



Sweets & Swirls  
helps Nyanyas  
with holiday  
cookie sale  
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Wonder has an important job at Red Roof Retreat, taking clients for cart rides around The Ranch property on Concession 6. (Supplied)

## Red Roof asking for Gifts from the Heart to help 200 families

Sharon Burns  
The Local

At the first and original site, a ranch on Concession 6, sits a big red barn where cats and kittens freely roam in and out of the guinea pig and cat room. On the other side of the barn are stalls for Murray, a donkey, and a goat whose name changes with everyone you ask. Next, Wilbur the rescue pig awaits visitors, always hoping they will give him food.

This is Red Roof Retreat, a provider of respite and recreational programs for children and adults with special needs. It serves about 200 families, and has a waiting list. Red Roof offers day programs, respite service, social nights, Saturday camps and summer camp programs.

Their annual Gifts from the Heart fundraising campaign is underway, and they need community donations, said executive director and founder Steffanie Bjorgan.

But first, let's finish our tour. Before heading toward the back of the property, stop to admire the restored red 1952 Massey Ferguson tractor.

Visit two Flemish Giant rabbits that live in a habitat near Wilbur. Follow a long wheelchair accessible path to the stables at the back where two mini horses, and Wonder, a 17-hand purebred Friesian horse, live in harmony. Wonder has an important job at Red Roof, to provide cart rides to clients. The path winds around a small pond where numerous turtles can often be spotted.

Back near the house, in the summer, quacks from Muscovy ducks can be heard from the large brightly-coloured play structure and from under the big tent where clients meet to expand their experiences, such as community engagement, independence, connection and relationships with others, then

Continued on page 18

## Breakwall construction beginning soon

Mike Balsom  
The Local

The federal government is investing almost \$6 million for the final phase of a breakwall installation along the eastern portion of Parks Canada lands on the shores of Lake Ontario.

Niagara South MP and parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport Vance Badawey made the announcement Friday. The amount is part of the \$557

million in infrastructure funding that was previously announced in November, 2022.

Construction will begin in December to create a new 500-metre section of breakwall starting behind Fort Mississauga to combat shoreline erosion near the mouth of the Niagara River. Frequent and more severe storm events and high water levels, possibly due to climate change, have wreaked havoc on the current break-

wall protection near the fort farther east toward the Parks Canada lands leased by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

Chris Zoetewey, Parks Canada's NOTL-born technical services officer, confirms that this is the next step toward making the old fort, a tower of strength on Lake Ontario that was built to guard the mouth of the Niagara River following the War of 1812, more accessible from more perspectives

than it has been in many, many years.

"The big stone wall on the water side of the fort will be replaced," Zoetewey explains. "It was installed some time in the 1980s. Fort Mississauga is star-shaped, and because of past events, such as the high water level in 2017, two of those star points have been lost. That high water has caused a lot of that wall to fall into the lake."

The new breakwall will

extend from behind the fort all the way down the shoreline along the first fairway of the golf course. When the project is completed in two years, strollers will be able to walk the shore from the cairn monument to the Battle of Fort George facing Queen Street behind the fourth green of the golf course, past Fort Mississauga and down toward the clubhouse.

"It will end there in a curve, what they call a

bullnose, curved into the shoreline," explains Zoetewey, who recalls that as a kid growing up in NOTL, he frequently climbed up the shoreline onto the old breakwall. "Parks Canada property basically ends at the tee box for the first hole of the golf course."

Zoetewey explains that the work will be completed over this winter and next, and will be undertaken in a

Continued on page 5

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# Councillors, staff wrestle with meeting schedule

**Kris Dube**  
**The Local**  
**Local Journalism**  
**Initiative Reporter**

Council and committee-of-the-whole meetings held during the day are less intrusive on the personal lives of town staff, says a report recently brought to local politicians.

But that's not necessarily so for politicians, and may discourage public attendance.

The report focuses on the schedule of meetings at town hall, and is an update on how a new format adopted at the start of 2023 has been working so far.

This year, council and committee-of-the-whole general meetings have been held at 9:30 a.m., while committee-of-the-whole planning meetings have been called to order at 6 p.m. since the new schedule came into play.

There are three meetings per month, not including the various committees that members of council sit on.

At the Nov. 21 council meet-

ing, town politicians were given two options for 2024. The first one was preferred by staff: that planning meetings begin at 5 p.m. and the two other meetings in the month continue to take place at 9:30 a.m.

Coun. Gary Burroughs quickly motioned to move ahead with the option not preferred by staff — that all meetings take place after hours.

He later removed his motion after colleagues raised questions and asked for more information.

Coun. Nick Ruller asked if starting planning meetings an hour earlier will improve engagement, also pointing to the "healthy agendas" staff and council are often faced with.

"Staff does believe it will address that," said chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie, adding it would only be a trial if changes are made, and that council could adjust the schedule, again.

"If we found we weren't getting the engagement we wanted, we could move to adjust it," said Cluckie, noting the format would be monitored throughout the year.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita said the public has told her they're "so confused" about when council meets.

"I think moving back to the evening meetings might actually help some of that confusion," she said, adding that daytime meetings seem to have gone on longer than ones held later. She also believes there has been a drop in council attendance this year.

"To me, that's the more important one," said Cheropita.

Coun. Adriana Vizzari said the staff report did not address council attendance, something she'd like to see.

"I'd like to see some metrics on that because I don't know if that's true," she said.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor also wants more information about public attendance and livestream numbers — comparing 2023 to when all meetings were previously held in the evening.

Cluckie said numbers could be provided related to people watching at home, but noted the

town does not track in-person attendance in the council chamber.

Although not included in the report, treasurer Kyle Freeborn told council that cost savings of about \$5,000 have been realized after switching to the new schedule.

Staff says studies have shown that a person's ability to focus, decision-making skills and overall performance are better during earlier parts of the day.

Hazards posed by inclement weather and travel are mitigated with daytime meetings, according to the report, and town hall is better staffed during daytime hours to accommodate the needs of the meeting.

Limiting the number of night meetings works in favour of the town for attracting and retaining employees and offers the municipality "an advantage" over some of its counterparts, staff said.

With an aging demographic, daytime meetings may be preferred by those members of the public who choose to attend the proceedings in person, staff also noted.

Staff says in its report that disadvantages of daytime meetings include them posing a barrier when it comes to public participation for people who work traditional daytime hours.

Daytime meetings may not be feasible for councillors with daytime jobs either, and a requirement to attend meetings during the day may deter potential future candidates from seeking elected office, staff said.

Early meetings may hinder staff's ability to address other aspects of their roles and responsibilities within regular business hours, the report said.

There are a number of factors pertaining to "employee wellness," which include personal lives being affected, and a lieu time policy that "does not equally offset the time incurred through evening meetings."

Managing personal and professional time around evening meetings that do not necessarily have a "defined end time poses challenges," staff said.

This isn't the first time the current group of elected officials

in Niagara-on-the-Lake have discussed their schedule.

Burroughs has raised concerns publicly on a number of occasions, mostly with how crowded planning meeting agendas have been.

In late October, council discussed a staff report that included options on how committee planning meetings can be more efficient.

Through a motion made by Coun. Maria Mavridis, council endorsed a step related to the amount of time speakers are given — cutting that time from 10 minutes to five.

Staff also said they will have stronger enforcement on duplication — residents submitting written comments on an issue, while also repeating their position verbally in front of council.

With the number of questions asked by councillors at Tuesday's meeting, the end result was for staff to take the feedback received during the discussion, and bring another report to council with the information requested before any decisions are made about the 2024 schedule.

# Town talks summer camp, aquatics programs

**Kris Dube**  
**The Local**  
**Local Journalism**  
**Initiative Reporter**

Fewer people are using Niagara-on-the-Lake's municipal pools but town staff are working to improve those

numbers, and are looking to pitch some ideas to council in an upcoming parks and recreation master plan.

That's according to parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte, while he was fielding questions at Tuesday's council meeting during an update on

St. Davids pool saw 4,555 swimmers in 2019 and 3,353 in 2023.

"Is this just a slow recovery from COVID, or is this something we should be concerned about?" asked Coun. Wendy Cheropita.

Turcotte said he was speculating, but that a possible factor in the decline could be an increase in residential pools being used for lessons as well as recreational swimming.

He said one step that will be pitched to council in its plan is seeking outside providers and indoor pools the town could use to offer programming.

"We're looking at a revamping of our programming for aquatics," said Turcotte.

But there has been a slight uptick in registration for advanced swimming courses, ones required for individuals moving forward with becoming certified lifeguards.

"That's a positive trend upwards, that youth are looking to become lifeguards, and we're looking to foster that here in the town," he said.

Summer day camp numbers appear to be on their way back to normal since COVID, when there were only 226 total participants in 2020 between full-week and single-day registration. In 2021 there were 303 users, but those numbers climbed in 2022 with 622 reg-

istrations, and dropped slightly in 2023 with 557 kids signed up.

This year, 392 kids were from Niagara-on-the-Lake, and 165 were non-residents, according to staff's report.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked what the town's advertising timeline is, saying she believes programs should be promoted as early as possible.

Turcotte said the town usually starts marketing its summer programs after the conclusion of March Break.

"We found that in the past if we advertise too early it kind of gets lost in the wash," he said.

"Usually, April is the sweet spot for summer camp," he explained, referring to when the town starts advertising what it has to offer.

O'Connor said "parents are anxious" earlier in the year to start planning summer for their children.

The report was received for information by council.

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# Region disputes police need for new hires

**Kris Dube**  
**The Local**  
**Local Journalism**  
**Initiative Reporter**

The Niagara Regional Police Service's 2024 budget has been handcuffed by regional council until next month.

When Chief Bryan MacCulloch presented the police's proposed \$190-million spending plan, it brought a 7.1 per cent increase to what was allotted by the regional government for 2023.

After being interrogated by regional politicians for more than two hours, it was decided that the budget be sent back to the police services board and reconsidered by council on Dec. 7.

A news release from the NRP on Monday said the board has called a meeting for Dec. 4.

The police service is asking to be accommodated with an inflationary adjustment of 4.8 per cent from the 2023 approved budget to maintain core services, and includes an additional 2.3

per cent increase for service enhancements, stabilization and growth, adding up to more than \$12 million in additional funding.

This includes the hiring of 20 new officers, plus an additional seven to fill vacancies that are currently open within the service, along with several civilian positions, MacCulloch told councillors. He also noted that another 16 officers are needed, but a request for those has been deferred to future budgets.

The City of Niagara Falls covers costs related to the casino patrol unit, an agreement formed many years ago when the first casino opened in the honeymoon capital, and expected to exceed \$5 million in 2024. Asked if the police budget could pull more from Niagara Falls, MacCulloch said that's out of his jurisdiction. "I don't think it's appropriate, and I have no leverage, or ability, or hammer, to have the city pay whatever is requested," said the chief.

When local detachments can't meet their minimum staffing levels, which fluctuates on different days of the week and on weekends, officers are often redeployed to other areas of the region.

This occurred 715 times in 2022 and on 752 occasions so far this year.

"It's a significant draw on resources," said MacCulloch, also pointing to parental and sick leaves playing roles.

Lincoln Reg. Coun. Rob Foster said he was having difficulty with the request for additional programs and hires, when other agencies, boards and commissions under the region's umbrella have all been told to hold the line.

"We've tried to take a responsible, incremental approach to our ask," said MacCulloch, who also noted in the meeting that the 7.1 per cent increase started as a 9.9 per cent hike when the police board started working on its 2024 budget.

"We recognize the impact it's having on the taxpayers of the Niagara Region, but we

also recognize the increased demand and ever-increasing expectations that are being placed on us through the courts and provincial legislation," said MacCulloch.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said he'd prefer to see actuals in the budget, not year-to-year budgets outlined in what was presented to regional council.

He also said he didn't "see a driving need identified" in the budget presentation that equates to a proposed 7.1 per cent increase.

Regional chair Jim Bradley questioned a number of "program changes" and "enhancements" as they are described in the budget report — mostly civilian positions the police service is looking to either create or expand on, at a cost of almost \$5.9 million.

This also includes 20 new frontline constables.

Some of the jobs include a communications training coordinator with an annual salary of almost \$148,000, and a visual content creator



Police Chief Bryan MacCulloch asked for a \$12 million funding increase, but regional council said no and sent it back to the police service board. (Screenshot)

who would earn more than \$112,000 in one year.

"I don't know if it is this year, in fact, I know it isn't," said Bradley about the timing of these requests.

Bradley also said that if council doesn't accept the budget, the police board has the ability to enter a process with what he called "O-Cops," which is the Ontario Civilian

Police Commission, a provincial adjudicator that can investigate budgetary disputes between police services and municipal governments.

"I know it's a bit of a defeat when you do that, but it's an avenue that's available," he said, shortly before a vote was taken to send the budget back to the police services board.



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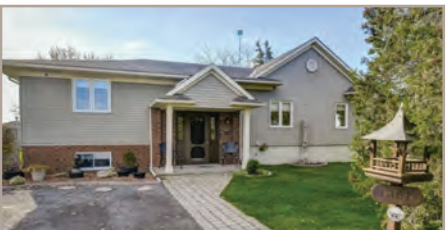
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# Niagara College given gift of energy storage

## Local Staff

A large crane recently helped deliver an industrial-sized battery to Niagara College, which will help its NOTL campus fulfill its commitment to sustainability. Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro is helping the college with energy storage in some of its academic programs.

The 250kW battery storage unit will be used by the college to store energy for peak demand management, and to support the Schools of Environment and Horticulture, and Trades.

“Energy storage will benefit the college and our communi-

ty by reducing both our peak electricity demand and our strain on the local grid,” said Pam Skinner, senior vice-president, college operations.

Valued at \$214,000, the battery energy storage system was used at the local hydro distribution station as a prototype project and research test for renewable energies.

No longer in use by NOTL Hydro, the battery will help college operations achieve cost-savings over the next 15 to 20 years, the battery’s remaining life span.

NOTL Hydro purchased the unit as part of a Government of Ontario Smart Grid Fund proj-

ect to test the viability of using battery storage to increase the capacity of a distribution feeder line to support distributed energy resources, said Hydro president Tim Curtis.

In addition to the government grant, support also came from Panasonic Eco Solutions Canada, which provided the unit at cost, said Curtis.

“We are proud that the battery storage unit will now be used by Niagara College for student development and their own sustainability goals.”

The battery storage unit will store off-peak, low emissions electricity to offset the college’s use of peak electricity,

which is produced from higher emitting sources, and will also minimize demand on the local energy grid during peak times when demand for power is the highest, and when the system relies more heavily on non-renewable energy sources, the news release from Niagara College explained.

The donation will also have a positive impact on student learning. Data can be harnessed from the battery for student case studies in various environmental and technology programs.

The battery is expected to save the college more than \$20,000 each year.



A crane from NOTL Hydro lifts an industrial battery for energy storage on to the NOTL campus of Niagara College. (Supplied)

# Council discusses changes to way budget is handled

## Kris Dube The Local Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Niagara-on-the-Lake council will adjust its budget process when it begins its 2025 spending plan — a process previously used by the last term of council.

Through a motion brought forward by Coun. Sandra O’Connor, the town will once again form an audit and finance committee to review policy and procedures, to go over reports

and to monitor significant changes, O’Connor said during last week’s regular council meeting when it was voted to move ahead with reviving the committee.

“With the new method we’re using, that has kind of gone by the wayside,” she said.

O’Connor’s motion reads that the town previously had an audit and finance committee to assist council in the “provision of effective municipal government by overseeing the administrative systems regarding financial accounting, re-

porting, internal controls, safeguarding of corporate assets, compliance with legal, ethical and regulatory requirements and the efficient and effective use of resources.”

Her motion says the audit function is “not being fulfilled” by the current budget committee, which includes all council members.

The audit committee would consist of some members of council, and those who don’t sit on it would still be able to participate in its business, says O’Connor.

A terms of reference document still needs to be completed.

Town treasurer Kyle Freeborn said an internal, or external, auditor would need to be part of the picture, but O’Connor said the last committee didn’t require one.

“I don’t see why there’s a need for an internal auditor when it’s the same as what we had before,” said O’Connor.

She was also asked by Coun. Maria Mavridis if the intent of her motion was

that an audit function would involve the committee going through budgets “line by line,” which O’Connor agreed is what she’s hoping for.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said he prefers the current system, with the budget being reviewed by all councillors sitting as a committee-of-the-whole.

He likes the idea of an audit mechanism, but not how it is laid out in O’Connor’s motion.

“I know I’m reviewing in detail. I’m coming prepared

to do that at the level I want to do that,” he said.

Coun. Gary Burroughs said he has more than 100 budget-related questions before staff, but understands they are busy and may not have time to get to all of them.

“This kind of committee would provide that solution,” he said.

O’Connor’s motion says part of the committee’s mandate would include reviewing future budgets, 2025 and beyond, before they proceed to council.

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# Shoreline work to take two winters to complete

Continued from page 1

way that will ensure the heritage value of the site.

“We have to do it during the winter to ensure we don’t damage fish habitat,” he says. “We’re working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to work within that window. We are going to create a ramp that goes into the dry ditch on the outside to bring in equipment and materials, so we don’t have to go through the fort or use the stretch of walkway that is currently very popular, or damage the boardwalk.”

The shoreline area includes many non-native and invasive tree and shrub species with root systems

that have caused damage to archeological resources within the earthwork fortification and the surrounding grounds. Some trees and large shrubs are also falling or at risk of falling into the water as the shoreline erodes.

Parks Canada plans to remove this vegetation to support the breakwall construction and then plant native grasses, selected for their minimal maintenance and water requirements. For every tree removed during this work, Parks Canada will plant two new native-species trees or shrubs in the area.

A press release from the federal government says these measures will ensure public safety, safeguard

historic artifacts along the property, and protect Parks Canada administered lands leased by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

Zoetewey says it’s important for people to stay away from the area where the work is being done over the next two years until it is safe to traverse the extended shoreline path some time in 2026.

“People don’t see the damage to the breakwall,” Zoetewey explains. “The undercutting by the water along the shoreline had been really bad. I’m excited that this work is going to address that, and that the new breakwall will meet new standards based on the changes we are experiencing in our environment.”



A shoreline protection project is about to begin, thanks to funding from the federal government. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Once complete, the breakwall will help to ensure public safety and safeguard historic artifacts along the property.

## Water, wastewater costs could increase more than 10 per cent

**Kris Dube**  
The Local  
Local Journalism  
Initiative Reporter

It appears Niagara-on-the-Lake residents will be soaking up an increase on their water and wastewater bills in 2024.

During a budget review committee meeting Tuesday morning, town treasurer Kyle Freeborn told council why the cost is going up.

The town’s water fixed and variable rate increase is proposed at 10.8 per cent, while the wastewater variable and fixed rate is proposed to increase by 12 per cent.

The total impact for an average user if approved by council would be \$107.29, or \$10.99 per month, he said.

Freeborn explained that the region is responsible for treating water and acts as a wholesaler when it comes to distributing it to Niagara’s 12 lower-tier municipalities, which are responsible for infrastructure and keeping it in good repair.

The wastewater budget is driven by increasing regional treatment costs and declining water volume usage, he said.

Coun. Sandra O’Connor asked why rates are increasing when people are using less water.

Freeborn said this helps maintain the same level of service, but also means there is “less water to help spread that cost around,” and that it is put on ratepayers as a result.

The town has also taken steps to keep the increase down in 2024 by putting just \$365,000 into reserves, rather than \$1.05 million as a recent study recommended, he said in his presentation.

This has been done to “mitigate further rate increases,” said Freeborn, also noting that putting the full amount into reserves would cause a 19 per cent increase.

The town has “substantial funds in the reserve,” totalling nearly \$3.7 million, nearly \$2.2 million more than what was recommend-

ed in the study, Freeborn said.

Forty-one per cent of the water and wastewater budget is related to regional charges, said Freeborn, and has increased by about \$421,000 since last year.

Freeborn’s presentation was received for informational purposes — council has yet to rubber-stamp its 2024 budget.

In a separate report, council also approved for information a breakdown of employee and contract costs and how they compare to last year.

The town is projected to spend more than \$1.5 million on 12 full-time employees, and \$82,000 on contracts.

Last year, the town spent more than \$116,000 on outside contracts, and spent \$1.41 million on 12 full-time employees.

Staff said in its report that these increases are “primarily reflective of changes in steps within the payband and estimated increases in salary rates.”

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# COMMENT

## Climate change as a buzzword in politics



Owen Bjorgan  
Special to The Local

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When kids in the school-yard fight over the soccer ball (think climate change), the conversation is lost on why the ball is important. The focus instead shifts to the fight itself (think government officials), as the world has become accustomed to watching the fighters more than the ball.

When you take your eye off the ball in the sport of life, there can be heavy-duty consequences.

I like to stress the inefficacy and danger in politicizing important topics, such as climate change, into black or white scenarios. What the last handful of years has shown us is that every crisis, big or little, fast or slow, can become politicized in an instant. Once that happens, the issue rarely gets the attention and action it desperately requires.

What's the cynical saying again? Never let a crisis go to waste. Someone needs your votes.

That exact someone is likely in an extremely affluent position, with troubling irony often surrounding their message. In a recent report released by The Guardian, Oxfam and the Stockholm Environmental Institute found that the richest one per cent of the world's population release more carbon into the air than the two-thirds of poorest people in the world.

Furthermore, the same study used 2019 data to reveal how 16 per cent of global carbon emis-

sions came from that richest one per cent — an equal amount emitted to approximately five billion of the poorest people combined. That divide has likely increased since wealth inequality has been driven even deeper by COVID-19 times. The rich continue to win, the poor continue to lose, and the once-stable environment which sustains life becomes further destroyed.

Cue the incoming "but politicians fly a private jet everywhere while telling us, or taxing us, on how to be more climate change conscious." I can understand the perceived hypocrisy. Yet, I also understand and accept that there is such a great spread of wealth and job positions in the world, some people will always experience a remarkably different lifestyle.

I just wish said politicians would use their power and leverage to take meaningful action on climate change, and doing so without harming the livelihoods

of their citizens along the way. To go out on a limb here, the Liberals certainly have a better reputation on climate change messaging than the competing Conservatives on a federal level in Canada. Yet, as every accord and agreement regarding climate change pops up in the news headlines every year; we will not be meeting targets — again.

As election seasons loom for the U.S., and Canada one year later, we have also seen some interesting characters pop up quietly outside of our North American world. For example, the media was quick to recognize that the recently-elected Argentinian president is a right-wing "climate change denier."

This term gets attached to politicians more than we have ever witnessed in the past. Is this simply a sign of the times, or is it proof that climate change is politicized beyond the point of no return?

As the Cop26 climate meet-

ing begins in Dubai, U.S. President Joe Biden has announced he will not be attending with other world leaders. He is reportedly focused on the Israel-Hamas war and his 2024 presidential campaign. And he is not alone — there are other world leaders also signalling they won't be going to the important two-week meeting on climate change.

Why would a majority elect someone who openly goes against a scientifically-proven and indisputable trend of human-accelerated climate change? There are time-bomb threats of climate change refugees, food shortages, water scarcity, severe weather events and ecological system collapses all around us.

My answer, from a place of empathy and realism, is that our human species is ultimately just another animal. When we are scared of not living the lives we want due to inflation, we stop car-

ing about the long burn of climate change. When wars pop up in Russia-Ukraine or Israel-Hamas scenarios, we fear for our immediate security instead of fearing an ocean rise in a few decades. Our species has always been more attune to the acute threat versus the long term one — a respectable survival instinct that also fails to grasp the bigger picture.

Personally, I would like to see mainstream media get back to educating people about climate change versus steering them toward picking sides about it. For the sake of everyone, especially future generations, I hope the world finds peace and can collectively use the same technology we use for space ships, AI and medical advancements to tackle climate change, while helping, versus crushing, people along the way.

But maybe that is too much to ask for. Time will tell, in the next news cycle, and the next generation.

## Doug Ford debacles a four-year trend



Wayne Gates, MPP  
Niagara Falls Riding

I have served as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Niagara-on-the-Lake for four terms. And over the past five years, since the Ford government came to power, there has been a troubling trend of poor governance and in some cases, corrup-

tion, in our provincial government.

We have seen this firsthand as Bill 23 to open the Greenbelt came into effect in Ontario. This legislation was rushed through, without proper consultation from municipalities, Indigenous communities or the public. When it was tabled and passed last fall, municipalities from across the province, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, urged the Ford government to use caution — but the government pushed forward.

Bill 23 not only opened the Greenbelt for housing development, threatening the sanctity of our agriculture, tourism industries and cultural heritage, but also down-loaded development costs unto municipalities, straining local budgets and passing more costs to the taxpayer.

We know now the process was tainted from the start — and the RCMP is in the midst of a criminal investigation into the whole affair.

Determining whether this was criminal is a job left to the RCMP, but what

I can say for certainty is the Ford government wasted an entire year, and put our local heritage and industry in jeopardy, without addressing our housing crisis in Ontario with thoughtful solutions and constructive policy.

There have been troubling reports about what the Ford government is doing to Ontario Place by granting a private foreign company a 95-year lease to operate a private, for-profit luxury spa, located on acres of publicly owned waterfront land, and involving hundred of millions of dollars from the public coffers.

There has been a lack of openness and transparency from the government on this process — similar to what we have seen on Bill 23.

But what we do know is that the Ford government is planning to pay upwards of half a billion dollars of taxpayer money — approximately \$650 million — to a private Austrian company

for construction of an underground parking lot. To me, this is not a prudent use of taxpayer funds.

Just last week, we were able to obtain documents that suggest a close friend and former employee of the Premier, Amin Massoudi, was paid nearly \$250,000 for a private communications contract while also working as Ford's principal secretary. It appears as though Ford double-billed the Ontario taxpayer, and is trying to hide this information from the public.

We also know how Ford has managed the autism file — going against the recommendations of the government's own Autism Advisory Panel and leaving families across Ontario who have children living with autism struggling to access services. We have watched the wait-list for services grow to more than 60,000 names.

And finally, we have this government's healthcare debacle: while people here in our community struggle to access services and deal with

Continued on page 7



## View from the couch

Donald Combe  
Special to The Local

These first segments of *The Crown*, Season Six (Netflix, 2023) discreetly, yet openly, deal with the deep problems that all involved had to face in the period sur-

rounding Diana's affair with Dodi and their subsequent deaths. Every one of the characters was innocent, yet also guilty. The Queen was sympathetic, yet had to be objective. The series is a statement on duty vs desires, and I found it compelling "history/theatre."

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

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## Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week we gave the wrong answer — we were a week behind. So two weeks ago Ben was on the side of Four Mile Creek Road, with the statue of the white horse behind him, and last week he was at the St. Davids Fire Station — no answers to either of those. This week's should be easy.



## COMMENT

*Local*

## LETTERS Council needs to make a decision about patios

In *The Local* (Nov. 22), there was an interesting article that 'Permanent patios don't sit well with councillors.'

Information was provided by staff on the amount of money that the town would lose in parking revenue as well as a cash in lieu option/parking rate for temporary patios occupying municipal parking stalls. This information was very informative.

Coincidentally, on the same day in the *Globe and Mail*, it was reported that during the summer of 2021, a total of \$181 million was spent by residents at curbside patios in Toronto. Had the space for parking been exclusively used for parking

as in the past, a total of \$ 3.7 million would have been realized by the city. In other words, curbside patios made a whopping 49 times more money than parking spaces.

In the same article, it indicated that Torontonians were generally embarrassed by the appearance of their curbside patios.

In the Town of Oakville, a community I frequently visit, the main downtown roadway, Lakeshore Road East, has recently completed refurbishing the streetscape with the planting of new trees, the placement of benches, waste receptacles, improved signage and yes, wider sidewalks as

well as other amenities. The wider sidewalks were to be partially used to enhance outdoor dining opportunities. Instead, several curbside patios were installed along the sidewalks.

This has not set well with some of the merchants along the street who feel that restaurants have received preferential treatment and that space that was previously dedicated for parking has potentially created a negative situation for their business. The Town of Oakville will eventually need to decide whether to remove or retain curbside patios as the case is in Niagara-on-the-Lake and elsewhere.

Here, council needs to decide whether or not to either retain or remove the curbside patios that have been there since 2020. Approval was given by the previous council for the installation of curbside patios on a temporary basis to help restaurants as a temporary measure to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. The present council will also need to decide if the current 'corral' structures add to the ambience of Queen Street. Should council decide to keep curbside patios in place, they will need to identify where they are to be located as well as state the actual number of patios that will be approved

by the municipality.

Compared to other cities that I have visited, the 'corral' patios that are found in Niagara-on-the-Lake as well as many other cities and towns are visual eyesores. They pale in comparison to the well-known street side patios found in Paris, New York City, Amsterdam and Montreal.

The patios found in our community do not complement the wonderful floral displays along Queen Street that Communities in Bloom recognized several years ago.

A design standard for curbside patios should be carefully considered. This standard should visually

enhance the appearance of the streetscape of Niagara-on-the-Lake as well as the well-known heritage of our community.

The culinary experience at any curbside patio should not be negatively impacted by the appearance of the structure.

It's apparent that the longer council takes to make a decision to remove or retain the curbside patios, that the decision process will only be that much more difficult. I have decided that the 'corral' style curbside patios are inappropriate. It's decision time for council!

**John Morley**  
NOTL

## Library interview with Adriana Vizzari

**Cathy Simpson**  
NOTL Public Library CEO

*The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library board and staff are exploring the special place books, reading, storytelling and libraries hold in the hearts of community members. This questionnaire prompts introspection and reflection, offering a unique lens through which to examine the bond between readers and their connection to books, storytelling and libraries.*

Adriana Vizzari is a Niagara-on-the-Lake councillor, library board council representative, and a St. Davids mother of four. She was born and raised in Niagara and after attending the University of Waterloo for Business and Human Resources Management, moved back with her husband, Cory.

She is active in the community and is often found at one of the town parks, rinks, pools and, of course, the library. Her passion for the community and reading is why she volunteered to sit on the library board. She is an excellent library ambassador to town council, keeping them informed about what we do and what we need to better serve the community. She is also a voice for youth and is working to bring more services to all NOTL settlement areas.

**Q. What sparked your love of reading?**

Definitely in childhood when we spent a lot of time at the library. I grew up in Thorold and we were always walking to the library or going there with my mom. I come from a family of six and am the oldest. The library was a great place to go where everybody could find something to do. One of the things I really loved were magazines. I got an opportunity to see *National Geographic Kids* or those teenybopper magazines that my mom would never buy for

me. I loved looking through all the new magazine issues and thought that was really cool. When movies were added to the collection, it was a real treat.

**Q. What's your favourite childhood library memory?**

Probably just getting lost in there and spending hours. When you walked into the Thorold Public Library they had a YA sign for the young adults section. I remember going there and trying to read the entire YA stack starting with *Sweet Valley High* and *Nancy Drew*. When the computer catalogue arrived, I could search for books and that felt big. It was just a weekly adventure.

**Q. How do you encourage your children to read?**

There's so much more offered at the library now for kids. There's the programming, there's Lego, there's art, all those things. When the kids were very young, it was our community hub. As a mom at home with young kids, it was a lifeline; it was where you could find other moms. We did the baby and toddler story times and I found library visits were something all four of us could do together. The library is so inclusive; we could all enjoy the same books if there was a story time or they could go do their own thing. It was an easy fit for kids of different ages.

**Q. Do you read them any of your childhood favourites?**

Yes! Dr. Seuss is a huge, huge love in our house. We're big fans of the Grinch. I read *Ramona* as a kid so I was really excited to get my kids into the *Ramona* books. *The Baby Sitters Club* is in graphic novels now and my kids are so into the graphic novels. I read a lot of Robert Munsch in childhood and my kids really love his books.

**Q. What do you think about e-books?**

Whatever format gets

your kids to read is good. The same with graphic novels; if they're checking out a graphic novel along with a novel, they're reading. I think there's nothing like a real book but when they get older and want to read e-books, I'm very open to that. I actually did have an e-book reader when the kids were babies. When I was nursing, it was easier to flip e-book pages than print pages. An e-reader is my number one gift for new moms because I know they'll be reading one-handed for a while. Once those years were behind me, I went back to real, paper books.

**Q. Have you ever been in a book club?**

Not a formal book club but our little mom group, and the groups that started at the library, would suggest we read a book together. We also have informal book chats at home with my husband and kids. It's so fun to watch my older ones suggest books to my younger ones. The older sibling will say "Oh, when I was in Grade 3, this is what I loved."

**Q. What have you been reading lately?**

Lots of town council information packages! I just finished the two-book series, *It Ends With Us* and *It Starts With Us* by Coleen Hoover. I have a couple books on my nightstand right now: *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett, Malcolm Gladwell's *Talking to Strangers*, which was a gift, and Christine Sinclair's memoir *Playing the Long Game* that I just read to my older girls. I read a mix of fiction and nonfiction.

**Q. How do you find time to read with such a busy life?**

The thing about reading is, it's a habit. If you make a habit of a half an hour in the evening or with kids, it's a hard stop at the end of their day. When I was little, it was the weekly trip to the library. Now, in my mom years, I'm

driving the kids to soccer and swimming so I have a book buried in my bag to read while I wait. The book lockers in St. Davids and lockers and

vending machine at the Virgil arena are very helpful. We can make a quick stop to pick up a hold in St. Davids or browse the books at the arena when

one is skating and the rest of us are waiting. I think they're vital to the community and make the library accessible to all the villages.



Adriana Vizzari with her four youngsters, Antonia, Gigi, Matthew and Loretta, at the St. Davids book locker. (Supplied)

## Health care also a concern

Continued from page 6

frustrating wait times, the premier is underfunding our public healthcare.

It has been revealed recently that the Ford government is now paying for-profit clinics between two and four times the amount they pay hospitals for OHIP-covered surgeries. Ford's former Health Minister Christine Elliot is now lobbying on behalf of Clearpoint Health Network, the largest chain of private surgical clinics in the country.

This is concerning, given how important it is that we ensure every resident re-

ceives efficient and thorough healthcare treatment.

We need to be focused on providing our community with the healthcare services we need, such as getting a nurse practitioner service back in NOTL.

When it comes to our community's struggle to get nurse practitioner services, I have continued to press Ford's health minister in Question Period and in committee on when the government is going to follow up on their promises and deliver this much needed service for our community — only to be told to be "patient" on the nurse practitioner issue.

All in all, this adds up to a pattern — that instead of addressing the challenges we face in the province, the premier continues to mis-manage our provincial government — and there are disturbing allegations and evidence of corruption.

The people of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Ontario more broadly deserve a provincial government that can competently manage and staff the bureaucracy, address the challenges we face, handle taxpayer dollars with prudence while investing in public services, and grant Ontarians the openness and transparency they deserve.



# Christmas cookie sale helps children with AIDs, HIV

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

The Nyanyas of Niagara are once again selling holiday cookies, a fundraiser to help the Stephen Lewis Foundation's grandmothers' campaign.

With the help of Erinn Lockard of Sweets & Swirls, the fundraiser is similar to last year's holiday cookie sale, says Nyanya Linda Carleton, except

instead of shortbread, there will be a choice of sugar cookies or ginger cookies in a decorative bag, with 20 cookies for \$20.

They make great treats for family members, friends or neighbours, says Carleton, and it makes fundraising simple for the small group of volunteers while supporting a great cause.

While the goal remains to help the Stephen Lewis campaign to raise money in response

to the crisis faced by African grandmothers as they struggle to raise millions of children orphaned by AIDS, the focus has changed slightly to support African women of all ages in areas such as health and education, "to help them learn to protect themselves, so they can stay healthy, grow up and have their own kids," says Carleton.

"HIV and AIDS has had devastating impacts on children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa. Stephen Lewis Foundation partners deliver HIV prevention, treatment and care that supports their multi-dimensional needs, so they can stay healthy and thrive," says Carleton. Programs delivered by foundation partners "save and improve the lives of thousands of children and youth who are supported to access education, adhere to HIV treatment, and become active leaders in their communities."

While Stephen Lewis himself is not as involved as he

once was, he is still the impetus behind the organization, with help from his daughter.

With a small group of Nyanyas to volunteer, fundraising efforts have been simplified, says Carleton, and those interested in joining or helping out are being asked to give a couple of hours at a time for tasks such as packaging the cookies, getting people involved at a level they are comfortable with "a little at a time."

She stresses cookies have to be pre-ordered by an email to the Nyanyas, not through Lockard. "Erinn is so lovely, doing this for us when she's so busy. She doesn't have time to talk orders for us."

Orders must be emailed Dec. 10 to nyanyas2018@gmail.com

Orders can be picked up Dec. 18 or Dec. 19 between 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at Sweets & Swirls Cafe in the Community Centre.

Payment can be by e-transfer to email: nyanyas2018@gmail.com; password: cookies, or cookies can be paid for by cash when picking up an order.

## Carols for Christmas



At St. Saviour's Church in Queenston, Rev. Janet Cashin and organist Michael Tansley are preparing final touches for Carols for Christmas, which will be held at the church on Sunday, Dec. 17 at 4 p.m. The Newark Singers will perform Christmas works by a variety of composers, and there will be readings, along with an opportunity for the audience to participate in some favourite carols. Admission is a freewill offering with proceeds to St. Saviour's. (Supplied)

## Stocking project expanding

### Local Staff

Every year Joan King puts out a call for help with her stocking project, and every year it comes pouring in, often from the same people who help out every year.

Last holiday season more than 100 volunteers pitched in, filling 220 stockings to deliver to the three long-term care homes in NOTL. This year will likely be about the same, with Crossroads School among the many others who are already onboard to help.

King would also like to expand her project — she's asking anyone who knows a senior living on their own to contact her, hoping to be able to deliver a stocking to them as well — she

says to call her at 905-262-5898, or email joankemp10@yahoo.ca.

This year she received an unexpected offer from a new business in town. Apple Hill Apothecary is offering to make it a little easier by suggesting rather than drive to Queenston to drop off stockings, they can be left at the Niagara Stone Road store up until Dec. 19.

They will also stuff stockings if volunteers want to drop off stocking stuffers, and they have lots of small items that would be perfect to add to them.

As a thank you "for being so awesome," those who donate will receive a little token of appreciation from Apple Hill, located at 758 Niagara Stone Road, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven



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# Queenston Women's Chorus presents *Christmas Wishes*

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

The Queenston Women's Chorus will be presenting its season concert *Christmas Wishes* Sunday at Trillium United Church in St. Catharines.

The women begin rehearsing Christmas carols in September so they'll be ready when the big day comes.

Formerly called the Queenston Ladies Choir, formed in 2003 under the direction of founder Lisa Cossens Brillion, the name was changed a couple of years ago to better reflect a wider age group the choir is attracting — the 26 singers range from 25 to 80, Brillion says, with a couple of original members still part of the group. There are also still some women from Queenston, but members now come from across the Niagara Region.

The choir has had to move around a bit for their performances. They were first held in Queenston, then moved to St. Mark's Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and have settled now at Trillium where they performed last year, "a beautiful space" for a concert, she says.

It has steps for the singers to stand at different levels, holds a bigger audience, "and they've treated us really



The Queenston Women's Chorus rehearsing. (Supplied)

well," she adds. They will also be holding a reception following their performance.

Rehearsals are still held at St. David's Queenston United Church, where Brillion is the organist and choir director.

As always, Sunday's concert will include a variety of Christmas classics, both sacred and secular, and one by Harris Loewen, retired head of choral studies at Brock University, says Brillion.

It will also feature holiday favourites such as *Deck the Halls*, *White Christmas*, and Gordon Lightfoot's *Song for a Winter's Night*,

promises Brillion.

The choir is also looking forward to singing on Queen Street, as part of a new NOTL Chamber of Commerce initiative to offer performances on the afternoon of the Candlelight Stroll. The Queenston Women's Chorus will be singing from the steps of the Court House at about 3:45 p.m. Dec. 1, with a sample of their Christmas songs.

The Niagara Star Singers, under the direction of Lisa's daughter, Celeste Brillion, will also be performing.

Proceeds from *Christmas Wishes*, Sunday, Dec. 3

at 3 p.m. will go to Newark Neighbours and the Niagara Festival of Performing Arts Scholarship Fund.

Trillium United Church is at 315 Linwell Road in St. Catharines.

Tickets are \$20, \$15 for students, and are available at the door.

## Holiday singalong returns at Wayside Chapel

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

The Wayside Chapel holiday singalong was such a success last December, it's looking like it might be an annual event.

Organizer Rick Meloen says as the happy crowd soaking up the Christmas spirit dispersed last year, he promised it would return.

He's hoping for another good day, although last

year was a little on the chilly side — dress warmly, he cautions.

It was Albrecht Seeger, a local grape-grower, who thought of the idea of a Christmas celebration and suggested the singalong. "He'd been asking me to do this for years, and I finally agreed," says Meloen, who was delighted with the turnout.

There will be a good mix of traditional carols as well as the rousing Christ-

mas tunes everyone loves, and Meloen says he has learned to have more song sheets to pass around — he had said he would be happy if 10 people showed, but instead there were at least 60, as well as a tour bus of curious visitors who arrived toward the end of the event.

The Living Water Wayside Chapel singalong, on the Niagara River Parkway beside Walker's Country Market, is Dec. 9, at 3 p.m.



Dianne Ticknor, pictured here with Carl Finkle and Rick Meloen, led the carol sing at the Wayside Chapel last year and will be back Dec. 9. (File photo)



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# Fundraiser for fatherless families of farmworkers

**Jane Andres**  
**The Local**

The Niagara Workers Welcome is hosting an on-line fundraiser until Dec. 20 to support the families of neighbours who have tragically lost their lives while on the migrant farmwork program. The goal is to raise \$3,000 to provide one month of groceries to three families in Jamaica.

The families of 31-year-old Kemar Campbell and 34-year-old Daniel Brown,

both of whom worked on a Niagara-on-the-Lake farm and passed away in their sleep, are the first two fundraiser recipients.

When Campbell left Jamaica for Niagara, he had a four-month-old daughter and was participating in the farmwork program for the first time.

Brown leaves behind two young daughters, a four-year-old and a newborn.

Both men worked on the same farm and would often connect about the joys of young fatherhood and the pain of family separation.

The third fundraiser recipient is the family of Jeel Stewart, who was permanently injured on the job at a NOTL nursery in 2008. Suffering from severed tendons and nerves in his hand has prevented him from working for the past 15 years, resulting in the severe decline of his health. He has five children.

Seasonal farmworkers are our neighbours and friends, not a disposable workforce.

We are building a caring community together and that care extends to families back home in the Caribbean. No family should have to go through these tragedies alone. For Campbell and Brown's families, it will be their first Christmas without their loved ones.

The Niagara Workers Welcome invites everyone to share and contribute to the fundraiser and show community support for the families of these men. Donations of \$100 and more will be entered into a draw to win a one-night getaway at Applewood Hollow Bed and Breakfast.

For more information or to donate via eTransfer, please contact [niagaraworkerswelcome@gmail.com](mailto:niagaraworkerswelcome@gmail.com) with the memo Family Fund. For more information, visit [workerswelcomeniagara.com](http://workerswelcomeniagara.com).

*Niagara Workers Welcome is a grassroots initiative dedicated to creating a caring community with our farmworker neighbours. Started by local resident and small business owner Jane Andres, Niagara Workers Welcome has coordinated welcome bags and events for 16 years. In 2023, 642 seasonal farmworkers received welcome kits containing necessities and notes of appreciation.*



Kemar Campbell



Daniel Brown with his wife and daughter. (Photos supplied)



Jeel Stewart and his family.

## Local HOME of the WEEK

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## Raising funds for palliative care



Rainer Hummel and the Hummel family's \$25,000 matching donation helped raise \$67,083 for palliative care and Ben's Compassionate Community, making 2023 the best year yet for fundraising and participation. Palliative Care's Tim Taylor was the top fundraiser once again this year. Alan Ash (above) from the Ukesters, Ron Kassie, the Healing Cycle's executive director, Raiana Schwenker, Rainer Hummel, Bonnie Bagnulo, Sean Simpson and Santa, sometimes known as Tim Taylor, celebrate the Healing Cycle success. (Photos supplied)



While he is still in town Dec. 9 Santa (right) will be greeting children of all ages at the community centre from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for free hot chocolate and cookies, a colouring contest and children's stories. "Just another way that NOTL Community Palliative Care Service raises awareness that children matter to us too," says executive director Bonnie Bagnulo.



# Icebreakers Comedy Fest returns for 10th year

**Penny Coles**  
The Local

When Toronto comic Jeff Paul comes home to Niagara-on-the-Lake for the 10th anniversary of the Icebreakers Comedy Festival, those attending the shows he has organized can count on lots of laughs.

For the last 10 years, he has arranged successful, sold-out comedy events for his hometown, where he and the comics he brings with him love to perform.

Paul, a St. Michael and Niagara District Secondary School grad, says he looks forward to getting out of the big city, where he performs regularly, to instead tell jokes in front of family, friends and the visitors who come for the Icewine Festival. He always has fun while he's here, and he makes sure the comics he lines up for three hilarious nights and four shows also have a good time.

During the rest of the year, when Paul performs at festivals and comedy clubs, he says he begins making a mental list, then an actual list of comics he thinks will be a good fit in NOTL. When it's time to reach out to those on the top of his list, he just has to hope they're available.

He describes the end of January as the perfect time for that.

Early in the New Year, he says, when people are on a "healthcare blitz," feeling like they've had too much to eat and drink, too much partying and spent too much money, they

swear off all the excesses of the holiday season and stay home.

But then the need to get out builds up throughout the month, as the health kick wears off and New Year's resolutions are mostly in the past, "and there isn't much going on anywhere else," says Paul. That makes the comedy festival in NOTL look pretty attractive for locals, visitors from around the region and tourists, especially from the U.S.

It also is planned to coincide with the Icewine Festival, which attracts visitors to town who are looking for evening entertainment.

That's how the Icebreakers Comedy Festival began, he says, with the help of two of his high school friends, Maria Mavridis and Tim Balasiuk. Paul's wife, Kyra Williams, is also a huge help — he describes her as "the glue that holds this together."

While the comedy festival coincides with the Chamber's icewine celebration, "it has always been an independent event, and even if there was no Icewine Festival, we'd still be doing this."

He's also had support from his friend Paul Harber of Ravine Vineyard Estates Winery — he has held some shows there — as well as from the MacNeill family from Niagara Oast House Brewers, also a great venue for comedy.

This year the festival opens Thursday, Jan. 25, and the first show is almost sold out. Locals hoping to see Joe Pillitteri emceeding at Oast better get their tickets soon. The line-up

for that event includes Tamara Shevon and headliner Darrin Rose, one of the country's best TV and film stars, including appearances on The Late Late Show on CBS.

It's not difficult convincing some of the best comedians in the country, those who perform at all the major comedy festivals, in film and on TV, to come to Niagara-on-the-Lake, he says. It's a beautiful town that has much to offer visitors, and he makes sure they see the best of it. And in return, while they're here, they will do their best work because they're having fun themselves.

"I've worked with most of them throughout the year," says Paul about this year's line-up, and some are friends of his. A few have performed at past Icebreaker's Festivals, but most will be here for the first time.

"The better time you show them, the better the show they give you. We put them up somewhere nice, feed them well and they give us a great show."

They stay at Colonel Butler Inn, mostly eat at the Sandtrap Pub and Grill right down the street, and can spend some time checking out the Icewine Festival.

"They like the whole experience, and I like giving them that experience."

Paul still has a day job as a program coordinator at CTV, which he jokes about being "an 18-year entry level position," but says it is perfect for him — he can work from home, and it allows him to pursue his main focus, which is performing by night at comedy festivals and clubs.

Although some audience members will go to see a particular comic they like to see, one they may watch for or follow from one club to another, in his experience, Paul says, it's typical for people to choose shows for their venue, rather than the comics performing.

This year, he is particularly pleased with the performers he is bringing to town for the 10th anniversary. "It's a big milestone, and we have an amazing line-up of great comics. That's why people keep coming back. They may not know the comics by name, but we've earned their trust. They know I bring great comics who put on great shows."

And we have to appeal to a wide range of ages, from teenagers to seniors, and build their trust so that they know we're going to bring them something new and something they'll enjoy."

The Pillitteri opening at Oast will be followed by two shows Friday at Corks Winebar and Eatery, the first with comic Sandra Battaglini hosting, and Ian Gordon, Jean Paul and Rob Bebenek performing.

Following that is the Melt-down, the late-night show at Corks, with its "dark and often dirty content." It's billed on the festival website as "our very own foul-mouthed festival founder Jeff Paul" hosting a

"line-up of degenerates, including Rebecca Reeds, Nick Reynoldson and Hunter Collin."

The final show, the CBC Radio Gala, is at the Court House Saturday night. It is again being recorded for CBC's Laugh Out Loud, with the popular radio show's host Ali Hassan emceeding the line-up of some of Canada's top comedians, including Lianne Mauladin, Gavin Stephens, Tom Henry, Allie Pearce, Keith Pedro and Matt Wright. The gala tickets also always sell out quickly, says Paul.

Tickets for all shows are available at [www.icebreaker-comedy.com/shows](http://www.icebreaker-comedy.com/shows).



Tim Balasiuk, organizer Jeff Paul, Maria Mavridis and Paul's wife Kyra Williams are instrumental in making sure the Icebreakers Comedy Festival is a success. (Supplied)

## Icewine Festival offers three weekends of celebration

**Local Staff**

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce will present the 29th Icewine Festival this January, with the traditional Icewine Village transforming Queen Street into a winter wonderland on two weekends, Jan. 20 and 21, and 27 and 28.

It will feature an array of ice wines from local wineries and icewine culinary treats.

Guests to the Icewine Village will be offered live entertainment, an enlightening speaker series, culinary and mixology demonstrations and more.

New this year is the Ice Bar at the Outlet Collection at Niagara, Jan. 13 and 14, with a VIP Lounge offering private fire tables, Muskoka chair seating, a private bar and enhanced culinary offerings with passes priced at \$150 per person.

The festival's hallmark event, the Sparkle & Ice Celebration, takes place on Jan. 26 at the Court House, from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. This event features celebrated winemakers presenting their favourite VQA

wines paired with icewine-inspired culinary creations and signature icewine cocktails. The night includes live entertainment culminating in a firework display while enjoy-

ing icewine from ice glasses.

Tickets for Sparkle & Ice are \$95 per person. For event details or tickets contact Tourism NOTL or visit [niagaraonthelake.com](http://niagaraonthelake.com).



Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL president Minerva Ward at last year's Icewine Festival on Queen Street. (File photo)



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# Local Love

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- 1/4 cup Soda Water
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- Fresh or frozen fruit (strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, oranges, limes, etc)

**Directions :** Pour wine, cranberry juice and orange juice into a pitcher. Add OLIV Balsamic. Stir to mix well. Add fruit and mix again. Store in fridge until ready to serve. To serve - add ice to two large wine glasses. Add some fruit from the pitcher of sangria to each glass. Divide sangria between 2 glasses. Top with soda. Add fruit (sliced orange, lemon or lime) to rim of glass for garnish. Serves 2



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# Manhattan Transfer's last Canadian performance coming up

It will be in St. Catharines, Dec. 3 for Bravo Niagara!

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

Those in attendance at the legendary Manhattan Transfer concert to be held Dec. 3 at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre will be the last people to see the vocal group perform in Canada. Likely ever.

The two original members of the vocal group, alto Janis Siegel and tenor Alan Paul, along with sopranos Laurel Masse and Cheryl Bentyne, have decided to hang up their microphones after their current 50th Anniversary tour. Though their final concert is scheduled for Dec. 15 at Los Angeles, California's Walt Disney Concert Hall, their farewell to Canada comes 12 days earlier as a Bravo Niagara! Festival performance.

"They are iconic," Bravo Niagara! co-founder Christine Mori recently told The Local. "We are so happy to have them for their final tour. And it's close to Christmas, so they will be doing some Christmas music, too."

In an email to The Local, Siegel confirmed that the decision to stop the long grind of touring and to retire is definitely the right one. But she doesn't rule out the possibility of a few one-off trips with her singing mates some time in the future.

"I personally would love to do our 50th anniversary show in cities and countries where we haven't been able to do it yet," said Siegel. "It would be great to once again hit some of the places where we have toured a lot over the years, the ones we couldn't get to on this tour."

Led by original member Tim Hauser, who passed away in October, 2014, The Manhattan Transfer emerged from New York City's avant-garde scene in 1972.

They soon signed with Atlantic Records and released their first major album in 1975. That same year they captured broader attention when they starred in their own 1975 CBS-TV variety series as a summer replacement for *The Cher (Bono) Show*. They caught on internationally a year later when *Chanson D'Amour* from their 1976 *Coming Out* album became a surprise number one hit in Europe.

The immensely influential jazz vocal group won its first two Grammy Awards in 1979 for their version of jazz fusion band Weather Report's song *Birdland*. And six years later they set a record when their album *Vocalese*

became the greatest Grammy nominated jazz album in history with 12 nominations in a single year.

After winning 10 Grammys and selling millions of records, it's also time for the singing quartet to retire from the studio. Their final album of new recordings, 2022's *Fifty*, largely a collaboration with Germany's WDR Funkhausorchester Köln, revisited many of their most beloved songs through their career with new musical accompaniment.

"I don't think of it as a greatest hits record," Siegel said. "It was more of a pandemic project. We really only had two big hits, in *Chanson D'Amour* and *Twilight Zone* anyway. We just really enjoyed working with them so thought it would be a great idea."

Siegel adds, though, that their current record label, Concord, is holding onto a five CD box set that includes some unreleased tracks from the vaults. She is fervently hoping that collection sees the light of day some time soon.

Over five decades The Manhattan Transfer has worked with some of the best vocalists of the times, both live and in the studio. Siegel says it was thrilling to collaborate with Johnny Mandel on the group's first Christmas record (1992's *The Christmas Album*).

"Singing with Ella (Fitzgerald) live on The Grammy telecast was certainly a high point," she adds. "Other collaborations that stand out for me were with Take 6, Arif Mardin, Willie Nelson, Boz Scaggs, The Modern Jazz Quartet and a live version of *Birdland* with Weather Report."

As she reflects on the group's final performance north of her native U.S., Siegel also has fond memories of collaborating with Canadian musicians such as Marc Jordan, Andrew Kesler and Don Breithaupt.

"And we played the Montreal Jazz Festival many, many times," adds Siegel. "We also played Toronto and Vancouver a lot. I do wish, though, that we had toured more of Canada because we love the country."

Lucky local fans will have a chance to say they were there when the legendary Manhattan Transfer performed for the very last time in Canada this Sunday, Dec. 3. Siegel, Paul, Masse and Bentyne will take to the stage at the PAC's Partridge Hall at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at [bravoniagara.org](http://bravoniagara.org).



Cheryl Bentyne, Trist Curless, Alan Paul, and Janis Siegel of The Manhattan Transfer. (Supplied)

## Strike a Pose: The Art of Self-Obsession

Local Staff

From a brush stroke to the press of a button, capturing a likeness can be a lifelong obsession, and an activity that many of us today cannot live without, says a news release from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

The latest exhibition at the museum, *Strike a Pose – The Art of Self-Obsession*, shows how the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake have been documenting themselves for centuries, whether in paint, ink, pencils, photography or pixels, providing the museum with a rich visual history.

*Strike a Pose – The Art of Self-Obsession* opens this weekend for the Holiday

House Tours, Dec. 1 and 2, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and runs to the end of April.

Sponsored by Niagara-based Selfie Mode, their Selfie Booth will add a fun and interactive element to the exhibit. Keen selfie-posers are encouraged to take a picture of themselves, which can then be included in the exhibit.

"We're lucky to have a long history with photography here," said the museum's assistant curator Shawna Butts. "For example, many of the pictures I chose for this exhibit were taken by photographer William Quinn, who had his studio in the family home on Ricardo Street."

Local historian Joseph

Masters writes that locals used to enjoy watching Quinn set up his gear. "And once he was underneath his camera hood," said Butts, "according to Masters, they'd give him some swift kicks in the rear!"

Luckily today, local photographers are treated a little more gently.

Before the advent of photography, the only way for people to leave behind a tangible and visible legacy was to immortalize themselves in paintings and drawings. This exhibit gives the museum the opportunity to highlight examples of early settler portraits, including Mary and Peter Servos, John Crooks, and Captain William Milloy.

As well, the museum has a unique collection of miniatures, handheld portraits that were popular well into the 20th century. One rare image is that Laura Secord, created several years before her death.

Curating this exhibit has allowed Butts to show the similarities in how artists created a portrait, how photographers created a studio image and how today's selfies are just as carefully posed, edited and shared.

Visitors are encouraged to take photographs and share them widely, with a promise that no one will receive a kick in the rear end.

For more information visit [www.notlmuseum.ca](http://www.notlmuseum.ca)

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# Extra! Extra! Yellow Door's Newsies a hot ticket

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

Founder and artistic producer Andorlie Hillstrom expected Yellow Door Theatre Project's production of *Newsies* to be popular, but not quite this popular.

As of press time, all school matinee performances by the non-profit youth theatre group at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre were sold out. Closing night is also sold out. In fact, 86 percent of all tickets for the five shows between Dec. 6 and 9, including a matinee on the final day, have already found their way into the hands of anticipatory theatre-goers.

"We are so excited," Hillstrom says. "This is going to be a very special production."

Set in turn-of-the century New York City, *Newsies* is the rousing musical tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenagers who sell newspapers hot off the presses. When the fat-cat titans of the publishing industry raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies them from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions and fight for what's right.

What makes this production so special, though, is not the speed at which the tickets are selling, but the cast and crew.

As is usually the case for every Yellow Door fall production, *Newsies* gathers a combination of the young students who are learning musical theatre through experiential classes at YDTP's Virgil studio home base, along with professionals from the theatre world.



Avery Kasper (standing), Lucas Romanelli, Morgan Hilliker, Diego Rey (sitting), Catherine Dubois and Wren Evans preparing for *Newsies*. (Mike Balsom)

*Newsies* marks a return home as well as a return to the stage for Lucas Romanelli, who takes on the lead role of Jack. He's been away from theatre for three years since leaving Sheridan College's musical theatre performance program, when he got discouraged with online classes during the pandemic.

"I wasn't able to be fully present with it, doing it in my living room or bedroom," says Romanelli. "I lost a bit of my drive and decided not to continue. I stepped back and took courses in fitness and health at Niagara College and coached a bit there."

When Hillstrom came calling, the 22-year-old St. Catharines resident jumped at the chance to return to the company where he immersed himself in theatre as a teenager, per-

forming in Yellow Door shows such as *Robin Hood*, *Going Under* and *Crack of Doom*.

Romanelli tells The Local that *Newsies* was the musical that first drew him to the theatre. It was his dream to portray Jack Kelly on stage, so it was impossible for him to turn down the chance to embody his favourite character.

"I like to play Jack as not just that fearless leader, but also someone who has fears, who wants to run away," he explains. "He recognizes that everyone looks up to him, but he's scared. It's been a lot fun balancing his confidence with his self-doubt. It's the difference between what's inside his head and everything that everyone looks for in him."

And it's been so much fun for Romanelli to be back with

Hillstrom and company.

"This place formed me into the performer that I am," he says, smiling ear-to-ear. "It helped me see a path I could follow to do this professionally. To be here, to give back and be a leader and a role model for the young kids, whose shoes I was once in, it means so much to me."

Romanelli adds that his time away from theatre has actually proven to be a benefit, and his studies in fitness at Niagara College are already paying off.

"Bringing out my physicality has opened up a whole new door in performing for me," he says. "I can use my physicality as a strength of mine for performing. I think that's a good lesson for the younger kids here, too, that the skills you learn, the life you live can be

applied and brought into the theatre."

Romanelli has spoken to Hillstrom about possibly teaching some classes in physicality and movement to the young students at Yellow Door. And the chance to perform again has led him to return to his studies in theatre at Toronto's Randolph School for the Performing Arts this fall.

Playing his love interest Katherine is Niagara Falls resident Morgan Hilliker, a graduate of the theatre performance program at Lewiston, New York's Niagara University. The 23-year-old is another alum of Yellow Door.

"I used to do shows here as a kid," Hilliker says. "I was in *Peter Pan* and *Drama 101* here. It's really cool to come back as an adult, to be on the other side of it as a mentor."

Hilliker says the rehearsals with the young cast members have brought back many memories of her younger days when she first fell in love with musical theatre.

"It's that community feeling," she says. "Everyone is giving it their all. Being surrounded by so much energy has actually energized me. It instills in me this passion that I have for what I am doing, reminds me of how much I love it and how exciting it can be."

She and Romanelli bridge the gap between the young Yellow Door students and the more experienced professional actors appearing in *Newsies*. That includes the likes of television and film actors Dave Evans and David Gibel and theatre mainstays Christoph

Ibrahim and Greg Solomon.

"It gives the kids a chance to be surrounded by people who are doing this for a living," says Hilliker. "It shows them that it can happen, that it's something that is a viable option for people. And it's nice for us to make those connections with people in the industry, to meet like-minded people who are interested in this art form."

Hilliker loves the feistiness of character Katherine, especially in light of the time period during which *Newsies* is set.

"She's opinionated, fun, determined," she says. "There was a lot of sexism in that period. You see that a bit in this show. But she is so strong, she has so many goals and dreams. Getting to play someone who is so motivated is really nice. I can channel my own motivation into Katherine's."

Not as familiar with the show as Romanelli was before taking on her role, Hilliker says she has really fallen in love with it, finding herself singing the songs on the drive home after six- or seven-hour rehearsal sessions.

"Even if you don't know the show or the music, you don't really need to in order to come and enjoy it," she explains. "It engages you, it tells you the story nicely, and it's an all-around powerful, fun show."

With 86 per cent of the tickets sold already, it makes sense to book a seat as soon as possible. Yellow Door Theatre Project presents *Newsies* Dec. 6 to 9 at 7:30 p.m. each day, with a matinee on the final day at 1 p.m. Visit [yellowdoortheatre.com](http://yellowdoortheatre.com) or [firstontariopac.ca](http://firstontariopac.ca) to order yours.

## Trip of a lifetime coming up for local guiders

**Megan Gilchrist**  
The Local

Next July, 22 Niagara Pathfinders, Rangers and leaders plan to take the trip of a lifetime, and thanks to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Kinsmen, that dream is a little bit closer.

The Kinsmen recently presented members of the unit with a cheque for \$1000, after youth members made a presentation to the club about their travel plans to visit two International Guiding Centres.

The Kinsmen are strong supporters of Guiding in NOTL, providing meeting space for Sparks, Embers and Guides in the Kinsmen Scout Hall, and sponsoring youth members to attend the interprovincial LEAP

camp in 2019.

While the Guiding program is well-known for building skills such as camping and community service, purposeful travel is also an optional part of the program for the older branches. However, the pandemic put a hold on many youth members' plans and ability to participate in this life skill and character-building opportunity — and for many, this is their first opportunity to travel outside of Canada.

Over 12 days in July, the group will visit London, Paris, Lucerne, Adelboden, Liechtenstein and Munich, and will experience many cultural, historical and geographical points of interest. They will learn about other countries, world history

and politics, and how breakdowns in governmental and democratic systems can impact societies. Youth members will have a voice in selecting and engaging with places that are relevant and of interest to them, with a focus on building life skills such as planning, leadership, independence and exploration of post-secondary education and career opportunities.

Participants are taking an active role in researching activities and destinations prior to departure, including similarities and differences to their lives here in Niagara. In addition, youth will develop presentations on Canada for sharing at Guiding World Centres where they will have the opportunity to meet and learn from other

youth, and experience the sisterhood of global Guiding.

While participants are excited and actively working to raise funds for their journey, the cost, even travelling economically with a student tour company, can be prohibitive. To make the trip as accessible as possible, regardless of families' economic circumstances, the unit hopes to fundraise as much of the cost as possible — a total of \$81,000 for the group.

While a challenging target, there are several ways to help them achieve their goals — by buying Girl Guide cookies from the unit, or sponsoring a case for donation to social services such as Newark Neighbours. If you belong to a business or organization, you can help by provid-



Kinsmen president Ray Hobbs with a cheque for guiders, including Sophie Cadeau (Ranger), Shaunna MacQuarrie (Guider), Daphne Cadeau (Pathfinder), Samantha Fretz (Ranger), Jessie MacQuarrie (Ranger), Ollie Beharriell (Pathfinder), Krystine Beharriell (Guider) Amanda Fretz (Guider), and Ken Slingerland from the Kinsmen. (Supplied)

ing a space for unit members to sell cookies, or buying cookies to provide to clients or staff as gifts. If your organization has funds to spare, contributions to our trip are very appreciated.

We are grateful for the sup-

port of our community, including the NOTL Kinsmen, and we can't wait to share tales of our travels in 2024!

For more information or to purchase cookies, please contact [1notlpathfinders@gmail.com](mailto:1notlpathfinders@gmail.com).

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NIAGARA FALLS

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# Handcrafted treasures at the Pumphouse (Part II)

**Maria Klassen**  
**The Local**

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre's Holiday Market offers a wide variety of one-of-a-kind handcrafted items by talented artisans, which will be available in the beautifully decorated lobby and galleries of the Pumphouse.

Opening this Friday, Dec. 1, several vendors will be offering artwork made of glass. Glass-Cuts features pieces created through drawing and painting on glasswork, bringing thoughts and ideas to life in art form.

Silva Talmasson works with stained glass, creating beautiful glass pieces. Julia Kane channels her love for vibrant colour into paintings and fused glass. Her unique wreaths and trees are perfect for gifting.

If you are interested in in-

finity cowls, Deedee Alexandre finds relaxation in selecting yarn and using statement colours when knitting them, suitable for everyone's taste.

Lesley Edwards discovered a passion for knitting toys and ornaments, expressing creativity through yarn and needles.

Unique stoneware pottery is created in the garden studio at Lakeside Pottery. Ron and Barb Zimmerman craft their own glazes, shapes, and decorations.

Peter Sobol expresses narratives through clay and glaze, infusing his pottery with vibrant colours. His whimsical creations originate from drawings and paintings.

For those with a sweet tooth, the Exotic Jelly creator Karen Mitruk developed her passion during farm harvests. Drawing inspiration from her grandmother's canning, she

crafts unique and tasty jams, jellies and marmalades.

New to the market this year is Roger Martelli, artisanal chocolate-maker, offers fudge that is creamy and rich.

Several vendors are in a class of their own. Contemporary artist Rene Inman explores various mediums, including pastels, oils, acrylics, Paver-

pol sculpting and jewelry-making. Cathy Peters produces watercolour and acrylic paintings. Vibrant dyes and soft silk in her hand-dyed silk scarves add a colourful dimension to wearable art.

Simply Stitches features hand-stitched greeting cards for all occasions.

There is something for

everyone at the market: for someone on your gifting list, or for yourself.

Dec. 1 and 2 the doors are open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. From Dec. 3 to 10, the doors are open from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m.

There is no charge for entry, but non-perishable food donations for the Newark

Neighbours food bank are encouraged.

Shoppers are also asked to bring their own bag.

Major credit cards are accepted.

Proceeds from the event go toward programs for children and seniors, including art kits for seniors and free art camps for children and youth.



Jellies and board by Exotic Jelly



Mugs by Lakeside Pottery



Glass ornaments by Julia Kane Studios



Ceramic tea lights by Peter Sobol



Hand-dyed silk scarves by Cathy Peters

## Parade buttons going fast



Parade buttons are available at local businesses, and volunteers Robin Fraser and Mike Carleton were out Saturday at Penner's Building Centre, Bob McDonald and Guy Hamilton at Phil's Your Independent Grocer, and Roger Schmid with his granddaughter Imogen at The Junction in St. Davids with a specialty Christmas hot chocolate they made for her. They all had a great response from supportive shoppers. Buttons will also be for sale on parade day, Dec. 9, beginning at 11 a.m. (Photos supplied)



Niagara-on-the-Lake

**NOW AVAILABLE**

### 2024 Resident Parking Permits

- Entitles Niagara-on-the-Lake residents to three hours of free parking in the Town's Heritage District.
  - Permits cost \$30.00 and are valid from January 1 to December 31, 2024.
  - Permits are available at Town Hall (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil) or online at [www.notl.com](http://www.notl.com).
- \*Please note that ID is required to prove residency.

Scan the QR Code for more information about Resident Parking Permits:



### 2024 Dog Licenses

- Annual dog licensing is mandatory in Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- Licenses are valid for a full year after purchase and are available online, by mail or in person at Town Hall (1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil). Dog tags will be mailed to your home address.
- Dog owners can learn more and register for a license online at [www.notl.docupet.com](http://www.notl.docupet.com).

Scan the QR Code for more information about 2024 Dog Licenses:



1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil ON, L0S 1T0  
905-468-3266 | [notl.com](http://notl.com)



# Cat rescue fundraiser coming up Saturday

Sharon Burns  
The Local

Volunteers were busy serving customers, rearranging holiday planters, and of course, talking about cats at NOTL Cat Rescue's Saturday morning fundraiser.

"This is our annual Christmas fundraiser for NOTL Cat Rescue," said Tanya Rice, volunteer and direc-

tor of fundraising. "We're a nonprofit. We're 100 per cent volunteer driven."

Money raised will help with their trap, neuter and release programs, veterinarian bills, and the cost of keeping cats and kittens in foster homes.

NOTL Cat Rescue has 17 cats and kittens up for adoption right now, but Rice stressed that "pets are not a

Christmas gift, it's a commitment. They become part of the family. If you're going to go to a rescue centre, or a breeder, and you're going to give a pet as a Christmas present, make sure the receiver is open to it."

A combination of adult females and kittens are up for adoption right now while they are being cared for by foster volunteers. "We have

adult females from age one year who should never have had kittens and kittens as young as four months old and eight months old waiting to be adopted."

"We are always looking for foster volunteers," said Rice. NOTL Cat Rescue provides everything a family needs to foster, including food, litter, cat climbers, toys, and assistance. "If you

want to go on vacation, we'll take the kittens back and put them in another foster home."

They also need volunteer drivers, "those who may be retired or semi-retired, who would be willing to drive to veterinarian appointments."

Their first sale was Nov. 25, but they have a second one coming up Saturday. The planters, hanging bas-

kets, and baked goods are all made by volunteers, friends and family, and Rice assured The Local that "chocolate turtles and candy cane paws will be restocked, and we're adding a few new baked surprises" when they extend their Floral and Bake Sale.

Support NOTL Cat Rescue Dec. 2 at 456 Line 2, behind Crossroads Public School, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Tanya Rice, Carolyn Greenfield, Joyce R. and Deb Peppers help fundraise for NOTL Cat Rescue. (Photos Sharon Burns)



Tanya Rice, fundraising organizer, shows the story of cats and kittens needing homes.



There will be lots of planters for sale this weekend to support NOTL Cat Rescue. (Supplied)

# Easy way for people to give at Christmas

Continued from page 1

of course there's baking, animal care and crafts.

Gifts From The Heart hopes to raise more than \$60,000 this year. "The need never ends," said Brodie Townley, who has been a member of Red Roof's board of directors for the past five years. Townley noted that Red Roof is not government subsidized, and Gifts from the Heart has always been one of its two big fundraising campaigns.

Besides The Ranch, Red Roof has two other sites in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In 2021 Red Roof's board of directors were offered space in Cornerstone Community Church, on Hunter Road.

Lastly, Kevan's House, named for the late Kevan O'Connor, a local philanthropist, supporter of Red Roof and friend of Bjorgan, is a home on Concession 2 that is available for adult respite.

Red Roof requires funding to pay wages, insurance, taxes, and property maintenance. "Wages are our biggest expense," said Bjorgan. They employ nearly 20 staff members, including educational assistants, personal support workers, and developmental service workers.

"We have one nurse who donates her time. She audits staff after their medical training, which includes how to administer meds or do GI tubes or trachs."

"Our staff are doing some pretty significant work," she added, "especially in terms of medication and personal care, and that's not something you can train volunteers in."

"One of the challenges we have is we don't pay our staff what they can get somewhere else," Bjorgan continued. "We would really love to be in a position where, when I do my budget, I can offer better pay for everybody."

Red Roof offers two types of day programs, one for those with complex care who require a client/staff ratio of 1:1. The other has one staff member working with three clients. One day program is offered at the Cornerstone complex, the

other at The Ranch.

Weekend respite occurs at The Ranch for children, and Kevan's House for adults.

"We do a Saturday day camp for kids and a Thursday nights social night for youth. Rec programs are full like they used to be (pre-COVID) because we have the space at Cornerstone. Our other programs are either smaller in number, or different in how often they are offered, and that's just due to space restrictions and staff," said Bjorgan.

Families pay a fee for services, however fundraising is really what keeps Red Roof going.

The Gifts from the Heart campaign is in its 13th year and started when then-local resident Arthur Dalfen challenged Bjorgan to double his \$10,000 donation. "Well, I quadrupled it. So it was game on from there," said Bjorgan.

"This is a great and easy way for people to give at Christmas. You don't have to go anywhere or buy anything or purchase tickets. It's a click donation or a drop off donation. You get your receipt right away. It's good for year-end taxes. It's a great way to give gifts."

Sometimes local businesses "do their own challenge to raise money for us," said Bjorgan.

Community groups are also very supportive of Red Roof Retreat. "Cornerstone Community Church has been donating their space since we wanted to reopen in COVID." Before that, Red Roof's recreation programs were held at a long-term care facility in St. Catharines, but pandemic restrictions made residency there difficult to maintain.

"Cornerstone has been the best. They're such a great commu-



Steffanie Bjorgan with her son Garrett, who has been the inspiration behind Red Roof Retreat. (Supplied)

## Where do you want to live?

### Tell us

A comprehensive survey is now available, asking Niagara-on-the-Lake residents about their housing needs as they age. The survey is available online and for those without a computer or internet access. It is completely anonymous and administered by Niagara College. Please make your views known.

#### How to access the survey?

**Option 1:** Scan the following QR code with your phone's camera



**Option 2:** Link to the survey with your browser using this URL:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/fqxeb7fJv>

**Option 3:** Respondents without the internet, please call 905-468-7498

nity to be part of," Bjorgan said. Also, the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake has chosen Red Roof as one of the charities that benefit from their fundraising.

Right now the organization does not need volunteers, who mainly do the outside chores at The Ranch, and when the need arises, they will put a call out on social media.

Bjorgan's main job is to apply for grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Niagara Community Foundation, Branscombe Family Foundation, Walker Industries, Rankin Construction, The Investors Group, Canadian Tire Financial Services and McDonald's, to name a few.

"Ontario Power Generation has a \$2,500 grant for anybody working in programs and animals. So I get \$2,500 from them

every year and that goes towards feed costs," said Bjorgan.

"There's a lot to keep track of and it is probably one of the most complicated small organizations out there. Even my board members have a hard time because nothing is black and white."

Townley thinks the support Red Roof Retreat offers clients and their families is worth donating to.

There's not a lot out there for children and adults with special needs, he said. "Red Roof offers things that families can't find elsewhere. That's why Red Roof has been particularly successful, plus the personality of the staff driving it."

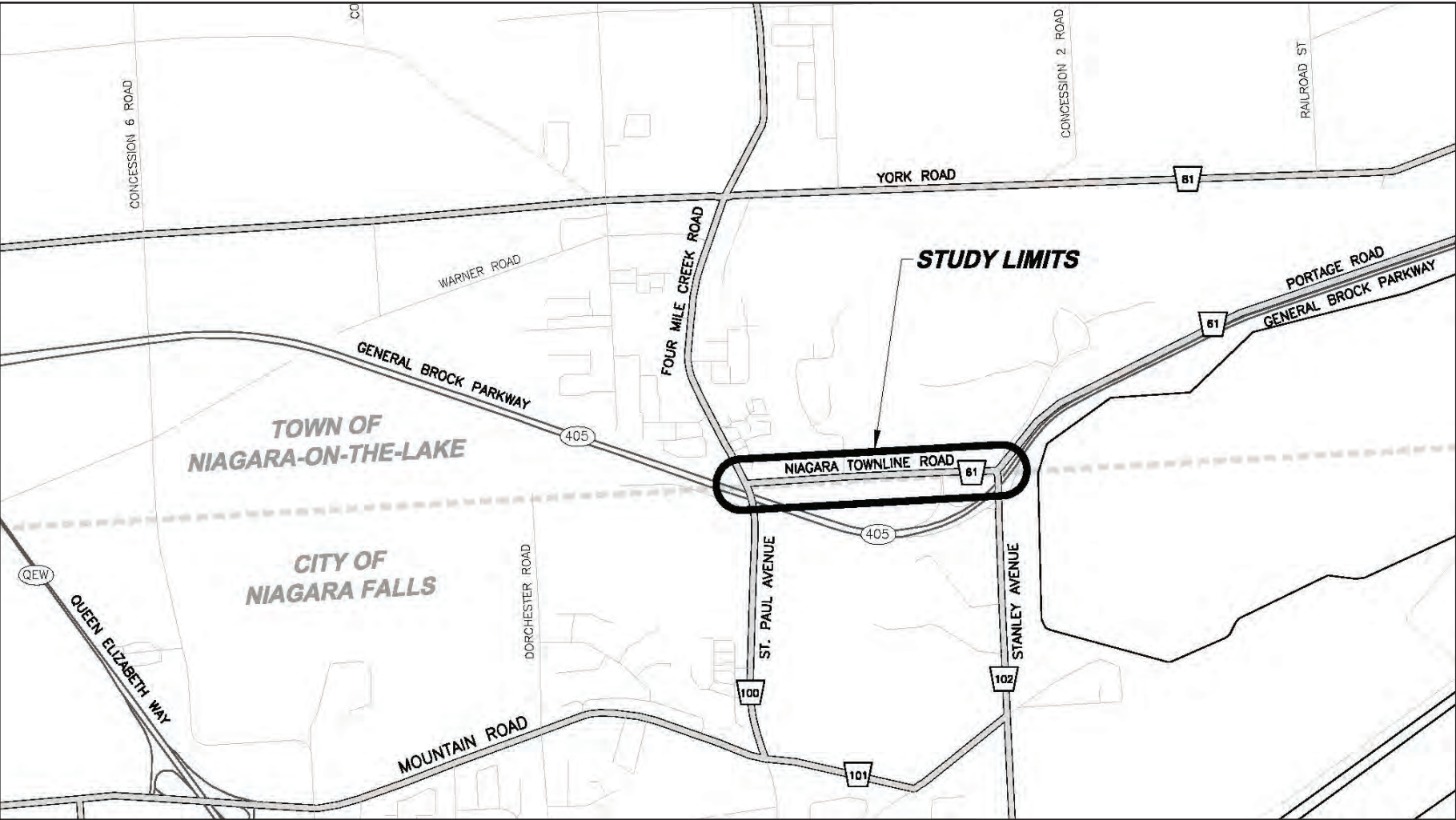
To donate, visit [redroofretreat.com](http://redroofretreat.com) and look for the Gifts from the Heart Campaign under the events tab.



# Public Notice

## Public Participation Meeting Proposed Street Name Change Townline Stamford Road (Regional Road 61) to Niagara Townline Road (Regional Road 61)

Niagara Region has received a formal request to consider changing the name of Townline Stamford Road (Regional Road 61) to Niagara Townline Road (Regional Road 61).



On The proposed change would provide that Townline Stamford Road be renamed to Niagara Townline Road.

forwarded to Regional Council for consideration on Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024.

The public participation meeting is being held during Niagara Region’s Public Works Committee as follows:

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024  
Time: 9:30 a.m.  
Location: Council Chamber, Campbell West Entrance, Regional Headquarters

To provide input orally at the Public Meeting, please pre-register with the Regional Clerk by sending an email to [clerk@niagararegion.ca](mailto:clerk@niagararegion.ca) before noon on Monday, Jan. 8. To provide written input, please either mail your comments to the **Office of the Regional Clerk, Niagara Region, and 1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Ontario, L2V 4T7** or send an e-mail to [clerk@niagararegion.ca](mailto:clerk@niagararegion.ca) by 9 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 5.

Direct any inquires with respect to the proposed street name change of Townline Stamford Road (Regional Road 61) to **Mr. Graeme Guthrie, Associate Director Transportation Engineering** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3249 or [graeme.guthrie@niagararegion.ca](mailto:graeme.guthrie@niagararegion.ca) or **Mr. Petar Vujic, Manager Road Safety** at ext. 3238 or [petar.vujic@niagararegion.ca](mailto:petar.vujic@niagararegion.ca).

**Notice of Proposed Adoption of the Street Name Change By-law:**  
It is the intention that the proposed street name change by-law will be

**Accommodations for Participation**  
If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in the Jan. 9, 2024 meeting, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Special accessibility accommodations and materials in alternate formats can be arranged by contacting Niagara Region’s **Accessibility Advisor** at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 or [accessibility@niagararegion.ca](mailto:accessibility@niagararegion.ca).

**Personal Information Collection**  
Any personal information collected at public meetings or submitted in writing is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, will be collected, used and disclosed, where applicable, by members of Regional Council and Regional Staff according to the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**. The written submissions including names and contact information and the report of the public meeting will be made available to the public. Any information you share will only be used for the intended purpose for which it was provided. For questions or comments about privacy practices, or for more information about he administration of the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act** in Niagara Region programs see [niagararegion.ca/government/foi](http://niagararegion.ca/government/foi).



# Golf is taking young golfer Eli Perng places

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

He may be only 11 years old, but St. Davids Public School student Eli Perng has had a golf club in his hands for more than 10 years already.

Just back from a trip to Pebble Beach, one of golf's meccas, where the youngster shot 80 from the red tees, Eli is not letting this week's colder Niagara temperatures slow down his progress. He'll be practising his swing all winter in the Perng family's St. Davids living room, where his father Richard has set up a golf simulator.

The Local caught up with Richard and Eli, along with Eli's proud grandmother Corinne Bosch of Grimsby, at Eagle Valley Golf Club and Academy. That's where he trains with U.S. Kids-certified instructor Travis Glass.

"My grandmother bought me those plastic clubs when I was 11 months old," says Eli. "They would set up tennis balls in a line and I would whack them with my clubs."

Richard says his son used to sleep with those plastic clubs in his hands.

When he celebrated his third birthday it was time to replace the toys with some actual golf clubs. Eli would spend hours in the backyard hitting balls with his new sticks and his father, a radiologist with Niagara Health and an avid golfer himself, would take him along to Eagle Valley to practise. He met Travis a year later and began to take lessons from him.

"By seven years old he was taking individual lessons," Glass tells The Local, "and slowly he started competing. Over the years he's been gradually building his game and getting better and better and better. I wouldn't say he does any specific part of his game any better than other juniors.



Eli Perng and his father, Richard, who was caddying for him at a 2019 junior tournament. (Supplied)

He's just very good at pretty much every part of it."

As Eli gets older, Glass says, that all-around aspect of his game will benefit him greatly in longer tournaments. And the fact that Eli will stop at Eagle Valley to hit balls before school and return after the school day is over for more practise and lessons bodes well for his future.

The oldest of five children, Eli has fallen completely in love with the game. Though he also plays travel hockey with the NOTL Wolves, golf is the mature, gregarious young man's first love. And he realizes that even if he may possess some kind of natural talent for the sport, he does indeed need to put in the effort to hone his skills.

"I've been working on my swing for a very long time," says Eli. "I feel pretty confident in it, but there are still some things I need to improve. Number one is

my club head speed, and my personal trainer is helping me with that. Number two is getting my attack angle from the inside."

That analytical approach shows through his Instagram page, @golfwitheli, where one can find evidence of his smooth, nearly flawless swing.

That page caught the attention of Foresight Golf Canada at a tournament last year. Foresight is a manufacturer of simulator systems and launch monitors. They ended up sponsoring Eli by helping to outfit him with his own launch monitor, making it easier for him to work out the kinks.

And it was Foresight who sent him and his father, along with three other young golfers and their chaperones, to Pebble Beach to play in the 32nd annual Legends Invitational Tournament.

There he rubbed shoul-



A certificate from a U.S. Kids World Championship is something not many young golfers can display. (Supplied)

ders with Navy SEALs and a number of NFL legends, including Marshall Faulk, Jim McMahon, Steve Largent, Jan Stenerud and his team captain, Kenny Greene, a former safety with the St. Louis Cardinals and San Diego Chargers. They signed a football that Eli was able to take home with him.

"Words can't describe how incredible the trip was," says Eli. "It is one of the homes of golf. Seeing all the holes that the pros play on TV and having the chance to play those exact holes was amazing."

"It was the first time they had a junior team play in this tournament," adds Richard. "Foresight wanted to have four juniors, so they picked three American kids and one international, Eli. They came fourth in their flight. The entrance fee was \$40,000 per team and Foresight paid for all of it."

It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, says Richard. But his son has already played in three world championships. The game has taken him to the Irish Open and to the Under Armour World Junior Championships in Orlando, Florida. He's also played Pinehurst, another perennial PGA Tour stop and site of many U.S. Opens. They've turned down chances for Eli to play in Dubai, Australia and Brazil, as well.

And Eli carded his first hole in one at a U.S. Kids tournament at Chedoke Golf Club in Hamilton earlier this year.

The Grade 6 student says his goal is to get a golf scholarship to an NCAA college and hopefully follow the path of his favourite golfers, Tiger Woods and the U.K.'s Matt Fitzpatrick, to the PGA Tour.

According to Richard, it won't be too long before the college scouts start paying

more attention to him. He feels Eli is at a bit of a disadvantage living in Canada, though, where he can't play golf year-round.

But that simulator in the Perng living room will be busy in between hockey games and practises from now until the courses open, though he'll have to share it with younger siblings Winnie, Coco, Harrison and Margot and maybe even his mother, Crystal. And he'll even play in a few online golf tournaments in an attempt to keep him in the eyes of the golf world.

As for Richard, he has had to swallow a bit of a tough pill this year.

"He beats me on the golf course more than I beat him now," he laughs. "Last year I was beating him seven out of 10 times, this year he's beating me six out of 10. The ball is always on the fairway, he just doesn't miss."



Following through on his swing comes easily for the young golfer. (Mike Balsom)



A football signed by NFL greats at the Legends Invitational Tournament at Pebble Beach is one of Eli Perng's prized possessions. (Mike Balsom)



# NOTL's Matteo Giampa already a Griffin stand-out

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

It hasn't taken long for Niagara-on-the-Lake native Matteo Giampa to get comfortable in the gold and blue as a freshman for Buffalo, New York's Canisius University Golden Griffins.

Over 13 games, the speedy forward has recorded nine goals and six assists, leading the Canisius men's hockey team in goals, assists and points early in the season.

That comes as no surprise to head coach Trevor Large, in his seventh year with the Griffins.

"At the beginning of the year when all the guys were on the ice together," Large recalls, "one of our fifth-year guys came over and said 'hey coach, Giampa looks like our best player.' We certainly had expectations for him and his potential as a player and a person. But when the other guys talk about how good someone looks early in their time here, that's really exciting."

Last Saturday afternoon Giampa definitely looked like one of the best players on the ice for either team at Buffalo's LECOM Harborcenter, where the Griffins played host to the Air Force Falcons in NCAA Divi-



Matteo Giampa (Tom Wolf)

sion I Atlantic Hockey Association action.

Giampa's smooth skating, physical play, ability to find the open space and expert stick-handling stood out in a fast-paced game that attracted 621 fans to the sixth-floor Key Bank Rink across the street from the home of the NHL's Buffalo Sabres.

Canisius took a 2-0 lead into the third period on the strength of goals by Kyle Haskins and Grant Porter, but watched that lead slip away in the third. With 42 seconds remaining in regulation, Clayton Cosentino

scored for the Falcons to force overtime. Air Force won the game in a shootout.

The fact that Large chose the 20-year-old rookie to take the second penalty shot for his team is a clear indication of the confidence he has in his young forward. Giampa skated toward then right, cut back to centre ice then tried to beat Air Force goaltender low on his glove side. Blessing reached out his pad and blocked the back-handed shot.

"It sucked that I didn't score," says Matteo, "but the fact that he put me out there to

try to score a goal for the team is really huge."

Giampa's return to the Niagara area for NCAA play follows two years of U.S. prep school play and then another two years for the Bonnyville Pontiacs of the Alberta Junior A Hockey League.

"We saw him a couple of years ago," Large says. "He's always had a great, potent shot, he's always produced. He's a high-skills player. That's something we're always looking for when we're recruiting. He grew, got really strong, and his skating went from good to great really quickly last year."

Large has Giampa playing on a line with his former Pontiacs teammate Trey Funk and fifth-year player and team captain Max Kouznetsov. The coach has been pleased to see the influence the older player has had on the two rookies, and it's clear he's hoping his leadership rubs off a bit on both of them.

"There's definitely a little bit of chemistry between Funk and me," says Giampa. "Max is pretty vocal in the dressing room, he's given me and Trey lots of good advice. He's a great leader, he's been really great to play with."

Giampa didn't wait too long to record his first NCAA goal.

He accomplished that feat in the Griffins' first game of the season, a 4-2 loss to Miami (Ohio) on Oct. 13. He was relieved to get that one out of the way so quickly.

Away from home every winter since he was 16 years old, Giampa is also relieved to be so much closer to family. Following Saturday's game his father, Arc, brought him back to Virgil to enjoy a dinner at home.

With his sister Madison in her first year studying sciences and playing hockey at the University of Waterloo, Arc and his wife Bonnie often find themselves dividing their time between the two locations to watch their kids' progress in the sport. So far, though, there has been some representation from the Giampa family at each and every Griffins home game.

Matteo is studying business at Canisius and hasn't yet experienced any major difficulties balancing the demands of the Golden Griffins and those of his professors.

"I'd be lying if I said it was easy," he laughs. "But that's what I signed up for, to be a student athlete. That's what you have to do. The team's been great, the school's been great. I'm handling it really well right now."

Like Canadians, Buffalo residents love their hockey, and that was evident at the Harborcenter Saturday. Canisius being a small, private Jesuit university with enrolment typically under 5,000 students, the hockey team has been its most successful and probably its biggest draw in terms of fans.

"You kind of know everybody here," says Giampa. "It's kind of like one big family. I'm really liking it here so far. And when we have an off-week it's close enough to home that I can go back and relax with my family and just decompress."

The Griffins currently hold an overall record of 4-7-2, and a conference record of 4-3-2. Large is hoping that Matteo's presence on the Griffins will lead to increased success in the Atlantic Association this year and beyond.

"He wants to dominate college hockey consistently," says Large. "He can do that with his skating and his strong puck protection skills. When he puts it all together and uses all of his attributes he absolutely dominates. That's what we talk to him about every day, how do we get him to use his skating, his size and his shot all the time. When he does that he's a tough match-up for anybody."

## Preds' Fernandez caps weekend with hat trick

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

Niagara Predators forward Luca Fernandez followed a two-goal performance against North York Saturday with a hat trick Sunday to lead his team to a 5-1 victory over the Toronto Flyers.

The win capped a bit of a strange weekend for the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League team. It began with the cancellation of Friday night's scheduled contest against Durham. The Preds were handed two points by the league as the third-place Roadrunners were charged for forfeiting the game.

"It's not the way you want to get a win," said coach Kevin Taylor. "It's still two points for us though, so it benefits us."

The Preds used the ice-time that night to scrimmage and to prepare to take on the first place Renegades once again in North York.

And they came out strong Saturday evening. Though North York scored the game's opening goal, Fernandez responded with two in a row to give Niagara the lead just 7:44 into the first period. Niagara and North York traded leads for the rest of the first, which ended in a 3-3 tie.

The Renegades went up 5-3 in the second, but Nick Savoie closed the gap with a late goal and the third period

began with the Preds down by only one.

But the wheels fell off for the Preds the rest of the way, with the Renegades scoring four times in the first 10 minutes of the third period, cruising to a 9-4 win, their fourth of the season against Niagara.

"We outplayed them for two periods," said Taylor. "In the third period we were terrible. And we didn't get great goaltending that night. If our goaltending had been there, I think we would have won that game."

Taylor also said his team needs to get mentally tougher for games against the league's top teams.

"We get a goal or two scored against us and it's tough for them to battle through it," he said. "We're very fragile in that aspect. I think it's because we haven't strung together a lot of wins. They don't understand that we have to work harder when we get down a goal. There's not enough confidence from some of the guys on the team."

Fernandez continued to hold a hot stick Sunday afternoon, notching a hat trick to lead his team to a convincing 5-1 over the Toronto Flyers.

The 6'2", 181-pound forward got his team on the scoreboard in the waning seconds of the first period when he tipped a shot from the blueline by his teammate

Logan Baillie into the net past Toronto goalie Lucas DiRisio.

In the second period Shane Kaplan tucked in a rebound past DiRisio to put the Preds up 2-0, just two minutes before Fernandez let rip a hot wrist shot from the face-off circle to beat the Flyers' goaltender on his blocker side. Georgy Kholmovsky then gave the Preds a 4-0 lead when he capitalized on a loose puck near the Toronto crease.

Fernandez completed his hat trick when he took a pass from teammate Declan Fogarty from behind the net and quickly let go a wrist shot before a hapless DiRisio could get into position.

"We dominated the game," said Taylor Sunday. "We went into a bit of a lull in the third period. Mankowski played well tonight (in net), too. We have to get a few more wins together and start moving up more in the standings."

Fernandez doesn't really have an answer for why he's had such a strong scoring touch recently.

"The puck's just been following me around a lot lately," Fernandez told The Local Monday night. "My teammates have been getting me the puck and I've just been able to put it in the back of the net."

The Oakville, Ontario, native said it felt awesome to get his first hat trick in junior hockey.



Goalie Mike Mankowski lines up the puck for a glove save against Toronto. (Mike Balsom)

"I had some familiar faces in the crowd Sunday," said Fernandez. "My girlfriend Erin and her family were there watching the game. It was so nice to be able to get three goals in front of them, to put on a show."

Outside of hockey, Fernandez is working at Pro Hockey Life, a hockey store in Oakville where he can capitalize on his employee discount for some of his equipment. He is enjoying his first season with the Predators and doesn't mind the drive down from Oakville for practices and games.

"It's only 45 minutes," he said. "I do it because I love hockey. I want to keep playing as long as I can. I want to go to Europe and play professionally. I'm in touch with Jeremy

Rottke, who played for Streetsville (now the Toronto Flyers) last year. He's playing in Switzerland, and he's been helping me to figure out how I can get over to Europe to play."

With 13 goals and 24 points, Fernandez is leading the Predators in both statistical categories.

"I wasn't expecting to get so many points this season," he said. "I was just hoping to help my team get some wins. Getting points is an added bonus."

Behind him in number two in team points is defenceman Gehrig Lindberg, with 20 in only eight games. But the East Aurora, New York, native recently left the Predators to play for the expansion Federal Prospects Hockey League's Blue

Ridge Bobcats, a professional team based in Wytheville, Virginia. It's a big loss of a huge contributor to the team both on the ice and off.

The four points from the weekend have moved the Niagara Predators up a notch to sixth place in the league's South Division.

They will have to win their next game to hold that spot. The seventh place Tottenham Railers, whom the Preds visit this Saturday, are tied with Niagara in points, with one additional game played.

Their next home game at Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena is Friday, Dec. 8, when they will have another chance to pick up their first win this season against the Renegades.



# Under 18s bring home surprise gold

Mike Balsom  
The Local

Head coach Devon Neudorf never would have predicted his Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U18 team would leave last week-end's Bob Merkley Memorial Regional Silver Stick tournament in Midland with the championship.

The local rep team went undefeated through five games in the three-day B-level tournament, topping their pool with two shutouts and a tie. They followed that with a 3-1 win in the semi-final against the Parry Sound

Shamrocks Sunday morning, then bettered the South Muskoka Bears by the same score to take home the gold.

South Muskoka and Parry Sound were ranked numbers one and two provincially heading into the weekend.

"I'm kind of at a loss for words to some degree," Neudorf says. "I'm really proud of how the boys all stepped up and got the job done at the end of the day. There's a lot of talent on this team and it really came down to the attitude and the effort that they came up with."

Neudorf credits an all-around team performance for

the weekend's success. Those first two shutout games, 2-0 over the Norfolk Knights and 4-0 against the Penetang Flames, actually capped a string of five games, going back to their previous three Niagara District League wins, during which goaltenders Quinten Davis and Braden Sawyer did not give up a goal.

"They were dominating wins," says Neudorf. "The boys really controlled both of those games. We gave up maybe 20 shots against Norfolk, and maybe 15 against Penetang. We really locked down on defence, they really bought into doing all the little things right."

Offensively, 11 members of the 19-man roster put points on the scoreboard during the weekend, Dylan Price leading the way with five goals and two assists. Not only did Price lead the Wolves in goals and points but he also topped all tournament participants in both categories.

"We say it often in the room and on the bench when we get into these tight games," Neudorf says, "that we need everyone to get going. But there comes a point when you're down a goal or tied, and you need your best players to be your best players. Dylan really did that, he



The Under 18 Wolves win a major tournament held in Midland last weekend. (Supplied)

brought his A-game all weekend."

The Wolves faced off against South Muskoka in their third game and came out with a 3-3 tie Saturday night with Davis between the pipes.

Davis backstopped them to a 3-1 victory in the semi-final Sunday morning, and Neudorf and his fellow coaches decided to keep him in net for the championship rematch with the Bears that afternoon, considering that he had already effectively faced the team in round robin play.

South Muskoka took an early 1-0 lead but Davis shut the door the rest of the way. Price found the net to tie it

up, then Calo Zambito took a pass at the point from Devin Hunter and ripped a shot through a screen to beat the Bears' goaltender. Zambito added an empty-net goal to seal the 3-1 victory and capture the trophy.

The victory qualifies the Wolves for the International Silver Stick finals scheduled for Jan. 5 to 7 in Forest, Ontario. By Monday afternoon Neudorf had already booked hotel rooms for the team for that weekend.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake hasn't won a Silver Stick since 2010-2011," claims Neudorf. "That's 13 years."

For now, it's back to Niagara District League play for the Wolves. They'll try to extend

their win streak, if not their shutout streak as well, this Wednesday evening against Pelham at Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena.

Neudorf feels their first trip away as a team has made them a better, more confident team, having removed the imposter syndrome they faced heading into a tournament against the province's top-ranked programs.

"It was an incredible weekend for the boys," Neudorf concludes. "Not just on the ice, too. It was also great to come closer together as a group, everyone in the same hotel for the weekend. I know we can compete against anyone in the province, and we proved it this weekend."

LocalWORSHIP

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday, December 3rd

9:45 a.m.

Cornerstone Kids Sign In (Nursery - Grade 8)

10:00 a.m.

Worship Gathering Online & In-Person

Message: Kevin Bayne When God Feels Absent & Silent (COMMUNION)

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**St. Davids and District Lions Club**

**Friday Fish Fry**

**December 1**  
4:30 to 7:00 pm

1 Pc Dinner - \$13.00  
2 Pc Dinner - \$17.00

EAT IN or TAKE OUT

Haddock & Chips or Baked Potato, Coleslaw, Tartar Sauce, Bread, Tea or Coffee

Refundable Bottle & Can Drive EVERY FISH FRY FRIDAY

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**HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS CRAFT SHOW**

Saturday, December 2  
10:00am - 4:00pm  
free parking and free admission

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**Holiday Food Drive**

DECEMBER 2ND  
St. Davids Lioness Lions  
1462 York Rd., St. Davids | 9 am - 1 pm

We will be accepting donations of non-perishable food, personal grooming & cleaning products, and pet food to help local families this holiday season. Donations can be dropped off in the parking lot where indicated. Don't forget to pick up your Christmas tree from our lions. Your kindness is very much appreciated. Donations in support of Project Share.

**WRITE FOR RIGHTS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

We invite you to sign letters and petitions for worldwide human rights violations:  
On Dec 8 between 9 am and 2 pm  
at the NOTL Community Center Café-  
14 Anderson Lane

NOTL CATS RESCUE  
Annual

**Floral And Bake Sale**

Saturday December 2nd  
9am-2pm  
456 Line 2 (Behind Crossroads School)

For More Information Please Email Tanya  
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## GUN SHOW

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THIS  
NEWSPAPER



OBITUARY



**Reimer, Ingrid Anna Edith (nee Rahn)** — It is with great sadness that we announce that our mother, Ingrid Reimer passed away peacefully at the Niagara Health Hospital in St. Catharines on Tuesday November 21, 2023 at the age of 93. She is survived by her daughters Marlene (Arthur) Moyer and Doris (Kelly) Kennedy. Beloved grandmother of Krista, Laura, Karen, Lisa (Nick), Sean (Sheida) and Robert (Brandy). Precious great grandmother to Abigail and William. She is also survived by brother Manfred (Maria) Rahn. Ingrid is predeceased by her husband Gerhard, daughter Evelyn and son-in-law Jim. She is also predeceased by brothers Werner and Guenther Rahn. Mom was born in Goldau, Kreis Rosenberg, West Prussia and immigrated to Canada in 1950. She and dad settled in Niagara and made their life farming for which we are forever grateful.

As per Mom's wishes, a small, private family service has taken place. The family would also like to extend their appreciation to the nurses, caregivers and doctors at the St. Catharines Niagara Health Hospital. Online condolences at [www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca](http://www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca)

### Celebration of Erika's Eternal Life



Erika Dyck would like to let you know she is absent from her body and present with her Lord. Her life lived with faith on earth was completed November 25th, 2023. Gone home to be with her creator forever now with her Savior. We thank him for the gift of Erika.

The way she wore her glasses on the tip of her nose, the great haircuts from her basement and of course her intense love of antiques.

She spent 80 years on this earth, leaving behind her husband Vic of 60 years, two daughters, Carrie and Chrissy, and her pride and joy granddaughters, Riah, Autumn and Georgia. She loved and was loved by her family, her friends and her clients. As missed as she will be, we know her peace has been found in Heaven.

We invite all those who loved Erika to come and celebrate Erika's Eternal Life on Friday, December 1st, at Caroline Cellars from 2-5 pm. Address: 1010 Line 2, Virgil

Online condolences at [www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca](http://www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca)

PUZZLE ANSWERS

CRAFT SHOW

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14							15				16			
17							18				19			
20					21		22				23			
24			25					26	27			28		
			29					30			31			
32	33	34					35					36	37	38
39				40			41				42			
43						44						45		
			46					47	48	49				
50	51	52		53				54				55	56	57
58			59				60	61				62		
63						64				65		66		
67						68				69				
70						71				72				

- Across:**

1 Name which sounds like a name

7 WWW access enabler

10 Salad variety

14 Agreeable odors

15 Akhenaten's son, briefly

16 Rich Little, for example

17 Render innocuous

18 --- & Evelyn (body-product brand)

20 Fish eggs

21 Have a soak

23 Long

24 Touchdown turf

26 "Cogito, ergo ---"

28 "The buck stops here" monogram

29 Banded chalcedony

30 Funds for the golden years

32 Put down

35 Unattractive quality

39 Former immigration island

41 Convert into leather

42 Unhand me!

43 State with more corporations than people

45 First Bible book after the Gospels

46 Annie Oakley's employer

47 Big rig brand

50 Service score

53 "% Daily Value" forerunner

54 Saber cuts
- 58 Scarcely detectable amount

60 Arrived

62 Sink a sub?

63 Airplane statistic spawning confusion

65 Join battle

67 One more thing ...

68 Beyond tipsy

69 Lunkhead

70 Young lice

71 "Sail --- Ship of State!" (Longfellow)

72 Never left
- for example

19 One way to deliver

22 Country singer Ritter

25 Home to an archer, a lion and a bull

27 Web address

31 Shifty types

32 Low-energy source of illumination

33 Malt beverage

34 Queasy

35 Persian Gulf federation

36 And so on

37 Three-striper

38 Shortest-named ABBA single

40 Knights fought with them

41 Persist

44 Go on to say

47 Colorado winter time

48 Visitors from afar

49 Lacks what it takes

50 Nile dam

51 Official state dish of Texas

52 Surrealist Max ---

55 Intoxicating

56 Well under par

57 Charger

59 Causes of personality clashes

61 Aware of

64 Ramallah-based group

66 Former Portuguese Indian colony

Down: 1 Madrede, 2 Orion, 3 Nosed, 4 'I'm a, 5 Carbon, 6 As many, 7 Itch, 8 Sure sign, 9 P-T-A, 10 Cate, 11 Oprah, 12 Beers, 13 Brent, 19 By mail, 22 Tex, 25 Zodiac, 27 U R L, 31 Sneaks, 32 L-E-D, 33 Ale, 34 Ill, 35 U A E, 36 Etc, 37 Sgt, 38 S O S, 40 Swords, 41 Try again, 44 Add, 47 M S T, 48 Allens, 49 Cannon, 50 Aswan, 51 Chili, 52 Ernst, 55 Heady, 56 Eagle, 57 Steed, 59 Egos, 61 Onto, 64 P L O, 66 Goa.

71 On, O, 72 Stayed.

67 Also, 68 Lit, 69 Nooodle, 70 Nits, in, 62 Eat, 63 Wingspan, 65 Engage, R D A, 54 Slashes, 58 Shred, 60 Got Acts, 46 Cody, 47 Mack, 50 Ace, 53 Tan, 42 Let go, 43 Delaware, 45 32 Laird, 35 Ugliness, 39 Ellis, 41 Sum, 28 H S T, 29 Onyx, 30 I R As, Bathie, 23 Yearn, 24 End zone, 26 Disarm, 18 Crabtree, 20 Roe, 21 14 Avomas, 15 Tut, 16 Ape, 17 Across: 1 Monica, 7 I S P, 10 Cobb, 11 Ape, 15 Tut, 16 Ape, 17

### Sudoku solution from November 22, 2023

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

## St. Nicholas Day Craft Sale

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# Art students brush up on skills in friendly competition

**Mike Balsom**  
**The Local**

Laura Secord Secondary School students Gab Griffin, Remy Armstrong-Juhlke and Janneke Stokely were the home team in the annual

DSBN Art Battle last Thursday. Though they didn't place in the top three, they all enjoyed the high-pressure experience of creating a piece of art in a limited time frame. Teams of three gathered at the school's cafeteria to receive

five random prompts, three of which they were to use as their theme in creating an original artwork within three hours. The Secord team's prompts were glasses, Grandma's ashes, and dumbo octopus, which led to a very interesting final canvas.

The team from Governor Simcoe Secondary School took top prize, while E.L. Crossley was chosen as the runner-up. Westlane Secondary was the third place winner. The competition, entitled Juxtapose, was organized by

Second art teacher Jen Bolan as an opportunity for students to challenge their own creative thinking and meet fellow students with similar interests. The competition was judged by working artists from outside of the school

system using criteria chosen collectively by the students. The art will be on display in the Laura Secord cafeteria for the remainder of this week before moving on to the atrium at the DSBN Education Centre at 191 Carlton Street in St. Catharines.



Every corner of the Laura Secord cafeteria was filled with student artists. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Gab Griffin, Pippa McCafferty, Remy Armstrong-Juhlke and Janneke Stokely of Laura Secord Secondary School.



Talia Cosby, Elinore Radimore and Melody Pennings, the winning team from Governor Simcoe Secondary School with their finished masterpiece.



The team from A.N. Myer, Allesia Rocca, Jessica Iudiciani and Arielle Longo, putting finishing touches on their painting based on the prompts butterfly, strawberry and bear trap.



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