

The Niagara-on-the-Lake LOCAL



**Holiday Inn:
not to be
missed**

page 4

The trusted voice of our community.

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St. Davids Lions Club member Al Snider helps sell Christmas trees at their tree lot on York Road. (Fred Mercnik)

Lions clubs fundraising with Christmas trees

**Penny Coles
The Local**

Local Lions Clubs' Christmas tree sales are underway, all in the name of giving back to the community.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Lions Club has a new home for their Christmas trees this year, but it's working out better than could have been imagined, say organizer Terry Flynn.

Their inventory of 320 Christmas trees was unloaded in the parking lot of Cornerstone Community Church at the corner of Field Road and Niagara Stone Road last week — the church calls it their town campus, with their church services held on Hunter Road at their Orchard campus. By Monday, they were down to half that amount, says Flynn, who is predicting they could be sold out by Dec. 10, which would be unusually early.

The tallest and most expensive trees are all gone, he says.

The club has used the parking lot of Niagara Fruit and Vegetables on Four Mile Creek Road since it first started selling trees, says Flynn. They took over from the Virgil Lions Club, which folded,

about 25 years ago.

"I saw the writing on the wall last year. And lo and behold, we got the news we'd have to vacate," says Flynn.

Niagara Fruit and Vegetables has been sold to Niagara Orchard & Vineyard. Lion member John Skubel, former organizer of the tree sale, has moved as an employee from one business to another, and although Flynn took over organization of the sale, Skubel still watches over it.

"Big John still checks in a couple of times a day," says Flynn.

He's also really pleased with the pastors of the church, who are still handling some of the administration and several of the church programs from their Field Road location.

"They have been really amazing, really helpful."

The tree lot is fenced and secure, and cameras will be added to the very visible location, says Flynn.

He had hoped to increase their order this year, but a shortage of Christmas trees meant that he had to settle for 30 fewer trees. The NOTL Lions had the Niagara-

Continued on page 5

Provincial report influences Town discussion of CAO search

**Penny Coles
The Local**

With the recent release of an ombudsman report on the hiring of the former regional chief administrator, Niagara-on-the-Lake town councillors are proceeding with caution during the upcoming search to replace CAO Holly Dowd,

who retired in August.

The provincial watchdog tasked with investigating the hiring of the regional CAO in 2016 has determined it was an "inside job," tainted with improper disclosure of information to the successful candidate, Carmen D'Angelo. The ombudsman offered 16 recommendations to improve

hiring practices in the future, all of which were accepted by regional council.

At Monday's committee of the whole meeting in NOTL, councillors agreed to spend \$25,000 to hire Legacy Partners Executive Search Firm for the recruitment of a CAO.

Some councillors expressed disappointment with

the process of getting to that point — rather than sending out a public request for tenders, staff reached out to other municipalities who have recently recruited a CAO. They then asked four recommended firms to submit proposals. Three replied, and council members were given the opportunity to review the

submissions independently of costs. To ensure confidentiality, the documents were not sent electronically and were not permitted to leave the building. Legacy had the highest score for its proposal, as well as the lowest price, said the staff report under discussion Monday.

"We've been blessed with

the Ontario ombudsman report in the last week about the extremely unsuccessful hiring at the region," said Coun. Clare Cameron, referring to the timing.

"What went on up there is what every municipality should be safeguarding

Continued on page 2

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Community radio station looking like a go

Penny Coles
The Local

David Auger believes there is a need for a community radio station to serve Niagara-on-the-Lake.

And he has Duff Roman, retired from an award-winning career in radio, onside.

The two men met with a small group of interested people at the community centre last week, the second held to discuss how to move the project forward.

The advantage of radio is that it allows for news to be broadcast as it happens, seven days a week, Auger said, speaking of other areas where community radio stations have been successful, such as Haliburton.

"If any town in the country can support a radio station, Niagara-on-the-Lake can. It has the greatest concentration of newly and completely retired people, who are extremely talented, great communicators, and even more important, have something to say. It's the perfect breeding ground for a radio station."

A small survey he took of 100 people through Facebook gave results "positive enough to make the point that there is an opportunity

here," he said.

Roman explained initial efforts would be geared toward an online station, allowing them to put together a group of talented people who are accustomed to social media and want to get involved in offering music and local news. The eventual goal would be an FM station, he said.

Auger suggested to begin, they would need a fundraising committee with a target of \$100,00, to cover renting space, buying equipment — they could look for used, suggested Roman — and one full-paid staff member as station manager.

"We need a fundraising group, a membership group and a technical group."

All the programming would be run by volunteers, with an annual budget also of about \$100,000, and on-air advertising to support it.

Auger said the best scenario would be to find a few people who would initially put some "real money" behind the project, which would help the fund-raising committee when members go to the public for support.

He said it would be important to have Town support behind the station,

which would be "positive, open and inclusive."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero was at the meeting to offer her help, suggesting Auger go to council to explain his plans. But Town support would have to be in the form of a verbal endorsement, not financial, she explained.

"I'm thrilled, really interested in having this in NOTL," Disero said.

NOTL Chamber of Commerce president Eduardo Lafforgue cautioned there are several organi-

zations in town trying to raise money for worthwhile projects, cultural and otherwise, and while he finds the idea of a radio station a good one, he's afraid businesses are asked so often for money "they're already stretched."

But Auger believes there are enough people with the interest and the creativity to move this project forward.

"If all the stars align, I'm hoping we can have something online by Canada Day," he said.



Duff Roman and David Auger lead a discussion about establishing a community radio station in NOTL, first online, and then, hopefully, on an FM station. (Penny Coles)

Process to be 'clean as possible'

Continued from page 1

themselves against, ensuring it doesn't happen elsewhere."

Cameron suggested adopting the provincial ombudsman's recommendations, several of which refer directly to the hiring process, for the selection committee to follow, but was told that would be better dealt with as a notice of motion for a later date.

Cameron is one of four council members on the CAO selection committee, which also includes Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Couns. Gary Burroughs and Erwin Wiens.

Cameron also questioned the role of interim CAO Sheldon Randall in the selection process — the role is not clearly defined, she said, suggesting it "odd" he be included.

Disero said she didn't want to put Randall in an awkward position of having to be part of the process to choose his future boss, but Randall said he has been clear "from day one" he's not applying for the job.

He has been in the situation of being interim CAO involved in the process of hiring a new CAO in the past, he said, and worked with the consultant and the selection committee, but had no part in the hiring decision. He said if he is involved in this recruitment, he would assume his role to be the same.

Coun. Erwin Wiens made a strong case for having Randall involved. Although the

hiring is a council decision, the interim CAO is the only person to be a "conduit to the staff" that the new CAO would be working with daily, Wiens said. "Not involving him would be a catastrophe, in my opinion. We have to find someone who would mesh with the staff." Wiens said it's common to have a CAO assist with the selection of his replacement, and not to include Randall in the search "would be a big mistake."

Disero spoke of being very cautious because of the intensity of the investigation that has just taken place at the region. "It makes me think not just twice but three or four times before I send an email."

There could come a time when an investigation is called into what council has done throughout the recruitment process, she said.

"I am so concerned now the process we follow be as clean as possible."

She said she had heard from some members of council that there has been "backtalk behind the scenes" which could cause trouble, and encouraged council members not to engage with the public on any recommendations that could have an impact on decision-making.

She suggested the selection committee discuss with Randall what role he might play, and also that the committee review the scope of their search — including whether it is to be nation-wide — and

the associated costs, to be confirmed by council.

Shed like the recruiter to begin advertising for the position in January, she said.

In response to a question to have more councillors involved in the selection, clerk Peter Todd clarified all meetings of the committee will be in public, with some exemptions, including interviews, to be held in closed session.

Burroughs reminded councillors he was on regional council, "when this fiasco took place with the CAO hiring. I'm thrilled the (ombudsman) report came out just in time so we can learn some lessons from the recommendations."

Councillors agreed that the selection committee be asked to review the job description for a future CAO, confirm the role of the interim CAO, and come back to council for approval, also with a timeline and associated costs.

"As far as the idea of transparency and people looking at this process, I think it's fantastic people are watching," said Coun. Cameron. "Expecting us to be open and transparent is excellent. I have great faith in the council that's here, that we'll be operating above-board. We'd be complete idiots to be doing anything but that," she said.

"Now is the time to step up to the plate and for everybody who is part of a public organization, elected or not, to walk the walk, talk the talk, and do things right."

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Trees of Hope program collecting gifts for children

Penny Coles
The Local

At Vintage Hotels in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the holiday season is a time for sharing.

This month, Trees of Hope toy drives are being held at Queen's Landing, the Pillar and Post and the Prince of Wales.

Trees at all three locations will be filled with names of children in the community who otherwise may not receive a gift on Christmas morning. Vintage Hotels is encouraging the public to visit their neighbouring property to collect an ornament and purchase an unwrapped gift for one of the names displayed on the tree.

The tree in the lounge at Queen's Landing has stars with the names and ages of women and children at Gil-

lian's Place, the local shelter offering hope and safety through a range of services to women who have fled from violent and abusive situations.

Lily Kszan, general manager at Queen's Landing, says many of the staff members will take one of the stars and shop with their families.

There have been many holiday seasons where her children would shop with her, says Kszan. She would choose children close in age to hers, and they would enjoy shopping, feeling confident they knew what other boys and girls their age would want for Christmas. It was a fun family time, she says, and also a good learning experience for her kids, teaching them, "about others their age who are less fortunate, and about community. That's so important."

Several staff members do

the same thing now with their kids, she says, while she shops for the moms on the trees, who tend to ask for simple things.

Although the recipients of the program at the other hotels changes every year, Queen's Landing has collected gifts for Gillian's Place from the beginning, Kszan says. "What could be better than helping these women and children who have had to leave their homes, sometimes at night without anything. There is no more worthwhile cause than Gillian's Place."

While staff and regulars at the lounge take a star every year, Kszan says there are many annual visitors to the hotel who know about the Tree of Hope and make the donation of a toy a tradition of their visit.

She gives credit to Ric Singh, who has been working with Vintage Hotels since the 1980s, and who first organized the Tree of Hope when he was at the Pillar and Post, wanting to be sure kids less fortunate were well-looked after at Christmas.

He will likely take several truck-loads of toys to Gillian's Place, he says, and if there are still stars left on the tree without gifts to go with them, Vintage Hotels will provide the funds to purchase them. But most years, he says, there are more than enough gifts for everyone.

Canada's leading child and youth mentoring charity, Big Brothers Big Sisters will bene-



Lily Kszan and Ric Singh of Queen's Landing show off some of the toys collected for Gillian's Place. (Penny Coles)

fit from the strong efforts put forth by the team at Prince of Wales, and Inn on the Twenty. Big Brothers Big Sisters facilitates life-changing relationships that inspire and empower children and youth to reach their full potential, both as individuals and citizens.

The Pillar and Post is working with Project SHARE this year to sponsor families living in poverty in the Niagara Falls community. Project SHARE's mission is to address the short-term need for food and create long-term solutions for food security, mobilizing resources in our community, and adapting

services to respond to changes around us. Pillar and Post will be accepting both gifts and donations that will go toward providing a hearty Christmas meal for each of the sponsored families.

The Tree of Hope at the Prince of Wales Hotel is located in the main lobby, in the Pillar and Post in the Cannery Restaurant, and at Queen's Landing, in the Bacchus Lounge.



Each Tree of Hope at Vintage Hotels is decorated with stars, with the names of children in need, and what they might like for Christmas.

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Holiday Inn a music and dance delight

Penny Coles
The Local

It might be considered Christmas fluff, but it's beautifully presented, visually stunning, emotionally uplifting, unforgettable fluff.

The Shaw Festival production of Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn* will have you grinning from ear to ear, tapping your feet, humming along to holiday classics, and possibly even dancing in your seat.

"*Holiday Inn* is a respite," says director Kate Hennig in her program notes.

It is that, and more.

Yes, it's a break from holiday stress, an opportunity for a night out, and a few care-free hours. It's also a simple little story set in a time that takes us far away from where we are — to a place where there may be a touch of disappointment, but a lot of love, old-fashioned fun, and some of the much sought-after joy experienced when celebrating holidays.

There isn't much of a plot — it takes a back seat to the music, directed by Paul Sportelli, and choreography by Allison Plamondon, either one of which would make this production well-worth the night out, but combined make it a must-see.

Jim Hardy (Kyle Blair),



Kyle Blair as Jim Hardy and Jenny L. Wright as Louise with the ensemble of *Holiday Inn*. (Emily Cooper)

Ted Hanover (Kyle Golemba) and Lila Dixon (Kimberley Rampersad), are singers and dancers who think they are chasing success together — hoping for the next big break, in whatever dark nightclub or lounge will have them. That is, until Jim announces to his fiancé, Lila, that he's done with life on the road, and has bought a farm

in Connecticut. He expects her to come with him, but instead she decides to go off with Ted on a six-week tour.

Jim quickly learns farming isn't as easy, or as profitable, as he expected, but he is offered help in the form of farmhand Louise (Jenny L. Wright, who immediately endears herself to the audience), and Linda Mason

(Kristi Frank), whose family lost the farm to foreclosure.

To save history repeating itself, when Jim realizes he can't pay the mortgage, he is persuaded by Linda to turn the farmhouse into a concert hall, performing holiday shows that of course feature the best of Berlin, who wrote at least one song to celebrate each of them.

As such, Christmas is actually only a small part of the show, but featuring one of the holiday's biggest musical success: *White Christmas*, immortalized in *Holiday Inn* the movie, produced in 1942, and starring Bing Crosby

and Fred Astaire.

While *White Christmas* may be the play's signature song, *Easter Parade* is every bit as familiar and beloved, and accompanies the show-stealing scene with the most stunning, awe-inspiring costumes by Judith Bowden, in a production that has one scene after another of jaw-dropping, period song-and-dance costumes.

As a highlight, it is closely followed by Independence Day, the other bright, energetic and enthusiastic celebration, with kicking up heels to *Song of Freedom* and *Let's Say it with Firecrackers*.

As each holiday is recognized in song on stage at the Shaw Festival Theatre, the festival itself moves closer to celebrating four seasons. During January and February, the theatre is open for the popular annual film series, and rehearsals beginning for the 2020 season, which opens in April.

That's good news for Niagara-on-the-Lake residents, and great news for the town, as the Shaw creates even more events for locals to attend and more reasons for visitors to visit.

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Kyle Blair as Jim Hardy and Kristi Frank as Linda Mason in *Holiday Inn*. (Emily Cooper)

Lions trees going quickly for both clubs

Continued from page 1

on-the-Lake Minor Hockey midget Niagara Lions unloading trees for them, and as sponsors, the club gave the hockey team \$1,000. Flynn says he expects the club will make a donation to the Lions hockey team in memory of Mickey Labonte, a midget player who passed away from a rare and aggressive form of cancer last August.

The NOTL Lions tree lot is open 12 to 8 p.m. on weekdays, and weekends 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

St. Davids Lions received 600 trees, almost twice as many as they've ordered in previous years. They were fortunate to have the St. Davids Leos on hand to help unload.

"It was hard work, but they did a really good job," said Lion Susan Snider.

"We were happy to have them there to help out."

The St. Davids Lions tree lot is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week, and has Balsam at \$55, six to eight-foot

Fraser for \$65 and 10-feet and over at \$100.

All proceeds from both clubs go back to the community.



Sale organizer Terry Flynn shows off one of the few tall trees remaining on the Virgil lot, and the smallest remaining tree. Small trees for those in condos turned out to be a favourite this year, he said. (Penny Coles)



St. Davids Leos helped unload trees at the St. Davids Lions Hall. The club ordered about 600 trees, and had its best day ever for sales Saturday. (Photo supplied)

Willowbank open house Dec. 12

Penny Coles
The Local

The Willowbank School of Restoration Arts will be decorated for the season for its Holiday Open House next Thursday, Dec. 12.

Caitlin Wooll, education coordinator at Willowbank, says the event is short — from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and will include a brief update on "what we've been doing and where we're going."

It will also be the launch of a much-needed new website for the school.

Following the presentation, Wooll says, "we hope people will mingle and chat," and there will be light refreshments.

There is no admission charge for the event, but donations are welcome, says Wooll, and will go toward bursaries to help with tuition.

There is also an ongoing sale of student-made items, such as slate cheese platters, place markers and coasters, wooden cheese knives, cards with Wooll's illustrations,

and beeswax polish, to help pay for Willowbank students from the class of 2021 to the Association of Preservation Technology design competition, held in Miami.

Each year, the students' participation is completely voluntary, self-organized and self-funded. This is the third year Willowbank students have competed, and placed third overall with their bridge design. The bridge they built

is a wood replica of a brick masonry arch in the basement of McFarland House, says Wooll.

They are continuing to raise money to offset costs for their trip, says Wooll.

The hand-crafted items will be on display and for sale the evening of the open house.

RSVP to willowbank@willowbank.ca or 905-262-1239.



Willowbank students Meghan Lenz, Graham Forster, Chris Riou, Antiy-Demian Savov, and missing from the photo, Lisa Christie, came third in an international design competition. (Photo supplied)



Niagara Lions, a NOTL minor hockey midget team, helped unload Christmas trees for the club last week. The club donated \$1,000 for its sponsorship, and will also make a donation to a fundraiser in memory of Michael Labonte, a former team member who died of cancer in October, said NOTL Lion Terry Flynn. (Photo supplied)



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EDITORIAL

Community looking a lot like Christmas

It's beginning to look, and feel, a lot like Christmas in every corner of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Queen Street is looking its best. The giant Christmas tree outside the Town Hall in Virgil will be lit up Thursday, Dec. 5 at 5:30 p.m.

If you're reading this in time to get to the event, there will be the Ukesters playing, and Dan Williams, Lord Mayor Betty Disero's husband, is donating refreshments.

There are deer family decorations in five locations — one in each of the five neighbourhoods — which make for a great selfie, #deernotl.

There are Christmas events every weekend. This Friday is the magical, musical Candlelight Stroll —

don't forget food for Newark Neighbours — and the Rotary House Tour runs this Friday to Sunday.

We have *A Christmas Carol* and *Holiday Inn* at the Shaw Festival, and *Aunt Agnes* opening soon at the Foster Festival in St. Catharines.

And don't forget the Christmas Parade locals consider the best parade ever. Anywhere. Organized year after year by volunteers who do an amazing job. They've even been pretty good in past years at calling for good weather and getting what they ask for.

No surprise parade entries also think of others — you can bring a non-perishable food item for Newark Neighbours, or warm clothing to donate.

But as wonderful and fes-

tive as all this is, perhaps the best part of the holiday season in NOTL is the number of groups, service clubs, businesses and individuals who are considering others, who are sharing their love and generosity with those less fortunate, in this very caring community of ours, and across the region.

We're proud to have Ted Mouradian writing for The Local, this week suggesting the caring of Christmas should be extended 365 days a year. This is a town where for many, it is.

Enjoy all NOTL has to offer this holiday season, and let's try Ted's advice, to 'be Christmas' all year long.

Penny Coles
The Local

LETTERS

Consider giving to Grandmothers campaign

The Christmas season is once again upon us. This is the time of year when we all gratefully reflect on the past year and look forward to the New Year with new opportunities and happy times with friends, family and the wider Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

So many people in town are members of one or more groups, ranging from bridge, Mahjongg, euchre, book clubs, lunch or dinner groups, walking groups, yoga, zumba and so many more. If you belong to a group in town, and, in the spirit of the season, are thinking of organizing a donation on your groups' behalf, please

consider the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.

The Nyanyas of Niagara (Swahili for grandmother) is one of over 240 grandmother and grandother groups that raise money and awareness for the African grandmothers in 15 sub-Saharan African countries, who are raising their orphaned grandchildren due to the HIV-AIDS pandemic.

Tuesday, Dec. 3 was Giving Tuesday. Tuesday has passed but it serves as a reminder to donate to one of your favourite charities, any time of year. Please consid-

er the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign.

Please contact Terry Mac-taggart at twomact@yahoo.ca, or 905-468-2438, if you wish to make a donation.

The Canadian and African grandmothers will be very grateful for your donation. Remember that "happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give." We thank you in advance. And we wish you all the happiness and good health for the holiday season and for 2020.

Cindy Grant
Nyanyas of Niagara

Letter Policy

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

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

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

LOCAL

The trusted voice of our community

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Mystery burial

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

In 1870, Mary Brady, age 20, was married to Dr. Robert St. Patrick Stevenson, age 53, by Rev. Robarts at St. George's in St. Catharines. Mary and Robert had three children and he had four children by a prior marriage. They lived on what had been his grandfather, Rev. Robert Addison's farm, just outside Niagara-on-the-Lake. Robert died in 1892, Mary in 1922. Mary was interred at St. Vincent de Paul cemetery. It seems unusual that she was not interred beside her husband at St. Mark's.



A Man Goes to the Movies

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

The Good Liar, a tale of brilliant clashing intellects and deceit, acted so skillfully by Dame Helen Mirren and Sir Ian McKellen, to-

tally mesmerized me. The ever-so-carefully planned journey, leading to revenge and retribution, is amazingly correct and sweet. Seldom does a film hold its audience so totally; what a ride!

Donald Combe is a

retired English teacher who loves to go to movies. His Facebook reviews have become popular with his friends and followers, and he has graciously agreed to share his opinions through "short and sweet" exclusives for The Local.



Dame Helen Mirren and Sir Ian McKellen attend *The Good Liar* premiere.

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Imagine the creatures wintering in the forest



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Do you ever step outside of your house at this time of year, and think, how on earth are animals sleeping outside in that?

Maybe I'm the only one who questions how the most extreme winter residents here fare against the winter, and how we are among those unique residents.

Essentially, if you're a living thing facing the winter, you have three choices: migrate, hibernate, or adapt when the weather rolls around.

Humans don't truly hibernate of course, but our societal mood follows the swing of the seasons. Many people openly experience some sort of "winter blues," sometimes referred to as seasonal depression. It is biologically real. The aboriginals, the first pioneers, and the modern Niagara-on-the-Lake folk have all experienced tougher times in winter. Of course, the modern folk have it relatively easy.

Because humans don't dig burrows into the ground or crawl into a cave for winter, we embrace the luxuries of being smothered by blankets while watching Netflix as the snow

(and at this moment, freezing rain) falls outside the window. We eat more carbs and fatty foods, not just because it's nearly holidays, but our brains send primordial messages to our body to stock up for the difficult weather ahead. Think about how we eat thick soups, more meat, and drink heavier beverages come winter.

We are well-trained as kids and as a species to know that winter can hurt if you're not careful, so sometimes it's best not to overexert yourself out there — or at all. Animals follow some similar traits as they embrace the lazy factor over winter, and they too eat some pretty big feasts before lying around. Deer eat beech nuts, squirrels stash acorns, and scavengers such as coyotes and raccoons try to pig out and fatten up before winter sets in. That fat coat is not available in stores and probably isn't in style for people.

A nighttime winter landscape can seem bleak and desolate. If you contemplate it in excess, you'll probably feel an empathetic shiver as you look out into the abyss.

Winter is cold in both temperature and personality. The bare trees look like a barcode contrasted against the white world around them, and within each of those black lines, you must imagine mammals, in-

sects, and birds taking refuge. It's actually a diverse community hiding in the bark and hollows of these trees. Thank goodness they are all more or less on the same page, focused on the need to survive winter. Some of them are close to being biologically dead, but their ticking heart and fat reserves somehow keep the engine putt-putting away. It's inglorious, but it works.

We know it's humanly satisfying to step inside the house or ski chalet after exposure to the cold. That feeling of refreshment and relaxation upon entering the warm room is engrained in our animal DNA.

We find ourselves seeking out the warmer temperatures trapped inside. We are out of the wind, which amplifies the effects of subzero temperatures. We are with our own kind and find a sense of security when community surrounds us.

It's no different for the creatures in the trees.

The wood frog is an odd winter warrior. It hunkers down into the mud in winter, where it pulls its limbs in tight to embrace the freeze-over it is about to experience. Parts of this amphibian's internal organs literally freeze, and a coat of ice envelops the frog's sensitive, slimy skin. How could this possibly be okay?

It emerges as a real life "frog-sicle" in early spring. The ground

thaws, the frog's body is gently pushed to the surface of the forest floor, and the ice begins to melt away. It then hops its way towards the vernal pools in the forest to mate. Only a couple of days a year, you might be lucky to see this post-winter phenomenon.

Its call sounds exactly like a quacking duck. Unsuspecting ears in a spring forest might have you thinking there is a pond full of ducks ahead, but it

is instead filled with hundreds of frogs trying to mount one another. What makes this supercharged sex affair more bizarre when it occurs, is that some of these frogs were literally frozen less than 24 hours ago.

Sadly, I have never seen or heard a wood frog in NOTL. With the vast majority of our swampy woodlands gone, wood frogs are now heard quacking in the forests of southern Niagara.

We all fantasize about leaving the country when winter grips us. Florida, Mexico, Costa Rica... those are dreamy locations where a lot of our birds go for the season.

But whether or not a trip to somewhere warm is in the cards, until spring, let's embrace the beauty and challenges of winter. Some of us will just freeze-over like the wood frog until spring, and that's okay too.



The flash freeze caused fascinating ice formations on the forest floor in NOTL. (Owen Bjorgan)



Auchterlonie on Astrology

Bill Auchterlonie
Special to The Local

This week I look at the second week of December and everything up to the Full Moon on Thursday, Dec. 12.

Thursday, Dec. 5: The Moon moves from sensitive Pisces into fearless Aries this afternoon. In the morning there is a harmony of the Moon in Pisces, and Mercury in Scorpio, which creates a mysterious calm that is good for quiet, thoughtful insights. In the afternoon another connection, this time with Jupiter in Capricorn, makes for an impulsive moment where big enthusiasm creates opportunities for travel plans. Walt Disney was born on Dec. 5, 1901, in Chicago. His father had been part of the team

to build the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, and that inspired Walt and his brothers to create the Disney entertainment empire. Walt's chart is strong in both Sagittarian and Capricorn planets, suggesting a personality both visionary and with tremendous management abilities.

Friday, Dec. 6: Impulsive emotions can get the best of nearly anyone today, at least until tonight when the Sun in Sagittarius and the Moon in Aries make energetic harmony in the sky. On Dec. 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment passed, outlawing slavery in the US. *Star Trek - The Motion Picture*, premiered on this day in 1979. And on Dec. 6, 2002, *Adaptation*, starring Meryl Streep and Nicolas Cage, opened to rave reviews.

Saturday, Dec. 7: A stressful Saturday is — thankfully — only mildly so. It's likely we're making a mountain out of a molehill. On Dec. 7, 1909, Leo Baekeland patented Bakelite — the beginning of the plastics industry.

Sunday, Dec. 8: After a laid-back Saturday, here comes a super busy Sunday. The Moon moves from energetic Aries into loving Taurus just past midnight, and is in the same spot in the sky as Uranus at 9:34 a.m. Surprise, or at least an unexpected change for some, including an unusual number of lottery winners. Later in the day Venus, in the constellation Capricorn, makes a friendly connection with Neptune in Pisces, indicating the potential for sweetness in relationships. (Or at least one re-

lationship.) And finally the day concludes with Jupiter in Capricorn, connecting to Chiron in Aries. Look to healing advice that is worthy. Or perhaps travel news that is also healing. John Lennon was fatally wounded on Dec. 8, 1980. The film *The Deer Hunter* opened on Dec. 8, 1978.

Monday, Dec. 9: Today is the day Mercury moves from secretive Scorpio into all-knowing Sagittarius, the beginning of a month of big ideas and self confidence, with words and thoughts and plans. On Dec. 9, 1985, Jerry Rice began a record 100 NFL games with at least one reception. Two years later, Larry Byrd ended his 59-game streak of free throws.

Tuesday, Dec 10: Just before noon, the Moon moves from

luxurious Taurus into talkative Gemini, as Mercury in Sagittarius connects with healing Chiron in Aries, bringing good ideas and/or good news to many. Even so, the day may end with insecure feelings that prompt a new direction. On Dec. 10, 1901, the first Nobel Peace Prize is awarded. And in 1964, Martin Luther King received his Nobel Peace Prize.

Wednesday, Dec. 11: While the Moon continues in her transit of Gemini on her way to Thursday's Full Moon, the big news today comes from Venus and Saturn, both in Capricorn. This brings a sobering energy to at least one relationship, but maybe a wake-up call for a re-evaluation of relationships in general. The brilliant actress who helped

make Young Frankenstein an enduring hit, Teri Garr, is 75 today, with more than 140 film and TV credits. She has been mostly retired since 2001, due to multiple sclerosis. Joe DiMaggio announced his retirement from baseball on Dec. 11, 1951. He was back with the Kansas City A's as vice-president just a year before the A's moved to Oakland.

Next week I look at the Full Moon in Gemini on Dec. 12. And more!

And a reminder to visit my website, www.LookingUpWithBill.com. It has an all new podcast, featuring the astrology of Christmas and the real birthday of Jesus.

As Joni said: We are stardust. We are golden. So shine on!



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Try having Christmas in your heart all year



Ted Mouradian
Special to The Local

Well it is that time of year again in Niagara-on-the-Lake, when we all either love it or hate it. I am not talking about winter, I am talking about Christmas. I know I should be politically correct, so Happy Holidays that include Christmas, Hanukah, Diwali, Eid and any other reason for people to celebrate.

But for the purposes of this article, I am going to con-

centrate on the tradition I was brought up with: Christmas.

Each year, while I was growing up, we had lots of presents under the tree and many celebrations with Sunday school Christmas pageants and family dinners, so this is not about someone who was brought up with negative Christmas experiences. But my childhood views have changed about what Christmas means to me.

Each year, I go around and listen to many people talk about how stressed they are at this time of year. They worry about what to buy for whom and who will host the Christmas dinner, not to mention

all of the preparations people make to host those Christmas parties. And of course I wonder why we do it.

I am not talking about those who truly love Christmas, as I know this is a very special time of year for them — decorating the house, buying that special present for that special someone and preparing that Christmas meal. We must also remember there are actually two Christmases that are celebrated every year, the secular Christmas and the religious Christmas as both are equally important to both groups.

Years ago, I decided to opt out, not because I don't enjoy getting together with fami-

ly and friends but because I find it difficult to spend tons of money on "stuff" when so many people are suffering in the world. I also really feel for those who do not have anyone to share this time of year with. There is so much pressure in the media to buy gifts, share dinners with family and friends that we forget about those who do not have what we have. Yet all we do is worry about how much money we are going to spend on each other.

I do not buy gifts and I do not receive gifts. I don't need another sweater and I would rather have the money spent on a charity like the food bank. I know that many of you do

both and I congratulate you for doing so and please do not stop. I am also not the type of person who goes around spoiling Christmas for others as many people have the ability to do that on their own.

So, here is my Christmas wish for all of you. I wish you would be Christmas all year round. Buy gifts for others when you see something you think they could use and don't wait for one day a year to give. Donate to charities all year round and not just one day a year. Give a food basket to a family in need during the year instead of just one day a year. And finally make a point to visit family and friends all year instead of only one day a year.

For 2019 and beyond, if we would all simply "be Christ-

mas" for the entire year by giving and loving without worrying about what we are getting back. If we walked around with our Christmas smiles and our hearts decorated with love, think of what an amazing world we would have. Stop the negativity, the hate, the greed and the war mongering and instead of coming together only one day a year, wishing everyone "joy and peace on earth," let's have that in our hearts 365 days a year.

Peace...

Ted Mouradian is President of the 2% Factor Inc. and creator of the Law of Cooperative Action. He is an author and professional speaker and can be reached at ted@the2percentfactor.com.

Focus on accessibility



Lord Mayor Betty Disero and Dave Antaya raise a flag at the Town Hall in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Antaya is the NOTL member of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee working to raise awareness and promote action plans to improve accessibility for all businesses and organizations in the Niagara region. The We are Accessible campaign is offering evaluations and recognition for the implementation of accessible conditions. (Photo submitted)

LETTERS

Update on Diane Peirce

Many friends and neighbours have been asking me for an update on Diane's status.

I'm happy to write we have a small number of potential living donors under evaluation at the Centre for Living Organ Donation at Toronto General Hospital, part of The University Health Network. It is the largest liver/kidney transplant centre in North America. To ensure confidentiality for potential donors, that is all the information the centre can provide.

With limited resources, the centre can only fully assess one potential donor at a time. Potential donors go through a preliminary assessment, and one is selected for full assessment. The others are kept in waiting in the event the first potential donor does not qualify. Our family is hopeful that we may have a qualified donor early in the new year.

Our website www.donor-4diane.com has now had nearly 1,300 unique visitors and 69 people have moved forward to the donation portal. The compassion we have received from the community has been overwhelming. Diane wishes to express her sincere gratitude to everyone.

We had a scare back in October when Diane developed a brain infection know as hepatic encephalopathy (HE). I noticed her speech and mobility had slowed considerably. After a trip to TGH emergency department, she was admitted and treated by the liver team.

The physicians took this in stride (it seems HE is common in end-stage liver disease) but it scared the hell out of me. After four days in hospital and some powerful antibiotics, she was released. And none too soon! Having somewhat of a shortage of patience (no doubt I will hear about that comment) she couldn't wait to get out of the hospital and back to her granddaughter. It seems the rest of us

in the family are second class citizens since Olive was born.

So Diane is back to the "new normal" as she refers to her health status. In fact her MELD score (which determines her place on the wait list for donors) is now slightly lower, meaning she is even further away from a deceased donation.

The physicians keep advising us that Diane will have to be much sicker, perhaps near death, to be a candidate for a deceased donation. As you can imagine, this option has no appeal to any of us in the family. Hence, we are all focused on a living donation. The University Health Network created the world's first comprehensive Centre for Living Organ Donation in 2018. They have been incredibly helpful to us and give us great hope. You might find this video of interest: https://www.uhn.ca/Transplant/Living_Donor_Program/Centre_for_Living_Organ_Donation?utm_source=LivingOrganDonation.ca&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=redirects.

There is also definitely change in the wind for deceased organ donation. Nova Scotia has already moved to "presumed consent," Alberta may be passing similar legislation and I believe Ontario has a proposed bill in place. We hope all of Canada will follow: <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-may-follow-nova-scotia-s-lead-in-adopting-presumed-consent-for-organ-donation-1.4512874>.

In the meantime, you can help others by consenting to a deceased donation if you haven't already done so. Several lives can be saved by a single donor.

Thanks again for your compassion. What an amazing community!

Mike Peirce
(Now better known as Diane's husband)

Rocky Balboa

Pets Alive Niagara.

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Rocky's story

Introducing Rocky Balboa a 55 lb., 3 year old, micro chipped, vaccinated, neutered male Husky mix.

Rocky is a sweet smart friendly boy! He is doing well in his foster home.

Rocky is in his glory being outside and going for walks but needs some leash training. The foster says Rocky loves running around, just having fun so a wooden fenced in back yard would be great. This pooch loves attention and wants to be with you all the time, he just wants to be loved!!

Rocky is house trained but does not like to be crated. It is suggested that Rocky be in an adult only home and an only pet since he sometimes gets jealous of other pets. Rocky requires a confident handler who understands and will work with him to overcome his issues.

Free training is being offered to any adopter within the Niagara Region, Ontario. Please visit www.petsaliveniagara.ca/adopt for an adoption application.

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Amnesty invites public to letter-writing event

Penny Coles
The Local

When members of the local Amnesty International group gather next Tuesday to write letters, they are hoping to add to the pressure to free a Canadian imprisoned in China.

JL Groux, of the local Amnesty group says there are about one million Muslim Uighurs in China's western province of Xinjiang. Huseyin Celil, a former activist, is a Canadian citizen from Ontario who has been a prisoner of conscience in a Chinese prison for 13 years, he says.

"Amnesty Canada members know that when we come together we can achieve change. And the more people that come along to these kind of events, the more our movement will grow," says Groux.

There are other cases Amnesty International Niagara Group 137 will highlight, and sign letters to help put pressure on foreign governments to release prisoners of conscience.

The Dec. 10 event is called

Write for Rights in Niagara, and will focus on 10 cases worldwide, including young people.

Grassy Narrows, a First Nations reserve in northern Ontario, is one of the situations they will protest, although in this case, their letters will go to the Province.

Given the harm that has already been done to the people of Grassy Narrows, and the situation in which they now live — their health seriously affected by an environmental disaster that dumped mercury into their water, their land clear-cut by loggers, and a commercial fishery that provided employment closed — for more than a decade Amnesty International has been campaigning for justice, protection of their rights and an improved standard of living.

They would be happy to have a good turn-out of supporters and letter-writers, says Groux.

Write for Rights in Niagara takes place Tuesday, Dec. 10 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Meridian Credit Union Arena.



Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Amnesty members Lorraine Joyner and Hugh Church, Coun. Erwin Wiens, Amnesty's JL Groux and Zipporah Ogoti, and Quinton Ascah representing MPP Wayne Gates, raise the flag for Amnesty International at the Town Hall Monday. (Penny Coles)



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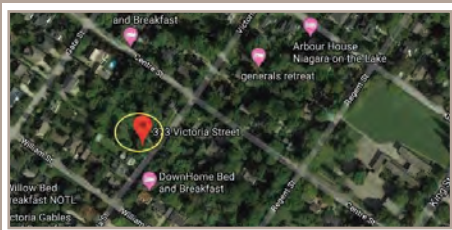
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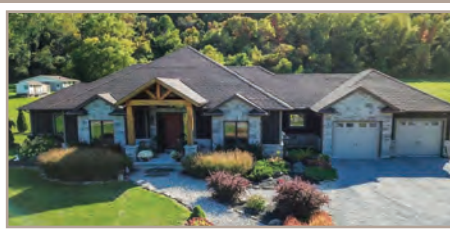
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Local family fosters puppy-in-training to be dog guide

Penny Coles
The Local

Pacey is going to have an exceptionally good Christmas.

The yellow Labrador's time with the Fieguth family in Niagara-on-the-Lake is about to end, and Pacey, the four-legged baby of two-legged Emily, will return to the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides training school after Christmas, to finish his training before graduating as a full-fledged dog guide. Emily, who is not looking forward to his departure, says she'll be making it an extra-special Christmas for him, with a few more doggie cookies.

"He has absolutely become an important part of our family. He's in our Christmas photo," she says.

Emily, her husband Harry and their two boys, Logan, 16, and Brayden, 18, had never had a family dog before deciding to join the Lions Foundation Foster Puppy Program.

"We've been dog babysitters for years," says Emily. "My parents and my brother have had dogs, but for some reason we didn't. We just enjoyed looking after other people's dogs. Having Pacey has been a wonderful experience for all of us. He's the sweetest thing on earth. It's been an opportunity for us as a family to have a dog and see what it's like, and it's been amazing."

Brayden, her older son, and Pacey have become very close since the dog joined their family in January, and when Brayden went off to the University of Guelph this year, he wanted to take Pacey with him. "I told him he wasn't taking my puppy," says Emily.

The family will celebrate Pacey's first birthday Dec. 9, and Emily will be sure he has an extra treat that day as well. Pet Valu in Virgil sells "really cute cupcakes" and other healthy treats for dogs, she says.

Emily, office administrator for the Niagara United Mennonite Church, often takes Pacey to work with her.

"He gets so excited when I put his vest on. He knows that's the sign he's going to work."

And not just to Emily's work — the green vest signals he's in training for his job, which is helping others, adults or children.

One of the tasks he has to

learn to be a dog guide is to ignore others when he is working, says Emily — his job is to lay at her feet.

"At this stage, once in a while he needs a reminder."

He is not easily distracted, but has been known to react when he meets another dog, or someone rubs his belly. A gentle command, "working," gets him back on track, says Emily.

"Training any dog is a big responsibility, but this is 24/7, and comes with extra responsibility. At first it was overwhelming. There are rules we all have to follow — don't do this, make sure you do that — and being consistent is important. We all had to be sure to do the same thing, and it took a little bit for everybody to learn what was okay and what wasn't, what do you do when he jumps or nips at you."

But he's a smart dog, and has responded well. Part of the training is for the Fieguths to take him places. They've had him out at several restaurants, the mall, and even the Shaw Festival Theatre.

"He needs to have that experience of going out, and learning the rules of how to behave appropriately in different situations," says Emily.

The foster puppy program is aimed at teaching dogs the basic skills that they will need to know before entering the official dog guide program. They are expected to become familiar with social settings such as malls and office spaces to prepare them for common settings that they might encounter once they are paired with their future handler.

"We take him everywhere, and we've been very lucky. We've never been asked to leave."

Although dog guides cannot be refused admittance when they're working, the rules are different for dogs in training.

Emily carries a card with her when they go out that explains Pacey is in training, and he will be treated the same as a dog guide — for instance, they are often placed at a restaurant table against a wall so he has somewhere to lie down without being in the way. But if he barks, or acts inappropriately, he can be asked to leave.

"Fortunately, that's never happened," she says.

He aced his recent



Emily Fieguth often takes Pacey to her workplace, the Niagara United Mennonite Church. (Penny Coles)

10-month assessment at the Pen Centre, with a trainer to test him as he walked among the crowd, used the escalator, and passed by food without being distracted.

He also went on his first vacation from the family,

and wherever he goes they have his special cookies, he'll be fine," she says.

"And it's good for him to have a purpose."

When he leaves the Fieguths, he will go to the Oakville school for further

category, added in 2018, as a support dog guide for use by professional agencies with individuals in traumatic situations.

Only three dog guides are now working in that category — two with police forces and one with a not-for-profit agency, which works with victims, mainly women and children.

Lions Foundation of Canada has matched dog guides with more than 2,800 Canadians. The dogs cost about \$25,000 to raise and train, but are provided at no cost to the recipients.

The foundation relies on support from service clubs such as the Lions, corporations, foundations and individuals from across the country in order to meet its mission.

Emily says Pacey's future will be decided when he goes to Oakville, by trainers who will decide what his skills are best suited for.

Some dogs end up as breeders rather than dog guides, in which case he could live with them. If for any reason he leaves the program, or when it's time for him to re-

tire, the Fieguths will be given the opportunity to share their home with him again.

Emily and her family will of course miss him when he goes, but they've known from the beginning they were training him for a cause, to help some person live with independence, she says.

"I've met people who have a dog guide, and I know people who could benefit from having one. This has been a wonderful, very rewarding experience. He loves us unconditionally, and I'm glad we did this. But having a dog is a lot of work — more work than babies," jokes Emily.

"We constantly remind ourselves we're doing this for somebody else, so they benefit from having him. And the whole purpose of this program is for him to go on to bigger and better things."

Would she repeat the experience?

"Yes, but probably not right away. I think I'll need some time to get over him."

For more information, visit <https://www.dogguides.com/foster.html>.

“ This has been a wonderful, very rewarding experience. ”

Emily Fieguth

when they went away and left him with a babysitter. "It was tough. I had to leave all the phone numbers and instructions for while we were away, and there was still mommy guilt. But he seemed happy. He had his routine, and he didn't seem to have missed us."

She assumes the same will happen when it's time for him to leave them permanently.

"As long as he's being loved,

training for one of seven different kinds of assistance: to be a dog guide for someone who is blind or visually impaired; for someone deaf or hard of hearing; for a person with a physical disability; a seizure response dog for someone with epilepsy; autism assistance; a diabetic alert dog guide for a person who has Type 1 diabetes with hypoglycemic unawareness; and the newest

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NOTL actor plays lead in Foster's Aunt Agnes

Penny Coles
The Local

Nora McLellan is thrilled to have the title role in *Aunt Agnes*, the new Christmas family play by prolific Canadian playwright Norm Foster premiering this season.

The Foster Festival is offering what is being billed as *Mary Poppins* with a touch of *Auntie Mame*, a “zany romp through the ups and downs of family life, with a heartwarming Christmas message.”

McLellan, a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident for decades, came to town to perform with the Shaw Festival in 1980.

“I’ve lived here off and on since then. I was here for Chris’s first season,” she says, referring to Christopher Newton, Shaw artistic director from 1980 to 2002.

In addition to *Arms and the Man* and several other plays at the Shaw over the years, she is probably best-known locally for her

role in *Gypsy*.

Further afield she has appeared in several productions with the Stratford Festival, in *Anne of Green Gables* in Charlottetown, and with the Vancouver Playhouse.

Although it was the Shaw Festival that drew her to call Niagara-on-the-Lake home, it’s been about 10 years since she was part of the company, so she appreciates the emergence of the Foster Festival in St. Catharines, and the opportunities it presents for her and other Shaw ensemble members, both past and present, close to home.

Aunt Agnes premieres at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, with 15 performances in The Recital Hall from Dec. 11 to 22.

Although far from Foster’s first Christmas play, it’s the first year the festival has extended its season in St. Catharines, offering a theatre experience for families to celebrate the holiday.

The story begins just two

days before Christmas, when George and Sally Trimble and their two children, Melissa and Brian, are surprised by a visit from George’s Aunt Agnes — an aunt he didn’t know existed.

As Agnes settles in for the holidays, she develops a relationship with 14-year old Melissa that seems to be just what the teen needs.

As with most of Norm Foster plays, it’s a comedy with a light-hearted approach that encompasses a poignant message of value for all families.

McLellan isn’t the only Shaw veteran — Peter Hartwell is the designer, and Kelly Wong, as George, just finished his 11th season with the Shaw. Sally is played by local actor Cosette Derome, Brian by Hayden Neufeld, who played Oliver in Garden City Productions’ *Oliver Twist*, directed by another Shaw veteran, Donna Belleville. Neufeld received musical theatre training with NOTL’s

Yellow Door Theatre Project. Niagara Falls actor Kate Peters is Melissa, “who really carries this play,” says McLellan.

“We’re all part of the same theatre community,” she adds. “We’re all in the theatre and the arts together.”

The Foster Festival, she says, “has given an awful lot of work to actors in this community, some working at the Shaw and others not with the Shaw.”

They all welcome any opportunity they’re given to work locally, enabling them to stay at home, she says.

Aunt Agnes “is really a family-friendly play for kids and grandparents especially. It’s a family Christmas show, no doubt about it,” says McLellan.

It’s a “little bit of magic,” she adds, with *Aunt Agnes* revealing she has “some extra power to make things happen. There’s a reason why she shows up on the doorstep when she does.”



Nora McLellan (Photo supplied)

The youngsters in the play are working hard, going to school and then heading to the theatre to rehearse, and are both doing a great job, says McLellan.

“This is a really lovely group of people to be in the room with. We’re having a great time, and it’s wonderful to have this so close, just

down the road from Niagara-on-the-Lake,” she says.

“It would make a wonderful outing for grandparents and their grandkids, something for any family to enjoy over the holidays.”

For more information or tickets, visit <https://www.fosterfestival.com/site/aunt-agnes-for-christmas>.

Toy drive to help young cancer patients



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

Penny Coles
The Local

Jane Neaves is looking for help from Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.

She has spent much of her time in recent years at McMaster’s Children’s Hospital, first to visit and support a dear friend of hers whose little girl, just three when she was diagnosed with cancer, was in hospital for more than a year. That was five years ago, and the toddler is now eight years old, and still going for treatments as an outpatient. Neaves often drives to help the family, which includes an older sister, now a teenager in high school.

“There are three of us still doing what we can to help the family,” says Neaves. “I do the

driving.”

In all the time she has spent at the Hamilton hospital, it wasn’t until last year, when she was there shortly before Christmas, that she realized there are children who don’t get to go home for the holiday.

This year, she says, there will be 85 children on the ward Christmas Day.

Many families, spending days, months, and more with a seriously ill child in the hospital, are unable to work and struggle financially, says Neaves, so she determined she would help make Christmas a little easier for them. Last year she reached out to friends through social media, and received donations of money and toys, making sure every child in the hospi-

tal, and in some cases siblings — who often feel forgotten during a difficult family situation, she says — had gifts to open at Christmas.

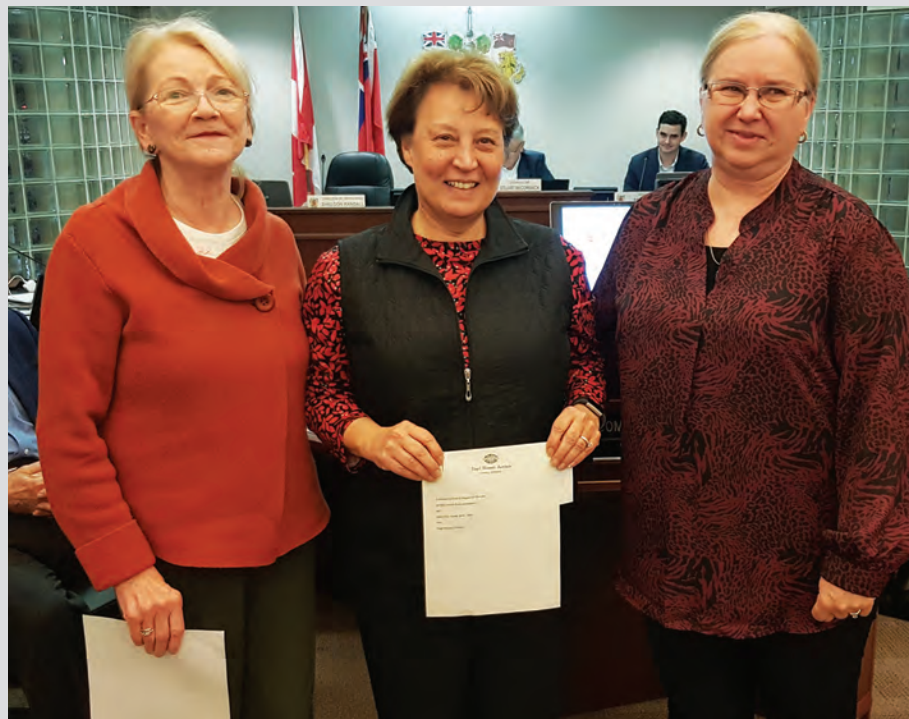
This year, she’s organizing another toy drive, aided by friends who helped out last year.

One of those friends is Pat Darte, who is spear-heading a local toy drive for children in McMaster’s paediatric cancer ward.

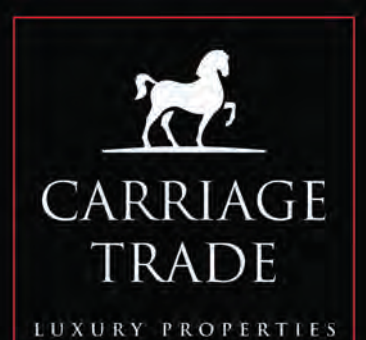
He’s already had an outpouring of support locally, and wants to spread the word for others who would like to help. “I want to make sure as many kids are happy at Christmas as possible,” he says.

Donations can be dropped off at his home at 834 Queenston Road in NOTL, or email dartepat@vaxxine.com.

Giving back to the community



Sandra Edgeworth and Margaret Byl of the Virgil Women’s Institute present a cheque to Lord Mayor Betty Disero at Monday’s committee of the whole meeting. Edgeworth is the president, Byl the vice-president of an organization established in Virgil in 1916. Byl is also president-elect of the Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada. The organization wanted to give something back to the community, and the donation is to support the Mary Snider Room, and the NOTL Christmas Parade. (Penny Coles)



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Are you looking for a fun, exciting, and safe place to enjoy winter activities with family and friends? You're in luck! Parks Canada is kicking off the holiday season on Saturday, December 14th with its annual, weekend-long Garrison Christmas event and the Vintage-Parks Canada 2020 Rink Launch Party. It's a family holiday event not to be missed!

There's always something fun to do at Fort George National Historic Site and the Vintage-Parks Canada Skating Rink. Interested in our special events? Check some of these out:



VINTAGE-PARKS CANADA 2020 RINK LAUNCH PARTY

**Saturday, December 14
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.**

It's time to lace up your skates and celebrate the launch of the Vintage-Parks Canada Skating Rink! Enjoy the sounds of Niagara band the Madhatters as you and your family glide around the outdoor rink in historic style. With hot beverages and holiday greenery, it's the perfect kick-off to the Holiday season!



FORT GEORGE GARRISON CHRISTMAS

**Saturday, December 14 &
Sunday, December 15
Noon - 4 p.m.**

Come experience Christmas traditions from the early 19th century, including crafts, activities and games for the whole family! See Fort George decorated in traditional holiday greenery while enjoying hot beverages, historic treats, and musket demonstrations. Join Parks Canada and the Friends of Fort George for some jolly Christmas fun! Regular admission rates apply. Admission is free for youth 17 and under.

NEW YEAR'S DAY LEVEE

January 1, 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Fort George National Historic Site
Start the new year off with a bang! Join the Friends of Fort George and Parks Canada for our annual levee celebrations, with cannon firing, toasts, and music by the 41st Regiment Fife and Drum Corps. Call **905-468-6621** or email **admin@friendsoffortgeorge.ca**



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For more information, please visit our website:
parkscanada.gc.ca/fortgeorge

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**Saturday, January 4
1 p.m. - 5 p.m.**

On Saturday, January 4, from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m., visitors can come dressed to impress and join us for a civilized gathering on the eve of war during a time of elegance and artistry in the early 1800s.

Enjoy special activities inside Fort George and on the rink. Wear your Regency best for a chance to win prizes! Your Regency best could include dresses, breeches or pantaloons, collared shirts, shawls, tailcoats, waist coats, cravats, gloves, bonnets, Regency hats, and simple hair styles.

For more information, please visit
www.parkscanada.ca/fortgeorge, call **905-468-6614**
or email **pc.niagaraont.pc@canada.ca**



VINTAGE-PARKS CANADA SKATING RINK

Saturday, December 15 - March 22

Family and Evening Skating: Skate rentals, music, dedicated rink staff and programming
Friday: 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.,
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Open Skate:

Monday to Thursday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

*Operating season and hours are subject to weather conditions.

Holiday Hours of Operation:

For hours of operation between Monday, December 23 to January 5, please visit
parkscanada.ca/fortgeorge,
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or Twitter: **@FortGeorgeNHS**



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All Wrapped Up

A truly local experience

Submitted by
Bibelot Design Studio

One of Niagara-on-the-Lake's best-kept secrets lies a short distance out on Lakeshore Road.

Bibelot Design Studio, located at 853 Lakeshore Road, is a small creative space run by husband and wife team Christine McGrath and Reid Maltby. Their simple, modern line of home decor is hand-crafted right down to the textiles which are block-printed, screen-printed, or dyed in-house on 100 per cent linen. The use of linen is especially meaningful since both Christine's grandmothers were weavers in the linen mills of Belfast.



Bibelot Design Studio, 853 Lakeshore Road, NOTL

The hand-printed textiles are combined with wood veneer and glass to create mirrors, frames, wall art, table art and holiday ornaments.

They also have a line of soft furnishings, pillows and table linens. With a great variety of hand-blended colours

and designs to choose from, custom inquiries are always welcome.

Everything in the studio, which shares a parking lot with Lakeshore Antiques, is handcrafted with great attention to detail. There are many one-of-a-kind items and a broad range of prices. Bibelot Design Studio also carries a small selection of Canadian artists' work, including local textile collage artist Leisa Daly.

Make an afternoon of your visit. Our neighbours include the beautiful Konzelmann Estate Winery, the newly rebranded (and super cozy) Palatine Hills Estate Winery, and Barb and Ron at Lakeside Pottery. How's that for a local experience?



Christine and Reid of Bibelot Design Studio

King St. Gallery – Tiny Treasures Show

Submitted by
King St. Gallery

The King St. Gallery is kicking off its Tiny Treasures Show, as it does every year, to coincide with the annual Candlelight Stroll.

A Cappella Niagara will be performing in front of the gallery, so enjoy the music and stroll in for a look around. We'll be open until after the stroll Friday night.

As the name suggests, the show focuses on smaller sizes of original art works. This year we celebrate the addition of four artists to our gallery and are excited to show some of their tiny treasures. Smaller paintings are often chosen as gifts to remind loved ones of a special visit to Niagara, and often collected year after year.

We will also be including original designs in jewelry, which are always well received.

We will be featuring beautiful turned-wood



bottle-stoppers and bird-house ornaments, as well as bowls and platters, all perfect for holiday gift-giving or as hostess gifts.

Our stained glass works, in the form of butterflies and dragonflies, are beautiful light-catchers, and happy reminders of summer.

We have collectible, hand-sculpted and adorned clay sculptures, representing characters of the steam era, in an elegant and fun interpretation.

A Book of Master Artist Quotes would make great stocking stuffers – and a good read – for anyone with a love of art, and we have wire art pieces that are fun and affordable.

Of course, we have larger-sized art as well, heirlooms to be passed down through the generations.

And when in doubt, a gift certificate for Mom and Dad, to purchase new art or sculpture for their new condo, is always a great idea.

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All Wrapped Up

Dreaming of a Wine Christmas

Submitted by
Konzelmann
Estate Winery

It's that time of year, when we deck the halls and make merry. The days are filled with festive gatherings and holiday shopping – and we hope a big glass of delicious wine. Time spent with friends and family is at the top of the list for seasonal plans, but finding the perfect gifts is probably a close second.

Whether you are looking to gift your clients, show your employees they are valued, or share and create memories with your loved ones, our wide range of gifting solutions has got you covered. When it comes to gift giving its all about individual character, so we curate each offering to fit your unique style and budget. From baskets for the foodie, entertainer or sweet tooth in your life to custom labels featuring your company's logo or a family photo, the possibilities are endless.

If you are looking for the perfect way to spend time



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with your friends or family, we also offer memorable experiences at the winery. From cheese and reserve wines in our estate cellar, to

learning how to pair your favourite junk food with wine, we have experiences suited to everyone on your list.

Put a little bit of Ireland under your tree

Submitted by
Irish Design

What better way to celebrate the holidays than cozying up with the ones you love, Guinness in hand, showing off your new traditional sweater from Ireland? If you're thinking of purchasing a beautiful Aran knit jumper or perhaps a winter coat, now is the time to do so as here at Irish Design our 33rd annual anniversary sale is in full swing! From super soft merino wool cardigans and pullovers, to wool cashmere coats, tweed jackets and rain



Visit us at 75 Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake.



A great selection of gift ideas for everyone on your list.

gear, there's something to find here for everyone on your Christmas list!

Pick up some stocking stuffers like our organic beeswax Jo Browne perfume, Kerry Woollen Mills soap, sheep coasters and tea cups and of course everything Guinness. If you're looking for some sparkle we have a wide selection of gold, silver and pewter jewellery with gemstones, Connemara Marble or Swarovski crystal that are per-

fect for the person on your list who loves to wear their Celtic heritage with pride. Find great deals on Dubarry, Jack Murphy, Oxford Blue, Aran Woollen Mills, Jimmy Hourihan, Fisherman Out Of Ireland and plenty more straight from the Emerald Isle. We also offer free eco friendly gift wrapping with any purchase, so come in today and we'd be thrilled to help you find everything you need and more to complete your Christmas shopping!

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RiverBrink consultants discuss possibility of expansion

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

What the future holds for the RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston should be more certain in a few months.

The first step toward that future coming to light took place last Friday, as the museum hosted an open house to kick off a feasibility study on its growth.

Curator Debra Antoncic was pleased with the turnout, as almost 30 community members showed up to meet the representatives from Lord Cultural Resources. The evening was set up in a round-table of sorts. Visitors were invited to sit with three principals from the consulting company, including president Gail Lord, who has a weekend home in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Lord's station on the round table focused on the collections of the museum. RiverBrink is known for housing The Samuel E. Weir Collection of more than 1,400 important and valuable Canadian, European and American art pieces. It was clear many in attendance wanted any future changes to protect the curatorial excellence and integrity of the museum's exhibits.

Former RiverBrink director Richard Baker said, "this has always been a very high quality gallery that exhibits art of a very high standard and historical interest. It's very important to maintain that rather elevated and sophisticated atmosphere that it has achieved over the years it's been here."

Longtime volunteer Fred Farnham has seen a few changes to the museum over the years. He worries that future expansion could move RiverBrink further away from Samuel Weir's original vision for the building, which was built as the lawyer's summer home.

Farnham has been volunteering since before 1996, when RiverBrink's east-

side porch was converted into what is now known as the "long gallery." Marina Ramirez, Lord's senior consultant of facility planning, met with visitors in that room to learn what they liked about the museum's architecture, and to hear their suggestions for changes.

Susan Dods told Ramirez she feels RiverBrink needs more space to display more of the Weir collection on a permanent basis. Currently, the "long gallery" is being used to house "Compounding Vision," a temporary exhibition of the works of Toronto artist Charmaine Lurch. Meanwhile, much of the Weir Collection remains in storage.

Baker feels strongly that changes need to be made to the front entrance to the museum. "The appearance of the front of the building needs to be improved, so people don't drive by and say it's just another house. It's just a domestic front door. It's absolutely unremarkable.

"You could just change the materials, you could perhaps make it look a little bigger, you could make it an antechamber, you could use glass, put a modest sign upstairs that says 'this is the RiverBrink Art Museum,' something modest, but powerful and inviting."

Baker was one of many visitors who lamented the fact that RiverBrink is a bit of a "hidden gem." Many in attendance expressed to Ted Silberberg, Lord's senior principal, market and financial planning, that for the museum to survive, it's important that attendance improves.

Attendance this year was up, Silberberg believes, because free admission had been sponsored from February through August. That led to 3,900 visitors for 2019, 1,300 more than the previous year, when there was an attendance charge.

Silberberg's role in the feasibility study focuses on the financial viability of Riv-



Senior consultant Marina Ramirez speaks with four RiverBrink supporters about future plans for the museum. (Mike Balsom)

erBrink. He was heartened by the number of people who showed up to express their interest in its future.

"There is substantial room for growth in all attendance and revenue areas," says Silberberg. "Being in Niagara-on-the-Lake, having access to substantial markets both for Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Falls, having a strong pass-by traffic, people here for the wineries, a demographic whom I assume would have a strong interest in art as well — these are all opportunities."

He went on to say, "the objective of our study is to build on the opportunities, look to mitigate the challenges, and help to increase attendance, earned income, and the conditions for more private and government support."

A number of different ideas arose to capitalize on those opportunities.

One participant posited the idea of selling the property, and moving the collection into town to the former hospital site. This was said to be a way to capture more walk-up traffic. Another thought

a sculpture garden on the surrounding grounds would draw more visitors.

Others focused on rentals as a way to increase revenue. Silberberg tossed out the idea of using RiverBrink's river-side locale more effectively, perhaps setting up a tent to host weddings and other functions throughout the summer months.

Partnerships with other Niagara museums, such as Rodman Hall Art Centre in St. Catharines, which sees 30,000 visitors cross its threshold each year, was another solution. Interestingly enough, Rodman Hall's current curator, Marcie Bronson was in attendance Friday, as was Sarah Maloney Kaufman, managing director and curator of the Niagara Historical Museum. Lord Cultural Resources is also consulting on upcoming changes to that museum, which were unveiled in November.

A meeting with RiverBrink's board of directors preceded the open house.

The next step for Lord, Silberberg and Ramirez will be to meet with the local school boards, chambers of commerce, and other organizations to gather input on the museum's role in the community. That process should take up the next few weeks and months, said Silberberg.

According to Antoncic, there is no timeline or budget yet for any changes, upgrades or expansions to RiverBrink. "We're conscious that there are a number of expansions going on, there are a lot of big projects that organizations are raising money for now,

so we're just really trying to start out and find out if this is something we can even dream of doing."

One thing is certain, though. Like the Niagara Historical Museum, RiverBrink will have to install an elevator to meet the standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by 2025.

Antoncic welcomes input from those who were unable to attend the open house. Questions or concerns about RiverBrink can be sent to her via email at dantoncic@riverbrink.org.

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Learn about Nobel Prize-winning literature

Penny Coles
The Local

Valmai Elkins is a published writer who loves literature.

While teaching childbirth education at McGill University, she pioneered the hospital Birthing Room and introduced the concept and design across North America.

Elkins and her book, *Rights of the Pregnant Parent*, are credited with changing hospital birth. It became an international bestseller, followed by *The Birth Report*. She was also a pioneer in encouraging fathers to be present at their babies' births.

Next Tuesday, Elkins will present the Nobel Series talk, held at the NOTL Public Library, on the prize for litera-

ture.

Alfred Nobel, engineer, chemist, inventor and philanthropist, was also a lover of fine writing, says Elkins. "He himself produced a handful of poems and a satirical novel. His Nobel Prize in Literature, presented on Dec. 10, the anniversary of his death, is awarded for "Outstanding work in an idealistic direction that adds the greatest benefit to humankind."

Since 1901, she says, there have been 101 men who have won the prize and 15 women, including, in 2013, Canadian, Alice Munro.

The 2018 Award was postponed because of allegations of sexual abuse and financial misconduct against the husband of a member of the Swedish Academy. It was

deemed prudent to allow the scandal to settle before an award was made, says Elkins. "However another wave of scandal would engulf this year's double prize, as each winner has triggered public outrage because of their interpretations of historical events."

Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk, 57, winner of the 2018 award, also received the prestigious Man Booker International Award for her audacious novel *Flights*, a plunge into contemporary travel through a restless world where the international airport replaces the town square, says Elkins. The narrator maintains that, "a thing in motion will always do better than a thing at rest, for change will always be a nobler thing

than permanence." This journey through time and space, with side trips to the anatomy of the human body and soul, the nature of borders and the return of Chopin's heart posthumously to his native Warsaw, is both disorienting and captivating.

"Tokarczuk's 2014 novel, *The Books of Jacob*, however, received such vitriol for its interpretation of the 18th century Polish history that her publisher protected her with security guards," Elkins says.

This year's winner, Aus-

trian playwright, novelist and screen writer, Peter Handke, 78, has 30 works of fiction, drama, screenplay and critical theory with a string of awards.

"At 24, his play, *Offending the Audience*, established him as a brilliant linguist and provocateur. His screenplay, for the Wim Wenders film, *Wings of Desire*, about trench-coated angelic beings who gather in the Berlin Library during the Cold War to send rays of hope to troubled humans, won acclaim. But his novel, *Across the River: Justice*

for Serbs, produced an outcry accusing him of denying crimes against Muslims in the Bosnian War," says Elkins.

Though his publisher issued a 24-page defence and even his most ardent critics concede his linguistic brilliance, his work and that of Tokarczuk raise disturbing questions about the political nature of post-modern literature.

Elkins will talk about these two Nobel prize-winners at the NOTL Public Library Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 2 p.m.

InfoHealth to focus on caring for the frail

Penny Coles
The Local

Who will support Niagara residents when they're too frail to live at home?

What are their housing options, and where will they find the help they need?

And how can they help themselves to remain "brain healthy" so they can remain at home?

Those are some of the issues Dr. Larry Chambers, research director of McMaster's Niagara Regional Campus School of Medicine, will discuss at Wednesday's InfoHealth session at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

He will talk about "closing the gap" in both physical fitness and brain health, which can be improved up to a point, and then, as we age, begins to decline.

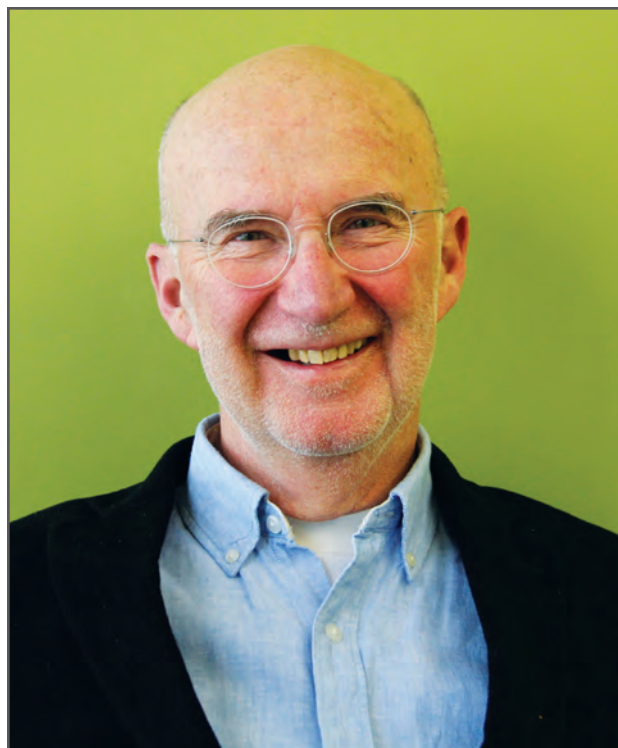
Although the decline can't be prevented, it can be slowed, Chambers says.

There are four ways to gauge good brain health: the ability to manage financial affairs; the ability to take care of medical conditions; the ability to live safely without someone else present; and the ability to drive a car safely, says Chambers.

"Throughout our life we have the opportunity to do as much as possible to keep our brain and body strength as high as possible. But we get to a point in life where we can't increase them, we can just slow down the decrease. That's called the fitness gap."

The more we do to close the fitness gap, the better off we'll be as we age, "adding life to years, not just years to life. That means having better quality of life."

Chambers speaks of the benefits throughout life of avoiding stress, getting



Dr. Larry Chambers will present some of his research findings on caring for the frail, at the NOTL Public Library, Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 2 p.m. (Photo supplied)

enough sleep, exercising, and getting blood supply to the brain by avoiding smoking and controlling blood pressure.

He also talks of the importance of keeping the brain active while we age — by learning new skills, such as playing a musical instrument, starting a new business, or playing chess. "Keep the brain going," he says.

The demographics in NOTL are changing, he adds. From 2011 to 2016, the number of people over the age of 85 increased from 500 to 700.

"It's probably now about 900 people. And it's a problem."

The provincial government and the public think of housing for the frail as "only one place — long-term care homes. We need a multiplicity of options for people who are frail."

In addition to more housing options, more staff are needed to look after the frail,

he says.

"There needs to be a call to action, to think about the fitness gap, housing options and finding ways throughout the community to support the frail," says Chambers.

To raise public awareness and stimulate actions, Chambers, with Hanna Levy and Eva Liu of the Niagara Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, McMaster University, will present the next InfoHealth session on supporting the frail, Wednesday, Dec. 11 at the NOTL Public Library at 2 p.m.

The DeGroote School of Medicine has 85 medical students, 26 post-graduate trainees and a 400-physician faculty, based at Brock University. It has partnerships with family physicians, long-term care homes and hospitals across Niagara, as well as the Niagara Region public health department, to support medical students.



Valmai Elkins will talk about the Nobel Prize for Literature at the NOTL Public Library Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. (Penny Coles)

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It's starting to look like Christmas in NOTL



Patrick and Barbara McGilly played Mr. and Mrs. Claus at Ravine Vineyard's Christmas Market Sunday. (Fred Mercnik)



Chelsea Dempsey from Ravine Vineyard's bake shop displays baked goods at Sunday's Christmas Market. (Fred Mercnik)



Corina Ribaric, Adelaide Ribaric, Anna Pillitteri-Smith, with Lord Mayor Betty Disero, Serafina Martinelli and Juliet Pillitteri were at *Holiday Inn* at the Shaw Festival Theatre last week. Disero, sitting in front of them, chatted with the girls before the show. "She was so lovely and nice," said Eileen Pillitteri, "it reminded me how great it is to be a part of this fantastic town." The girls really enjoyed the play, she added. (Eileen Pillitteri)



Stephanie Reis, sommelier, and her husband Fabian Reis, winemaker and grandson of Herbert Konzelmann, hosted an open house at Ferox Winery, formerly Vignoble Ranch. (Photo supplied)



Grace United Church volunteers look after a bake table at the church's Christmas Market. (David Gilchrist)



Tony Hendriks of Hendriks valu-mart decorates outside his Queen Street store. (Fred Mercnik)



Theresa Brooks, Linda Spencer, Lynn Lawrie, and Lois Hamilton chat with Father Christmas at Just Christmas on Queen Street. (Fred Mercnik)



Grace United Church volunteer Leslie Woodward holds up a basket for a door prize at the church's Christmas Market event. (Fred Mercnik)

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LOCAL

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Wild goose chase ends in success

Penny Coles
The Local

A goose named Chicken led a group of Glendale residents on a merry chase Tuesday.

The chase began when Robin Fisher sent out the call for residents, and organized a rescue operation to capture a Canada goose that suffers from angel wing, says Steve Hardaker, one of the neighbours who offered to help.

The syndrome prevents the bird from flying, he says, and Fisher intended to catch it and transport it to the Open Sky Raptor Foundation in Grimsby, where it will live out the rest of its life, he says — birds don't recover from angel wing.

The rescue group first saw it by the storm water treatment pond at the corner of Taylor Road and Glendale Avenue, but by the time they captured it, they were behind

White Oaks Resort and Spa. "I threw the blanket on him three times, and he still ran," said Fisher. "It was Alison and Tammy that finally got him down. He was so tired he just gave up. Alison was the one who picked him up and put him in the cage. It went so well."

The reason his saviours dubbed him Chicken? "He initially fled from us, playing chicken and twice crossing Glendale and then Taylor," says Hardaker. "Fitting name."

Angel wing is a syndrome that affects primarily aquatic birds, such as geese and ducks, in which the last joint of the wing is twisted, with the wing feathers pointing out laterally, instead of lying against the body, is Wikipedia's description of Chicken's deformity.

It is caused by a high-calorie diet, often, when they live near humans, and fed a steady diet of bread.



Alison Flus, Tammy McCarthy, Robin Fisher, Logan McCarthy and Steve Hardaker were led on a wild goose chase by Chicken, who can't fly. He has been taken to a bird sanctuary, where he will live to the rest of his life in safety. (Photo supplied)



Decorated for the Holidays

Diane Turner and Tonde Wirth of the Garden Club of Niagara are decorating McFarland House for two weekends of a Christmas celebration, using mostly natural items scavenged from local gardens. McFarland House will be open Friday and Saturday on the Rotary House Tour, and Sunday 10 to 4. It will be open to the public all three days. Next weekend, Dec. 14 and 15, it will be open 10 to 4 as well, but without Rotary House Tour guests, and will allow for a more leisurely visit. Cookies and hot beverages, including hot chocolate and cider, will be served both weekends. (Penny Coles)

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NOTL TOWN HALL – CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

December 5 @ 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

All are invited to join in the Christmas spirit as we light up the large pine tree out front of the Town Administration Building, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, (corner of Hwy 55). Musical performance by the NOTL Ukesters. Cookies and hot apple cider will be provided. Special guest appearance by a jolly man in a red suit.

21ST ANNUAL ROTARY HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

December 6 @ 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

The Museum is one of the stops on Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Holiday House Tour. Come enjoy our holiday decorations, shop the gift shop for someone on your holiday list, sip some hot apple cider and enjoy the exhibits. Museum admission is free for all during this event. Contact contact@nhsm.ca. For tickets please visit: niagaraonthelakerotary.ca

ART EXHIBIT AND SALE

Candlelight Weekend:
Friday Dec. 6th, 11AM - 8PM
(Featuring local soprano Adrianna Polito from 5:30PM - 8PM!)
Saturday Dec. 7th, 11AM - 4PM
Sunday Dec. 8th, 11AM - 4PM
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sandraiafrate.com

UGLY SWEATER HOLIDAY FOOD TOUR

December 6 @ 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Don your best ugly holiday sweater and join us on a special walking tour for a little foodie fun! This 2.5 hour tour differs from our usual Niagara-on-the-Lake culinary tour. It will include a mix of food tastings at culinary partners and a chance to pick up a last minute gift for that hard to buy for person on your list. We promise a tasty bit of fun and frivolity and a take away gift. So grab a friend and dig out that ugly sweater and get in the holiday spirit! A prize will be awarded to the foodie with the ugliest sweater. It's a great way to spend the afternoon with friends or a nice alternative to the holiday office party. Private booking dates are available. \$60 per person – Meet at 1:00 pm at the Irish Harp, 245 King St., NOTL. For more info, contact: support@eztix.com or call 1 (289) 768-8717.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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64					65						66		
67						68					69		

- Across:**

1 Concert appearance

4 Dirty

9 Cooking meas.

13 100 square meters

14 Contradiction

16 Chief Hawaiian island

17 Short for the least

18 Tennis great --- Gonzales

19 Tax

20 Applications

22 Tap's partner

23 Hoop dunk

25 Added for free

27 About this size

28 Surrounded by

30 Subject of spectacular bankruptcy case

33 Very similar to

35 Flashy

37 Tokyo Yoko

38 The Pobble had none

39 Engender

41 One of four

42 "You've Got Mail" company

43 "The hour --- hand": St Matthew's Gospel

44 Dangerous feats

46 G W T W's --- Butler

48 Green, blotchy frog type
- 50 Toque wearers

52 To do with plants

55 A machine's productive hours

57 Honorific title in India

58 --- of the above

59 Happy feline rumble

60 Letters, these days

63 Of a thing

64 Surrounded by

65 I'm sorry --- you waiting

66 "The sloeblack, slow, black, crowblack, fishingboat-bobbing ---" (Dylan Thomas)

67 Egg holders

68 Peter Pan's pal

69 Blunder
- Down:**
- 1 Complete range
- 2 Whiskey choice
- 3 Thomas Edison was once a director of it
- 4 National economic indicator
- 5 tate of preparedness
- 6 Baseball segment
- 7 Clickers or squeakers
- 8 Expression of derision
- 9 Add as a bonus
- 10 Hi-fi is not supposed to suffer from it
- 11 Card dispenser
- 12 Golfing short shot
- 15 Gray wolf
- 21 18-wheelers
- 24 Sleeping
- 26 Stir-fryer
- 27 Pack
- 29 Election list
- 31 That show's going to be --- 9 pm
- 32 Silently indicates assent
- 33 State emblem on Old Glory
- 34 Expression of amazement
- 36 Pristine
- 40 Chums
- 41 Holy book of Islam
- 43 Agenda topic
- 45 Make lace
- 47 Musical intervals
- 49 "1984" antagonist
- 51 Bases
- 53 Bury
- 54 Hotelier --- Ritz
- 55 Poisonous Javanese tree
- 56 Catamountain
- 57 Japanese rice wine
- 61 Cut
- 62 Intelligence officer

OBITUARY



CRUX, Sandy—Died peacefully at her home in Virgil, Ontario on Thursday, November 28, 2019. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Jim, her brother David Reynolds (Colleen) of Calgary, her sister Marsha Reynolds also of Calgary and her children Andy Girard (Donna) of St. Catharines and Carole Wiens (Chuck) of Virgil. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Julia Dick (Jeff), Matthew Wiens (Alex) and Stephanie Willms (Jesse) and her beloved great-grandchildren Corson, Landen, Georgia, Hunter and Charlie.

A private memorial service for immediate family and friends was held at the Tallman Funeral Home in Vineland on Monday, December 2, 2019. Online condolences at www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca

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Answer from
November 21, 2019

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

Down:
1 Gamut, 2 Irish, 3 General Electric, 4 G D R, 5 Readiness, 6 Inning, 7 Mice, 8 Yah, 9 Toss in, 10 Background noise, 11 Shoe, 12 Putt, 15 Lobo, 21 Semis, 24 Abed, 26 Wok, 27 Stow, 29 Slate, 31 On at, 32 Nods, 33 Star, 34 Ooch, 36 Unspoiled, 40 Pals, 41 Qurban, 43 Item, 45 Tat, 47 Thrills, 49 O'Brien, 51 Feet, 53 Inter, 54 Cesar, 55 Upas, 56 Puma, 57 Sake, 61 Mow, 62 Spy.

Across:
1 Glig, 4 Grimy, 9 Tbsp, 13 Ave, 14 Denial, 16 Oahu, 17 Min, 18 Panchito, 19 Scot, 20 Uses, 22 Die, 23 Basket, 25 Throw in, 27 So big, 28 Amongst, 30 Error, 33 So like, 35 Loud, 37 Ono, 38 Toes, 39 Spawn, 41 Quad, 42 A O L, 43 Is at, 44 Stunts, 46 Rhett, 48 Leopard, 50 Chets, 52 Botanic, 55 Uptime, 57 Sri, 58 None, 59 Purr, 60 E-mails, 63 Its, 64 Amid, 65 To keep, 66 Sea, 67 Sacs, 68 Wendy, 69 Err.

Former Rangers make Niagara College team

Mike Balsom
Special to The Local

They once were Rangers, now they are Knights.

NOTL Rangers basketball alumni Beth DeBoer and Mackenzie Schroeder have been making a mark as first-year members of the Niagara College Knights women's basketball team.

The two were teammates and co-captains last year at Eden High School, and played together on the Rangers under-19 women's team. Both were recruited by former Niagara head coach Michael Beccaria, just before current coach Chris Rao was brought in to take the helm.

Welland native Rao left his role as assistant coach with the Cape Breton University Capers men's team to accept the Knights position. He also has extensive experience with Nova Scotia's under-14, under-15, and under-17 boys provincial programs.

Both DeBoer and Schroeder impressed Rao from the start, when he gathered the women for some workouts in mid-August before the start of the school year.

"They play really hard, is the first thing," says Rao. "They both defend well, they have a good sense of the game that's developing, and that's only going to get better."

"They have flashes as rookies where it's really, really good, and they're doing things right, like rebounding. Of course, they

have flashes as rookies where they're not, but we're starting to see more good than bad, and that's great."

The pace of the college game is something Schroeder and DeBoer have had to adjust to early. Rao says it was evident that their skills were up to par, but adds, "the jump isn't so much skills-based, but that you're playing against older girls who are more physical and more athletic than anything you've seen before."

Schroeder concurs. "It's a lot quicker," she says. "Everything is just more intense, like communicating, just knowing where you are, being more on top of it, compared to high school."

Schroeder almost didn't play club basketball last year. After the high school season was finished, she contemplated taking the year off to train. The St. Catharines native had played previously with the St. Catharines Rebels, then the Welland JUEL Prep teams, and, finally, in 2017, with the Niagara JUEL squad.

A visit to an Eden game by Rangers coach Bruce Caughill, though, convinced her to join DeBoer, who was returning to the Rangers for the 2018 Ontario Basketball Association season.

DeBoer was one of the players on the first NOTL girls team coached by Bruce and his wife, Jennifer, back in 2009. That squad experienced a lot of success on the provincial circuit, before many of the

girls moved on to play elsewhere.

Schroeder says, "having the opportunity to play last year, and learn, and have good coaching, has really helped my game improve."

Adds DeBoer, "Bruce and Jenn really have a lot of passion for the sport, throughout the region. They put a lot of passion into everything they did, and they really took the time to know every girl, and they really cared about us as people, not just basketball players."

When she was considering her basketball future last spring, DeBoer says the Caughills "always made sure we did what was best for us. There are different opportunities that are best for different people, and they just wanted to be sure I did what was right for me."

And what was right for both DeBoer and Schroeder was pursuing both their education, and their basketball dreams, at Niagara College this year.

Schroeder is enrolled in the two-year Fitness and Health Promotion program at the college.

She plans to continue post-secondary studies after earning her diploma in that field. However, she's not yet sure if that will include further studies at Niagara College, or a post-graduate program at Brock University. Either way, she plans to continue playing basketball at the post-secondary level.

Police Foundations is the program that caught



After acquiring skills with the local Rangers basketball league, Beth DeBoer and Mackenzie Schroeder are playing for the Niagara College Knights. (Mike Balsom)

the interest of DeBoer when it came time to choose her college path. Like Schroeder, she is looking to complete the two-year program, and plans to continue school and basketball beyond that timeline. She admits there was an adjustment period, during which she had to learn how to balance the demands of the team with those of her courses.

On the court, Schroeder, has earned a starting role as a power forward, while DeBoer's role has been to come off the bench to provide dependable

minutes (22.4 minutes per game).

It's been a tough season for the Knights so far in the win-loss columns. Their record after eight games is 1 and 7. However, in that one win (79-76 over Redeemer College), DeBoer and Schroeder both put in their best performances of the year. Schroeder netted 13 points and added nine rebounds, while DeBoer contributed 10 points, finding her shooting touch at the charity strip, going 5 for 9 in free throws.

Rao says of the former Rangers: "They're getting

more comfortable as time goes on. They've been working on their shots a bit, things are starting to fall for them, they're feeling more confident, they're getting to the rim. It's just a confidence thing, it wasn't anything they didn't have the skills for coming in."

Caughill, of course, is happy to see the two playing on the Knights. "That was always our goal," he says, "to try and help the kids experience what Jenn and I experienced (playing post-secondary basketball), and we take significant pride in that."

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