



Don't miss
tractor parade
Thursday
page 4

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Santa Claus thrills spectators as he winds up a perfect parade through the streets of the Old Town on a beautiful sunny winter's day. Thank you Santa, for visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake on parade day every year! (Penny Coles)

Perfect day for a perfect parade

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Christmas Parade made its way through the streets of the Old Town Saturday, on a beautiful day to bring out enthusiastic crowds.

The parade was a welcome event to the community's holiday season after a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And although Santa Claus visited as much of the town as he could each of those years, the annual community tradition of more than 50 years was sorely missed.

Despite weather forecasts that earlier in the week had predicted rain, the sun came out to warm up spectators of all ages lining the streets, eager to see the many great bands, floats, dogs — lots of dogs — and individuals, including local dignitaries, in the

parade. The parade was led by a Grape Growers of Ontario float, the honorary grand marshal this year, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and his wife Tammy were expected to ride in a horse-drawn carriage near the front of the parade, followed by several councillors walking the route, including Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens and his wife Dorothy.

Instead, spectators were left puzzled by the Wiens in the Lord Mayor's carriage, Zalepa nowhere to be seen.

Zalepa told The Local Tammy's father, Wayne McRae, died last Thursday, and the funeral was Saturday morning in Niagara Falls. Although he was disappointed to miss the parade, the Saturday funeral was well-attended

Continued on page 16

Two Circle St. residents concerned about trees

Digging began before trees were adequately protected

Penny Coles
The Local

Residents' opposition to a Chautauqua development has, you could say, come full circle.

It was November 2018 when the neighbours of a

Circle Street property filled the council chamber in opposition to a proposal to sever a lot at 6 Circle Street to build a larger house next to a small, cottage-style home. Their issues included concern about the impact on the streetscape, and some

mature trees on the lot.

Now referred to as 6A Circle, construction is going ahead on the severed lot, and Michael Burns, one of the neighbours who spoke out about the trees four years ago, is still concerned.

Public open houses at that time, and in-person deputations at council discussed planning issues in Chautauqua, and that single lot on Circle Street garnered

a lot of attention. One of the main issues then was for the protection of the two huge silver maple trees more than 100 years old. Fast forward to 2022, and the house will be built, meeting town zoning bylaws, but the trees continue to be of concern.

Chris Byart, now the owner of the cottage-style home at 6 Circle St., which he has been gradually updating and renovating, was

not happy about zoning bylaws that allow for the new house, and hoped contextual zoning might become an election issue. There was talk from most candidates about changes to planning policies that will allow for contextual zoning to protect streetscapes, and zoning amendments to the town's Official Plan. And with the regional Official Plan now approved, NOTL's plan

should be as well during this term of council.

But construction is beginning, and the issue remaining for both Burns and Byart is the safety of those two mature trees, despite assurances from the town that they would be protected.

When diggers showed up last week, there was no proper protection in place

Continued on page 2



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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Residents question town staff about process

Continued from page 1

for either tree.

Town staff arrived “with insufficient materials” for fencing, said Burns, “and there seemed to be a lot of head-scratching.”

The fencing was left unfinished and was "laughably

inadequate” to provide tree protection.

Excavation with heavy equipment began early Thursday morning, and a town representative explained that there was insufficient material for complete fencing.

Burns and Byart were

outside, asking questions when police arrived and left, and then, after what Burns alleges was intimidating behaviour on the part of the crew toward him and Byart, police returned.

At one point, Burns said, he and Byart were threat-

ened with arrest for obstruction.

On Friday, town staff came back and put proper protective fencing up around the trees, but both Burns and Byart question why a building permit had already been issued before tree protection was in place, and why dig-

ging was allowed to begin.

Byart was hoping to meet with town staff this week, including the new director of operations, Romolo D'Angelo, to get answers to those questions.

Burns too has questions, such as who paid for the tree protection — the builder

or the town — and why it wasn't installed before the work began, as he believes it should have been before a work permit was issued.

The Local also asked town staff some of those questions Monday morning, but had no answers by press time Tuesday.



This is the proper enclosure that residents believe should have been installed before digging was allowed to start. *(Photos supplied)*



Police attended the Circle Street construction site twice last week and at one point threatened to arrest two residents with obstruction, says Michael Burns, who lives across the street.





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The first lot of fencing put up by the town was totally inadequate to protect the trees, say two residents who are concerned tree roots will be damaged by construction.

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Correction

Last week's article in the print edition of The Local about the NOTL Rotary Holiday House Tour had a photo of Brenda McArthur of the McArthur Estate. Unfortunately her name was incorrect. Brenda is a very generous and dedicated community supporter, not only decorating and welcoming visitors to her beautiful home as part of the house tour, but also taking the lead in decorating Queen Street each year. The Local apologizes for the error.

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If you feel you are a suitable candidate for this position, please send your resume and a cover letter outlining your experience to penny@notlocal.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Don't miss Thursday's tractor parade through Virgil

Penny Coles
The Local

The second annual tractor parade to drive through the streets of Virgil should be almost double the fun this year.

Organizers Erwin Wiens and Dorothy Soo-Wiens are expecting more than 30 tractors “of all shapes and sizes,” including four grape harvesters — they’re pretty impressive when they are on the move any time, and even more so when decorated with colourful lights for the holiday season.

There are also a couple of 4x4 trucks that will be dressed to the nines, and tractors “of all different sorts.”

A Niagara-on-the-Lake fire department ladder truck will be in the lead, with town crier Tom Pekar in the first tractor.

The 2022 version of the Christmas Tractor Processional is this Thursday, Dec. 15, starting at 6 p.m. from the Virgil Sports Park on Four Mile Creek Road.

The opportunity to entertain those who live at Pleasant



Baraka Allen, Dorothy Soo-Wiens and Erwin Wiens are ready for their Thursday Christmas Tractor Processional. (Supplied)

Manor is one of the joys of organizing the parade, says Soo-Wiens, and like last year, the route will go from the sports park to Four Mile Creek Road, through the intersection at Niagara Stone Road to Pleasant Lane and

past the Pleasant Manor buildings with balconies full of spectators, before turning onto Eldon Street, to Line 1, left on Niagara Stone Road to Concession 4, then right on Line 2 to return to Four Mile Creek Road and back

into the Virgil Sports Park.

Soo-Wiens says she expects once their marshalling job is finished and the procession of tractors is on its way, she and Erwin will run out to Creek Road to see the parade underway.

They are both really looking forward to the event, which was great fun for the community the first time around and brought the organizers as much joy as it did to the spectators and those who participated, she says.

Last year, “it really made our hearts so full,” she says, and the enthusiasm from the farming community and those who are looking forward to seeing it again this year is already doing the same.



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Donald Combe and Peter Babcock look over books in the Addison Library at St. Mark's Anglican Church, with videographer Joe Lapinski. (Photos by Barbara Worthy)

Addison Project tells story of Niagara's first rector

**Barbara Worthy
Special to The Local**

Living in the same town as Donald Combe has ensured that even the lesser-known characters of history are recognized and commemorated. Combe, 91, a retired teacher and long-time sexton for St. Mark's Anglican Church, has been researching the stories of many of the residents in St. Mark's graveyard for decades.

However, it is the story and life of Robert Addison, Niagara's first rector, that has inspired Combe.

"Not only did he baptize my great-great-grandmother," says Combe, "but he is quite possibly the most significant person in Upper Canada's history."

Addison was integral to early settler life, documenting births, marriages, and burials, and providing what for many was a moral compass for their growing communities. His ministry stretched from Niagara to the Six Nations of the Grand River, and down to Fort Erie and Long Point. And all points in-between.

It was Combe's passion that inspired St. Mark's to commission the making of a short documentary on the life of Addison, courtesy of an Ontario Seniors Community Grant award.

Joe Lapinski, videographer, and local writer/director Barbara Worthy, teamed up with Combe and Peter Babcock to highlight the 37 years of Addison's missionary in Niagara.

And what better location to depict that life than the beautifully restored home of Rev. Addison, Lake Lodge, near Four Mile Creek, under the careful stewardship of the Ed Werner family. The original home was built by Addi-

son in the early 1800s, shortly before the completion of St. Mark's Church, and both have become visible legacies of the Addison era.

St. Mark's has also opened the invaluable Addison Library to the filmmakers, and for the first time some of the 1,500 volumes, dating back to the 1600s, will be carefully filmed and featured in the documentary.

The team also solicited the acting skills of local history enthusiasts Rick Meloen, Andrea Douglas and Jane de Mun-

nich, to portray Addison, his sister Mary, and his children's companion, Rebecca. After the death of his first wife, Rebecca would eventually marry Addison after being his companion for nearly 20 years.

But there is a slight chance that the star power of Cinderella, the 17-year-old, 17.2-hands Percheron loaned to the production by Sentineal Carriages, might steal the show.

The documentary will be released in the new year, and available on St. Mark's website, and the NOTL Museum website.



Rick Meloen as Addison on Cinderella, with Lake Lodge in the background.



Cinderella, with Andrea Douglas, Rick Meloen and Jane de Munnich.



Give the Gift of Membership



**Barbara Worthy
NOTL Museum**

Imagine receiving a gift at Christmas that never stops giving. That's the joy of giving a Gift Membership to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum for that special person in your life this holiday season.

A membership to the NOTL Museum includes a whole host of benefits that can be enjoyed all year long. These benefits include:

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- Free admission to lectures, and members only events, for members and their guests;

- A quarterly member newsletter, monthly cultural newsletter, and weekly e-blasts;

- 10% discounts at our Loyalty Partners in NOTL;

- Exclusive access to the museum's massive resources.

The NOTL Museum is home to more than 50,000 artifacts and archival materials. And all these resources are

in careful stewardship for the community. Members have free access to these resource files, and staff welcome the opportunity to assist in research projects. The gift of a NOTL Museum membership helps to ensure these resources are maintained.

Ultimately the gift of membership to any cultural not-for-profit organization is truly the gift that never stops giving — a unique gift of lifelong learning and sharing.

Check out the various NOTL membership options at www.notlmuseum.ca/members.

Give the Gift of Membership to the Museum!

Help preserve the rich history of Niagara-on-the-Lake and enjoy benefits for your friends and family.

NOTLMUSEUM.CA | 43 CASTLEREAGH STREET, NOTL

EDITORIAL

The Local moving to up-to-the-minute community news site

As we prepare to welcome a new year, The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local is also preparing for a bright future for news in our community, with an exciting announcement of a new partnership that will benefit our readers and advertisers.

By Thursday morning, you will see The NOTL Local website looking very different. We are thrilled to now be operating our hyperlocal news website under the umbrella of Village Media, which operates successful community news websites across Ontario, Canada, the U.S. and around the world. The print edition of The Local will

continue as an independent newspaper, still owned by the two of us, Penny Coles and Karen Skeoch.

An Ontario-based company, Village Media specializes in optimizing the reach of smaller community newspaper websites, and in addition to our local stories, will be able to offer so much more digital information than we can include in our print edition, all in one place. Online, notllocal.com will be an up-to-the-minute community news site providing lifestyle articles, news from across the region, weather, a newsletter highlighting local stories, a business directory, a

custom-built polling survey, horoscopes, a crossword puzzle . . . and that's only a fraction of what will be available on the NOTL Local website.

A bit of Village Media history: the network of local news websites launched in 2000 in Sault Ste. Marie with SooToday, and has, since its beginnings, been dedicated to offering online, hyperlocal digital community news. The NOTL Local is now their 20th owned and operated website in Ontario alone — with more than 60 sites worldwide — and while partnering with them is new and exciting for us, we are also bringing something to the ta-

ble that is new for them.

Village Media has chosen The Local to be the first of its news outlets with a partner that continues to offer a print edition. For those of you who still like the feel of holding a newspaper in your hands, it isn't going anywhere. It will arrive in your Wednesday mail as it always has, supported by a Village Media website more comprehensive than anything we could provide our readers and advertisers on our own.

This partnership allows the two companies to offer a sustainable print edition and website, serving the community through a collaboration

by those of us who care passionately about delivering news to our readers. It also allows our local businesses to expand their advertising opportunities in ways our former website just wasn't equipped to do. Village Media is making an investment in this community that will provide services we, as a small newspaper, could not have dreamed of offering.

All of our writers, photographers and community members whose contributions to our print editions have been so valuable will continue to be an integral part of this independently-owned newspaper, and will also find

their great stories, columns and photographs now shared with a much wider digital audience to appreciate their skills and the information they present. We also hope to bring more talented journalists on board to help us meet our goal of providing daily news.

All of this comes at a time when the print newspaper industry is facing tremendous challenges. This exciting new partnership with Village Media positions us to deliver integrated community daily news now, and into the future.

Penny Coles
Karen Skeoch
The Local

Saying goodbye, looking forward to retirement

When I started at the old Niagara Advance in 1990, I had no idea how much this experience would change my life in such an incredibly wonderful way. The friend-

ships I have formed over the years mean so much to me. I even met my husband when he came in to place an ad. What a good deal he got!

For more than 30 years I

have helped businesses market themselves in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, as well as developing several tourism-related magazines and sections. The decision to retire

has not been an easy one, and I could have never made this decision without the incredible people I have by my side.

Four years ago, Penny Coles and I decided to open our own independent paper. Penny, you are an extremely talented editor and it has been an honour having you as a business partner. I'm even more honoured to call you my dear friend. You have been a true inspiration to me both personally and professionally. I am incredibly proud of all we have accomplished and the papers we publish each week. I may be retiring as sales manager, but look forward to continuing as an owner to support you as the paper continues to grow.

I am overjoyed to share that Julia Coles will be taking over for me. I have no doubt that she will be successful as she is an incredible marketing genius, extremely organized and tons of fun.

Thank you to our amazing designer Rosie Gowsell who makes our clients so happy with her creativity.

To Mike Balsom, thank you for the amazing job you do to bring incredible stories to our readers. Thank you for understanding our vision of what a community newspaper should be.



Karen Skeoch saying goodbye, but not to NOTL.

And to all our other contributors and those who share their stories with us, who also help by lending their voices to a great community paper, I thank you!

This community continues to amaze me. When someone needs help, our community surrounds them with love and everything they need. I have seen it time and time again and look forward to continuing to be a part of this community, just in a different way.

I have spent many hours thinking of how to say "thank you" for the business, and the

trust you have placed in me over the years, but far more, for the friendships that have grown over this time. Please accept my sincere and utmost gratitude.

I am looking forward to retirement, being able to travel more, spend time with my two adorable grandkids and volunteer in our beautiful community.

"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." — Winnie The Pooh

Karen Skeoch
The Local

Where is Ben?



The Local co-op student, Ben Foster, is discovering new locations in NOTL and wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week, Hans Paul recognized Ben was standing by the old engine that was once part of the town's water pumping station, where the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is now.



P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, L0S 1T0

Editor:
Penny Coles
penny@notllocal.com
905-246-5878

Publisher:
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local

Graphic Designer:
Rosie Gowsell
composing@notllocal.com

Advertising Sales:
Karen Skeoch
karen@notllocal.com • 905-641-5335

Julia Coles
Regional Sales and Obituaries
julia@notllocal.com • 905-934-1040

News Tips: news@notllocal.com

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View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Masterful storyteller Thomas Hardy observed and wrote with skill of

19th-century life in his native Dorsetshire, England. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (Prime, 2005) is the tale of a young and beautiful school mistress

pursued by three eligible suitors: the local vicar, a rich squire and a dashing village swain. You will have to watch to see whom she picks. A gentle, sweet film.

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

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COMMENT

Local LETTERS

Important town document was not available

I would like to thank The NOTL Local, and specifically Penny Coles, for their assistance in helping me obtain the report containing the town's response to Bill 23, which was evidently completed on Nov. 23.

The report, signed by CAO Marnie Cluckie, planning director Kirsten McCauley, and corporate services director Kyle Freeborn, is well written and clearly outlines the dangers, both economic and environmental, that our town faces with the implementation of this bill in its current form, and is a compliment to their collective abilities. It is included in the Dec. 13 Committee of the Whole meeting agenda: <https://bit.ly/3W3zPsz>.

That being said, finding the report would tax the skills of even Howard Carter, on this the 100th anniversary of

his discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. The town website was of no assistance if you entered the search term "Bill 23", and I am unaware of any public announcement or press release in either print or social media indicating that the town's response was complete and publicly available, prior to the publication of the Dec. 13 meeting agenda.

Given the significant impact of this legislation, and the current level of public debate, the lack of notification by the town on the availability of this report is concerning. Effective communication is essential to building an informed community, and I would ask that the council, along with staff, review the process that led to this oversight to avoid future repetition.

Mike James
NOTL

Local LETTERS

Random act of kindness while visiting NOTL

A recent day for my family started off rough. It was a sleepless night (both from children, and my own mind) and way too early morning. It was full of big emotions and reactions and was extremely hard for all us. A lot of tears and sorries and hugs.

I was carrying a lot of self-doubt, heavy feelings, mom guilt, wife guilt There was just a lot, and I know you have been there too.

It was a real struggle and even more difficult to get the kids out of the house to our appointment with Santa. I'm talking explosive! But I slowly moved out of my funk and found my patience to try to get to bed time.

We made it to Santa (barely) and to meet up for lunch with family where we were taking part in our usual entertainment of kids, half conversations with adults, and witty apologies to the amazing people around us for our over-excited, loud children. After our meals and 15th bathroom break, we asked for the bill.

Please take this as your sign to take part in random acts of kindness. If it is buying a coffee

for someone. Calling to check in on a friend. Dropping some food in the bin at the grocery store. Making a donation to a charity. Making a friend and their family dinner when you know they are slammed with work and life. Offering up a free babysitting night so someone can get out. Donating your old coats to someone on the streets...

Or buying someone's lunch, gas, dinner, groceries, coffee, water, diapers, or even the \$2 donation you're asked to make at the grocery store check-out.

Please let's work together to continue this magic...

Thank you so much to the person or people who did this Sunday, Dec. 11 at The Old Angel Inn in NOTL.

I hope this message of love, hope, joy and gratitude can reach these people in one way or another or just fill someone's heart with faith this holiday season.

You started some serious magic!

@loveandleavewild
Kaylee McKernan
(formerly from NOTL)



Zach, Kaylee, Cian and Elsie have all been impacted by a random act of kindness during a recent visit to NOTL. (Photo supplied)

COP15 highlights biodiversity loss — but will it help?



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

The 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference, also known as COP15 (Convention Of Parties, and their 15th meeting), is currently taking place on Canadian soil in Montreal.

In this two-week meeting, with delegates from 196 countries around the world, many will refer to the summit as an equivalent to the historic Paris Agreement in 2015 in regards to tackling climate change.

Although human-accelerated climate change will inevitably be part of the conversation, this meeting aims to highlight the acute and demanding issue of biodiversity loss. Especially outright habitat depletion — something our very own Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Region have not been impressive at safeguarding.

This current period of extreme losses in biodiversity,

namely alpha diversity (the actual number of species in given area), is sometimes referred to as the Holocene extinction event. This infers that this massive loss of life is fuelled almost entirely by the human species. As we deplete a greater variety of ecosystems around the world, we take out the species uniquely at home in them.

The World Wildlife Forum states experts believe the Holocene rate of extinction is anywhere between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than historical paces of background extinction. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, more than 41,000 animals worldwide were on the brink of extinction by the end of 2021. These are not just numbers. Each one of those animals is a cog in the wheel for the machinery of society.

If aliens exist, they must be sitting back and watching in wonder as one species dominates all of the others with reckless abandon, and therefore actually pulls the rug out beneath their own feet at the same time.

Do I feel this meeting and all of its international grandeur

is worthwhile? Yes.

Do I believe it will be meaningful and produce results? I doubt it.

Biodiversity protects what sustains us. By choosing to actively protect biodiversity as a society, we benefit on two fronts.

Firstly, we would be keeping the fabric of ecosystems and all of their big or small connecting pieces intact, which creates more stable environments. This leads to less invasive species, healthier waterways and guarded soil conditions around the world.

Secondly, if you dare to dive off the deep end for a moment with me, we are doing something beyond scientifically correct. We are being morally responsible, by allowing species that were here long before us to continue rightfully living and existing on the third rock from the sun — the only place in the universe known to support this concept called life.

Here is where things get tricky. We have contextual human traits that can distract us from broader goals, like COP 15's evolving goal of securing about one-third of the world's remaining wild areas.

We spend a lot of time, energy, and money in the developed era bickering over social issues, politics, and things we believe in that are unique to humans. We care more about Will Smith's slap than countless tree frogs and monkeys being slapped out of the Congo rainforest. We are insanely distracted while biodiversity crumbles on the periphery.



Owen Bjorgan found this cecropia moth near Lincoln, Ont., along the Niagara Escarpment, a biodiversity hotspot in Canada. This is Ontario's largest insect, about the size of an adult's hand, and is a beautiful and important aspect of our local biodiversity. (Owen Bjorgan)

HOLIDAY EARLY DEADLINES DECEMBER 28TH ISSUE

Classified and display deadline: Booking Friday, December 23rd @ noon
Editorial and letters deadline: Friday, December 23rd @ noon

JANUARY 4TH ISSUE

Classified and display deadline: Booking Friday, December 30th @ noon
Editorial and letters deadline: Friday, December 30th @ noon

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Editorial

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Art education central theme of winter exhibits

Local Staff
The Local

The winter exhibitions at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre will highlight the value of the visual arts experience through education and practice.

Art inspires innovation, encourages originality and develops creative thinking for students of all ages, says pumphouse marketing co-ordinator Aimee Medina.

The Joyner Gallery at the arts centre will feature the works of the instructors, while the Walker Room gallery showcases the artistic talent of participating Niagara-on-the-Lake elementary school students.

Both shows run from Wednesday, Dec. 14 to Sunday, Jan. 29.

The group exhibition represents the art instructors' practice and teaching techniques through their artwork, says Medina, and the collection "also offers visitors a glimpse into the range of mediums that are available in the art centre's upcoming programs."

Among the works on display is a piece titled *Model Resting*, in coloured pencil by NOTL artist and instructor, David Antscherl. He also has an academic



Art instructor Jenny Santos will have her sculptures on display at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre until Jan. 29. (Photos supplied)

background in rehabilitation medicine and anatomical research. This January, Antscherl will share his expertise in these fields in the intermediate-level art class, *Anatomy for Life Drawing*.

Also featured in the show are the stunning sculptures in ceramic by professional artists and instructors Debbie Whitehouse and Jenny Santos. Both artists will be teaching in the new year:

a two-day garden pottery workshop for beginners in January by Whitehouse and a hand-building pottery class in February led by Santos.

More information about the exhibit can be found at www.niagarapumphouse.ca/exhibition.

Another must-see group exhibit this winter showcases the artworks of participating elementary school

students from Crossroads Public School, Royal Oak Community School, and St. Michael Catholic Elementary School.

"We are excited to present the works of young talents in our gallery. Through the exhibit, we want to promote the importance of art education at an early age," says art centre director Rima Boles. "We have witnessed first-hand in our art camps



Broken, by instructor Debbie Whitehouse, is one of her sculptures on display in the Joyner Gallery.

the positive impact that art experience brings to young artists. Our program instills creativity, self-expression, risk-taking and many other life-long skills."

In January, the arts centre will be offering an in-studio, winter art camp for budding artists. Using quality art supplies and tools, campers will spend the week creating projects in drawing, painting, sculpture and more.

For more information or to registration for upcoming programs visit www.niagarapumphouse.ca/programs.

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre is an art hub of the NOTL community. It is located at 247 Ricardo St, Niagara-on-the-Lake, on the banks of the Niagara River, in a heritage building that formerly supplied water to town.



ÉQUIPE SANTÉ ONTARIO
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COVID, COLD, AND FLU CARE CLINICS OPEN IN NIAGARA REGION

Partnering members of the Niagara Ontario Health Team—Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara (NOHT-ÉSON), namely primary care providers and Niagara Health, are opening five COVID, Cold, and Flu Care Clinics (CCFCCs) across the region starting Thursday, December 8. Health-care professionals at the CCFCCs are equipped to test, assess, and provide treatment for people with COVID-19 and other cold and flu-like illnesses.

All appointments for the primary care CCFCCs must be booked by calling 289-267-2879.

Primary care CCFCCs will be closed on statutory holidays.

NIAGARA NORTH FAMILY HEALTH TEAM
- OPENS DECEMBER 15

Virgil site - 1882 Niagara Stone Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Thursdays - 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Fridays - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed Dec 23)

NIAGARA NORTH FAMILY HEALTH TEAM - OPEN

Carlton site - 145 Carlton Street, Unit 7, St. Catharines
Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Thursdays - 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

CENTRE DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRE HAMILTON NIAGARA - OPEN

Vanier site - 1 Vanier Drive, Welland
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Model Resting is a coloured pencil sketch by instructor David Antscherl.

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Storytelling, drumming, Indigenous art at St. Mike

Ben Foster Special to The Local

Last Thursday I met Brian Kon, chair of the Niagara Region Metis Council, during his visit to St. Michael Catholic Elementary School.

During his visit to the school, he played drums and told traditional stories, such as the popular story known as *The Earth on Turtle's Back*. He started by saying “tanisi,” which in the Cree language means ‘hi,’ to the group of children gathered to meet him.

He explained a little about First Nations languages, saying that not all English words have equivalent words in these languages, and that Indigenous languages have different ways of describing things.

He also engaged the children in Dot Art, guiding them through the steps of creating it, describing that beads represent how powerful a person is and that each piece of art tells a story. Everyone got a small stick to put little dots over their canvases, choosing to make a turtle or flowers. The artwork is quite remarkable, and he has been doing this for the past six years.

Kon was born in Winnipeg, Man., and moved to Niagara Falls in 1996, where he continues to live today. He enjoys photography and sketching, in addition to painting.

He also creates traditional Metis attire, using materials and techniques employed by Metis fur dealers in the 1800s. You can

see examples of his art at traditional and non-traditional Indigenous ceremonies he attends.

As a visual artist, Kon has achieved international acclaim. The technique he uses is known as Dot Art (Bead Art Painting), and it is a modern interpretation of traditional beading done by Metis people. To produce the images in his art, each “bead” is applied as a single dot of paint. Many of the designs in Kon’s paintings can be traced back to beadwork discovered on historic Metis clothing and goods.

Kon’s visit to the school was enjoyed by all; the children

really seemed to appreciate having him there, and were enthusiastic about the art and learning how it came about. Lots of pictures were completed, and I am sure they will be treasured by all the children who created one.

I also learned something new about Dot Art. It’s a different way of expressing pictures, and I really liked it. I also heard about Kon, and how he developed this kind of art for himself.

Ben Foster is an Eden High School student doing his co-op placement at The Local.



Venette Gerden Purcel and Erin Duemowere were at St. Michael to demonstrate drumming to the students, and tell some stories. (Photo supplied)



Brian Kon is a storyteller and artist with the Catholic school board, teaching students about Indigenous history and culture. (Photo supplied)



St. Michael students learn the significance of Dot Art, and try some themselves. (Ben Foster)



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Arts and Entertainment Gift Giving

Piaf! The Show celebrates the legendary French chanteuse Edith Piaf



The highlight of the American leg of the global tour was the special presentation at Carnegie Hall on January 6, 2017 on the 60th anniversary of Edith Piaf’s last performance at the famous venue. Photo credit: Kevin Sempe.

The show that has sold more than 1 million tickets worldwide comes to Niagara on Thursday, January 19 for one night only

With a million tickets sold in more than 50 countries and acclaimed reviews worldwide *Piaf! The Show*, a musical celebration of the life and music of the legendary French chanteuse Edith Piaf, returns to North America in 2023 as part of the extended world tour to commemorate the 60th anniversary of her death.

Conceived and directed by Gil Marsalla, *Piaf! The Show* is unanimously considered by Edith Piaf’s close friends as “...the most

beautiful tribute ever produced of Edith Piaf’s career...”

In two 45-minutes acts, the show narrates the rags-to-riches story of the Parisian singer’s career through her unforgettable songs, complemented by a visual tapestry of previously unreleased photographs and images of famous Parisian locations of the Edith Piaf era.

Nathalie Lermite who performs in the title role, is considered by all those close to Edith Piaf as the greatest

French-speaking performer of the repertoire.

Alain Delon, legendary French actor, says of Nathalie: “It is because she is a great singer and a great actress, that she does not imitate Piaf...but that she is Piaf on stage!”

At the age of six, Nathalie Lermite started performing and at age eighteen she released her first album *Tu es tout ce que j’aime*, from which two singles sold over 400,000 copies. In 1995 she opened for Michel Leeb at

the Olympia with Herbert Léonard.

Nathalie Lermite has also recorded numerous theme songs for television series and cartoons. 1989 marked her first steps in musical comedy when she was hired to play the role of Cristal in *Starmania*, in which she performed for three years at the Théâtre Marigny in Paris and then on a national tour, ending in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. This was followed by a succession of roles in musicals in which she often played the role of Edith Piaf. She played the role of the Queen in the Molière Award nominated play *La petite fille aux allumettes*, directed by David Rozen, from 2015 through 2018 before joining *Piaf! The Show*.

Piaf! The Show comes to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in downtown St. Catharines for one night only on THURS 19 JAN.

“... Nathalie Lermite brings the spirit of Piaf to life...”
— China Daily



Piaf! The Show tells us the story of the career of the singer through her unforgettable songs in an original scenography and projections of unpublished images.

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Young actors shine in *White Christmas* at Shaw

Mike Balsom
The Local

Shaw Festival patrons taking in the Kate Hennig-directed production of *White Christmas* a second or third time this month may have noticed two very different young actors portraying the role of Susan Waverly.

Fifteen-year-old Catherine Dubois of Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines resident Payton Mills, 11, both make their professional theatre debuts in the holiday production that is currently earning rave reviews across the board. They alternate as the general's granddaughter on a day-to-day basis, each making her own mark on the Shaw stage.

"Payton is amazing," Dubois enthuses, "she's a firecracker. We're very different as individuals, and I find that we play our Susans very differently. Because she is younger, she plays it younger. I do it a little bit older, a little more chill. That's what Kate wanted, she pushed that individuality in finding our Susans and not just emulating each other."

That might seem like an overly mature explanation coming from the Grade 10 student at Laura Second Secondary School. But Dubois has been singing, dancing and acting on stages for a number of years with NOTL's Yellow Door Theatre Project.

Dubois credits her vocal and performance coach, YDTP's founder and artistic producer Andorlie Hillstrom, for giving her the confidence to audition for the Shaw this winter. Dubois has performed in about 10 YDTP productions, and was part of the ensemble for her high school's long-awaited production of *Mamma Mia!* last spring.

At only 11, Mills also has a number of theatre productions on her resume. Inspired by her babysitter's daughter, the Grade six student at Prince Phillip Public School first signed up for a summer camp



Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane as Seamstress, Kevin McLachlan as Phil Davis, Catherine Dubois as Susan Waverly and Élodie Gillett as Assistant Seamstress in Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*. (David Cooper, Shaw Festival, 2022)



Jeff Irving as Bob Wallace and Payton Mills as Susan Waverly in Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*. (David Cooper, Shaw Festival, 2022)

with Linus Hand Productions when she was six years old. She has appeared in *High School Musical*, *Beauty and the*

Beast, *The Little Mermaid* and more with the Niagara Falls-based organization.

"I'm obsessed with musical theatre," laughs Mills. "Since I was little I would always run around the house singing and dancing. And when my sister took me to see *Matilda* in Toronto I knew that was what I wanted to do."

Mills had earned a role in Linus Hand's December production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* when she was encouraged by her vocal coach, Tenja Hagenberg of Performance on Point Talent Management, to audition for Shaw. She had to step away from that musical to take on the Waverly role in *White Christmas*.

Similarly, Dubois was scheduled to play Mary in YDTP's production of an original play, *Nobody's Children*, which just wrapped up four nights at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre this past weekend.

"It was really hard to leave *Nobody's Children*," admits Dubois. "I was Mary, which is a prominent role. The people are great. And it was going so well, and I love the music. But it's been worth it. I got to see the show last week, and it was amazing."

Dubois has relished the chance to work with the large group of experienced performers and creative people involved in *White Christmas*. Since day one of rehearsals she has been soaking up as much knowledge as possible from director Hennig, music director Paul Sportelli and her co-stars in the play.

"I've seen many shows at the Shaw," Dubois says. "I never imagined it would be me on the stage. From the first time we read the script, everyone was so prepared and ready, they knew how they wanted to come at this. It's been amazing to see their process. I've taken a lot of that with me."

Rehearsals began in Octo-

ber, and ramped up when they moved to the large rehearsal space in November. Since then, Dubois says it's been challenging to balance the demands of school with her schedule at the Shaw. Recently, her drama teacher at Laura Second, Tracy Thorpe, brought a bus load of students to see her in *White Christmas*.

"It was nerve-racking, but amazing," laughs Dubois. "But the applause after my song, and at the end when we took our bows, was a little bit louder that day. They were so supportive. And I got to say hi to them all after."

Mills says finding out she got the role in *White Christmas* felt like a dream. Any nerves she may have had at the start were dissipated almost immediately during the first few rehearsals.

"The cast is really amazing," says Mills. "They made everything so easy for us. Kate Hennig didn't use a lot of crazy technical terms. Cath-

erine and I could pause and ask questions any time. They made it so easy for us, and the other actors made it such a great experience."

Beginning with the first read-throughs of the script, Payton and Catherine attended all rehearsals together. The company would run through each scene twice, with Catherine playing Susan first and Payton following, or vice versa. During the current run the girls each perform every second day.

Though they never appear on stage together, their work on *White Christmas* is a true collaboration. They have become each other's biggest fans. As they share a dressing room, they write notes daily and leave them for the other girl to find the next day.

Though both have been performing from a very young age, neither has done so in such a professional setting before, in front of audiences the size of the often sold-out houses at the Festival Theatre this month.

Mills got over any jitters quite early in the process.

"I actually start on-stage," she explains. "The curtain rises and I'm there. It's a lot easier that way than having to push yourself to take that first step onto the stage. You can't really see the audience, and if you do, you realize they are paying to come and see you."

And the youngest of four kids wasn't too daunted by the fact that she has to sing a solo during the production.

"You have to step into your character a lot when you sing," adds Mills. "You have to step into the role of Susan, and ask yourself, 'would Susan be nervous?' The answer is no, she's having a lot of fun. You have to feel the happiness, or the sadness that Susan is feeling."

Dubois remains as much of a fan of the Shaw Festival as she has become a part of it. She saw this season's production of *Damn Yankees* twice, and finds it hard to believe she is now sharing the stage with the likes of Drew Plummer and Kevin McLachlan, both of whom appeared in that production.

"It's crazy to think that they now know my name," marvels Dubois. "I mean, they're celebrities! They've seen me do something. Three months later, we're now on a first-name basis."

And she's even been recognized on the streets of NOTL.

"It was a couple of hours after a show," says Dubois. "I went out to get coffee with my friend Lucy. We were walking down the street, and these parents with their kid stopped me and asked me if I was in a play today."

For these two mature young actors, if they decide to keep at their craft, it's quite certain that it won't be long before more and more people know their names.

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REAL ESTATE WILLS BUSINESS

Penguin Dip to carry on Boxing Day tradition

Penny Coles
The Local

This will be the 47th year for brave souls to take the plunge in the annual Penguin Dip, held Boxing Day at Balls Beach.

Organizer Chris Bjorgan, 65, says he's looking forward to it — he doesn't even think about the cold anymore.

He also expects to see veteran dippers Pat Quinn and Vic Tee back, and probably several family members. His nephew Owen Bjorgan is a regular, and even his older brother Lorne, one of the originals in 1974 who has missed a few years because of a bad back, might return.

Lorne is the only one of the original group that is still around, he adds, and although Terry Ball, another original, hasn't taken part in years, his sons have. "It's a bit of a legacy with his family as well," says Chris.

Although Chris wasn't involved the first year, he relates the story of its beginnings, when his brother, Ball and a small group of friends were playing football along the Niagara River Parkway on an unseasonably warm Easter day. They decided to cool off in the river and jumped in — and were shocked to discover how cold it was.



Justine Nicholls, Sam Quinn, Chris Bjorgan, Owen Bjorgan, Katelyn Knox, Chris Knox, and Pat Quinn are the seven who completed the three dips Boxing Day 2021, to make it an official Penguin Dip. (File photo)

"They said, 'okay, this was a really dumb idea. We should do it again,' and decided they would do it on Boxing Day.

They used to jump in from the Ball family dock, with a pot-belly stove to warm them

in the garage, he recalls.

"It was a really nice set-up, and a lot of fun. From there, it became a tradition."

He's really not sure how many people to expect this year — although some regulars might be really excited

after a two-year absence, others may not come back. "We see that happen with other events," he says. "We'll have to see."

At the last pre-COVID-19 event, former councillor Clare Cameron and her

husband Mackenzie took part in their first Penguin Dip, and said they'd be back. To become an official Penguin requires three dips in the water, for three years, and the Camerons said then they would be back.

Chris says he has heard from Clare recently, and they are planning on making this Boxing Day their second official dip.

During the first two years of COVID, when organized events were restricted, Chris says there was still a dip, although it was not announced and there were just a very small number of friends involved, to ensure continuity.

Although there is always a discussion about the weather and the temperature outside, Chris says it doesn't make a difference. The water is always cold, and when you get out the air always feels warmer. Going back in twice more is the hard part, but he's done it so many times he doesn't think about it.

Typically he has a heated truck parked nearby for dippers to warm up in between dips, but he's not sure that will happen this year, with the town having decided to block off parking.

"I think it will just mean we'll want to get back in the water sooner, and it will all be over in just a few minutes," he says.

In recent years the event has become a fundraiser for Red Roof Retreat, says Chris, reminding spectators to bring some cash for when the hat is passed.

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Wine industry mourns loss of pioneer Peter Van de Laar

Mike Balsom
The Local

Peter Van de Laar, the 1985 Grape King and one of Niagara's original pioneer growers of vinifera varietal grapes, has lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. He died peacefully in his sleep Dec. 6, just two days before his 80th birthday.

Van de Laar planted some of the first Chardonnay and Gamay vines in Niagara in the 1970s, and went on to produce high-quality grapes that were used in many award-winning wines under the Inniskillin and Jackson Triggs labels.

"He knew that our industry needed to change," says Matthias Oppenlander, chair of the Grape Growers of Ontario. "He was willing to take a risk back in the 1970s, a really good businessman, and an even better farmer. He's one of those guys who set our industry on the right path."

Peter Van de Laar was the youngest of seven children, all born in the Netherlands. The family immigrated to Canada in the 1950s, arriving first in Parry Sound before moving shortly after that to north St. Catharines.

Peter's son Chris Van de Laar tells The Local the family originally rented a farm at Bunting and Carlton Streets, where the Mandarin Restaurant now sits. Peter's father turned down an offer to buy the land, and shortly after found the farmhouse on the Niagara River Parkway that the Van de Laar family still owns today.

Peter was much younger than his siblings, and none of the older children took much of an interest in farming. In his 20s, Peter began doing most of the work on the farm, and that's when he began to experiment with different varieties of grapes.

"At the time my father was one of the biggest growers for Chateau-Gai Wines," Chris says. "Paul Bosc was at Chateau Gai. Paul had been telling my father and another big grower, John Marynissen, to start experimenting with these vines because he was certain they could grow them here."

Chris says his father loved the challenge of trying to nurture different grapes on the family farm. When people told him he couldn't, that became the impetus to plant more. Though other pioneers from the same time

garnered much attention for their risk-taking, Peter never sought out the spotlight.

"He never wanted notoriety," Chris explains. "He was quiet and humble. He was an amateur winemaker, and he knew if it did take off that it would be a great thing for our business as well as for this industry."

The Van de Laars' original Niagara-on-the-Lake farm consisted of 20 acres, bought by Chris' grandfather not so much for the farmland but because he and his wife liked the house. With Peter at the helm, they expanded by buying a neighbour's property, tripling the capacity of the vineyards. Today, with Chris managing the farm, they hold 110 acres.

One of Peter's proudest moments came in 1985, when he was named Grape King, seven years after his good friend Marynissen held the honour. Chris remembers Ontario Premier David Peterson coming down from Queen's Park and posing with Peter for a photo.

According to Chris, although his father enjoyed being honoured, true to form, he didn't so much like

being the centre of attention.

"We went out and got him a personalized licence plate afterwards that said 'KING 85,'" laughs Chris. "He told us years later that he was so embarrassed driving around with that plate that he wanted to throw the thing in the garbage. We told him to put it on his pickup truck, but there was no way that was happening."

Another proud moment for Peter came just four years ago, when Chris was named the 2018 Grape King. By then, the ceremonial garb had changed from the traditional royal cape and crown to the updated blazer and chain of office. As well, the demands on the current Grape Kings aren't quite as heavy as they were back in 1985.

Peter was, of course, pleased to see his son follow in his footsteps, but never really said much to Chris.

"That's just the way he was," says Chris. "But I would run into people who would tell me how proud he was of me. He pushed my sister and me, he was a constant coach. When my daughter Erica (Blyth) be-



Peter Van de Laar, the 1985 Grape King, in the full regalia of that era. (Photo supplied)

Continued on page 15

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One last visit to morning coffee group

Continued from page 14

came a lawyer, he asked her if she might be a judge one day. That was his way."

Peter first started feeling ill last February, but the cancer diagnosis didn't come until July.

"By that time it was too late for surgery," Chris says. "It was stage four. He was reluctant to do any chemotherapy, but we were able to talk him into it. He responded very well to the treatments, and he lived longer than the doctors anticipated. A recent scan showed that the tumour had shrunk, but by then his body was just too weak."

This fall, as the family's seasonal workers were getting set to head back home to Jamaica, Peter insisted Chris drive him over to say goodbye.

"He was in really rough shape," remembers Chris. "He grabbed them by the hand, and he was crying. He thanked them for all their hard work through the years and their kindness. He wanted them to know that he enjoyed every single second of working with them. He told them it was an honour to know every



Peter, Cathy and Chris Van de Laar in 2018, when Chris was named Grape King. (Photo supplied)

one of them."

He also had his wife Cathy drive him to McDonald's one recent morning. Peter was one of a group of about 10 men who met there five or six times a week at 9:30 a.m. for coffee.

"She brought him there in the truck," says one of

the group, Gord Paget. "She came inside, pointed to the truck, and asked us all to wave to him. He was too weak to get out of the truck. He is really going to be missed. He was a great father and a hard worker, such an easy-going person."

"He was a very inter-

esting guy," adds another member, Hank Berg. "He had such fascinating stories, and he had taken trips all over the world. I'm going to miss him."

Fellow Grape King (2007) Kevin Watson, whose late father John (the 1989 Grape King) was right

beside Peter in the infancy of the Niagara wine industry, is devastated to see yet another of the pioneers, this one a close family friend, pass on.

"Chris and I are both very fortunate to have had our fathers plow through the field and make things

a lot easier for us," Watson tells The Local. "They were great friends, and it was a tight community. He always treated me really well, and when my father was sick he was always there with advice."

"It's such a big loss to our industry," adds Oppenlander. "We've lost a lot of these pioneers lately. Peter had so much knowledge and wisdom, and he passed that down to Chris."

Peter is survived by Cathy, his wife of 55 years, their children Chris and Dianne, their five grandchildren and one great grandson. Chris' son Nathan is studying at the University of Guelph with the intention of continuing the family business into its fourth generation.

A man of few words, Peter summed up his life to his son in his last few days.

"He said it was good," Chris says. "I asked him what was good? He said, 'the farm, it worked out really well for you and your family, and nothing has made me happier than to walk out into the barn, or to drive out on the farm, or to jump on a tractor, my entire life. I'm glad it worked out that way.'"

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Bands playing Christmas music perennial favourite

Continued from page 1

and was a good celebration of life for his father-in-law.

Riding in the carriage with the Wiens were Coun. Sandra O'Connor and Coun. Adriana Cater-Vizzari's two children, who hopped in at the last minute to ride in the parade while their mom walked behind with some other members of town council.



NOTL Chamber of Commerce board chair Andrew Niven, his wife Cassie and their two children (Penny Coles)



The Burlington Teen Band (Penny Coles)



The Grinch isn't stealing this Christmas. (Penny Coles)



Dogs, dogs and more dogs. (David Gilchrist)



Royal Oak Community School (David Gilchrist)



Santa waves to the crowd. (David Gilchrist)

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The NOTL Sailing Club (Penny Coles)



The York Lions Steel Band (David Gilchrist)



The NOTL fire department's Sparky the Pal (David Gilchrist)

The buzz on pollinators: Beginning a pollinator patch is easy

Sandra Ozkur
Special to The Local

Klara Young-Chin had been tending to a large property for many years, so when she retired to Niagara-on-the-Lake, she wanted a home that would require less maintenance. Although lawns look pretty, they require a substantial amount of upkeep, which is time-consuming and expensive. But her main concern was about the water consumption and the environmental effects of lawnmower emission, fertilizers, and pesticides commonly used to keep the lawn looking good.

Young-Chin took this all into consideration when she purchased a townhouse with a small yard that would be easy to care for. Soon after moving to town, she joined an environmental group of people who also lived along One Mile Creek. They called themselves Friends of One Mile Creek, with a goal to collaborate with the community and relevant agencies to work efficiently toward restoring and revitalizing the water, wildlife and natural environment of the One Mile Creek watershed, including reintroducing native pollinator plants along the creek banks.

As a member of the organization, she became aware of a community stewardship initiative from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to help with their water quality improvement program. The project provided free wildflower plugs and guidance on how to plant and care for these flowers. Her only responsibility was to plant and water the flowers until they were established. With this help, Young-Chin was confident that she could replace her entire front lawn with a wildflower garden. It would be low maintenance because native plant species are perfectly adapted to our climate and soil

and, once established, don't require watering, pruning, or fertilizing. These indigenous plants are generally perennial, self-propagating, and drought resistant with deep roots that help prevent soil erosion. But, most importantly, their flowers and seeds provide the perfect nutritional food specific to our native birds, insects and bees.

"Beginning a pollinator patch is easy," Young-Chin said. Early in spring she began by removing the existing sod in the front yard to prepare for planting the seedlings. She then seeded dwarf white clover as a ground cover to keep unwanted seeds from germinating. Clover produces nitrogen, a natural fertilizer for enriching the soil. In early July, she received the plant plugs and placed them according to height and the amount of sunlight each required. She grouped individual species in large clumps so the insects could easily locate their favourite flowers. She was careful to include many different varieties that would bloom at different times throughout the season, thus providing a constant supply of nectar and pollen. It only took a few weeks of watering for the plants to become established, and then they were on their own.

"We all have a role to play in increasing biodiversity. One of the easiest ways is to create a pollinator garden in our yards. No matter how small, it will make a difference for the pollinators who need many pit stops to fuel up with nectar and pollen. The need for creating corridors for wildlife and biodiversity is more important than ever before. We need to keep in mind that with increased urbanization, the landscape gets more and more fragmented. It is vital that we all do our part as good stewards of the land by adding native plants, trees and shrubs to help keep our



Purple asters and goldenrod are great in pollinator gardens. (Sandra Ozkur)

natural environment healthy for ourselves and wildlife," said Young-Chin.

This all began in 2008, and she now has a very well-established pollinator garden in her front yard. At first, she thought the neighbours might not approve of her unconventional approach, but she has since found the opposite to be true. It didn't take long for passersby to start taking notice of the prolific blossoms and the wildlife activity in the garden. "People would stop to look at all butterflies and bees at work, the beautiful flowers, and the abundance of birds. If I was outside, I would answer their questions and educate them on the benefits of pollinator gardens."

In 2012, the One Mile Creek friends planted a large pollinator garden at William Street Park. They also added oak and tulip trees, which are considered to be keystone plants for our ecoregion.

According to entomologist Doug Tallamy, "Intentional use of native plants, which have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over millions of years, creates the most productive and sustainable wildlife habitat. While some plants play a singular role for one or limited types of wildlife, others are essential to the life cycle of many species. Just 14 per cent of native plants (the keystones) support 90 per cent of butterfly and moth lepidoptera species."

The research of horticulturist Jarrod Fowler has shown that 15 to 60 per cent of North American native bee species are pollen specialists who only eat pollen from 40 per cent of native plants.

In 2016, the friends planted another pollinator garden at the corner of King and John Streets. There you will see some great examples of native wildflowers such as milk-

weed, spotted Joe Pye weed, ironweed, asters, dense blazing star, wild strawberries, big blue stem grass, and wild bergamot. This garden was created together with the town, Communities in Bloom Committee, and the conservation authority. Look for the large interpretive sign at the site for more detailed information.

In 2020, adjacent to the King and John pollinator garden, an additional half acre was naturalized as a riparian buffer with 490 native trees and shrubs. These were planted along One Mile Creek, which flows through the commons. In the last two years the seeds of some of the wild flowers have migrated to the naturalized area, which is a beautiful site in summer.

In 2022, at the entrance to the Upper Canada Trail at the corner of Charlotte and Pafard Streets, a more formal pollinator instalment was created with permission of the town

and support of the Friends of One Mile Creek and the conservation authority.

The creek friends hope to add more pollinator gardens, but with limited public space available, they need individual home owners to get involved. The pollinator populations are critically low, so hundreds of pollinator gardens are needed immediately. If more people join in, we can expand quickly and provide safe zones for pollinating insects to feed and reproduce throughout the region. Your contribution may seem small, but it will be part of the bigger picture.

Tip of the week: Pollinator gardens are low maintenance, economical, biodiverse and ecologically beneficial, so dig in and get started!

Take a look at the NPCA website for ideas and a list of plants that are suitable to Niagara, or visit Guide to Maintaining a Pollinator Habitat, or friendsofthemilecreek.org.

That's the spirit



A small group of members of the NOTL Horticultural Society carried on the tradition of wrapping and packing poinsettias provided by Van Noort Greenhouses, then delivered them to seniors at Upper Canada Lodge, Pleasant Manor and Niagara Long Term Care to add some Christmas spirit to their surroundings. Hilda Ellard, Ingrid Regier and Alice Rance were packing boxes, and Regier helped deliver. The women have fun working together and the long-term care homes seem to appreciate the flowers, said Rance. (Photos supplied)

LocalSPORTS

LocalHAPPENINGS

St. Davids and District Lions Club

Friday Fish Fry



December 16th

4:30 to 7:00 pm



1 Pc. Dinner - \$ 11.00
2 Pc. Dinner - \$ 15.00

EAT IN or TAKE OUT Haddock & Chips or Baked Potato, Coleslaw, Tartar Sauce, Bread, Tea or Coffee

Refundable Bottle & Can Drive EVERY FISH FRY FRIDAY St. Davids LEOs will be on hand to receive your empties!



CAROL SING AT THE WAYSIDE CHAPEL:

Take a break from the busyness of the season and join in a carol sing at the Wayside Chapel. The chapel is on Niagara River Parkway at Line 1 in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Saturday, Dec. 17 at 3:30. This is an outdoor event, after all the chapel is rather small, so dress appropriately. Don't forget to bring your singing voice.



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Goalie turns heads in debut with Predators

Mike Balsom
The Local

Goaded into taking a rookie lap at the start of Friday night's game against the Windsor Aces, Niagara Predators goalie Warren Krogman knew all eyes would be on him for the next 60 minutes.

The 18-year-old from Grimsby didn't disappoint in his first Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League start, turning away 36 shots to lead the team to a 5-1 victory.

"Cam Savoie was at the door, making sure no one went out," associate coach Connor Shipton says about the team's entrance onto the ice surface. "Warren came on and skated around. I can tell you he was a little nervous, but he did what we asked him to do. He kept us in the game, and the boys really wanted to play well for him."

Indeed, Krogman's Predators teammates pulled through, swarming the Windsor goal from the opening faceoff, en route to outshooting the Aces 63-37. Five different Predators found their way onto the score sheet in what was probably the steadiest, most well-rounded performance of the year from the entire team.

"We got scoring and opportunities from all of our lines," says Shipton, who took over the bench for his third game in a row with head coach Kevin Taylor serving his final game of a suspension meted out the previous Friday. "It was a whole-team offensive effort. Everyone was getting in on the action."

Nolan Wyers was the first to beat Windsor goalie Ben Hardy, scoring just 1:30 into the game, assisted by Anthony Tropea and Cole Ellis. Cameron Savoie followed up almost 15 minutes later when he took a pass from Tropea and beat Hardy in the top corner. The Preds kept Hardy busy in the first, peppering the 20-year-old New Hampshire native with 24 shots on goal.

Reese Bisci put Niagara up 3-0 early in the second period, but Windsor's Samuel Senft notched his 27th goal of the season about two minutes lat-

er on a breakaway. The Preds squandered a two-man advantage midway through the period, but later managed to get a goal from Cole Ellis when he buried a rebound off of Tyler Gearing's shot on Hardy, regaining the three-goal cushion.

The Aces had their best opportunities of the game in the third, but Hardy came up big to hold onto the lead. Leo Savin added a fifth goal for Niagara late in the third period.

Shipton was pleased with the chance to beat a team for which he played defence during his own GMHL career. He was with the Aces for 17 games in the 2016-2017 season, and still holds some resentment toward the team for the way he was treated.

"My last ever win as a player in junior," he added, "was knocking Windsor out of the playoffs in my last year. That was nice as well."

Friday's win followed a 6-1 loss to the Bulls in Bradford Wednesday night. The Bulls outshot the Predators 48-30, taking a 2-0 lead in the first and beating Niagara goalie Jordan Duquette four more times in the second. Cameron Savoie scored the lone Niagara goal in the loss.

"Aside from the second period, it was a very good game," Shipton says. "We got away from playing our 1-2-2 system in the second, and they capitalized. It was a lot closer than the score indicates. The bounces didn't go our way, we hit a couple posts, we had a lot of good chances, but didn't capitalize on them."

Taylor will be back behind the bench this week as the Preds go into their busiest stretch of the year. They have four games coming up, including two rare mid-week morning games as part of the GMHL's Annual College Showcase, and a home-and-home series against the fourth place Tottenham Thunder this weekend.

The showcase pits South Division teams against North Division teams this Tuesday and Wednesday at the Gale Centre in Niagara Falls. The



The puck rolls into the net for the last goal of the game. (Ben Foster)



Rookie goalie Warren Krogman played his first game with the Niagara Predators Friday, with a 5-1 win. (Supplied)

Predators take on the South Muskoka Shield Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., and the West Nipissing Lynx Wednesday at 11:30 a.m.

"I like that we get to play a couple of Northern teams this year," Shipton says. "It will be an interesting test, getting to see two teams we normally don't see. I've been watching some videos of both teams. I kind of know what to expect from both of them."

The Shield recently acquired former Kingston Frontenac Dennis Golovatchev from Tottenham, where he had amassed 45 points in 19 games. In only six games with South Muskoka he has already collected 10 goals and 9 assists. They also boast 6'7" Latvian forward Toms Breikss, who has 35 points in 23 games.

"I know the North is a little more physical," Shipton adds. "But I think our squad stacks up pretty good against both teams. They will be good games, if we continue to build

off what we've done in the past few games."

Shipton sees the fact that the Showcase is happening in Niagara as an advantage for the Predators. With the mid-week games, many players from other teams may not make the trip due to school or work commitments. And the Preds will be one of the only teams sleeping in their own beds Monday and Tuesday nights.

"I'm telling the guys to look at it like they're back in minor hockey, playing a tournament," he laughs. "Let's look at these two games as home games, go out in the morning and play with all that energy. Let's use it to our advantage."

Admission for all 16 College Showcase games at the Gale Centre is free. The full schedule is up on www.gmhl.net.

The Tottenham Thunder visit Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena Friday at 7:30 p.m., while the Predators will travel to Tottenham Saturday.

Bisci earns spot in December power rankings

Niagara's leading scorer Reese Bisci is the lone Predator to find a spot in the South Division's Power Rankings for December. With six goals and 11 assists, the Welland native is on pace to match the 32 points he collected with the Predators in 2022-2023. Bisci is in 19th place amongst South Division forwards in this month's rankings.

Of the 25 players on the list (five goaltenders, 20 skaters) North York leads the way with seven players while Bradford and the Durham Roadrunners boast five each.

LocalWORSHIP

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday, December 18th

9:45 a.m.

Kids Ministry Sign In (Nursery - Kindergarten)

10:00 a.m.

Worship Gathering Online & In-Person

Message:

Kevin Bayne
Jesus in the World
Matthew 2:13-23

www.ccchurch.ca

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OBITUARY



KAMIN, JOHN

JULY 18, 1932 - DECEMBER 3, 2022

It is with heavy hearts and so much love, that we announce the passing of our father and grandfather, John Kamin on December 3, 2022, with family by his side.

Dad was never the same after losing his beloved and darling wife of 55 years, Elveana on May 17, 2022. Although heartbroken, we take comfort knowing that Dad and Mom have reunited and are holding hands once again.

Devoted father of Rebecca (Jamie King) and Cynthia (Kevin Lamotte). Adored grandfather of Connor, Dylan and Charlotte. Predeceased by his parents Krisjanis and Marta Kaminskis, sister Irma and brother-in-law Nick Ermanson, as well as his parents-in-law Anton and Minnie Bienkowski.

Born in Elksni, Latvia, his happy childhood was interrupted by the Russian advance into Latvia during WWII. He left on foot with his family making their way to refugee camps in Hamburg, Germany where he completed high school and spent his teenage years. His family was sponsored and first settled in Oklahoma, before immigrating to Canada in 1950 to reunite with other family members. Dad first lived and worked in Toronto for the Toronto Transit Commission, eventually purchasing land in Niagara-on-the-Lake with his parents. Dad was a wonderful son and helped grow and maintain a small vineyard while working full time at Thompson Products, and later General Motors in St. Catharines. His work ethic and commitment to provide for his family characterized the kind of man he continued to be throughout his life.

Dad met his sweetheart, Elveana at a ballroom dance studio and they married on June 25, 1966. Mom and Dad built a home, a family, and a beautiful life in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They remained dance partners throughout life, inseparable and truly in love. Dad cherished every moment with his wife and daughters, and celebrated each passing year with gratitude and pride.

Dad was the happiest and proudest grandpa. His grandchildren always received his full attention, and he looked forward to listening to shared stories, joys or worries of their day. He engaged in their activities and interests, and was supportive of their hopes and dreams. His grandchildren meant the world to him.

Dad was one-of-a-kind, a gentleman to the end. He exemplified decency, honesty, and absolute selflessness. He accepted everyone without judgement; always treating them with respect and kindness. He was a gentle soul who quietly helped and supported others without hesitation, never seeking attention or praise.

Dad was thoughtful with his words, a well-spoken and intelligent man. He was inventive and could figure out how to build or fix anything. He loved studying maps, and he never missed a geography question in Trivial Pursuit. Dad appreciated the simple things in life; bowling, sitting outside with his loyal dogs, listening to his favourite songs, catching up with friends and enjoying a sunset with a glass of local wine. Dad considered the love and happiness of his family, his greatest blessings.

Dad had the kindest eyes and an even kinder heart. He made the world a better place. We will cherish our memories forever and always. Until we meet again Dad.

A private Funeral Mass was held at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Wednesday December 7, 2022, followed by the Rite of Committal at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations may be given to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



WALKER, ETHEL RITA
OCTOBER 9, 1925 – DECEMBER 12, 2022



Born on October 9, 1925 in the former Grantham Township at Homer, now in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Ethel is predeceased by her beloved husband, John (1991), her son Robert, her daughter Susan and her grandson Jordan. She is survived by her son Will (Candace) and two grandchildren Niki (Josh) and Samantha, her great-grandson Jack and many nieces and nephews. Ethel is predeceased by her three brothers and four sisters.

She excelled at lawn bowling during the summer months and carpet bowling in the winter months. She volunteered with the Ladies Auxiliary, Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 124 for a number of years. In addition to many years of farming in Niagara, Ethel also drove bus for elementary school children for more than 25 years.

The family will receive guests on Thursday December 15, 2022 at 10:30 to 11:30am followed by a funeral service at 11:30am at MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Interment will take place after the service at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



NOTICES

**To place an Obituary or
In Memoriam in our Classifieds,
please contact Julia at:
julia@notllocal.com or
905.934.1040
Deadline is Tuesdays at 1 p.m.**

OBITUARY

VAN DE LAAR, PETER ADRIAN
1942 – 2022



After a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, Peter Van de Laar passed away peacefully in his sleep on December 6, two days shy of his 80th birthday. Peter is survived by his wife of 55 years, Cathy (nee Sneek), son Chris (Laura), daughter Dianne (David) Valentim, grandchildren Erica (Phil) Blythe, Nathan, Mark, Nicole, Scott, great-grandson Andrew and predeceased by grandson Andrew. Peter is the brother of Frank (late Marlene, Mary), Harry (Willy), late John (Mary), late Bill (late Margo), Ted (late Donna), late Maria. Brother-in-law of Jack (Julie), late Riet and Cor, late Tony and Cathy, Surviving Cathy, Nick (late Cobie) Anne (late Hank), Joe (late Margaret), Nell (Gerry), Paul (Rita), John (Jane), Ronnie (Larry), Frank (Paula), Margaret (George), Jerry (Carla). Fondly remembered by many nephews and nieces, friends and their families.

Peter was a lifelong fruit and grape grower in NOTL and proud to be one of the Pioneers of the Ontario grape industry, having planted some of the first Chardonnay and Gamay vines in the 1970's. He was an excellent grower who was proud of the high-quality grapes he produced that were used in many award-winning wines under the Inniskillin and Jackson Triggs labels. He was rewarded for his hard work by being crowned Grape King in 1985. Farming was his love and passion and even in retirement, he was always looking for an errand to run or a project to complete.

Peter had a very active and enviable life outside of the farm with his best friend and loving wife, Cathy, cheering on his children and grandchildren in their various sports and was an Icedogs Season Ticket holder since their inception. He was a morning regular at the McDonald's "coffee shop" where he developed some great friendships. Pete and Cathy played cards regularly with family and friends, and together they were avid travelers, having completed many "bucket list" vacations to Hawaii, Antarctica, the Amazon, Russia, Iceland, the Nordic Region, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, to name just a few. In Peter's memory, donations can be made to NOTL Palliative Care or McMaster Children's Hospital, Neuromuscular Clinic. Arrangements have been entrusted to MORGAN FUNERAL HOME, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake. An inurnment will take place at Lakeshore Cemetery at a later date. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



IN MEMORY OF

M JANE CATCHER
(19-AUG-1958 TO 07-DEC-2022)



Jane passed away peacefully on Wednesday, December 07 2022 following a 2+ year battle with cancer – she was 64 years young.

She was born to Margaret Trudeau and Patrick J LaForce and grew up in Almonte, ON just outside Ottawa. She is survived by her loving husband of 38 years, Tom along with her sister Julie Drynan (Greg) and brothers Joe, Jim (Chrissy) & Jason (Darlene) LaForce. Also survived by father-in-law Chris Catcher Sr., sisters and brother-in-law Isabel, Tonia (Rick), Mary (Gord), Chris Jr. (Shari).

Jane was a 1979 graduate of Early Childhood Education from St. Lawrence College in Kingston, ON. Upon graduation she embarked on opening & certifying an in home day care program for one of the professors at Queen's University. A few years later she moved to Toronto to pursue a business career.

I met Jane at the University of Toronto while she was undertaking her Business Administration studies. I would like to believe that I was gallant & charming when we met, however truth be told it was Jane who chose me. She wanted to be with me and I wanted to be with her and that oneness never waned over the 40 years we were together.

Following graduation in 1982 the usual stuff happened; work, travel, careers and marriage in 1984. We were not fortunate enough to have children, although that didn't matter as we had each other. We were blessed with numerous nieces and nephews and presently have 19 great nieces and nephews across our families.

Jane's mid-life crisis came when she turned 46 which resulted in her returning to school and attaining her interior design qualifications graduating from Humber College in 2008. Jane's talent resulted in her opening a small boutique design firm – Catcher Design which was based on her two passions interior design & gardening. She continued to operate her small firm until her passing.

Retirement brought new challenges along with a move to NOTL. She was an active volunteer beginning with numerous Canada 150 events including The Tall Ships and The Snowbirds. Jane also was the Shaw Guild Garden Tour Convenor and Shaw Gardens Chair in 2021 and 2022.

Jane was a kid at heart and loved life. She loved animals and always carried dog biscuits with her when she went on a walk. She was a guiding light for many and will be tremendously missed by her friends and family. She was my best friend & life companion – goodbye my love.

A memorial gathering will be held from 3:00PM – 6:00PM on Thursday, December 29th at the Morgan Funeral Home 415 Regent Street, NOTL. All are welcome to bid Jane farewell.

Wayside Chapel offering carol sing-along Saturday

Penny Coles
The Local

The Living Water Wayside Chapel is a popular spot for visitors during the tourist season, and is known among locals for its Easter Sunrise Service. However, this holiday season the tiny chapel is offering something new — a Christmas sing-along.

Rick Meloen, who helps maintain the Wayside Chapel on the Niagara River Parkway, has organized a carol sing for this Saturday, Dec 17, at 3:30 p.m.

Meloen is a member of the Faith Fellowship Christian Reform Church in Niagara Falls, which owns and maintains the chapel, built in 1965, and he is typically the coordinator of any events held there.

Although he is too young to have been part of the discussions around its conception, he says, the chapel was intended as an outreach project for the church, as “a place where people could stop for a moment of quiet meditation, here on the parkway, with nature close by, before continuing on their way.”

The location is on an appealing corridor well-travelled by visitors to the area, especially during the sum-



Rick Meloen is looking forward to hosting a holiday sing-along at the Wayside Chapel on the Niagara River Parkway Saturday afternoon. (Penny Coles)

mer, providing a bit of a break or a few minutes of respite for them at the small, but inspiring stopover. Or as Meloen says, “a place for a passive sort of witness, not in-your-face, but a quiet spot to stop and say a prayer while travelling.”

This Saturday, it’s going to be a site to raise joyous voices in song, celebrating the season.

“It’s totally new for us,” he says. “The idea came from a local fellow, who regularly attends our Easter Sunrise Service. He suggested years

ago we should do something at Christmas, but one of the problems is we needed some musical accompaniment. I like to sing, but I can’t lead a sing-along.”

That problem has been solved with an offer from a singer, Dianne Ticknor, to

lead the carols a cappella. She will be providing song sheets for tunes of the season, he says.

Meloen explains since this is a first, he has no idea how many people the event will attract — he’d be happy if 10 people show up.

The Easter service always attracts a good crowd — it’s being going on for more than 50 years, except for the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many regulars will remember the chapel at a different spot, on the parkway but further south, beside what became a private home. That was actually its second home, says Meloen — it was originally on the property where it is now, closer to Line 2, on the site of Walker’s Country Market. When the move from Line 6 was necessary about 10 years ago, Meloen says, Jim Walker generously offered the site, and he gives Walker a shout-out for being such a helpful steward, ensuring the area around it is kept tidy. “It’s very good of him to allow the chapel to be here.”

As for Saturday, he says, “I think it’s a good opportunity for people to take a break from the busyness of the season. Come out and we’ll do a little singing together and have some fun. And come prepared for the weather — it’s outdoors.”

If it’s snowing, even better — snow has made for some magical sunrise services, and would be even more so for an afternoon of singing Christmas carols.

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