired from teaching, "I knew I wanted to still mentor children, so I volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters. I was so amazed of the value this organization has on the future of young children, and I am very happy to be a part of that."

But this community knows her best for her affiliation with the Terry Fox Foun-

dation, she said. Fifteen years ago, when the opportunity arose to keep the Marathon of Hope alive here in NOTL, King wanted to help fulfill Terry's vision, and his dream to have a world free of cancer, with a meaningful fundraiser that would bring the community together to support this worthwhile cause.

"Each of us knows someone who has been stricken with cancer, and we all know the value and importance of raising funds for research. This community certainly proved their support as they have raised over \$1 million since 1991 for cancer research. This is remarkable for a small town, but we have a big heart."

When King recently put out a request on social media for help putting together her second annual Christmas stocking program for seniors in long-term care, the response was overwhelming, she said.

"So I tell you, it really is a pleasure to volunteer in this community where there is so much kindness, generosity and support. People say to reach your highest potential you should surround yourself with people who make you feel better about who you are. That is what this community does for me. I feel very honoured to be recognized for this special volunteer award."

Of the nine other volunteer categories, the Community and Civic Engagement Award was given to Marilyn and Jim Armstrong. It recognizes actively addressing issues of public concern regarding the Niagara-on-the-Lake community, and acting as the voice to be heard on behalf of residents. "The ultimate friend and neighbour to all, they view protecting shared values as a top priority, and are committed to making positive changes within the town," said Disero.

Jim is president of the Queenston Residents' Association, and Marilyn the chair of fundraising. "This association encourages residents coming together, preserving heritage, celebrating culture and protecting the environment," said Coun. Norm Arseneault. "Along with leading the Queenston Residents' Association, Jim and Mari-

lyn were also nominated for their various commitments to the community over the years. One example is their development of the Friends of Queenston, a group which organizes cleanups on Earth Day."

Marilyn spoke for both of them when she said they are very appreciative of the award, adding, "it's not just Jim and I, it's a collaborative effort by all the Queenston Residents' Association members, and we feel we're almost sometimes more just the coordinators of the activities. All the QRA members involved are volunteering to help preserve the special place that Queenston is. We all enjoy the unique setting that we have, and we wish to maintain that."

The Culture Award, which acknowledges an individual who is passionate about Niagara-on-the-Lake's rich cultural sector, appreciating the finer details that make the town unique, was given to Lise Andreana, volunteer chair of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre.

"Lise is known to always elevate the quality and accessibility of visual arts here in town," said Coun. Allan Bisback.

"In a town known for its culture, the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre stands out as the hub for the visual arts," said Andreana. "Over five years ago my passion for the arts drew me to volunteer as chair of the board of directors," and that role continues to be very satisfying, she added.

"The greatest pleasure comes from seeing what a small band of staff and volunteers can do to improve the lives of Niagara-on-the-Lakers. It's a happy place for me, and so many others. If you are thinking about volunteering, I encourage you to follow your passion and your talents, and bring those to a cause that interests you."

The Environmental Efforts Award, recognizing outstanding work, leadership, and commitment to environmental excellence in NOTL, was given to Kyra Simone, nominated for her leadership on environmental initiatives, from educating locals on environmentally-friendly tips,

to leading cleanup efforts in public places, to conducting environmental research to provide useful findings for the general public.

"Kyra's creativity in the events she organizes has a big impact on the community," said Coun. Gary Burroughs. "Her educational background in science and science communication, combined with her love for her hometown, make her the perfect candidate for this award. Kyra is a true champion for the planet."

"It means so much to be able to give back to this town that I grew up in," said Simone.

She spoke of exploring Two Mile Creek with friends, "and eventually my curiosity about the natural world grew, and I got my own microscope and began looking at water samples from the creek. I also have so many amazing memories of cleanups with family and friends, especially at Niagara Shores Park, where we have dragged out car tires, Adirondack chairs, damaged canoes, and removed hundreds of balloons, bottles caps and straws from the shoreline."

Throughout COVID, she said, "being in the environment has been an amazing way to reconnect and give back. I'm so grateful to receive this award, and to continue to help out in the town and the environment that I love so much."

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award was given "to someone who is always thinking of ways to promote inclusivity and ensure diversity is celebrated in NOTL. A beacon of compassion, their goal is to help all residents and visitors have a safe and inclusive experience and cultivate a community of kindness, where diversity is seen as a strength," said Disero. "This person embodies the ideals of bringing people of all backgrounds together."

Niki Walker is that person, nominated for her work as co-chair of the town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. She was described by Coun. Clare Cameron "as the heart and soul of the committee, bringing

Continued on page 3



Joan King is best known in town for her work organizing the annual Terry Fox Run. (File photo)



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Ten awards given to dedicated volunteers

Continued from page 2

people together and making great things happen. Niki's work has benefited the town and residents, making a positive and important impact on the community."

Walker was not able to be at the council meeting, but thanked the town for the award and promised to continue to do the work she is so passionate about.

She told The Local after the meeting that she was honoured to receive the award, which she shares with the other members of the Inclusion committee: Jamie Knight, Kiera Sangster, Richard Mell, George Webber, Sandra Grusso, Bex McKnight, and John Wiens. "There are many people in this community who are working to break down barriers and build understanding, and to them I also say thank you. Thank you for starting uncomfortable conversations and asking tough questions, and not being afraid to speak up. Thank you for rolling up

your sleeves and getting to work creating safe, accessible, and inclusive spaces. Thank you for being open to learning about others and about yourself, for reflecting on your blind spots, and for being willing to change. Making our community a place where everyone feels welcome and like they truly belong won't necessarily be quick or easy, but it's worth striving for. I'm grateful to have the chance to play a small part in it, so thank you Lord Mayor Disero and council, not only for this award, but also for creating a committee dedicated to inclusivity."

The Sports and Recreation Award, given to someone dedicated to ensuring sports and recreational activities are organized and executed with the greatest enthusiasm, went to Rosemary Goodwin. For many years she has been actively promoting and introducing members of the community to tennis, "as her passion for tennis knows no bounds," said Coun. Wendy Cheropita.

Goodwin thanked coun-

cil for the award, and said she was proud to accept it "on behalf of all my fellow sport volunteers. Sport is about exercise, about fellowship and friendship, and you won't be surprised to learn my view that tennis does this better than anything, so I'm happy to sing its praises tonight."

She told The Local she is happy to have sport recognized. "From time immemorial, mankind has recognized the multiple benefits that flow from exercise based on games . . . in other words, from sport. Sport challenges us physically, mentally and socially, but rewards us in all those areas every time we play. My passion is tennis, for the simple reason that I see how much value it brings to the lives of so many wonderful people here in NOTL. I'm grateful to the Lord Mayor for letting a light shine on sport with this award, and especially on the great lifetime sport of tennis."

Samantha Fretz was given the Volunteer under 16 Award, for showing "a great



Tim Taylor (aka Santa) can be seen cycling through the streets of NOTL, raising money for the Healing Cycle palliative care team. (File photo)



Rosemary Goodwin (top right) was recognized with her work in sports and recreation. This photo was taken Monday, supporting a program called Girls Fun Tennis, an initiative to make tennis a fun way to hang out together. (Photo supplied)

interest in improving the community," said Disero, and demonstrating "excellent leadership skills in taking on volunteer opportunities and encouraging other young voices to get involved."

Samantha was nominated for her active role in the community in helping others, said Coun. Sandra O'Connor. "She has donated her hair three times for wigs for kids programs. She's a member of the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, has helped arrange activities and events to get the community engaged and raise awareness about important topics, and so much more. From creating a COVID-19 safety and mental health video, to organizing virtual game nights, to packing and handing out bags for youth wellness, Samantha is an important member of the NOTL community."

The Volunteer under 30 Award was given to Carrie Robinson, an innovative and passionate resident of NOTL, "ensuring continuous growth and advancement for their community," said Disero.

Robinson was recognized for the inspiration she pro-

vided to others at the third annual Daughters of the Vote conference. She "has great ideas and suggestions to help keep young people in NOTL," said O'Connor, and "works closely with her peers to lobby for affordable housing in the community."

The Working with Seniors Award was given to Tim Taylor, or Santa Tim, for his dedication to "improving the lives of our senior community." He was nominated for his efforts in raising money for the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Palliative Care Service through long-distance cycling rides. It was noted by Arsenault that Taylor can be seen on the street every day, riding to meet sponsorship requirements, and that he is committed to being the Santa Claus for Palliative Care. He also helps raise money for a long-term care program with the Healing Cycle ride.

"It's a real honour to be given this award, particularly in a town where there are so many deserving volunteers, very hardworking volunteers," said Taylor. "I do feel a little guilty though. I raise money for local palliative

care, but I also do it because it's fun. It's fun to go cycling in the month of September, and it's great fun to visit many of our friends and families during the Christmas period. What could be better?"

The Working with Youth/Education Award was given to Caitlyn Neufeld, for being an exceptional mentor for youth and a role model for children in town.

"Caitlyn has been volunteering with Cornerstone Community Church's youth program for more than five years," said Coun. Clare Cameron.

"Caitlyn spends her Thursday evenings and most Sunday mornings serving 30 to 40 youth and engaging with them in activities and meaningful peer relationships. Over the years, Caitlyn has planned and led so many events for kids to enjoy, including sports, movie nights and outings."

Caitlyn, who does all of this while working and studying Child and Youth Studies at Brock University, accepted the award on behalf of Cornerstone Junior Youth volunteers, who volunteer weekly at the church.

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EDITORIAL

Thanks to all our volunteers — you're an inspiration!

The last time the town was able to recognize and publicly thank its volunteers was June, 2019.

It has become a tradition, one that goes back more than 25 years, and typically involves inviting those receiving awards to a council meeting to be recognized. The chamber is full of excited volunteers, friends and family members. One by one volunteers are called to the podium, handed a framed certificate to hang on a wall,

followed by lots of clapping, hand-shaking, and picture-taking. Generally members of the press manage a group shot of all the volunteers, recording for history the men, women and youngsters, who in a town known for its strong volunteerism, are recognized for their outstanding contribution to this community.

There are never enough awards to recognize all those who give up their time and talents to help others, but it

gives us an opportunity to say thank you to all volunteers in town, not just those who are singled out for an award.

The presentation of awards has always been a highlight of the year, a feel-good event for all involved. So it was great to see the award ceremony return, after being cancelled for 2020 because of the pandemic.

Of course, it couldn't be the same. Council is still meeting virtually, and technology did not suit inviting

award recipients to participate in the virtual meeting.

Town staff did a great job of recording videos to be played during the meeting, but it couldn't provide the same level of excitement, or connection with those who won. If you were watching, you could see councillors clapping for the recipients, but muted.

As I watched from my living room, laptop at hand, I clapped along with them, feeling a little foolish but

also wanting to show appreciation for all those who choose to give their time to something they love doing for their community.

For all those who volunteer, there is a common thread when they learn they're being recognized. They always believe there are others who do more, are more deserving, and they will often say how much it means to them, how fortunate they feel, to make a difference in this beautiful town

that is like no other.

To the 10 exceptional people who were recognized this year for their volunteerism, thank you.

And to all those who are equally passionate and continue to volunteer without public recognition, getting on with whatever task you put your hearts, minds and energy to, thank you. We're clapping for you too.

Penny Coles
The Local

Local VOICES: 'Defining event' tipping point for PTSD

Doreen Bell
Special to The Local

Frequently, I refer to a Tuesday, May 18, 2021 quote in my journal, and am in awe at what's transpired since: "It's a horrible feeling to be stuck in a dark, murky pond of past painful experiences; living them day to day, not knowing when the sun will shine into the pond and bring a measure of relief. I am searching to understand what is going on inside my brain, before I rush into therapy that might worsen my struggles. I know there will be release one day, and I must wait patiently for that outcome. But some days I have no patience. I just want to see it over."

Many professionals describe Bessel Van der Kolk's book, *The Body Keeps The Score*, as a masterpiece; I concur. I am a classic example of one whose body has

kept score since I was being formed in the womb. That's what I learned during my therapy sessions.

My body has stored all the unresolved trauma I experienced throughout my life, whether I knew them to be traumatic. But my husband Michel's heart attack in 2018 was the tipping point that threw me over the edge and led to my Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis.

Frantic, desperate research followed this defining event to know and understand PTSD. I kept asking: Would I spend the rest of my life captive to this disorder? Hearing my doctor say I would have this condition for the rest of my life was like a death sentence. The thought of living in fear and anxiety, having recurring, painful flashbacks of my husband's heart attack and surgery, fright-

ened me greatly.

How does someone become traumatized? I researched extensively to inform myself about trauma. Michel's heart attack and quadruple bypass surgery was an incredibly traumatic experience for me. When it happened I did not realize I had several unresolved traumatic events earlier in life, and my life with PTSD had just begun.

How on earth did I get to this place in my life? The quick answer is the night Michel had a heart attack, so vivid in my mind. As Michel sat on the sofa having an electrocardiogram, I thought the result would show nothing was wrong with his heart. To be sure, he was the healthiest person I had ever known, a jogger for over 30 years, and a vegan for 15 years.

Hearing the words of the paramedic, "Sir, you just had

a heart attack, which damaged your heart," snapped something in my brain. That is the only way I can express it. I knew something happened to me at that moment, but I did not know what. Thankfully, Michel survived the attack and quadruple bypass surgery and is doing great.

Here we were, enjoying our twilight years together, having met 61 years ago. Then in one moment in time the heart attack threw me into an unfamiliar world.

Since that day (May 11, 2018), I lived in a world of fear, anxiety, and depression. By the summer of 2019, I knew something was desperately wrong with me; something I could not fix. My research of my symptoms pointed to PTSD, but I put it aside, thinking only soldiers returning from war had PTSD. I shared this research with no one.

My melt-down came in October, 2019. Panic filled me because Michel was travelling alone for the first time since his surgery. I had accompanied him on his previous two trips earlier in the year to teach in Saskatchewan. But this time he went alone. Deep inside I knew it was right for him to go alone, but I could not imagine not being with him to watch over him and take care of him.

I planned to stay with my daughter and her family for the week he would be away. However, the day after he left, fear and anxiety escalated, to where I knew I could



Doreen Bell

not drive to my daughter's home in Oakville. I emailed her and cancelled the trip. Immediately, she contacted me, suspecting something was wrong. She asked if I was depressed and made me promise to see my doctor.

The following week, when Michel returned, we went to see our doctor, who diagnosed I had PTSD. This professional diagnosis, confirming my research, relieved me. At least I knew what's wrong with me. But the news that it would never go away, and I would continue to have flashbacks, felt like a death sentence.

So began my journey with medications and therapy, frustration and an-

ger, which propelled me to take responsibility for my well-being. Armed with results of significant research of PTSD and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, I started psychotherapy. Happily, after three months of this therapy that focussed on EMDR, I am completely healed . . . yes, free from PTSD. This was a life-changing journey and, as Michel confirms, I am a new person and his new wife. My desire in writing this is to encourage others going through trauma that there is great hope for them, too.

Doreen Bell and her husband Michel moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake in November, 2018, both now retired. Doreen was a consultant to Hope For Life Pregnancy Center and in charge of training volunteers. Michel is a former business executive, an author, founder and president of Managing God's Money, (<https://www.managinggodsmoney.com>), and volunteers as an adjunct professor of business administration at Briercrest College and Seminary in Saskatchewan where he teaches modular courses.



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

My Love, a six episode series, has received universal praise. It is an intimate look at six long-time couples from

very different societies who openly proclaim and demonstrate their devotion to one another. They are sweet, simple, tender, sentimental stories; I now understand more fully the meaning of love.

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.

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Local LETTERS

Mapping out what's special about NOTL

As residents, we all know that Niagara-on-the-Lake is a pretty special place.

Each year, we share with tourists from all over the world the things that make our town unique, be it our history, the Shaw Festival, fine restaurants, wineries our beautiful countryside and much more.

For many years, at the NOTL B&B Association, we have published a map of the town that shows the locations of many of the special features of NOTL. Our members use the map with their guests to help them plan their stay, but the map has become very popular and is used by many businesses and institutions around the town as well. You likely have seen visitors exploring NOTL

with one of our maps in their hands.

Now the B&B Association is pleased to announce that we are launching a new online, interactive version of the map. The new digital version retains the beloved drawings and folk art feel of the paper version, but adds digital features, such as zoom, search and filtering capabilities. In addition, we have expanded the contents of the map beyond the standard tourist attractions, and added items like parks, bicycle paths and walking trails and where to find parking.

The new digital map is posted on our website at www.bookyourstay.ca/map and is available to anyone, resident or visitor. We currently have over 130 attractions, businesses and

facilities captured on the map, and we will be adding more on an ongoing basis. Also, as we learn from experience, we will continue to enhance the map to make it better.

The paper map started many years ago as a tool for B&B owners to use with their guests, but over the years it has found a broader audience. It is our hope that the map continues to evolve to capture all that is special about NOTL. We invite all local businesses and institutions to partner with us on the digital map, and we hope that local residents will also find the map helps them get the most from life in our special little town.

John Foreman
President, NOTL B&B Association

Local LETTERS

Revised proposal will negatively impact Old Town

We attended the town council meeting via Zoom on Monday, Nov. 8, and were appalled at the so-called 'revision' of the original unacceptable proposal created by developer Liberty Sites Ltd.

The proposal continues to threaten to negatively impact the space, the heritage and the general streetscape of Old Town.

Why was this proposal suddenly put before us like it was? Why would council even consider sacrificing the assets of our beautiful town, and 'sell out' to a builder?

The proposal, including the measurements, are not even accurate, as pointed out by several registered speakers, who, like a multitude of us in Old Town, have properties that will be jeopardized by this outrageous proposal.

For example, the re-

search presented that the actual density ratio of dwellings per acreage is six properties per acre: the new proposed plan blatantly ignores this ratio, and has put forward a 233 per cent increase over the acceptable low density ratio, as per information given by a concerned resident.

There are other transgressions this plan puts forward, and, unbelievably, it sounds like council is willing to negotiate on some of these items. We couldn't believe council seems open to discussing 'medium density' as a possibility. In actual fact, the 'medium density' proposed by the developer continues to be 66 per cent over medium density.

We are very disappointed with the comments of town planner Mark Iamarino, who indicated in the Zoom meeting that this is a suitable proposal. As well,

we refute the comments from lawyer Paul DeMelo, a Liberty Sites lawyer, who says that there are 'largely positive comments' about the proposal. Unbelievably, at the meeting, he strongly indicated that it will actually protect the heritage site and even celebrate it, while at the same time provide community benefits.

In our discussions with a large number of local residents, the consensus is unanimously opposed to these sentiments.

We as residents of our town are expected to give up too much in return for the developer's financial profit.

We respectfully ask you to reject this extremely inappropriate use of the Parliament Oak site.

Dianne Ticknor
NOTL

Local LETTERS

Parliament Oak proposal requires 'intense' look at it

Regarding the Parliament Oak situation: The thought that this project in its present form or anything like it is proposed, in the heart of this Old Town neighbourhood, is really totally unacceptable.

I am sure that because of the COVID meeting restrictions, the developers can't believe their luck that they don't have to go to a live and in-person meeting and actually face the surrounding neighbours, face to face.

With so much at stake here, this is really an unfor-

tunate and unfair situation.

Also, how will this affect their local property taxes and values? Can the water and sewer systems handle the possible changes? Also increased traffic and just general increased density and disruption in everything to do with a large, unwanted and out of place structure, totally incompatible with the neighbourhood.

Stop and think of what they are actually trying to do to this neighbourhood. It's shocking. I think a slowdown in proceedings and an

extra intense look at what they are trying to do here is absolutely necessary at this point. So many of these projects have a very familiar way of just suddenly getting approved overnight in a blink of the eye.

There is only one chance to get this right. Be very aware, and make your opinions known to those who we voted for and are now possibly going to give their final stamp of approval.

Christopher Allen
NOTL

Local LETTERS

First home in Canada was a different kind of green

The article on passive housing tweaked my interest. Now that cars have become more fuel, efficient it's nice to see housing follow that path.

While our first home in Canada was drafty and probably wasted fuel it did make some surprising concessions to the environment. Firstly, I would mention the two cisterns in the basement which collected rainwater and snowmelt

from the roof.

Our drinking water came from a limited supply in the well. Eight of us seemed to get by with only one bathroom and horror of horrors — it only had one sink!

Being cautious with water was drilled into us. That basement also had a root cellar which preserved the vegetables which we grew in a small plot in the backyard.

Also need I mention,

no dishwasher, no microwave, no air conditioning, no freezer and no clothes dryer — oops I lied. We had a clothes dryer — it was air powered and stretched between two posts. Now in retrospect while the expression being green wasn't part of our jargon, I think our community up and down the street was 'green'.

Joe Vandelinde
St. Davids

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Holiday Inn music enthralling, choreography show-stopping

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

A full house at 100 per cent capacity welcomed the holiday season at the Shaw Festival Theatre Saturday night.

Executive Director and CEO Tim Jennings could barely contain his excitement as he stepped from the wings and looked up at the packed house of masked theatre-goers awaiting the start of the classic Irving Berlin musical *Holiday Inn*.

The applause that greeted Jennings' introductory remarks was almost as loud as that for the ensemble at the conclusion of the evening. It might have been due to the general anticipation for the show to start, but was also likely an expression of the sheer joy of being one of the 856 in attendance for what felt like a return to normal at Shaw after so many pandemic-affected months.

Jennings spoke of the 2019 run of the same musical, and indeed, some may have experienced a slight sense of déjà vu upon attending Saturday's opening night. After all, of the actors playing the four lead characters in *Holiday Inn*, only

Vanessa Sears as Lila Dixon was not on the Shaw stage two years ago.

Kyle Blair and Kyle Golemba reprised their roles as Jim Hardy and Ted Hanover, characters originally played by Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire in the 1942 Hollywood version, while Kristi Frank once again embodied Linda Mason, the Midville, Connecticut school teacher who becomes the object of Hardy's and Hanover's affection. Many of the ensemble members from 2019 were also on the boards Saturday.

With Kate Hennig back in the director's chair, the music direction of Paul Sportelli, set and costume design by Judith Bowden and Allison Plamondon's choreography, it was inevitable that some in attendance would notice similarities between the 2019 and 2021 productions. But many who had been there two years ago remarked both during intermission and after the performance that there were enough fresh elements to make it feel brand new.

It was refreshing to watch a diverse ensemble cast sing and dance through the many recognizable *Tin*

Pan Alley songs, as well as some newer tunes (*Shaking the Blues Away*, and *Nothing More to Say*) that were added for the 2014 revival. And instead of the stereotypical Black housekeeper Mamie, that character is replaced by the Jill-of-all-trades Louise, played by Gabrielle Jones to maximum comic effect.

As well, young Julia Thompson made her Shaw debut as the self-assured courier Charley Winslow, another character added for the musical version of *Holiday Inn*.

Blair as Jim Hardy has the meatiest role, of course. At a crossroads in his show business career, Jim buys a farm in Connecticut with the hopes of settling down with his sweetheart Lila, who opts instead to go on the road with Jim's now-former song and dance partner, Ted.

Stuck on the failing Mason farm with "handyman" Louise, he tries to make it work. And as he fails at farming, he meets Linda Mason who, coincidentally, once had show business aspirations of her own.

After a visit from a group of his New York friends, Jim decides to convert the farm into the titular inn, with the




Gabrielle Jones as Louise and Kyle Blair as Jim Hardy in Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn*. (David Cooper)

idea of opening only during holidays to perform shows with Mason and an ensemble right on site.

Sitting at the piano, Blair and Franks perform a remarkable, moving duet on *White Christmas*. As the holiday season progresses, the ensemble celebrates New Year's Eve with a festive gala, replete with a giant clock and balloons falling from the sky.

Golemba as Ted comes to visit that night, having

Continued on page 9



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Rollickingly perfect performance of well-known classic

Continued from page 8

drowned his sorrows in booze after Lila runs off with a Texas millionaire. His slapstick with the minute hand, bumping into dancer after dancer was a comedic highlight.

With other familiar songs, including *Happy Holiday*, *Easter Parade* and *Cheek to Cheek*, the music kept the audience enthralled, while the choreography during show-stopper numbers such as *Shaking the Blues Away* acted as reminders of exactly what can be accomplished with an expert ensemble and production team.

And Bowden's costumes added to the show-stopping effect. The chorus girls in the turkey outfits have to be seen to be believed.

Another major highlight of the evening was Golem-ba's turn in the spotlight for a dazzling display of tap dancing on the Independence Day-themed *Let's Say*

it *With Firecrackers*, reaching into his pocket to throw incendiary devices to the floor for explosive emphasis.

Golem-ba also shined

during *You're Easy to Dance With*, during which he displayed his expertise taking turns dancing in different styles with eight chorus girls.

Musically speaking, the Irving Berlin songbook is a perfect basis upon which to build a romantic jukebox musical, and the cast and

crew of *Holiday Inn* have put together a rollickingly perfect performance of the well-known classic. It's a great way to get into the

holiday spirit.

Holiday Inn is on at the Shaw's Festival Theatre until Dec. 23. Visit shawfest.com for information and tickets.



Kyle Blair as Jim Hardy with the cast of Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn*. (David Cooper)



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Eligible children should be vaccinated by Christmas

Penny Coles
The Local

All Niagara children aged five to 11 could be vaccinated by Christmas, with Public Health clinics targeting that age group exclusively until the majority of youngsters have had their first shot.

Public Health clinic appointments were available through the provincial portal Tuesday morning, beginning Nov. 28, and with availability listed at clinics across Niagara through to Dec. 18. Clinics and staff are ready

to spring into action as soon as the vaccine arrives in Niagara, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara's acting medical officer of health, said Monday, although at that time he didn't have a firm date.

The young age group, for whom vaccinations were approved in Canada Friday, is at the greatest risk of infection, and is also driving the infection rate in Niagara, so it is a priority to be vaccinated, Hirji explained.

Those eligible for booster shots are already well-protected, and can wait, although they, and others

who have so far not been vaccinated but may decide to change that, should still be able to find appointments at pharmacies or with their family doctors, Hirji said.

Pharmacist Sean Simpson, the father of two, and also a member of the region's COVID-19 vaccination task force, said he isn't sure when he will receive the vaccine for kids at his pharmacy, but is working on his scheduling portal to be ready when it arrives.

Meanwhile, he said early Tuesday morning he was able to book appointments for his

kids through the provincial portal for next Monday.

Although the earliest appointments are taken, there are still lots available over the coming weeks, and it looks like there should be enough to have kids in that age group vaccinated by Christmas, he said.

Simpson agreed with Hirji that kids should be the priority for Public Health at this point, and said at the moment he has enough vaccine to continue taking appointments for those who are looking for booster shots, such as those in health

care, or in the 70-plus age group.

It makes sense for Public Health "to put as big a dent as possible in the large number of kids now eligible for vaccinations," he says.

Simpson suggested parents would be wise to take the first available appointment for their children, and if they find something closer to home, should be sure to cancel the one they don't want, to open it up for others.

Hirji says although he's expecting some hesitancy from parents, he hopes the number of infections among students, classrooms and schools in Niagara will encourage parents to have their children vaccinated as soon as possible, to protect their kids and families.

Vaccinations are "more effective and slightly safer for children, he said, with the age group about to get their first shots suffering fewer side effects than others. The children's version of the Pfizer vaccine is a different formulation to the vaccine used in adults and children age 12 and older, Hirji explained.

Currently, almost 40 per cent of outbreaks are in the education sector, he said, and come with "real costs to our children," when they are required to isolate and miss school, often with their parents having to stay home to look after them.

Cases have been on the rise in Ontario, and although the increase is not uniform across the province, they

are also trending upward in Niagara, "no surprise," says Hirji with the colder weather driving people indoors, and the lift of capacity limitations — soon after that, cases started to rise.

With outbreaks also linked to sports and recreation, Hirji spoke of "targeted" mandatory measures to ensure cases don't continue to rise, such as capacity limits in some situations. He suggested the province should be looking at where outbreaks are occurring and how to prevent them, such as reducing the number of bodies in change rooms during sports events.

There has been a small increase in hospitalizations due to COVID, with intensive care admissions, typically lagging behind, so far remaining flat, Hirji said. By far, the majority of people in the hospital with COVID are unvaccinated, he added.

Parents with children aged five to 11 can make appointments through the Ontario COVID-19 vaccination portal or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900.

The regional website lists the following clinics available for booking through the provincial booking system for those five to 11 years old, and says appointments must be made — there will be no walk-ins. There is the potential for earlier clinic dates to be added, depending on how early the vaccine arrives.

Appointments are now being booked at the following locations:

- Fort Erie, Leisureplex – Nov. 28-29, Dec. 7-8
- Port Colborne, Visitors Centre – Nov. 28
- Niagara Falls, MacBain Community Centre – Nov. 28-30
- West Lincoln, West Niagara Agricultural Centre – Nov. 29-Dec. 3
- Wainfleet, Fire Station 2 – Dec. 1-3
- Niagara Falls, Canada One Outlet Mall – Dec. 1-13
- Pelham, Meridian Centre – Dec. 4-13
- Port Colborne, Italian Hall – Dec. 4-6
- Niagara-on-the-Lake, Community Centre – Dec. 10-12
- St. Catharines, Pen Centre – Dec. 14-18

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Valu-mart gets new name, updates in store



Michele Hendriks keeps this old photo close to her, taken when she and Tony, with their daughter Madison, moved to NOTL to take over the Queen Street valu-mart store. (Photo supplied)



Michele and Tony Hendriks are considering the changes and updates in the store as a new chapter in a story that has been good to them and their family. (Penny Coles)

Penny Coles The Local

Tony and Michele Hendriks say they feel like they are closing one chapter of their life, and starting a new one.

"It's been a great story so far, and this really does feel like a new beginning," says Tony, who spent Monday watching a new sign replace the familiar Hendriks' valu-mart name on his Queen Street store, which will now benefit from being part of a nationwide chain, with some renovations and updating to the building.

It remains part of the Loblaw market franchise division, which includes valu-mart in Ontario only, and has become Hendriks Independent, one of the Your Independent Grocer stores across the rest of the country.

These are owner/operated franchise stores, with owners living and working in their communities, personally invested in their business and striving to build lasting relationships within the towns they serve, explains Tony.

It's a relationship that began for him more than 30 years ago, when he worked at the store for his uncle, Adrian de Laat.

De Laat eventually retired, and Tony bought the franchise in 1999.

He and Michele moved to town at that point, with their little girl Madison, then three. She's now 25, with two younger siblings, including Connor and Payton, all of whom have worked at the store. Madison has just graduated from the University of Ottawa, Connor is there now, and Payton, in Grade 12, who still works at

the store, has applied to the same university for next year.

Although it's hard to have them away from home, says Michele, they love coming back to NOTL. Madison is now working for the government, but will always think of NOTL as home, and is always talking about coming back.

The older the kids get, the more they appreciate the town and what it means to them, adds Tony.

His brother Ken also has three children, all of whom have worked in the store, and his youngest is also still there.

"It's really a family business, and since the beginning, we've felt like we were a part of the Niagara-on-the-Lake family. It makes me feel good to be able to offer this great new store for the community to enjoy," says Tony.

Originally, the official opening celebration was going to be held this week, but with renovations delayed due to COVID, it is planned for February, when he hopes all the updates and changes will be completed.

Over the next three years, Tony says, "Loblaw has decided to transition all valu-mart stores to the nationwide Your Independent Grocer banner name. This transition allows for greater buying power, enhanced pricing and selection, and a unified marketing presence, similar to how Home Hardware operates across Canada."

Both valu-marts in NOTL are changing to the Your Independent Grocer banner name. Tony officially switched over Nov. 21, and Phil's valu-mart in Virgil will transition on Dec 5.

"We are both undergoing renovations to varying degrees between now and next year. For our location, we have begun upgrading the look and feel of our store, with updated branding and signage, while ensuring comfortable and accessible shopping trips for customers, old and new."

Phil Leboudec says his Virgil store will go through a major renovation and expansion in the spring, also delayed due to COVID.

Tony describes with pride the improvements to watch for at his store. "Keep an eye out for our larger produce and floral presence, more take-away meal options, both hot and cold, improved deli and bakery prep areas, a new meat counter, and new checkouts."

Some of those changes will occur in the near future, some in the new year, he says.

"Additionally, Your Independent Grocer stores have a very competitive flyer sent out every week to our local customers. Our great PC products remain, and the popular PC Optimum program will continue as it's currently run, providing the greatest value to those customers that engage with the program to the highest degree."

This week and next, The Local will include both flyers, until Phil's valu-mart also

transitions to the new name, branding and flyer.

Tony says his grocery, dairy and frozen departments have also undergone an extensive product selection review. "We've added hundreds of new items, focusing on current food trends, and appealing to those with a wide variety of diets and preferences. The new year will see the same process undertaken within our fresh departments."

"Michele and I have been the proud owners of Hendriks valu-mart for over 22

years," he says, "and we will continue to be the owners of Hendriks Independent for years to come."

Having a business in a small town really makes you become part of the fabric of the community, he adds.

"We feel great pride in living, working, and raising our family in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Being a part of and supporting many town community service initiatives and organizations has allowed us to feel connected to our community, and its diverse

and flourishing citizens.

"Furthermore, our excellent staff will all remain with us. We are very thankful for all their great efforts and outstanding customer service, especially through the pandemic. We couldn't continue operating and serving our loyal local customers without them stepping up day after day. As a team, we look forward to working together to always have a friendly, welcoming atmosphere for all our customers to shop in their community store."

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Gifts needed for kids on cancer ward over Christmas

Penny Coles
The Local

Jane Neaves is hoping to wrap up a difficult year in a positive direction.

Driving back and forth from McMaster's Children's Hospital has become routine for her, supporting dear friends whose little girl, Vivian, just three when she was first diagnosed with cancer, was in hospital for more than a year.

That was six years ago, and five years later, the little girl, at eight, went through another bout of chemotherapy, this time as an outpatient, for a recurrence of a rare kind of leukemia.

Neaves often drove to help

the family, which includes an older sister, and parents who operate their own business.

But this last year became even more difficult.

This summer, just days before Vivian's 10th birthday, she was diagnosed again with cancer for the third time.

She was approved for a fairly new treatment, Chimeric antigen receptor T cell therapy, at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto, giving cells the new ability to target specific hidden cancer cells.

Between hospital visits, she was staying with her parents in a nearby Chelsea Inn, paid for by a charitable organization.

She is home now, finished

the treatment, and for the first time, Neaves says, "I heard the word cured."

During her time spent on the children's cancer ward in Hamilton four years ago, Neaves asked a nurse if Santa would come to visit the children who couldn't go home over Christmas.

She was told no, Santa wouldn't make it to the hospital, and she determined to change that.

There are typically around 90 or more children who are there over Christmas. This year there will be 87, and for the fourth year, Neaves intends to ensure there are gifts for them, left by Santa.

Many families, spending days, months, and more with a seriously ill child in the hospital, are unable to work and struggle financially, she says, and many have other children at home, so she decided she would help make Christmas a little easier for them.

She was also not in a good place herself, having survived a work-related assault that sent her assailant to jail for four years. She was struggling, unable to go back to work, and discovered taking on a challenge to help children suffering from cancer made her feel she could do something positive.

She reached out to friends and on social media with a request for cash and toys, making

sure every child in the hospital, and in some cases siblings — who often feel forgotten during a difficult family situation, she says — had gifts to open.

Neaves says the after-effects such an assault has had on her life will never go away, but helping the children in hospital at Christmas continues to give her something positive to focus on.

She has friends in Niagara-

on-the-Lake who help her, including Pat Darte and Mona Babin, who are assisting by donating and by accepting donations, says Neaves.

Toys that Hamilton hospital staff have recommended include Paw Patrol items, LOL dolls, Mini brands, dinosaurs, Thomas the Train, Lego, Pokemon cards, unicorn crafts, Frozen toys, Play Doh, and anything associated with Sloth.

Donations can be dropped off at Darte's home at 834 Queenston Road in NOTL, or email darteat77@gmail.com.

Babin, who lives in Garrison Village can be reached at mtmbabin@gmail.com, and will make arrangements for the collection of donations.

Neaves can be contacted at highheelhoni@hotmail.com.



Pat Darte and Jane Neaves are collecting toys to distribute to the McMaster Children's Hospital cancer ward at Christmas. (Photo supplied)

Nyanyas fundraising for African grandmothers

Penny Coles
The Local

The Nyanyas of Niagara have teamed up with Sweets & Swirls Cafe at the Community Centre to sell Christmas cookie boxes, 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 Lewis Foundation in 2006 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 which support them.

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

The need has grown even greater, says Nyanya Terry Mactaggart, one of the original founders of the group, with fundraising opportunities limited by the pandemic, making it more difficult to ensure community-based organizations in Africa have the resources to support their programs.

Hoping to provide ongoing support, the Nyanyas are offering two sizes of boxes with wonderful treats that make tasty gifts for family members, friends, neighbours, and to just have on hand to enjoy with guests. And the real gift is supporting a great cause.

The small box has 12 cookies (two of six different kinds) for \$20, and the large box will have 24 cookies (four of each kind) for \$30.

The cookies are chocolate coconut macaroons, peppermint shortbread with a chocolate drizzle, decorated sugar cookies, almond crescents, caramel date and oat squares, and gingerbread men.

All orders must be placed and paid for by Sunday, Dec. 12.

There are two pickup dates: Thursday, Dec. 16, and Friday, Dec. 17, both days from 2 to 5:30 p.m.

To place an order email Erinn at sweetsandswirlscfe@gmail.com.

Payment can be made by cash, cheque, or e-transfer.

To pay by debit or credit card, call Erinn at 905-468-1024.



Nyanyas Ruth de Laat (back, left), Sandra Hardy, Peggy Hooke, Erinn Lockard of Sweets & Swirls Cafe, Audrey Glauser, Terry Mactaggart, Marlene Bridgman, Heather Hall, Maureen Dalgleish, and (sitting) Joyce Loewen and Charlotte Letkemann are ready to raise money for the Stephen Lewis campaign to help African grandmothers. (Penny Coles)



The Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, currently under construction near Akka in Israel

Centenary of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The Bahá'í Community of Niagara-on-the-Lake - along with Bahá'ís the world over - are commemorating this year the 100th anniversary of the passing of the individual they know as the Perfect Exemplar of their Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh. During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Canada in 1912, the *Toronto Star* wrote, "What is it that strikes one most in this remarkable man? Is it his message? Is it his power of

thought, his manner of expression, the privations he has endured? No, it is none of these. It is his great sincerity. He is a humanist of a high type; his church is the world."

A film titled *Exemplar* is available to view or download on the Bahai.org website. The Canadian site can be found at <https://portal.bahai.ca/centenary>. You are invited to view the film and recall the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, an exemplar for humanity.

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Museum presents chest of War of 1812 artifacts

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's virtual lecture series continues next week with an exploration of the museum's extensive War of 1812 collection.

Sarah Kaufman, managing director and curator, presented the first part of her lecture, Opening the Curator's Treasure Chest, in February, when she enthusiastically showed off some of her favourite pieces from the collection. That included the Proclamation by Issac Brock distributed in February of 1812, issued as a warning to the residents of the area that Americans may be coming across the river to "disturb the peace and create alliances before the war was to begin," Kaufman explained.

Other interesting pieces came with a story of loss in a time of war, such as Martin McLellan's wallet, which was donated by his family as a token to preserve his memory. Kaufman also informs the audience that the museum boasts a unique and exclusive Laura Secord collection that includes her trunk, bowl and necklace. The collection also

includes a quilt made by her granddaughter using various pieces of embroidery that Secord had sewn. This was part of the museum's A Piece of Her Mind – Exploring the Herstory of NOTL's Women exhibit.

Kaufman's previous lecture created so much interest, she decided to add a second lecture. The War of 1812 collection is advertised by the museum as "one of the best in the province, and a treasure chest of militaria that attracts not only local enthusiasts, but international military scholars." With so much to explore, Kaufman returns with the next instalment of her presentation, Opening the Curator's Treasure Chest – Part Two, when she delves even deeper into the rich history and artifacts of the museum's prized collection.

Barbara Worthy, who looks after visitor and member services for the NOTL Museum, acknowledges the significance of the war to this area. "Maybe it has something to do with the fact that it was a local war – local men and boys fought alongside the British army; local woman fought alongside their men as Fort George was bombarded; Laura Secord made her legendary walk; the local Indige-

nous people ensured that they won every single battle they fought in; and Black settlers signed up for the Coloured Corps with as much dedication as their white brothers."

"The War of 1812 defined a country," Worthy continues. "And it also gave birth to a peaceful border that has lasted for more than 200 years. The NOTL Museum is proud of its role in being steward

for the historical artifacts that survive that period, and which help make the museum even more unique."

Join Worthy and Kaufman as they proudly share the riches in this unique collection. The lecture will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 1 at 11 a.m.

For more information call 905-468-3912. Register for the lecture at www.nhsm.ca/events



Artifacts include paintings of John Norton (left), Tecumseh (right) and a War of 1812 cartoon. (Courtesy of the NOTL Museum)

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St. Davids Lions, Leos, family members and friends helped unload 600 Fraser fir Christmas trees at the York Road Lions Hall. All trees are six to eight feet tall with a limited supply of nine-footers. All are priced at \$80 due to the dramatic price increase by tree suppliers. The St. Davids tree lot is open daily from about 10 a.m. to about 7 p.m. (Photos supplied)

Baraka Allen helped Terry Flynn of the Niagara Lions unload 420 trees last Saturday. Baraka is an offshore worker who has applied for permanent residency and likes to help out. The lot on Niagara Stone Road at Cornerstone Church has trees that range from four feet to 12 feet, and include spruce, Scotch pine, balsam fir, Fraser fir and some Siberian spruce. The lot is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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Be a patron on Museum Store Sunday

Submitted by
NOTL Museum

Museums like your local Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum foster an appreciation and knowledge of history. When you purchase a gift from a museum store, you help to sustain the museum's service to their community and the public. Products found in museum stores are curated just like their exhibitions, so there is always something unique.

Museum Store Sunday was created five years ago as a way to support art, heritage and culture. It started in the U.S. but is now promoted in 24 countries around the world. On November 28, 2021, be a patron and shop your favourite museum on Museum Store Sunday.

Purchasing from the NOTL Museum gift shop is a great way to do your holiday shopping while supporting the preservation of the community's heritage at the same time! All proceeds from the shop go towards the operating costs of the Museum and caring for your community's collection.



Cover of *Making Her Mark*

On November 28th and all year round check out what's in store, from local history books to Christmas inventory to heritage-inspired gifts.

We have many residents who have researched and written about our history, and often these books are only available locally. The Niagara Historical Society's recent publication *Making Her Mark: The Women of Niagara-on-the-Lake* is one of these great finds. Written by several community authors, the book

explores our history through the strong, intelligent women who came before us, many of whom long-time residents will remember. The book is already in its second printing and would make an excellent gift under the tree.

The Museum is open for in-person shopping at 43 Castlereagh Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake from Thursday - Monday, 1-5 pm. Or you can shop anytime through their online store. Visit www.notlmuseum.ca.

Building Community Through Laughter

Submitted by
Foster Festival

Community is built of many things: the physical spaces around us, the communication lines that connect us, the beliefs that guide us, and above all, that intrinsically human desire to be part of something larger than ourselves. Arts & Culture deepens our connection to one another, enriches all of our lives, and lightens our spirits. At The Norm Foster Theatre Festival, we love to hear the sound of our audience's laughter. Come share in the laughter with us this Holiday Season!

From December 5 - 16, The Foster Festival presents a world premiere reading series of Norm's new play, *Widow Wonderland*. The series features some of Niagara's most beloved actors. Lunch & Dinner packages are also available making this the perfect Holiday treat for friends and family.

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Widow Wonderland is a happy Christmas play, even though the two characters are a widow and a widower. But, you can't have a depressing Christmas play. It is frowned upon by the playwright's Christmas play union. And so Norm Foster has fashioned a cheerful one act Christmas play that throws a widow and a widower together at their apartment building's Christmas dinner for those who are alone during the holiday season. Michael and Sharon wind up at a table for two

during this December 23rd dinner and what follows is an evening of getting to know one another with all of the awkwardness and politeness and silliness that a first meeting often includes. Best of all, and most important of all, it is funny and heartwarming.

Give the Gift of Laughter this Holiday Season! Foster Festival Gift Certificates are now available for purchase and can be redeemed for any Foster Festival show or event.

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Volunteer firefighter helps with stress management



Graham Bettes, who seldom goes out without Maverick, helps train the fire department's peer support team. He is a member of the Glendale station. (Penny Coles)

Penny Coles
The Local

Virgil resident Graham Bettes doesn't go out much, and when he does, he usually has his service dog and best friend Maverick by his side.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake volunteer firefighter, a member of the Glendale station, suffers from PTSD, caused by stressful experiences accumulated over years as a first responder.

But he still finds responding to fire calls a good way to get out of the house, to tackle a job he is trained to do, and to feel he is doing something useful.

"I'm selective about the calls I go to, and I'm not often the first one there. But when my pager goes off, it gets me out, gives me a sense of worth, and I'm in the on-duty mode, in my zone, in the state of

high-performance that comes with the job."

But that's the current leg of a journey that began for him long ago, first as a member of the Lincoln Welland Regiment serving on a United Nations peace-keeping mission in Cyprus, and then during a 30-plus year career with a Toronto area police force, which eventually led to the diagnosis of PTSD.

He says at first, stress, and the symptoms of what he came to know as PTSD, seemed natural results of the job.

Stress from the difficult calls began early in his career, his first on just his third shift as a police officer. "You don't realize how damaging those calls can be, until you look back at them in retrospect."

He describes the fight-or-flight responses to those calls, which allow officers to

become hyper-focused while they carry out their duties, as necessary, but don't work so well off-duty when there is no danger, and eventually have to be understood and treated for what they are.

Skip to the present, and Bettes, now 51, draws on his experiences to play a lead role on the Niagara-on-the-Lake Emergency Services peer support team, formed to assist local firefighters with critical incident stress management.

That stress can come from one particularly horrific call (Bettes uses a different word we don't print, but is totally appropriate in this situation), or from accumulated stress built up over years of responding to those situations.

He mentions the recent traumatic call to St. Michael Catholic School, which went out as a motor vehicle colli-

sion. A 10-year-old boy had been getting his backpack out of his mother's car, when he was hit by another car from behind. As members of a small tightly-knit community, local firefighters responding would have realized there was a chance they might know the young student and his family. They might even have had thoughts of whether it was one of their own children at the school, says Bettes. "Everyone in the community can identify with those kinds of calls, let alone firefighters and other first responders. There is a very good chance at St. Michael that firefighters might have known those involved."

Afterward, the firefighters who responded would take part in a debriefing, and the distress of that call would be reason for Bettes to continue calling responders over the coming weeks, to chat with them and find out if they're okay.

Signs of stress would be completely normal following such an incident, he says, but if those signs, tears or shaking when talking about it, persist over the next month or two, "then we could be moving into PTSD territory."

He speaks of two particu-

larly disturbing calls he experienced while a police officer, both also involving children.

One was a lightning strike that hit several youngsters. Unfortunately, the child on whom Bettes performed CPR did not survive.

After that, he said, "I knew I had to get off the road."

That led him to the criminal investigation bureau, ironically, because it is the division that responds to the worst cases, and during that time he went out to another medical emergency involving a child. "It was a very bad call, a case of parental neglect," says Bettes. "The child had died of starvation."

He knew he couldn't subject himself to any more calls like that. He had already been diagnosed with PTSD, an accumulation of stress from experiences that began with his time in the military, and continued while working as a police officer. But he kept that diagnosis to himself, and did not report it to his workplace until 2018.

In the intervening years, he began providing peer support — people would come to him with their problems, he says, and because of the knowledge gained through his own ex-

periences, he was able to help. That led to first a part-time assignment, and eventually a full-time position with the force's organizational wellness bureau, matching officers in need of help with the programs that could help them.

But he continued to find himself suffering regularly from panic attacks and other PTSD symptoms, which can include depression, insomnia or inability to focus, and can also lead to suicidal thoughts, although that wasn't part of his experience. "I don't have a problem with suicidality, but many others do."

He began taking courses in trauma support, received counselling credentials from Yorkville University, and started on another path to help others. With other first responders who also suffer from PTSD as partners, he has founded The Valhalla Project Niagara, which acts as an umbrella organization to provide mental health treatment, education, and advocacy for people with PTSD. The program leaders work mostly with others in similar fields — firefighters and police, paramedics and health-care workers, military and corrections personnel — those most likely to suffer emotional trauma from work experiences.

That stage of his life was being mapped out in the months leading up to March, 2020, when he expected to launch the first residential program of The Valhalla Project, to be held at Cave Springs Camp. The pandemic quashed any hope of that, and instead, an intense

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Peer support team available to help firefighters

Continued from page 16

30-hour virtual program was devised to provide a management plan for those who could become suicidal. "An hour of therapy a week is just not going to cut it," he says.

Instead, eight aspects of PTSD are covered, including basic information about the disease, coping skills, and medications, both pharmaceuticals and cannabis.

It also teaches participants to recognize signs of distress, and not to try to get through those periods alone. "We encourage people to reach out, sometimes several times a day if necessary, to other people who are also going through PTSD and can help. Eventually their friends and family members can be taught how to help," says Bettes. "We take the stigma out of PTSD, and we take the stigma out of talking about suicide, because in our world, where suicide is prevalent, we have to have those conversations regularly."

The residential program was eventually offered to small groups, beginning in the fall of 2020, says Bettes, and continues, with six more scheduled for small cohorts.

There are other components to The Valhalla Project, including therapeutic activities such as trips to the Benchview

Equestrian Centre, which focus on positive energy, participating in Fox Den goat yoga or just hanging out with the goats, and to B-Y Honey Farm — the animals and their environment, along with the humming from bee hives, are calming, the activities get people who are sometimes house hermits out of the house, and for some, can lead to volunteering opportunities.

"Just being on the farm, in the fresh air, hanging out with animals or helping out with the hives, can be soothing," he says.

The project also offers a martial arts training initiative known as Veterans Jiu Jitsu.

Bettes encourages anyone who could use the help The Valhalla Project offers, or knows someone who does, to check out the website at www.valhallaprojectniagara.org.

The Valhalla Service Dog program also now underway is intended to eliminate the fostering aspect of training dogs, making the process faster, reducing costs, and allowing the participant in need of a service dog to be part of the training from the beginning. The dogs are graded as they go through their training, and graduate when they're ready.

Bettes understands the value of a dog through Maverick, who has been with him for about five years. The Brittany spaniel, like other service dogs,

provides a reason to get him out of the house, and gives him someone to feed, love and care for, all which help with depression. It makes him more comfortable when he does go out to restaurants or stores, and he's particularly useful at night, when the nightmares come one after another.

Bettes could be seen at the recent Remembrance Day service, lined up with other firefighters on Queen Street, Maverick at his side, in his jacket that proclaims him a PTSD service dog.

While Bettes is determined to take the stigma out of PTSD, he says, for himself and others, and around town many would recognize Maverick even without his coat, it is still a very personal subject some may not wish to discuss. Having a service dog often brings attention, and questions. "I'm very upfront about it," he says.

But when someone is out and about in a busy place such as Costco, questions about the reason for having a service dog is the same as asking about mental health issues, and not always welcome.

"We get that all the time," he says, as well as people patting a service dog when their coat clearly indicates that is not appropriate. "I slough it off, but not everyone can do that. People automatically assume I'm training him. The level of

misinformation out there is unbelievable."

On the other hand, when Maverick is given permission to approach someone who wants to give him a bit of attention, he makes the most of it.

"He gives the best hugs," says Bettes, and it only takes getting down on his level for Maverick to show just how good those hugs are, even at the fire station.

He adds, "I feel like I've won the canine lottery. He's my service dog/best friend."

The counselling work Bettes does now with the NOTL Emergency Services came about when the department was creating a critical incident stress management team.

He's been with the department since 2015, and with his extensive experience and training, and work in critical incident stress management, helped organize and train a peer support team, which consists of about 25 team members, a cross-section of firefighters, from some of the youngest volunteers to the most long-serving, men and women, and most of the district chiefs.

He credits Fire Chief Nick Ruller and operations and training Deputy Fire Chief Darren Trostenko for being very supportive of the program, which includes posting lists of members of the teams

at each station for firefighters to call if they need to talk to someone.

They may choose someone from their station, or may prefer to talk to someone they don't know. It could be about work, money, spouse or kids, "whatever life throws at them that is causing stress, and they need somebody they can vent to and who will listen in a non-judgmental way, or who can give them a couple of coping skills to help them through it."

If they need more than that, they are encouraged to reach out to a professional therapist, he adds.

He also takes his own advice. "If I go out to a bad call, I'll make sure the proper steps are taken for everyone on the call, and I'm going to do what needs to be done as well. If I'm not on the call, I can strongly recommend a group debriefing."

He is also involved in preparing new recruits and their families for the challenges they are likely to face in their new roles.

During training of new volunteers, there is always one session family members and loved ones are invited to, and Bettes offers a presentation on the mental health aspects of the job.

He talks about some of the symptoms to look for, and the reality of PTSD as a result of the job. Every firefighter thinks

they're tough, that they're going to be immune to those problems, he says, "and then I show up with Maverick, a PTSD service dog. That means I have PTSD, and I give them a reality check. I give them the information they need to handle the job, and how to get the help they need."

It is also about telling family members what to look for, and the changes they may see, so they can be aware of what to expect after their loved one has responded to a tough call, in an effort "to normalize job stress, and give it the respect it deserves."

Those sessions were not able to include family members during COVID restrictions, he says, but that part of the training should be up and running again soon.

He acknowledges that while every first responder faces tough calls that can cause distress, "every call we get is in our own community that we have a personal connection with, the people, the places, every call will have an added stress with that measure of personalization."

He refers again to the call to St. Michael School, and says, "these are difficult stresses that are part of being a volunteer fire department."

And for each of those situations, he adds, "there is help available for those who need it."



IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LAND AND PREMISES AT
THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL ADDRESSES IN THE
TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation
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By-law No. 5365-21

By-law No. 5366-21

By-law No. 5367-21

designating the following properties as being of cultural
heritage value or interest under Part IV of the
Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18

**21 Prideaux Street (Hummingbird Hill)
(PLAN 86 PT LOT 31)**

**27 Prideaux Street
(PLAN 86 PT LOT 30)**

**31 Prideaux Street (Servos-Jones House)
(PLAN 86 PT LOT 30)**

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 24th day of November, 2021.
Colleen Hutt, Acting Town Clerk

Further information regarding these designations is available
from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Any inquiries may be
directed to Jeremy Parsons, Heritage Planner at 905-468-6481, or
905-468-3061 ext. 297, or by email at jeremy.parsons@notl.com.

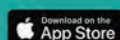


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NOTL man has fascinating, varied career on water

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The Welland Canal will remain open until noon on Friday, Jan. 7, but the Lake Ontario-to-Montreal section will be closing a week earlier. That means that marine pilot Robert Reese should have a chance to begin the new year at home in Niagara-on-the-Lake with his wife Mariah and their three boys.

Reese is a member of St. Lawrence Seaway Pilots Association, based out of Cape Vincent, New York. The 39-year-old guides the big ships through what is known as District 1. His job involves piloting from Lock 1 out into Lake Ontario, and then from Kingston to Cornwall along the St. Lawrence River.

"I have three distinctions," he explains. "I'm a harbour pilot. I will do any of the harbours on Lake Ontario — Hamilton, Toronto, Oshawa, and Oswego, New York. I'm also a lake pilot, which involves transiting the lake for navigation. And I'm a river pilot, so I do the St. Lawrence River and any of the locks on there — two American locks and one Canadian lock."

The family moved to town in 2014 from the Jacksonville, Florida area, where the couple originally met. The son of an army chaplain had lived in Louisiana, Georgia and the Florida Panhandle before settling in Ponte Vedra. Mariah, a Winnipeg native, often spent winters in the area with her family.

After completing high school, Reese attended a maritime academy, studying for a bachelors' degree in science, specializing in logistics. During that time he earned his qualifications as a third mate, completing a year at sea as a cadet. His career began shortly after graduation as a third mate on cruise ships.

In what he refers to as "the normal cycle of the cruise ship industry," he transitioned to the

oil and gas industry, doing supply boats and anchor handling, moving oil rigs around. That led to a number of years involved in military supply work, helping to deliver supplies to navies around the world.

As if guiding huge ships across Lake Ontario isn't interesting enough, Reese's career prior to the move to Niagara has included a few brushes with some monumental historical events.

While attending the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA), Robert was a first responder during the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on New York City's World Trade Center.

"It's on Long Island Sound," Reese says, about the USMMA. "We looked straight at Manhattan. I was an EMT, and when things happened I was held back to accept any patients that were airlifted over. We had a big airfield, the size of a football field, so we set up to receive any overflow from the city's hospitals."

Referred to now as The Great Boatlift of 9/11, Reese says anyone who had a boat of any kind got involved in moving people out of Manhattan. Nearly 500,000 people were evacuated over a mere nine hours following the devastating attack.

"A lot of them were from our academy," he says about the vessels used. "When you go to the academy, you actually are Navy personnel. So we got our orders and we responded."

Fast forward nine years for the next historic event. As Mariah tells The Local, Robert almost missed their wedding because of Somali pirates.

"We were doing routine supply work in the Gulf of Aden, which was becoming a hot spot due to Somali pirates," Robert explains. "In my supply work, though I was working as a civilian, I was also a Navy officer at the same time."

"I was the navigator and second mate. We pulled into port

and were supposed to be disembarking, but the captain told me I needed to be one of the five people to stay on board to plan a voyage to five places."

Once the ship, the Lewis and Clark, pulled out of port, the captain informed the crew that their mission was to rendezvous with a Marine Corps detachment to join a counter-terrorism and anti-piracy task force.

"We embarked a battalion of marines and helicopters and we proceeded to catch 15 pirates," he says. "I couldn't tell Mariah what was going on. Any communication had to be vague for operational security. I told her in an email that the captain promised I would be home on time for the wedding, though. Obviously the reception to that wasn't too positive."

"The next time I received an email from her," he laughs, "she asked why she was seeing my ship on CNN."

The American news network broke the story that the Lewis and Clark was acting as a jail ship for the captured pirates. Robert arrived back in Florida with about 10 days to spare before the nuptials.

Reflecting on the danger of the mission, Reese is matter-of-fact.

"Any time any of the captives were out and about on the ship, they had no less than three marines with them," explains Reese. "Conditions on our ship were much better than on theirs. They were just happy to have three meals and a cot to sleep on. They weren't in any mood to be aggressive."

In 2014, as the Ebola virus was sweeping across Sierra Leone and neighbouring West African countries, Reese was working for a shipping company that was often tasked to carry cargoes that were generally related to humanitarian aid to largely underdeveloped ports and harbours. Of all the things



The father of three likes to take his boys to see what he does whenever possible. Sebastian, the oldest, is the one who has shown the most interest since he was young. (Photos supplied)



Robert Reese heading to a boat he is going to pilot in Port Weller, with a small cruise ship in the background that tours the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes.

he's done on sea, he is most proud of his last voyage for that company.

"My ship was shallow draft and geared (we had our own cranes) with a ramp to roll cargo on and off if needed," Reese explains. At the peak of the Ebola crisis we delivered food-aid and medical supplies bound for a group of orphanages in Sierra Leone."

It was his last task as Master before making the move to NOTL. Of course the safety concerns made it a highly stressful voyage, but today he looks back on it as being his most gratifying.

"It was at a time when hardly any ships would even come close to the ports in those affected countries and we did what mariners do and delivered that cargo."

Shortly after that voyage, he began his two-year training period to qualify for his three distinctions with the Seaway Pilots. After years of being away from his family often for months at a time, working Lake Ontario's District 1 makes it much easier to be around while the boys grow up.

"As a master mariner, you have a lot of ship handling courses, simulator training, manned models," he says. "They have all these different scenarios based on depth of water, clearance under your keel, how much water you have around you, the type of bottom, and all the effects that go along with those."

Unlike his mariner friends in Texas and Georgia, for example, who guide ships in conditions that are consistent along

their routes, Reese says District 1 on Lake Ontario runs the gamut of every scenario.

"I think I have the distinction of having to deal with the entire textbook, not just a couple of chapters. It's really fun," he says, referring to himself as a nerd.

With his organization, he has the type of job that never gets boring. Reese works on hundreds of ships every season, including traditional lakers, tankers, and bulk ships with their own cranes on board. They are all driven by different types of propulsion, and the wind surface area can vary, affecting their reactions in different conditions. And there are sometimes language barriers with the crews.

Even piloting the same ship at various levels of tonnage capacity can create completely unique challenges from voyage to voyage. The location of the remaining cargo on any ship after a portion has been unloaded can completely change the way Reese pilots the vessel, making it "directionally unstable."

Ship handling is Reese's favourite part of the job. His grandfather was a Second World War mariner, and he introduced Robert to a number of men who piloted ships for a living. When he realized he could follow his grandfather into the USMMA and have such a career, he knew exactly what he wanted to do.

"I enjoy taking this 30,000 tonne dead-weight ship and putting it into a place with wind going across, and doing things people wouldn't think are possible. It's fun. It can be stressful at

times, but when you walk down the gangway and you take the seat and take that deep breath, it's total gratification."

As the shipping season winds down, his usual two to three days away from the family will be coming to an end. He'll be home with Mariah and the boys until mid- to late-March, when the canal opens again.

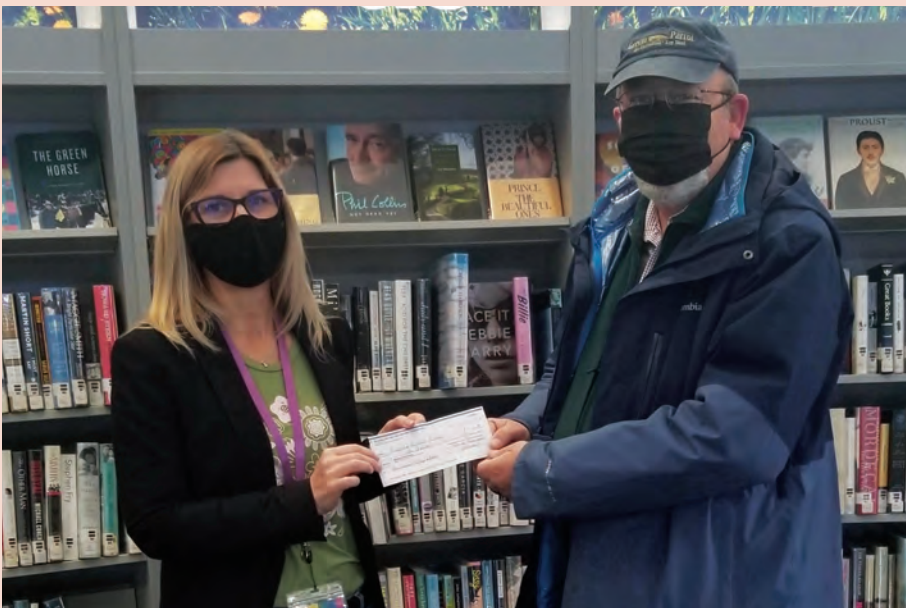
"We started a family pretty young, and it's always been important for me to get home as soon as possible, to be able to be around for my wife and kids. I give her all the credit for supporting me through my career. It takes a special kind of woman to be able to put up with someone who goes to sea."

"It's always exciting when I get to be home," Reese continues. "We go through a few weeks of decompressing from the season. We try to get into a routine. I'll attack what I can from the 'honey-do' list. Usually there's a couple of courses I have to do to maintain my licence."

Asked if any of his three sons might follow in his mariner footsteps, he says Sebastian does show some interest. A highlight of Reese's time in Niagara was having an opportunity to board one of the ships with his eldest son and his Second World War veteran grandfather in tow.

"I'm never going to pressure any of my kids to do this job," he says. "It's one of those things that if they have a passion for it, I will be as supportive as I can. But if they want to be a teacher or a plumber or whatever, I'll be more than happy to support them on that."

Easy access to information



On behalf of the NOTL Rotary Club, Gary Hatton presented Debbie Krause, NOTL Public Library's community outreach coordinator, with a cheque for \$1,000 for the costs of a HUB app released by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council. Migrant workers can download the app onto their phones, and access information, including government services, in their own language. It also shares information on health care providers, transportation services, local news and weather, consular information and important contacts, as well as specific agricultural guidelines. The app helps keep migrant workers updated on all local resources, networks, and policies to help them navigate independently in their communities. (Photo supplied)

Poverty doesn't take a vacation, especially in pandemic

Penny Coles
The Local

Their journey together has taken Ted van der Zalm and his wife Miriam in different directions since they first met as young adults volunteering in Africa, but each step of the way has been motivated by their deep faith and their dedication to improving the lives of the poorest of the poor.

For almost 20 years, their goal has been to provide clean, fresh water to the impoverished people who live in the mountains of the Jalapa area of Guatemala.

Since 2004, the couple have travelled to Guatemala each winter, taking their children with them — their first child that first year, until they had five kids traveling with them. In the early years they took their family and equipment with them in a pick-up truck, set up tents, and learned quickly how desperately clean water was needed.

It's something we in the western world take so much for granted, says van der Zalm. He has seen women leave their very basic homes in the mountains, baby on their back, 20-litre bucket on their heads, often a couple of two- or three-year-olds walking with them down the hill to their water source, and then back up again, collecting firewood along the way, buckets heavy with water on their heads.

"They do this two or three times a day, every day," he says, until he is able to deliver water to their door, life-changing not only for those families and their children, but the generations to come. He doesn't talk about how many wells he's drilled — the much more important number to him is the 90,000 people who now have easy access to clean, fresh water.

Van der Zalm has learned a lot over the years, and the work he does has evolved, but always with the same goal, to see clean water de-

livered to as many people as possible.

The need for much larger, expensive drilling rigs became obvious early in his trips to Guatemala, where the wells he drills are often 1,000 feet deep, through hard volcanic rock. Each one is a huge and costly challenge, but made possible by generous donations and fundraisers, mostly from the Niagara region. One well was recently funded fully by the NOTL Rotary Club, he says.

The van der Zalms have developed a large support group of volunteers, and a program to include Niagara high school students, as much to teach them about helping the needy and also appreciating their own good fortune at being born in a developing country. At this point in the pandemic that is on hold, and with insurance costs, may not be possible to continue.

They now have a permanent camp, Esperanza, or hope, returning to it each year. No more driving their truck — they are able to fly to their destination and find their equipment waiting for them.

They typically leave for Guatemala in January, and return home at the end of May, when the rainy season starts, and van der Zalm counts on drilling three wells during that time. It may not sound like a lot, but there is so much more to the job than drilling. Once he reaches clean water through the hard rock, there is still infrastructure required that involves pumps, generators and housing to protect them, and pipes to get the water up to the highest point, to be stored in a huge cement tank. From there, more infrastructure is required to take the water back down the hill, to be delivered to the homes along the way. No more spending most of their day walking to get water for the women who are fortunate enough to live near a well drilled by van der



Ted van der Zalm serves food to 2,100 people a day in the mountains of Guatemala, with help from local women.

Zalm, and the hard-working men of the village who commit to helping with the construction of the water system he is giving them.

"We finance the equipment for the well, the generators, and a large main trunk to the cistern. The community has to commit to running 30 to 40 kilometres of trenching pipe underground to their homes. The community needs to put in some sweat equity. They can't finance it, but they can do the manual labour that's necessary. And they work hard, because they've worked hard all their lives."

He and his volunteers have cexpanded their work to include medical clinics and schools, and instead of shipping discarded desks from Niagara school boards, often in rough shape, he has set up a program to pay for young Guatemalans to learn welding, so they can make the metal frames for desks, with seats and arms made out of recycled plastic bottles.

Education is paramount to van der Zalm, and he lives by the proverb that if you give

a man a fish, you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.

He also quotes a biblical miracle, the feeding of the 5,000, to describe the experience he and Miriam had when the world shut down in March, 2020.

As usual, they were in Guatemala, their well-drilling underway.

All of their kids but the

youngest were at home in Canada attending university. Travel was becoming impossible, the Guatemalan government had shut down the country, and Ted and Miriam had a decision to make, without having any idea what this new coronavirus would bring. They got their daughter on a plane home, and decided they would register with the Canadian embassy,

stay at their camp, and do what they could do.

"We had committed to our projects and to people who had asked for our help," he says. "The needs of the poor don't take a vacation."

Instead of returning home in May, they were there until November.

And instead of drilling

Continued on page 21



Prototypes of desks that will be fabricated in Guatemala as part of a program set up by Wells of Hope to give work to young people. (Photos supplied)

Niagara on the Lake Soccer Club

Annual General Meeting

November 30, 2021

7:00 pm

Virgil Arena in the Mary Snider Room

All are welcome. Come have a say in how soccer is run in 2022.

Many board positions are opening up for next year, too.



Botos trio and guest vocalist bring audience to its feet

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

Jazz pianist Robi Botos invited the crowd at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Friday night to go on a journey with him and his trio.

By the end of the almost two-hour set, the gathering of 225 was enlightened, entertained, and left feeling fortunate for having participated in a coming out of sorts for the talented Hungarian-Canadian.

For the third installment of the Bravo Niagara! 2021 TD Jazz Series, Botos assembled his trio of Mike Downes on bass and Larnell Lewis on drums, along with special guest vocalist Joanna Majoko. It was an evening of Botos originals, versions of well-known American songbook numbers and even a classic 1970s pop hit.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake resident (he moved to town just under a year ago) repeatedly expressed gratitude for the opportunity to perform before a live audience of such a size in a concert hall setting.

The shy, self-effacing Botos addressed the crowd casually, his face revealing



Robi Botos and his trio with Mike Downes and Larnell Lewis, and special guest vocalist Joanna Majoko, onstage at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Friday. (Alex Heidbuechel)

the great relief he was feeling for the opportunity to play at Partridge Hall, affirming that performing live was a key factor in promoting mental health for him and the other musicians.

The trio began the

set sans Majoko, clearly enjoying the chance to play together in the same room for the first time in months. Downes, a Winnipeg native and Juno Award winner, impressed early on with his fluid, masterful bass solos, his expressive face punctuating both the emotion expressed in his playing and the physicality involved in plucking the strings.

Botos introduced a new composition, called *Story*, that was obviously informed by his experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's a dark, ominous and moody, almost brooding number that expresses many of the anxieties felt across the globe during the past 21 months.

Informing the audience that "we make it up as we go," Botos shed light on the collaborative process between the three award-winning musicians, each of them amongst the best at their instruments in the jazz world. Though they had never played *Story* together before, the performance came off flawlessly.

The communication between Botos and Lewis was key to their improvisatory chops throughout the night. As the masterful musicians began each song, they eventually took their solo turns, with the pianist and drummer locking eyes for cues on when to return to the songs' chord progressions. At one point, Botos actually asked Lewis which key a

song began in (D-flat).

Lewis wowed the crowd with an incredible, powerful drum solo that shook the rafters of the PAC, highlighting the versatility the Grammy Award-winner has developed playing with Brooklyn-based funk-jazz fusion band Snarky Puppy.

The trio welcomed Toronto-based Majoko onto the stage about four songs into the set. The University of Manitoba graduate, whose debut EP *No Holding Back* was released earlier this year, brought her smooth, soulful vocal style to classic jazz material originally sung by the likes of Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Dinah Washington and Nat King Cole.

Majoko also added to the improvisation process, scat singing her way through the instrumental sections of many of the numbers.

Autumn Leaves, a song that Botos proudly said was written by a Hungarian, showcased Majoko's smooth, soft delivery. Indeed, Hungarian-French composer Joseph Kosma is credited as the composer who put the Jacques Prévert poem *Les feuilles mortes* to music in 1945, inspiring lyricist Johnny Mercer to translate the lyrics into the well-known jazz classic performed Friday.

The four continued the autumn theme with a version of *September in the Rain*, originally written for the 1937 movie *Stars Over*

Broadway. Again, Majoko's singing mesmerized the audience, who sat in rapt attention as she glided over the romantic lyrics.

Botos introduced the Burt Bacharach/Hal David composition (*They Long to Be*) *Close to You*, a song he recorded for his 2015 album *Movin' Forward*, as their final song of the night. Noting that the trio usually performs an instrumental version of the track the Carpenters took to the top of the Billboard charts in 1970, he invited the audience to see where Majoko's vocals would lead them.

She put her own dramatic stamp on the song, weaving in and out of the instrumental sections for an extended funk-up jam that brought the audience to its feet.

Bravo Niagara! co-founder and executive director Alexis Spieldenner was pleased with the chance to present Botos, whose stint as artist-in-residence for the organization in 2020 was extended into this season. She promised that Botos will be back on the PAC stage Dec. 20, making an appearance for Molly Johnson's holiday concert.

Spieldenner hinted that Botos will also play a big part in their upcoming spring, 2022 program, details of which will be announced at that Johnson performance or at the Dec. 16 Pavlo concert, also scheduled for the FirstOntario PAC.

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COVID saw van der Zalm feeding the hungry

Continued from page 19

wells, their attention was turned to feeding people, not a job they were prepared for. People in the mountain villages soon began coming to their camp looking for food, because any manual labour they depended on for money had come to a halt, and they had nothing to feed their families.

“They caught us off-guard,” said van der Zalm. “We were not equipped to be a hand-out station. The need seemed too huge for us.” But they were there to help people, and decided they couldn’t turn them away.

“In the story of feeding the 5,000, instead of sending them away, Jesus told them to sit down, and a miracle happened. I didn’t have Jesus beside me, but I had Facebook.”

He went on social media, asking for help, and the money started to arrive from home. With it they were able to buy the equipment and food they needed to set up a food station, taking it up the mountain where villagers could reach them. He would get up at 3:30 a.m. each day to buy food, and had help from Guatemalan women in the villages, who cooked for them. They were serving

2,100 people daily. Van der Zalm also talked to the owner of a transit company, who provided three buses and drivers, to transport those living too far from the food station to walk.

The government of the region gave van der Zalm and his food program an exemption to allow him and his helpers to move around, calling what they were doing an essential service.

“It’s still unbelievable to me how it all came together,” he says.

“It was definitely a step outside my comfort zone, but I saw a biblical story come to life. It was a fabulous effort, Guatemalan people helping Guatemalan people.”

It took about three months before the country gradually opened up, men were able to get back to work, the food station was phased out, and van der Zalm was able to fulfill his well-drilling commitments.

To come home in November and hear people complaining and pushing back over masks and vaccines, he says, “blew me away. The Guatemalans said, ‘that’s all we have to do? Wear masks? We can do that.’ They’re used to so much hardship, that was nothing for them.”

After losing a season of well-drilling at home, work

that supports his family, van der Zalm returned to Guatemala in January, 2021 on his own, but just stayed until April, relying on locals to help him.

Now, he’s looking forward to returning for a full season, January to May, but without the fundraisers he’s accustomed to financing his work, he is turning to the community to help.

He has relied in the past on change collected in a trail-

er, with which he visited Niagara elementary schools, to teach local kids about helping those in need; and huge, well-orchestrated fundraisers, such as golf tournaments and an annual Passion event, with wine, food and music.

Those and other fundraisers have been put on hold during the pandemic, and the need is greater than ever, he says.

He plans to set up the infrastructure to begin fab-

ricating desks when he gets to Guatemala, allowing the young men who have learned welding to use their trade, and of course he has wells to drill.

Hard work cuts down on the costs, but there is still money required. Fortunately Wells of Hope has an excellent reputation for how carefully money is spent, and a large community of supporters who believe in van der Zalm and the work he does,

many of whom have seen it first-hand.

To learn more, or to donate, visit https://www.wells-of-hope.com/get_involved/donate/

Or contact Scott Maxwell, who finds the financial support at home to keep the work going in Guatemala. Cheques can be mailed to 174 Cole Crescent, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0. Or call Maxwell at 289-313-7109.



Each well dug by Wells of Hope requires a generator to pump water uphill to a cistern. (Photos supplied)



One well dug by van der Zalm brought up steaming water, heated by the volcano rock.

FOOD & TOY DRIVE

Help those less-fortunate in Niagara to have a happy holiday season. We will begin accepting food and unwrapped toy donations at our office at 8 Henegan Road until Friday December 10, 2021. **Food & Toy donations will support Newark Neighbours and are in great need. Extra toy donations will support Gillian’s Place and Project Share.**

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Niagara
on-the-Lake
HYDRO

Two hat tricks help win two games for Predators

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

The Niagara Predators exploded for 19 goals over two games last weekend against the last place Tottenham Thunder, with an 11-7 Friday night home victory followed by an 8-1 win on the road.

Jesper Eriksson led the way in both games, recording a hat trick Friday night, the Greater Metro Hockey League franchise's first since it moved from Toronto, and following that up with the second in Saturday's game. The six goals vaulted the 20-year-old Swede past captain Mario Zitella and Alexander Insulander as the Preds' leading goal-scorer.

"He is starting to find his way in the offensive zone over here in North America," general manager Johan Eriksson said of the 6'4" forward. "He's used to far bigger ice, but he's starting to pick that up and play a bit of an easier game, and to use his teammates more."

Johan lauded Jesper for his hockey smarts as well. "Every decision he makes out there these days is just the right one. To have a player like that right now is huge for us. And he plays so well with Insulander too."

Nathan Fehr, Henry-Pierre Jayet, Noah Caperchione, Maxwell Bredin and new Russian import Georgy Kholmovsky all picked up their first goals as Predators Friday in a game that Niagara wasn't able to put away until the third period.

After Eriksson's first goal just over a minute into the opening period, the Thunder tied the game on the power play with Niagara's Josh Davidson sitting in the box. Niagara jumped out to a 3-1 lead only to see that erased by the end of the first.

In the second period,

the Thunder took their first lead of the game, battling back to go up 6-5 until Jayet tied it up with 11 seconds left. Kholmovsky put the Predators up 7-6 in the third, but four minutes later Alexis Hebert tied it up for Tottenham. Then Niagara peppered Thunder goalie Mack Maracle with a four-goal run over the final 10 minutes to end the game.

Predators number one goaltender Oskar Spinnars Nordin sat out both games this weekend, allowing Iain Riordan to see his first action in the crease Friday. He was later pulled in favour of Justin Appleton, also making his on-ice debut for Niagara, before returning to start the third period.

Niagara outshot Tottenham 53-20 Friday, but Eriksson would not lay blame on his goaltending corps for allowing the most goals in a single game yet this season.

"The team played a selfish game," said the general manager. "They knew we were playing the lowest team in the standings. They were mainly thinking 'how many goals am I going to score?' and played one-on-one instead of using their teammates. That doesn't work, and it was a big issue."

"It was probably the worst game we played all season," he lamented. "Iain had no help on defence, no help from forwards, there were turnovers and people misplaced. It was bad altogether. It was 100 per cent a bad team effort defensively. We should have won 11-1."

Riordan bounced back Saturday in Tottenham, kicking away 31 shots in the 8-1 victory.

Goals by Zitella, Jesper Eriksson and two from Caperchione gave the Predators a 4-0 lead by the middle of the second period. Again, Niagara took advantage of a tired Totten-

ham squad in the third. Insulander and Kholmovsky each scored and Eriksson completed his second hat trick in two days to end the game.

"We wanted to show who was the boss Saturday," Johan Eriksson said. "We owned the game from start to finish. We went back to basics and played a more easy kind of game. It was also the first game we actually rolled four lines, and we didn't play our first two lines as hard, giving our third and fourth lines more time."

Eriksson gave credit to forward Dante Massi, the team's scoring leader and playmaker with four goals and 24 assists, for being the best player in both games.

"Dante doesn't take a shift off," Eriksson marvelled. "He's just going all the time. It doesn't matter how hard they play on him, he still somehow gets the puck out of close contact every time. I don't even understand how he's doing it. He's a dream to have."

The GM is elated to finally have Russian Georgy Kholmovsky in Niagara. His immigration and insurance issues were solved last week, and he joined the team 13 games into the season. The 6'3" defenceman brings some much-needed size and strength to the Predators' blue line.

"He is so, so smart," Eriksson said. "And a good skater. Most of the guys on the team have already come to ask me if they can play with him. He's young, too, at 17. He was probably our best forward this weekend, one of two players on Friday, along with Brett Lee, who actually played two-way hockey."

The Predators are back in action Friday night at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, playing host to the St. George Ravens. Niagara currently holds a four-point advantage over St. George in the GMHL's South Di-



Georgy Kholmovsky, the new defenceman from Russia, holds the puck from his first Predators goal Friday in the 11-7 win over Tottenham. (Photo supplied)

vision standings, sitting in third place. They will be trying to even up the season series against their fellow Robert Turnbull-owned team, which sits at 2-1 in the Ravens' favour.

"Every single guy wants to win against St. George," said Eriksson. "They're our rivals. We play far better

against better teams, where we actually get to play more hockey."

That game will be followed with a trip to the Tavistock and District Recreation Centre to meet the fifth-place Plattsville Lakers.

Game time Friday is 7:30 pm, and fans are reminded

to bring gently used winter clothing, food items, and gift items for teenagers to support the Predators' Christmas drive in support of Gateway Community Church, Community Care of West Niagara and Project Share. Details of the drive can be found on the Predators' Facebook page.

Meet the Predators

Name:
Nathan Fehr

Jersey number: **23**

Age: **17**

Birthdate: **Aug. 13, 2004**

Hometown:
Niagara Falls, Ontario

Nickname:
Jeppe

Favourite hockey player:
Carey Price

Favourite 'hype' song:
Kamikaze by Eminem

Other sports you play:
Lacrosse

Favourite "cheat" meal:
Chicken Wings

Secret talent:
Great with Photoshop and Graphic Design



LocalWORSHIP



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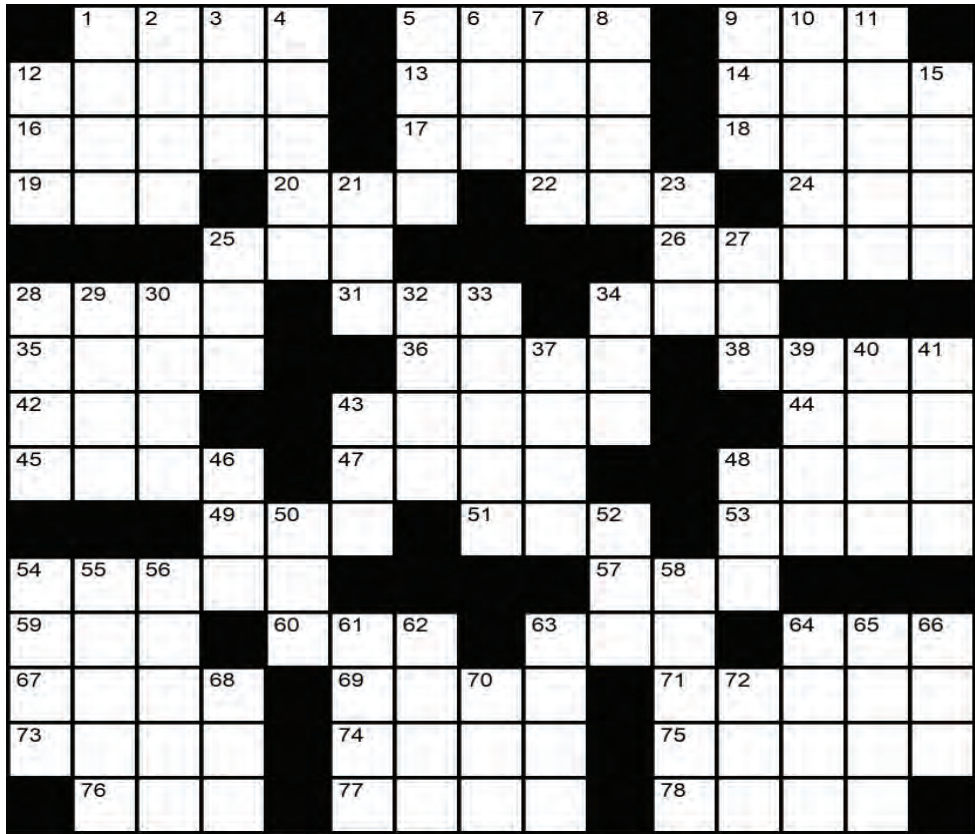
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Across:

- 1 Not strapped
5 Mining passage
9 Welding flash
12 Disgraced comic
13 U2 lead vocalist
14 Major health scare of 2002-03
16 Chip dip
17 1 for H, or 2 for He
18 "Yo!"
19 Anger
20 Teeny amount
22 Hearst kidnap org.
24 Observe
25 Dough dispenser
26 Fingerboard bars
28 Hobble
31 Not-for-profit TV spot
34 Angel dust
35 In which two dozen merles were found
36 Run at low speed
38 Kernel
42 CD- ---
43 Type of bottle with one surface
44 Owing
45 Afloat on the ocean
47 Touchdown forecasts
48 Big brute
49 Whey-faced
51 Type of joint
53 TV host --- Seacrest
54 49-er
57 "--- Love You" (Beatles hit)
59 100 square meters

Down:

- 60 Sir ---, Arthurian knight
63 Now let me think ...
64 Small snub-nosed dog
67 Smurf in red
69 Kvetch
71 --- ear and out ...
73 Visit
74 Doctor imprisoned on the Dry Tortugas
75 Stay still, at sea
76 Catastrophic occurrence
77 Approximately
78 Patron saint of sailors

Across:

- 30 Silent actor
32 It's not quite as fine as clay
33 "A weasel hath not such --- of spleen ..." (Shakespeare, "Henry IV" Pt. I)
34 Author
37 Brightest Simpson
39 Nervously irritable
40 Ambience
41 Typical Hunger Games devotee
43 Range of knowledge
46 Wonderment
48 "Either you do it --- will!"
50 Presumably unicorns missed it
52 Air-pollution measure
54 Hikers' helpers
55 In a snit
56 Land between China and India
58 "... ---, though your heart is aching ..."
61 Magazine contents
62 It's --- move
63 Reverse
64 "The United States themselves are essentially the greatest ---" (Walt Whitman)
65 "... and --- dust shalt thou return." (Genesis)
66 Bygone GM brand
68 Bridge agreement
70 Lifeblood of TV and the web
72 "--- sine numine" (Colorado's motto)

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from November 17, 2021

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

Across: 1 Rich, 5 Adit, 9 Arc, 12 Cosby, 13 Bono, 14 S A R S, 16 Salsa, 17 At No, 18 Hiya, 19 Ire, 20 Tad, 22 S L A, 24 Spy, 25 A T M, 26 Freis, 28 Limp, 31 P S A, 34 PCP, 35 A pie, 36 Idle, 38 Meat, 42 R-O-M, 43 Klein, 44 Due, 45 Asea, 47 E T As, 48 Ogre, 49 Wan, 51 Lap, 53 Ryan, 54 Miner, 57 PS I, 59 Are, 60 Kay, 63 Umm, 64 Pug, 67 Papa, 69 Moan, 71 In one, 73 Stay, 74 Mudd, 75 Lie to, 76 E L E, 77 Or so, 78 Elmo.
Down: 1 Roar, 2 Isle, 3 C B S, 4 Hyatt, 5 A bad, 6 Dot, 7 Inns, 8 Tool, 9 Ash, 10 Raise, 11 Crypt, 12 C S I, 15 Says, 21 Amp, 23 A F C, 25 Ape, 27 R P m, 28 Lara, 29 I P Os, 30 Mime, 32 Silt, 33 A deal, 34 Pen, 37 Lisa, 39 Edgy, 40 Aura, 41 Teen, 43 Ken, 46 Awe, 48 Or I, 50 Ark, 52 P m, 54 Maps, 55 Irate, 56 Nepal, 58 Smile, 61 Ammo, 62 Your, 63 Undo, 64 Poem, 65 Unto, 66 Geo, 68 Aye, 70 Ads, 72 Nil.





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3 Meritage Lane
\$1,650,000

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SOLD
CONDITIONALLY

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42 beautiful acres



SOLD
OVER ASKING

16 George Manor
\$995,000

Gorgeous end unit townhome



SOLD

121 Loretta Drive
\$950,000

Beautiful Virgil, 2,174 square feet



SOLD

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\$1,095,000

5.2 acres



SOLD

1121 Line 6
\$1,549,000

1 acre, 6 car garage

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