



Christmas stockings delivered to long-term care homes

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notllocal.com DECEMBER 27, 2023 Volume 5 • Issue 52



Girls escape, survive fire that destroys family home

Penny Coles The Local

A family devastated by the loss of their home, most of their possessions, and their beloved dog is focusing on the positive, with a message of gratitude toward the large community of people who have surcaring and compassion.

Fish, principal of Crossroads School, and her husband Stephen, a teacher at a Niagara Falls school, their two daughters Evelyn, 12,

street visiting neighbours.

event of fire, for saving their neously.

rounded them with love, Kate that night, it was to Evelyn broke the screen to the ground, and they ran tario for the event, which has say she was hearing nois- in her bedroom window, to the stop sign on the cor- turned into a fundraiser for land this year. When fire broke out on es from the basement and as both she and Kate were ner. That was our safe spot Red Roof Retreat. the evening of Dec. 15 in the thought there was an in-calling 911, and the girls that was part of our escape "We did it because we are Niagara Falls home of Kate truder in the house. The climbed out onto the roof. three girls then headed upstairs, and Mabel, their six- as they were escaping, and year-old Bernedoodle, soon she dropped her phone. She followed.

and Claire, 14, were home call with Kate, smoke dealone with a friend. Kate tectors in the house "started and Stephen were down the screeching," she says. The house had been recently Kate credits the calm, renovated, with smoke dequick action of the girls, tectors on every level and and a well-rehearsed escape in every bedroom, and they plan for the family in the were all going off simulta-

With smoke quickly fill-When Evelyn called ing the house behind them,

"She was talking to 911 called back to apologize, During Evelyn's phone and said there were three girls on the roof of a house, and the house was on fire," recounts Kate. It wasn't long before their street was filled with emergency vehicles police, fire trucks and first responders lined the road.

Steve had run to the Boxing Day. house, and was able get the girls down off the roof — he

One of the firefighters went into the house to rescue Mabel, performed

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Balmy Boxing Day for Penguin Dip

Sharon Burns The Local

While it was the 48th year in a row, for many, it was a year of firsts at the Annual Penguin Dip at Balls Beach on

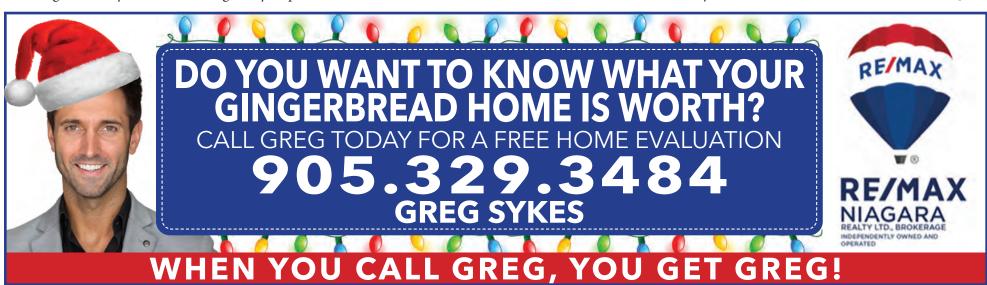
It was the first time Mary Ann Enns and partner, Vince caught them and got them Mayne, swam in Lake On-

Mayne and Enns are no

strangers to adventure. "Last year we went to Greenland and plunged inbetween the icebergs in -4 degrees Celsius waters," she said. Recently, Vince climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and cycled 900 kilometres around Lake Ontario, with Mary Ann and their trusty golden retriever, Bud, in the support van. They also hiked the Highlands in Scot-

"It was so much fun, and great to see so many people 70," said Enns. "We might as I knew," said Enns, who addwell do something big for our ed "I'm going to challenge 70s and Red Roof is very dear the 500 people at pickleball to our hearts. We would do it to do the Penguin Dip next

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Reif Estate Winery up for sale for \$25 million

Mike Balsom The Local

"I'm not selling the winery, I'm buying time."

Those are the words of Klaus Reif, the lone shareholder of Reif Estates Winery, which was listed recently for sale with Peter Fischer of Engel and Volkers Niagara for \$25 million.

With that statement, the 60-year-old 13th generation winemaker, who emigrated to Canada from Neaustadt, Germany in 1987, asserts that his reasons for listing the property are not at all financial.

"I don't need to sell the winery," Reif insists. "But it's time to move on. I have realized that I have neglected my family, I have neglected my friends. I have neglected my hobbies. Because I was here every day. The longest vacation I have ever taken was 12 days."

That realization set in with the deaths of two people very close to him.

First, his uncle Ewald, who came to Canada in 1977, bought Riverscourt Farm on the Niagara Parkway and started the winery in 1982, passed away six years ago after three months in hospital.

A 15-year-old Klaus first accompanied his father Gunt-



Klaus Reif displays some labels from Reif Estate wines through the years. (Mike Balsom)

1978. He immediately fell in back to Canada. love with the country. When

"I finished high school they returned home, Klaus then went to business school," had his plan for the future. says Reif." Then I studied er on a visit to his uncle in He knew he wanted to come winemaking and viticulture.

I finished university (Hochschule Geisenheim University) in June 1987 and came here two weeks later. Ewald retired from the winery business and I took it over then."

Ewald continued to work the vineyards, but eventually retired from his role there when he turned 50. He had an a house in Arizona. He was active retirement, travelling happy." often until his illness slowed him down.

"I saw him almost every day," Reif says of his uncle's time in hospital, "and we had he exclaims. "If something

some deep conversations. One day he told me he was okay to go, because whatever he had wanted to do in his life, he had done. He saw every spot in the world he wanted to see. There was nothing left on his bucket list. He flew with the Concorde, he had

On the drive back to NOTL that day Reif contemplated his own bucket list.

"My list is humongous,"

happened to me, I would not be happy, I would be furious. The next day I went back to talk to him and he told me I should consider retiring."

Reif pushed that notion to the back of his mind. But earlier this year his sister Marion, two years older than Klaus almost to the day, lost her battle with cancer.

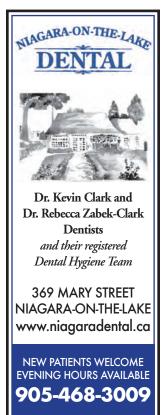
"She was taking care of my parents, who are 84 and 82," he says of Gunter and Elli Reif, who ran their own winery in Neaustadt until just a few years ago. "It's always been difficult for me to spend time with them. I figured if I sell, I will have more time to spend with my parents."

He's not in a hurry to give up Reif Estate's 125 acres of vineyards and five buildings which facilitate the farming,

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Long bucket list makes retirement appealing

Continued from page 2

production, administration and retail operations of the winery, as well as two homes which are part of the \$25 million listing.

Reif proudly takes The Local on a tour of the winery.

From outside the retail building he points out how the structure, built in 2008, was painstakingly designed to reflect and perfectly fit in with what is now the administration building, originally built in 1865.

He shows off the various tasting rooms, including the upstairs board room, decorated and built along the arts and crafts design style, with wallpaper lining the vaulted ceiling. A large board table is flanked by 13 chairs, one representing each generation of the family in the wine business, going back as far as 1632.

Awards line the mantle there. Some of his most cherished honours include the Best Dessert Wine and Best Canadian Winery Trophies from the 2017 International Wine and Spirit International Competition, an event he likens to the industry's Oscars.

In the expansive bottling room he boasts of being one of the few wineries that still runs its own bottling line. There, he describes how he and winemaker Roberto DiDomenico, whom he hired out of the University of Guelph in



Klaus Reif still uses the giant wine barrels his uncle had imported from Germany decades ago. (Mike Balsom)

ery's crush pad.

giant wooden barrels that his uncle imported from Germany and restored on site.

the early days of the VQA des-

since that day, poured the ce- his Inniskillin winemaker ment themselves for the win- Karl Kaiser and Paul Bosc Sr. of Chateau des Charmes win-Finally, he shows off the ery to hatch out the genus of a plan to promote quality in the industry.

Reif also reminisces about been so good to us," he says. "It won't be easy to let this go. ignation, when he met with But I will probably be here for 48 full-time staff working a long history that we have

1989 and has been at his side neighbour Donald Ziraldo, at least another two to three there, and who will continue years. It's a complex business. Whoever is interested in the winery, I will offer my services to help them ease into it."

> wants to find the perfect buy-"This community has er for Reif Estate. That means moved away from the typione who will hopefully main- cal German style design to a tain the employment of the more new world flavour. "It's

to honour the legacy of the family name.

"My name is on the label," he says, pointing to various He's adamant that he Reif labels through the years, including the first one that

Besides spending more time with his parents in Germany, he looks forward to continuing to enjoy the happiness that his young grandchild Aubrey brings to him on a daily basis. Her tricycle sits at the door to the administration building as a testament to how much he loves to spend time with her.

He envisions creating a foundation, an organization that would somehow provide guidance and mentorship to teenagers.

"I don't think we have enough support for that age group," he says. "I don't know exactly what to do, but that's such an important age, and I want to do something to provide help and guidance."

And the avid car collector looks forward to actually getting to drive something other than his everyday Ford F-150 pick-up truck.

"My dream is to buy a Porsche 911 GT3 RS," he says of the supercar that does 0 to 100 km/h in just 3.9 seconds and maxes out at 320 km/h.

And like his friend Ziraldo, he knows he will stay involved in the industry in some way.

"I'm not running away, I'm not moving away," he insists. "I've been in this business for 36 years. I have always learned from older people. Now I'm old, and I hope somebody picks my brain and learns from me."



The Highest Total Volume of Local Sales for the Past Decade

Highest volume in Niagara-on-the-Lake from 01/01/2011 to 09/21/2021. Source MLS.



300 LANSDUWINE AVENUE \$3,495,000

MLS 40522978 – Thomas Elltoft and Kim Elltoft



45 STONERIDGE CRESCENT \$1,685,000

MLS 40468088 - Randall Armstrong



229 VIUTUNIA STNEET \$1,595,000

MLS 40493539 – Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk



743 CONCESSION 6 ROAD LOT \$890,000

MLS 40503590 - Thomas Elltoft and Jane Elltoft



\$1,495,000

MLS 40520055 - Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk



466 DORCHESTER STREET \$1,149,000

MLS 40501539 - Thomas Elltoft and Weston Miller





1 SHAKESPEARE AVENUE \$1,175,000

MLS 40508021 - Weston Miller

Christopher Bowron*** 905-327-6704 Kim Elltoft**...... 905-380-8011 Randall Armstrong**......905-651-2977 Victoria Bolduc*......905-941-3726 Nicole Vanderperk*...... 905-941-4585 Thomas Elltoft* 905-380-8012 Jane Elltoft** 905-988-8776 Cheryl Carmichael*...... 905-941-0276 Caroline Polgrabia*...... 289-257-6063 Patricia Atherton* 905-933-4983

Weston Miller*..... 289-213-8681 Ricky Watson* 905-246-3387

***Broker of Record ** Broker *Sales Representative

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THE NOTL Gocal December 27, 2023 notllocal.com

Scrapping retail wine tax should invigorate industry

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

Niagara's grape and wine industry is raising a glass in a toast to the provincial government for its recent announcement about the elimination of a 6.1 per cent tax on products sold at winery retail

This comes as part of a larger agreement that consumers will be able to buy beer, wine, cider, coolers, seltzers and other low-alcohol beverages at participating convenience, grocery and big box stores across the province, starting in 2026.

Since 2018, Niagara Falls NDP MPP Wayne Gates has introduced legislation three times at Queen's Park, targeting the 6.1 per cent of sales that go to the government from retail sites at Ontario wineries.

Gates told The Local there were some wineries in the province that are so impacted by the "unfair" tax that they have been on the brink of going out of business.

"We knew there was some urgency to this —



Andrea Kaiser, in Reif Estate Winery's barrel room, celebrates the province finally agreeing to lower the retail tax on wine. (Supplied)

again," he said, also noting made a difference. he believes that a media that's why we introduced it September at Queen's Park that there were many peo-

He called the recent event with speakers from announcement a "big win Niagara's wine industry in for everybody," adding

Niagara-on-the-Lake Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser, industry stakeholders, cerns being raised by winas well as organizations eries and industry groups, such as the Ontario Grape Growers, Wine Growers Wineries.

"We all worked together on it," said Gates, also pointing to involvement from the province's craft in the industry, while those beer industry in the overall in Ontario only 7.5 per agreement.

Gates is hoping the wine tax will be done away with as soon as possible, telling The Local he would like it to become law by March 2024.

"We need this to happen immediately. We can't ies." wait until 2026," said Gates, will allow wineries to ex- Niagara-on-the-Lake, pand their operations.

Kaiser, a first-term cent announcement. gional councillor, has "When government and worked in the Niagara politicians are listening to wine industry for 20 years. your concerns, it's always a She is employed with Reif good thing," said Watson, Estate Winery and also whose family started their works as a consultant for local grape-growing opervarious wineries. As well, she has her own brand of wine, Drea Wine Co., which is sold at Reif.

forward a motion to re- nience and grocery stores, gional council to petition is also welcome news. the province to eliminate the 6.1 per cent tax, which she said is something that doesn't exist in any other he told The Local. province or wine-making region of the world.

Her motion was sup- will," said Watson. ported unanimously.

movement" on potential into the industry, he added. changes to how alcohol is sold in Ontario back then, up, expand their brands, the province said.

ple involved — including she said, and the recent announcement is the result of a "perfect storm" of conalong with politicians.

"It was just a matter of Ontario and Ontario Craft those things coming together, and all those industry voices coming together."

> In B.C., VQA winemakers have a 19 per cent share cent, said Kaiser.

> Scrapping the 6.1 percent tax will allow Ontario winemakers to reinvest in their companies, a move that is "absolutely essential to the financial stability and health of small winer-

Kevin Watson, owner adding that this new relief of K.J. Watson Farms in also pleased with the re- in a news release.

ation in 1978.

He said the tax going to the wayside, as well as plans for retail opportuni-In late July, she brought ties to expand into conve-

"It's about encouraging wine sales, and you can't sell wine without grapes,"

Will this create more jobs? "I think in time it

The incoming chang-"There was a lot of es should breathe new life

"Wineries need to gear

and maybe get some more listings in the LCBO and grocery stores," he said, also pointing to it allowing wineries to expand marketing and advertising projects.

Two-thirds of Ontario's grapes are grown in Niagara-on-the-Lake, said Watson.

The province also says it will enhance the Vintners Quality Alliance wine support program beginning in 2024-25 for up to five years, to 2028-29, to support the growth and sale of Ontariogrown grapes, a step praised by Ontario Grape Growers chief executive officer Debbie Zimmerman.

"It not only provides stability for both farmers and wineries, but it will is also fuel growth," she said

The elimination of the retail tax will invigorate Ontario wineries and make it possible for them to reinvest in their businesses and drive innovation. "Together, we toast to a thriving grape and wine landscape in Ontario," said Zimmer-

A new, "more open marketplace" will introduce up to 8,500 new stores where ready-to-serve products like beer, wine and seltzers can be purchased, and is the largest expansion of consumer choice and convenience since the end of prohibition almost 100 years ago, according to the province's news release.

Spirits such as vodka, gin and whisky will continue to be sold at the LCBO,



Three (3) bedroom getaway in desirable Chautauqua area of Niagara-on-the-Lake. A short walk to Lake Ontario to view one of the most beautiful sunsets in the world. An easy walk along the Lake and past golf course into Old Town area for shops, restaurants, spas, theatres and cafes. Chautauqua area features smaller lots, cottage style architecture and narrow treelined streets that create a unique community atmosphere. Public park with play area and dog run close by. New Furnace and A/C unit in 2022, new shingles in 2018

Patricia Atherton Sales Representative 905-933-4983



Caroline Polgrabia Sales Representative 289-257-6063

Rehearsal provided confidence to carry out escape plan

Continued from page 1

CPR, gave her oxygen, and took her to an emergency veterinary clinic, but she couldn't be revived.

"The firefighter told me that because Mabel had been downstairs and run up to alert the girls to the fire, she had saved their lives, and she was wrapped in a Canadian flag before she was cremated. She was a hero."

The girls are also heroes, she says.

"Our kids should be the spokespeople for how to escape from a burning building. They were calm, cool and collected. They called 911, got out of the house, and went to our safe spot. It was terrifying. It was fast four minutes — and they escaped from the last room that filled with smoke."

"Stephen and I have always agreed, our job is to keep them alive until they can keep themselves alive," adds Kate. "We didn't expect the test to come so soon, but we all passed, and now there is a sense of relief that is indescribable."

She has good cause to be proud of what the girls accomplished that night, "but the fact that they were so calm and so confident that their friend trusted them me most proud."

The family has been staying in Niagara-on-the-Lake, first with Kate's parents, Kathy and Tim Taylor, and then in an airbnb, as other family members arrived for Christmas.

Last Wednesday, they were allowed back into the house to see what was salvageable, which turned out to be very little.

"All the gifts we had purchased, with the exception of electric tooth brushes, were destroyed," she says.

However some friends soon took over the job of shopping to replace and

all things that were replaceable," Kate says, "but knowing my kids would have gifts to open Christmas morning, that they would have the traditional Christmas they were accustomed to, meant a lot. It relieved a lot of stress."

She says the four of them were having dinner one night a few days after the fire, talking about the one thing each would have grabbed if they'd had a chance. Kate and the two girls each said they would take their childhood stuffie Kate still has hers.

Stephen said there were a few reminders of his mother he would want she passed away when he was in his early 20s.



Stephen and Kate Fish, with Claire, Evelyn and their dog Mabel. (Supplied)

all survived, and just needed a good cleaning, and most of what Stephen had of his mother's was packed away in containers and also escaped damage.

"We have all we really can get through this we can get through anything. There are people everywhere who are going through much worse loss," says Kate. "We're going to be okay."

There are lots of tears, she says, "but they come and go, and there is also lots of laughter, lots of joy and lots of sharing memories."

Kate credits her parents for having passed on the traits that allow her to deal with the harrowing experience they have all been community, it covers a wide through, and still have a net. In addition to family positive attitude.

of my parents, the lessons communities — their famiwrap the gifts that were lost. they taught me and that I lies for seven or eight hours "I know it was just stuff, taught my kids," she says. every day — the schools the "I see their strength in my girls attend, their friends,

> about 18 months before who have reached out to oftheir home, the house fer help. "Even the family of where Stephen grew up, and which was left to him when his mother passed munities of the Niagara away, is fully renovated. But Falls Curling Club, where even that isn't worrying her at the moment — they have its board, and from Bethhad several generous offers lehem Housing and Big of places to live.

> been difficult to determine, of them. she says — it seems to have been a "fluke accident," with nity has been amazing. most of the obvious causes eliminated. "It wasn't hu- necessities, and extravaman error," such as a candle gances. They've offered left burning or anything of everything. There are no that nature, she adds.

police, the firefighters, the through her tears. Amazingly, the stuffies insurance company, resto-

all been amazing. I don't know if it's the time of year or if everybody is always so open-hearted. I hope that everybody going through something like this is shown with her life is what makes need, and we're okay. If we the same love and generosity we've been shown."

"When you consider you're having a rough day, someone else is having a worse day," she continues. "I have my husband and kids, and we're surrounded by love and compassion. There are people who have experienced much greater loss than we have. We are just grateful for everything the community has done for us."

When Kate speaks of and friends, she and Ste-"I am who I am because phen both have their school and as she's discovering, the They expect it will be families of those friends, our dog groomer," she adds.

Then there are the com-Stephen and Claire are on Brothers Big Sisters, with The cause of the fire has Kate on the board of both

"The Niagara commu-They've offered us support, words to describe..." she In the meantime, "the says, struggling to speak

"It's just so heart-warm-

ration company — they've ing. It's overwhelming how been surprised to hear how love and support people one. have shown us."

ken often about the impor- Maybe somebody has gone tance of an escape plan, and out and bought a smoke

much generosity, kindness, many people don't have

"Maybe this happened In recent days she's spo- to us to save one other life.

detector, or maybe other families will have a conversation about their fire safety and escape plan.

She encourages others to have those conversations with their families. If Claire and Evelyn hadn't known their escape plan, "if they hadn't reacted the way they did in their calm, strong, brilliant way, we wouldn't be having this conversation," she says.

"Christmas or not, have that conversation. There is no better gift to give your family. It could save their lives."

There is a GoFundMe set up for the Fish family. Kate says she struggled with it, but realized "every single person we speak to asks how to help. They ask what they can do. This is a way they can demonstrate their love and caring," she says.

In addition, when anyone sees the page and shares it, they share the message to go out and buy a smoke detector, and to talk about fire safety with their family.

"That's the greatest component, the message of safety and its infiltration into all of our communities."

The GoFundMe page can be found at gofundme. com/f/fish-family-house-



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EDITORIAL

Let's choose kindness for 2024 — it benefits us all

Christmas and Boxing about to come to a close, and the new year is waiting to be celebrated.

The Local has been delivered a day late, due to the good folks who work at the printing press also wanting a holiday, but hopefully our readers have been visiting our en on at this time of year by website to keep up-to-date on news at notllocal.com.

The staff at The Local worked extra hours last week to have the paper ready to go without any of us having work over the holidays, taking a much-needed break before we begin again on our New Year's edition.

Those who will not be taking holidays are our emergency services: Niagara Regional Police, our firefighters, paramedics, all those who staff our hospitals, long-term care homes and other essential services that don't get time off. Thank you all for looking after us!!

Day are behind us, 2023 is many volunteers who have the Terry Fox Foundation, it term care homes, but vaccines make things better for others to recuperate before they begin all over again, as the need community.

> One such project takpeople with huge hearts is the Tractor Parade — Dorothy and Erwin Wiens for organizing it, and the farming community for embracing it.

came out to watch it for its third year, and an idea born of the pandemic when the Christmas Parade was cancelled has become an annual event we all look forward to, none more so than the residents of Pleasant Manor. They may understandably of why the Wiens organize it, although we all love it, so

As well we thank the forts! And as a fundraiser for in the community and in longbeen busy elves, helping to raised an incredible \$100,000 — congrats to all who made - hopefully they have time that happen, including Joe

And thanks to Joan King continues for many in our for her Christmas stocking project, also an idea that sprung from pandemic restrictions. Thinking of seniors in long-term care who would be alone, with families not able to gather, she came up with the idea of taking the outside world into the three Thousands of spectators homes in NOTL, and with a large group of volunteers continues to provide stockings brimming with gifts to every resident of NOTL's long-term care homes. I witness the gratitude from staff first-hand while helping to deliver the stockings, a project that has become a tradition, and we feel the parade is just for all see the evidence of what them — they are a huge part a loving, caring community can accomplish.

We haven't put COVID

and booster shots have made it less stressful, and it no longer dictates how we live our lives, and likely has made many people more grateful for all the blessings this time of year bestows on us.

and her family, as they navigate their way through a long journey ahead of them, and so upbeat when she and her in Hamilton. family have gone through a positive. As always, we never great community this is.

thanks to them for their ef- completely behind us. It's still there are plans galore to be the quality of work they have

discussed: the tourism strategy, the transportation master plan, the parks and recreation plan — there is no shortage on the long list of items for staff, councillors and the community to deal with.

Those issues will be handled without two important Best wishes to Kate Fish leaders at the town, as we say goodbye to CAO Marnie Cluckie and director of operations Rome D'Angelo, both really, kudos to Kate for being heading off for new positions

They have served NOTL very devastating experience. well in their time here, and As she says, there have been are to be congratulated for tears, and also laughter, and finding jobs that will give she chooses to focus on the them great satisfaction in the those aren't as important as next stage of their careers have to look far to see what a D'Angelo says it will be the last for him — but they will Looking forward to the be missed. Ron Simkus, a renew year, it doesn't take a tired mining engineer who crystal ball to predict that lives in the Dock Area and many of the issues in the news has worked with the town on last year will reappear in 2024. Dock Area issues, told The Several development propos- Local Cluckie and D'Angeals are still not settled, and lo "have set the bar high" in

performed in NOTL. Cluckie has referred to NOTL as a small town with big city problems, and that would be wise to carefully consider during the process of looking for their replacements, who won't come cheap, but must be up to the task and bring the level of experience required to do it well.

A thought with which to welcome the new year: we would do well to remember the saying "In a world where you can be anything, choose to be kind."

There are variations and origins attached to it, but the message itself. The best stories we get to share are always about people who have been kind.

As we think about resolutions for the new year, that would be a good place to start. And feel free to share your stories with us.

> **Penny Coles** The Local

Lord mayor reflects on first year of office

On behalf of town council, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to all Niagaraon-the-Lake residents for a joyous New Year.

As I reflect on my first year as lord mayor, I am reminded how grateful I am for this opportunity to serve our community and to work with an incredibly strong council and staff. This role has filled me with great pride and furthis town and those who live, timelines for the successful exwork and visit here.

In 2023, council approved its Strategic Plan, which acts as a roadmap for the future by guiding decision-making and investments for this term of council. An implementation plan has also been developed with actionable steps to achieve our identified priorities, allocating resources, and

ecution of the Plan.

Through regular progress reports provided by town staff, council and the community will remain well-informed regarding completed milestones, ongoing initiatives and upcoming projects. I would like to thank the residents, community stakeholders, fellow council members, and town staff for the collaboration and thoughtful consideration that went into building both plans. I look forward to continuing to engage with residents when making decisions about the future of our community.

The town has been dedicated to digitally transforming services to enhance overall customer satisfaction. This year, some notable digital transformations in-Cloudpermit, our new on- fect locations, good being re- tired English teacher who The Local.

ther ignited my passion for assigning responsibilities and line building permit software. systems, energy conservation, the Friends of Fort George to Additionally, new digital ser- Bill 23 and cultural heritage. I throughout select locations opportunity to represent our in town that help to relay important town messaging to ing a difference. residents and visitors.

to attend multiple conferences where council and staff Niagara-on-the-Lake met with provincial ministers and delegated toward matters that are important to our

vice boards were installed am honoured to have had the town and have a voice in mak-

Niagara-on-the-Lake is Over the course of this truly a magical place to be, and year, I am grateful to have I am so proud to call it home. been given the opportunity I look forward to another year as Lord Mayor and serving dents, visitors, community partners and stakeholders.

On Jan. 20, join me in celcommunity, such as irrigation ebrating the New Year with

raise money for youth staffing opportunities for their 2024 summer season. Tickets are available through the Friends of Fort George website at friendsoffortgeorge.square. site/special-event-tickets.

As with all events in town, this will be a night to remember. Again, I would like to wish everyone a very happy holiday season and all the best for 2024.

Sincerely, Gary Zalepa **Lord Mayor**

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View from the couch

Donald Combe Special to The Local

clude Docupet, our digital has everything: good acting, perfect Christmas movie. pet licensing software, and glamour, travel, picture per-

warded, bad being punished, loves to go to movies. Until

Donald Combe is a re-

romance and above all a happy he resumes going to theatres, ending. Critics loved it, I loved he has graciously agreed to The Holiday (Prime, 2006) it and you will love it. It is the share his opinions, through "short and sweet" exclusives, of Netflix series and movies for



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Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. Last week, Pat O'Neill told us Ben was on York Road at Sheaffe's Climb, a historical marker at the Chief Norton side trail.

The opinions expressed in submitted commentary, and letters to the editor,

COMMENT -

PocalLETTERS Heritage Trail decision needs to be reconsidered

nicipal affairs. However, in be required.

This council was elect- certain cases involving the ed by the taxpaying resi- use of public property, it is dents of NOTL to represent my opinion and one that is them and their interests probably held by many othto their benefit in all mu- ers that public input should

this appears not to be the decides it is to his advantage,

Based on a recent report to a private developer, if he ture taxpayers expense. case when council has re- so as to facilitate his preferred of council which undoubtcently decided in private to access to what is a highly edly results in a very conoffer a unique piece of public controversial residential de- cerned and negative public property (the Heritage trail) velopment at current and fu- opinion. Without any pub-

This is the sole decision

lic input, this decision carries very little authority and needs to be reconsidered.

> **Derek Collins** NOTL

Yocal LETTERS Many thanks to all for Tractor Parade

reminding us of the moments my wife Jo-Anne tachments going by. and I were standing at

In our living room we pressive parade of colour- sure to others, and to us. have a vase with yellow fully decorated trucks, and yellow-orange flowers pickups, vans and tractors reason for my writing remember if she or I said "standing there has made tion for all the hard work with equally colourful at- this:

Pleasant Lane of Pleasant entered my mind that all stopped, and a young Manor watching the im- this was done to give plea- lady ran out and gave me about Robert Frost and Christmas.

A beautifully deco-A thought of gratitude rated piece of machinery there.

a bouquet of flowers and the last line of his poem Here follows the main walked back again. I can't The Road Not Taken, that accept my deep appreciaanything but I was hap- all the difference." py to have been standing

Thanks to all who all of us at Pleasant Manor. made this event possible And thinking now and wishing all a Merry

Well done and please and goodwill extended to

> **Tom Abna** NOTL

*"ocal***"**LETTERS Thanks to 'outstanding community' for Christmas stocking success

warming Christmas stocking initiative. The Niagara-on-the-Lake community comes together in so many ways to support this act of Long Term Care. giving.

again created 222 cards with ward to this little treasure.

It was another heart- Christmas riddles to bring a smile to the residents of the classes prepared 64 stockthree long-term care homes: ings. They were learning Upper Canada Lodge, about community and the Pleasant Manor and Niagara importance of giving back.

Amika Verwegen and group knit hearts for every four children once resident. They all look for-

Crossroads Kindergarten

Sheri Ruby of Ruby Inc. so Palliative care ladies generously provided special gift tags for all 222 stockings.

The Niagara Lions Club put together 30 stockings.

Members of the Niagara tinued as Penny Coles and residents of Pleasant Manor. remainder of the stockings which were made suitable for each and every resident.

offered to be a drop-off lofor people living in Virgil.

The excitement con-

community prepared the Wayne arrived with all the stockings.

with so much gratitude from to the 'Joy' of making this a Apple Hill Apothecary the administrative staff.

The highlight was Sancation making it convenient ta Claus (Martin Mazza) delivering the stockings Christmas morning to the

Such a special treat for them.

Huge thanks to each and They were welcomed everyone who contributed success. This truly is an outstanding community.

With much gratitude,

Joan King NOTL

Thorold, Lake Erie shoreline communities final stop on tour



Owen Bjorgan Special to The Local

When I thought I would be able to create a pre-settlement summary for each of Niagara Region's town and cities in one article, I found myself excitedly wrong. Each town and city on the Niagara Peninsula harbours distinct historical and environmental features that make them worthy of a deeper conversation.

Two weeks ago, we discussed what the Lake Ontario shore communities ment waterfall that techni- meant that water trapped looked like before European influence. When I ran Erie (versus surface run- there for thousands of Escarpment near the Beth- located at very end of Lake and the now endangered out of room for that article, off) flowing over it. That's years to follow. I carried on to the municipalities that lay across the midsection of the peninsula. Which brings us to today's third installment, featuring an ancient trip three Lake Erie municipal-

Thorold was a mixmash of ecosystem types over a relatively small area. Its north straddled a less severe section of the rocky Niagara Escarpment, and the south starting to flatten out into the previously described swamplands of central Niagara. The bulk of the area in the middle of Thorold was quite hilly. Nothing jagged, and not as the Onondaga Escarp- a concoction of wetland much in the way of deep ment. Moving further in- types sitting immediately cut canyons. Rather, wavy land still, the remainder of inland. In addition to that

hills would have been di- this massive municipality vided by medium sized was a remarkably flat wetstreams, including a par- land. ticularly noteworthy one former self.

near Brock University are appreciated creek was dammed up, revalley. Furthermore, water from the modern Welland Falls. It is the only escarp- ing into the lake. This cally has water from Lake behind the ridge just sat why on hot summer days the water there smells like tended eastward into Port a fishy beach, even though Colborne, which shares you are nowhere near a an incredibly similar his-Great Lake!

through Thorold and our to head to the beach. We'll have been a bit larger here, start with some of Niagara as Port Colborne is located Region's quietest and most a little further east along isolated beaches in Wain- Lake Erie's shoreline. Roufleet. This is Niagara's least tine westerly winds were populated, yet wildest municipality.

> Before settlement, Wainfleet three basic layers to it. In its south, there were sandy beaches and some small dunes. About a mere kilometre inland, there is a sub-radic violence, acting as a tle limestone ridge known unique protective agent for

The sand, the minwhich barely resembles its lature escarpment, and the bog are all connect-Those two large lakes ed. The largely under-Onondaga known as Lake Moodie Escarpment is subtle yet and Lake Gibson. Before influential in creating Can-European settlement and ada's southernmost bog, the desire for hydroelectric a wetland feature where a power, a giant meandering lake had eventually filled in with decaying plant matter, sulting in the flooding of its leading to a spongy enclave of peat muck.

The little escarpment Canal was injected into protected the bog from those newly created lakes, winds and waves of a whose waters then flow once-higher Lake Erie, over the naturally intact while also preventing any and ever popular Decew major streams from flow-

That bog would have extorical profile as Wainfleet. On that note, it's time The sand dunes would given more space to push Lake Erie's water and her sands to greater heights, as would have evidenced by abrupt and excellent dune formations near Sugarloaf Hill.

> These larger dunes were a buffer to Lake Erie's spo-



Fort Erie's sand dunes are some of the most impressive in Ontario, and have plenty of influence on surrounding ecosystems. (Owen Bjorgan)

further protected the ancient bog laying north of it. Humberstone Marsh and Areas are properties that were once all connected by a world of wetness that water slowly oozed its way northward to the Welland River or eastward to Black and Tee Creeks.

Following those west-

Pelham, I would wager that graphically diverse of all great numbers of badger, Canada.

sand wall, the Onondaga the municipalities. Being eastern hognose snakes, el area of Port Colborne Erie, it has felt the brunt of Fowler's toad. the shallowest Great Lake's wicked windstorms harder than anyone. Hence, Mud Lake Conservation the accumulation of large sand dunes on the shores in places like Sherkston, Pleasant Beach and Point used to cover almost all of Abino. Consider these Port Colborne. All of that dunes sand castles made by freshwater gods and god-12,000 years.

The dune landscapes sheltered a series of swamps erly winds further down trapped between their Lake Erie brings us to our steep banks. Some dunes last historic stop in Fort are so well established they have a thin organic soil lay-In a friendly and un- er on top of them supportknowing competition with ing some of Canada's largest tulip trees in places like Fort Erie was, and still is, Point Abino. These microthe most naturally and geo- habitats once supported

The Onondaga Escarpment rises as a giant hump in the land across Hwy. 3, sending some water to Lake Erie, but most of it toward the humongous swamplands surrounding Frenchman's and Black Creeks.

Because of the promidesses over the course of nence of the Onondaga Escarpment highlands here, Fort Erie gets a bonus feature of high and dry forests arising out of considerably wetter ones. Add that to the grassy marshlands that once graced the entire area now the Niagara Parkway, and you have what could have been the most ecologically interesting place in not just Niagara, but all of

Stockings bring smiles on Christmas morning

Penny Coles The Local

Once again the generosity of the Niagara-on-the-Lake community has made an overwhelming success of Joan King's stocking project, designed to bring smiles to the faces of seniors in long-term care on Christmas morning.

King was able to deliver 220 Christmas stockings to the three long-term care homes in town, enough for each resident — stockings that were bulging with gifts purchased by many volunteers, who went far beyond what is expected to add some light to the lives of those who received them.

The staff members who hand them out told The Local in the days leading up to Christmas how much appreciated the stockings are, that they truly make a difference in the lives of those in Niagara Long Term Care, Pleasant Manor, and for the last time, at Upper Canada Lodge.

Kristin Mechelse, program manager at UCL, says "it's amazing to have such support for our residents, our last Christmas here. It makes the day a little brighter for residents, for them to know others are thinking of them."

There are youngsters who also get involved in the project - the Crossroads School Kindergarten students and their parents helped stuff 64 stockings.

Amika Verwegen and her four children crafted Christmas cards, enough for every stocking, each one with a Christmas riddle inside: What does a reindeer do when he loses his tail? He goes retail shopping. Why did the Christmas tree go to the dentist? It needed a root canal. What do reindeer



THE NOTL Spocal

Joan King and Karen Skeoch, who helped with finishing touches to Amika Verwegen with Nova Versteegen, 12; Yuna, 11; Kazuhiro, six and Fern, three. generosity' of those who bought items for and stuffed 220 stockings. cards and writing the puns and jokes inside, says Amika. (Photos by Penny Coles)

visiting her anyway on Christ-Christmas morning. mas morning, so it wasn't diffi-

With Pleasant Manor so close to his home, he is able to see her every morning, sometimes going back after the lunch rush at the pizzeria, and usually on Monday and Tuesday evenings for a bit, when he isn't busy. His mother loves to walk, and he spends a lot of time walking around the halls of the long-term care area with her. During that time, he has come to know the othin long-term care at Pleasant er residents, high-fiving or fist-pumping as they pass by. Mazza was looking forward ceives is good, and the staff are to seeing their delight when very caring. He was going to be Santa delivered their stockings

cult to say yes to the idea. "I was

honoured to be asked," he says.

King continues to be overwhelmed by the outpouring of support, not just for the stockings but the cards, the knitted hearts from palliative care volunteers, help from Dorothy Soo-Wiens and the Lions Club, Sheri Ruby who donates gift tags, and all those who have had a hand in making the day bright for seniors on the receiving end.

At Niagara Long Term Care, staff agreed the stockings deliver a lot of pleasure on Christmas morning, especially for those who don't have visitors. "It's great to see their faces light up. It makes their day," says staff member Lucas Steingart.

To view more photos visit notllocal.com



the stockings at the community centre, show off the 'overwhelming The kids, in their Christmas Cards Crew T-shirts, had a lot of fun together making the



Martin Mazza, dressed as Santa, delivered stockings to all the residents of Pleasant Manor's long-term care unit, including his mother Lucy. (Supplied)



hang on their Christmas tree?

this," says Bev Pepin of Pleasant

Manor, seeing the effort put into

making Christmas a special day

for their long-term residents.

"Families say thank you, we all

say thank you to all the commu-

prise in store for them Christ-

mas morning. Martin Mazza

of Virgil's Italian Pizza and

Subs agreed to put on a Santa

suit and hand out the stock-

ings personally. His mother is

Manor, and Mazza says every-

thing about the care she re-

Those residents had a sur-

nity members who help out."

"We really, really appreciated

Horna-ments.

Lucas Steingart, Sheila Tryhorn, Brooklyn Gifford and Jessica Koppers show off the stock- Joan King and Kristin Mechelse at Upper Canada Lodge laugh over the riddles in the cards ings delivered to Niagara Long Term Care.



made by Amika Verwegen and her kids.





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THE NOTL & Pocal 10 December 27, 2023

Rand Estate access suggestion uses portion of Heritage Trail

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

The Town of Niagaraon-the-Lake is making an offer to a developer behind a proposed subdivision that's currently before the Ontario Land Tribunal and has been opposed by a citizen's group since 2018.

Solmar owner Benny Marotta's plan for The Rand Estate on the properties of 200 John and 588 Charlotte Streets is to build 172 residential units, but access driveways continue to be a key issue.

In a special council meeting on Dec. 15, local politicians held a closed session discussion, and returned to the public meeting with a resolution about the need for a constraintbased approach with development related to matters such as stormwater grading and cultural heritage attributes.

The developer is proposing accessing the property from 200 John Street, but the town says if that's what is used, the site could accommodate less than 10

However, the town's

Housing Mix & Built Form

Maintain low-rise character of Old Town





This is the artist rendering of what the mix of housing proposed for the new subdivision on John Street East and Charlotte Street might look like, with 172 units proposed. (Supplied)

rently getting a makeover.

A request to use that 15. resolution states that if an access would have to come

access at Charlotte Street from the developer, and feasible" through this ap- Dec. 20, the recommenda- in any way," he added. is used, an appropriate lev- could be an "opportunity el of intensification could to celebrate and improve" take place there. But it the existing trail, serving as would intersect with a por- a gateway feature, said the tion of the town's Upper resolution, which was read Canada Heritage Trail, a by town clerk Grant Bivol recreational pathway cur- once council resumed in the open session on Dec.

"Proper road access is

proach, the town is saying, also noting that a public process would need to un-

But Solmar is "unwilling to secure" the historical access, between 144 ity. and 176 John Street, from according to the munici- said Chisholm. pality.

who has been vocal about tive on the trail committhe proposed development.

On the group's website, it says they suggested the access now being recommended by the town. The committee that what we're group also refers to it as the "historical" John Street still an ongoing litigation," access. "However," SORE's recent website update says, the resolution states, with Solmar so far "unwilling" to secure that access from its sister Marotta company that owns that part of the Rand Estate, "Mr. Marotta is refusing to make that access available to himself."

During a heritage trail committee meeting on the trail isn't compromised forward."

tion that an access over the trail be explored was raised by committee vice-chair Tony Chisholm, who said he was looking for more details about the possibil-

"We have no informaan affiliated corporation, tion on this whatsoever,"

Parks and recreation Save Our Rand Estate manager Kevin Turcotte, (SORE) is a citizen's group the lone staff representatee, quickly shut down the discussion and provided advice.

> "I want to caution the going down the alley of is said Turcotte.

He said he will consult with the municipality's legal team and find out how the trail committee can be part of the process as it continues.

This satisfied Chisholm. "We all agree that we'd like to be involved," he said.

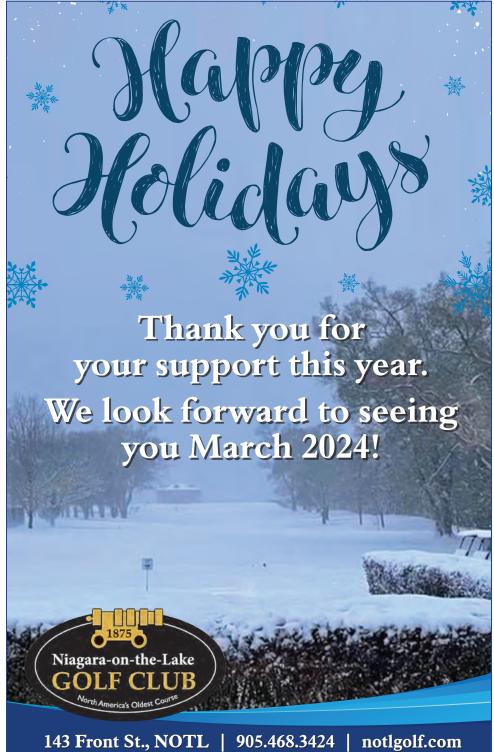
"We want to make sure

Related to the proposed subdivision, the town is also recommending it doesn't exceed 135 units, if the access pitched by council is requested.

Another condition, which SORE's update "welcomes and applauds," is the continued support of the Denise Horne report. Horne, while still a heritage planner with the town — she has since left — set out conditions for heritage preservation on the site, rejecting the majority of the requests to either alter, move or demolish heritage aspects of the estate.

The Ontario Land Tribunal hearing on the subdivision application is expected to be held in March.

Developer Benny Marotta told The Local he has no comment about whether his team will act on the resolution brought forward by council, but added, "We're happy to work with the town going





Dip a successful fundraiser for Red Roof Retreat

Continued from page 1

year." Enns is the play session scheduler for the Niagaraon-the-Lake Pickleball Club.

Hannah Burns has been waiting to turn 16 years old to take the plunge, and this year she finally qualified to participate. She feels she was prepared for the dip because, for several years in a row, she completed the Polar Bear Challenge at Glen Bernard Camp. She also expects to return next year.

Another first timer, Annika Janzen, was challenged by her father, Steve Janzen, who chose not to take the plunge. "It's all about her today," he said. Annika accepted the challenge and her dad supand cheering her on.

Chris Bjorgan, who instructed dippers on the rules and safety procedures from the ramp of the warming trailer provided by his brother Lorne, thought the "turnout was fantastic. It could be a record," he said. One count showed 61 people in the water and another 40 onlookers, supporters and fans on shore. Bjorgan said "the weather also helped. The water temperature was probably the warmest I've ever felt this time of year."

In order to qualify as Penguin, one must, for three years the air."

in a row, take the plunge as swimmers must dunk themselves completely under water, and the third time, said Bjorgan, "is slow and painful" as swimmers wait, ankles submerged, for everyone to get into the water, before backing up slowly until photographers finish taking a group picture.

Martin Lindqvist, director of hospitality at Chateau Des Charmes, created a fundraising challenge and invited friend Thanna Kurooparan and NOTL Councillor Tim Balasiuk to pledge and to swim in the Penguin Dip, each for the first time.

It was a challenge Torontobased Kurooparan took seriported her by carrying her bag ously. He prepared by taking ice baths at a spa in Toronto, yet "was glad that the weather is warmer this year, so I can get one step closer to being a Penguin." Kurooparan, who was born in Sri Lanka, said "it's "still cold for me." He is moving back to Vancouver soon, but plans to keep up with this day, but the temperature at Boxing Day tradition.

> Lindqvist's fundraising efforts paid off, raising just over it was the mildest Boxing Day \$3000. "It was great to see so many members of our community come out for such an exhilarating tradition," he rienced last year. said, noting that "there is a true sense of community in Epp Neuhof, "the weather was

> "Hats off to Tim," Lindfollows: The first time is just qvist said, referring to counto acclimate, the second time, cillor Balasiuk, "who put together an outstanding campaign raising well over \$1000 himself."

It was Balasiuk's first time doing the dip. "It was an absolute blast, and I was stoked when I heard about the challenge by Martin coming my way. All of the motivation was there to join the community for a swim in the mighty Niagara and raise some funds for Red Roof."

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa was also in attendance, supporting both Red Roof and cheering on all of the dippers from shore.

"I love seeing new faces at the swim," said Steffanie Bjorgan, director and founder of Red Roof, a respite for families with youth and adults with special needs right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake. "They are proof that you can try something new at any age, especially if it's for a good cause."

It started out as a drizzly 1 p.m. at Balls Beach was a balmy 8 degrees Celsius and many seasoned dippers can remember, a far cry from the winter storm the region expe-

For first-timer Audrey the number one factor for me this year. Then when I asked my friend Danie if she wanted to do it, and she said yes without hesitation, there was no backing out."

Epp Neuhof has watched



Thanna Kurooparan, Andrej Holly, Steffanie Bjorgan from Red Roof Retreat, Laini Taylor, Krystle Bernier and Martin Lindqvist. (Photos by Sharon Burns)

of the river for years. "Marty and Eddy (Ball) have been out, that water is still cold," he but Chris Bjorgan is catchdoing this since they were 18 and they refer to themselves as Granny's crew," said Quinn and Gerald Runsa-Epp Neuhof. "Eddy's granny man helped dippers safely (Granny Ball) had a house navigate the rocks down to there up until 11 years ago the beach. Quinn has the visit notllocal.com when she passed away."

Andy Ball is a veteran Penguin who has been participating for more than 20 years. "The swim yesterday was great," he said. "It seems to be gaining momentum again after the whole COVID thing, and it's a great group of people and a great cause."

Ball noted it's not quite the same for him as when they had the house at the beach, "but it's still fun. It's great to see the younger generations wanting to get involved."

Andy and brother Ed always try to be the last ones out of the water, as a safety laughed.

Seasoned Penguins Pat

"But no matter how warm it is longest record at 43 swims, ing up with 40 swims under his belt. "I missed a year for a Queen concert in Toronto," he

To view more photos, please



precaution, and "now it's just Audrey Epp Neuhof, who made her first penguin plunge this year, warms up in the trailer with Ed Ball, a regular.



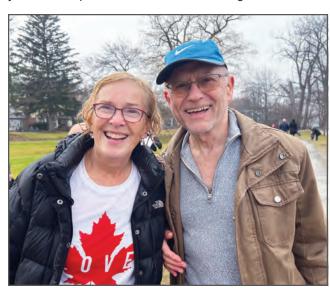
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Mary Ann Enns and Vince Mayne decided this was the year for them to try the Penguin Dip.



Organizer Chris Bjorgan with his daughter Justine.

HOLIDAY EARLY DEADL

DECEMBER 27TH ISSUE The printed edition of The NOTL Local for the week of Christmas will be delivered Thursday, Dec. 28 to accommodate the holiday schedule of the press.

JANUARY 3RD ISSUE

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THE NOTL Goeal -12 December 27, 2023 notllocal.com -

Tractor Parade raises whopping \$100,000 for Terry Fox

Penny Coles The Local

When Dorothy and Erwin Wiens approached Joe Pillitteri about making the Tractor Parade a fundraiser to raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation, it immediately became a competition.

They set a goal of \$3,000, and the game was on, but it wasn't long before Pillitteri's confidence soon faltered.

"I kept getting texts from Erwin. First he said 'I got a cheque for \$2,000,' and then I got another one saying 'I just got a cheque for \$3,000," and that kept going, until not only was Wiens the winner, but even more so the Terry Fox Foundation.

The "friendly challenge," says Pillitteri, ended up collecting donations of more than \$50,000 for the foundation.

"Erwin and Dorothy did not take their foot off the gas for a second," and he will be taking the Wiens out for a well-earned din-

all Dorothy. She is amaz- ly raised by Dorothy." ing. Erwin is really just



as the loser, Pillitteri says Erwin Wiens, Joe Pillitteri and Dorothy Soo-Wiens in front of the Lakeview harvester that was in the Tractor Parade, with a cheque for \$50,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation. It will be doubled by an anonymous donor. (Supplied)

can't resist joking. "We all to \$35,000, about \$5,000 ole Wiens, Susan Muste, donations. If the vehicles four position across Can-

Pillitteri raised about during the parade. eye candy for Dorothy," he \$15,000, the Wiens closer

Pillitteri thanked Car- the tractors and collecting it all they had."

Of course, "it's really know that money was real- of that from donations Kristen and Megan Wish, hadn't been moving so collected from spectators and Mike and Madison fast, they might have made Key for walking alongside more, "but they really gave

The rest from generous businesses, with the total hitting \$48,445 — until Matthias Oppenlaender showed up with a cheque for \$2,000, pushing the total over the \$50,000 mark.

"People have this pre-conceived notion of what they are capable of. Terry Fox had a notion that he could run across Canada on one leg. Dorothy and Erwin — they found the time and the energy to do something like this."

The Wiens put on an amazing event, he says. "This is what the Terry Fox Foundation is all about. It was really special, and it means the world to me."

To make it even better, says Pillitteri, the foundation has an anonymous donor who doubles any donations during the month of December, "getting us over \$100,000 for Team Pillsy, with a team total for this year of close to \$240,000 and our lifetime contribution to over \$700,000."

"That should put NOTL in the number three or ada. We're behind Toronto, Montreal and maybe Calgary for 2023, but we're right up there."





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THE NOTL Gocal notllocal.com December 27, 2023 13

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LocalSPORTS

Preds look forward to starting 2024 with easier schedule

Mike Balsom The Local

enough to inspire the Niagara Predators to a top-tier effort against the Bradford Bulls Friday in their last game before a two-week holiday break.

Dressed as Saint Nick, head coach Kevin Taylor arrived at the Meridian Credit Union tough." arena with a bag of gifts for his team. He had a great time distributing personalized gag gifts to each of his players in the lock-

But the Preds came out flat right from the opening faceoff and gave up a 7-1 decision to the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's South Division's second place team.

The Bulls scored three goals two main reasons. in each of the first and second a number of power play opportunities, and an overall lacklustre Niagara performance.

shot on Bulls goalie John Del- the game. But defenceman Guy

first period.

"I expected a lot more to-A visit from Santa wasn't night," Taylor said after the las Nicoletti. game. "Maybe they were already on vacation. It just seemed that they didn't want to be here. They were checked out. It was frustrating, after having a bit of fun before the game. I thought it was the thing to do, so this is

> ward Declan Fogarty, came in the dying seconds of the game. In fact, as per league rules, once the Bulls had built a six goal lead there were no stoppages of the clock during the third period, last action of the game.

The team's performance was especially irksome to Taylor for in both games; 55-20 on Wednes-

First, Friday's game folperiods, capitalizing on a lack of lowed a strong performance by backchecking by the Predators, the Preds, a 4-3 overtime loss, against the very same Bulls team in Bradford Wednesday.

That night the Predators The Preds didn't even get a spotted the Bulls the first goal of

assists by Josh Frena and Nicho-

Georgy Kholmovsky scored twice in the second, his fifth and sixth goals of the season, to put the Preds up 3-1, while Niagara goalie Kyle Magri knocked away all 19 Bradford shots to keep his team in the lead.

But Magri continued to face Niagara's lone goal, by for- a barrage of attempts by Bradford in the third, and Michael Silvaggio and Linus Callenvik found the back of the net to force the overtime.

Callenvik's tying goal came with just 45 seconds left in regmeaning Fogarty's goal was the ulation. He also netted the winner in the extra period.

The Predators were outshot day and 42-15 on Friday.

"I was really hoping for a strong game tonight," Taylor said. "Especially after getting a point on them last game. I know we got outshot in that game but we played really well. We clogged up the middle and all their shots were from the outside. And then they come out like this tonight."

The other reason for his disappointment was that for the first time in many games Taylor had a nearly full squad at his disposal Friday, with only forward Nolan Wyers out with an injury.

"With the lineup we had to-

seconds of the first period, with had expectations because of what happened last game, and with this lineup we expected to be able to do good things. It makes no sense."

> "There's two weeks now to dwell on this," Taylor added, "and I'm someone who will dwell on this for a while. I was really looking forward to going into the Christmas break on a high note. All I expected tonight was an effort, that's all I wanted, really, for the guys to work hard. That's what makes it so disappointing."

Both he and team owner and president Robert Turnbull hinted that some changes may be needed before the sixth-place team with a 10-15-3 record begins the second half of its season January 5 at home against Tottenham.

"I'm going to coach differently in the new year," says Taylor. "I think there's been enough of me giving everybody a fair amount of ice time. I might now even dress the four lines. Maybe it's time to cut back. There are certain guys who really want to be here, and others who are just going through the motions."

That Jan. 5 home game is followed by road games in North York, Toronto and Durham over the following three days.

Following those games, on night, it should have been a lot All-Star Games in West Nipiss-

well that day.

Goalie Zane Clausen and captain Logan Baillie will represent the Predators in the All Star Game, while Isaac Locker and please visit notllocal.com

aney until five minutes into the Manco tied it up in the waning better," Taylor lamented. "We ing. Despite their record, the Aidan Jones, playing in the U18 Predators will be represented All-Star Game, will have a familiar face on their bench, as Taylor serves as an assistant coach.

To view more game photos,



Goalie Zane Clausen stops an attempt by Bradford's Mason Sandoval as defencemen Nick Savoie and Aiden Jones back him up. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Jan. 9 the league will hold its Declan Fogarty scored the Preds' lone goal on the last play of the game against the Bulls.

James Berg tournament supports minor hockey, scholarship fund



Gary Zalepa gets ready to drop the puck at 2023 James Berg tournament. (Supplied)



The team led by Kyle Pauls wins for the second straight year. (Mike Balsom)

Berg Memorial Tournament raised \$8,000 Saturday, smashing last year's total of \$5,500. Organized by the family of the late James Berg (wife Carolyn, children Mackenzie, Madison and Mitch), eight teams, some formed just for the tournament, competed to take home a team set of T-shirts and bragging rights, with the team led by Kyle Pauls coming out victorious for the second straight year. Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa supported the tournament this year by coming out to referee the two semi-final games. \$6,000 of the proceeds will be donated to the NOTL Wolves Minor Hockey Association, while the remaining \$2,000 will go toward a scholarship fund for graduating Wolves players.

The second annual James

To view more photos from the tournament, please visit notllocal.com



CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH To advertise your **Sunday, December 31st** 9:45 a.m. Cornerstone Kids Sign In (Nursery - Grade 8) 10:00 a.m. in this section, **Worship Gathering** please contact: Online & In-Person Message:

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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63		H	64		65				66		67		1	
68					69						70	+		
71	-	+			72	\vdash					73	1	-	+

Across:

- Arabian ruler
- Following
- 10 Some providers of wood for furniture
- 14 Prepare
- 15 Larry --- in "The Iceman Cometh"
- 16 Largest island in the Marianas
- 17 Stage accessory
- 18 Fire prodder
- 19 A single time 20 Abandon
- 22 Overhaul
- 24 Aeronautics group.
- 25 --- Lama
- 27 Round Table leader
- 29 Baseball official
- 32 Lowest of the low
- 34 Eye defects
- 36 Notes
- 40 Heel
- 41 Sheltered spots
- 43 Short written reminder 44 Ethiopian capital --- Ababa
- 46 "The --- Dancers" (Jean Thesman)
- 48 About the eye
- 50 Did, once
- "--- and her Sisters" (Woody Allen movie)

- 54 Intriguing group
- 56 --- Annie ("Oklahoma!")
- 57 Battalion XO, often
- 59 Moves cautiously forward
- 63 Names
- 65 Author Evelyn ---
- 67 It replaced the French franc
- 68 Noted scat singer ---Fitzgerald
- 69 Boredom
- 70 Former Mrs David Bowie
- 71 Move
- 72 Palm tree fruit
- 73 Sports defeat

- Smartphone programs
- Brandy made from pressed fruit
- Matinee idol --- Novello (d. 1951)
- Disavowal Egyptian cobra
- Roman flower goddess
- Consider
- 8 Garden west of Nod
- 9 Go over again
- 10 Self-esteem 11 Middle meal
- 12 Former Portuguese territory in China
- 13 Slander

- 21 Comedian Roseanne ---
 - 23 Warrant
 - 26 Bony
 - 28 Deceptive decorative paintwork
 - 29 Where the Wizard of
 - Westwood coached
 - 30 One of three in "The Mikado" 31 Formerly known as shell-shock
 - 33 Inquires
 - 35 Escherichia ---, potentially dangerous bacterium
 - 37 Dweeb
 - 38 Give off
 - 39 Alone
 - 42 Counterfoil 45 Irritating email
 - 47 Straight --- arrow
 - 49 Melted
 - 51 Underworld
 - 52 No longer a minor
 - 53 Type of metal or gas
 - 55 Debate
 - 58 Country singer and actress
 - --- Kramer 60 Japanese heavyweight
 - contest
 - 61 Subdivisions of eons
 - 62 Male heirs
 - 64 Plant juice 66 Not hers

IN MEMORIAM

It is 'Forty Years On' since the early and sudden death on December 29th, 1983 of our father, John Drope.

He was best known as the inspiration and founder of the Pillar and Post. The P&P represented an exquisite combination of the many gifts he possessed and the things he loved. Beginning as a modest iron forgery and reproduction pine furniture manufacturing facility he created a unique and historically themed establishment for entertainment, lodging and hospitality. John liked to be at the centre of a good party, so there was a culture of quality and fun at the Pillar. He was most proud

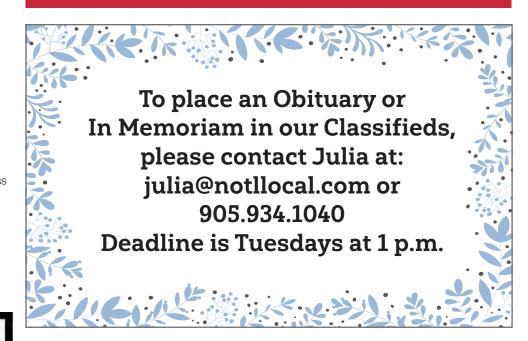
that he employed thousands of people over that first decade. As a director of the Niagara Foundation, he cared deeply about preserving the colonial elements of Niagara. In turn, he was a 'pioneer' of the tourism business that Niagara-on-the-Lake is so well known for today.

For many years, Dad was also an active member of the Shaw Festival's Board of Directors. He created 'The Shawction' now known as Shivery. For his work on of the restoration of Court House. The John Drope Hall is in his name in an upstairs' reception hall by the Niagara Foundation one of his eminent tried and trues. He loved Niagara in the quiet way, history, tradition and the people from all walks of life.

That was the public John Drope. He dazzled as a very talented multi-sport athlete at Ridley College and beyond, was sought out on every dance card and served in the Royal Canadian Navy in WWII. He was a beloved friend to many, to whom he was affectionately known as 'Dropey', 'Mathew', 'Johnny', and 'Dad' among other monikers. Most good guys are lucky to have one nickname!

We, his children: Kathy, Pat, Sarah (deceased), Nancy and Will and our late mother Mary were blessed to be in his aura. We each absorbed snippets of his adventurous spirit, honourable character and bigger than life personality and were deeply bruised that it all ended so suddenly and soon on the ski slopes of his beloved Osler Bluff in Collingwood. So December 29th 2023, we wanted to make sure his story and memory are preserved another 'Forty Years On'.

NOTICES



PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku solution from 6 5 8

9 8 5 3 9 4 6 8 5 4 3 6 5 9

December 20, 2023

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

Eras, 62 Sons, 64 Sap, 66 His.

Hades, 52 Adult, 53 Noble, 55 Argue, 58 Jana, 60 Sumo, 61 13 Emit, 39 Solo, 42 Stub, 45 Spam, 47 As an, 49 Thawed, 51 29 U C L A, 30 Maid, 31 PT S D, 33 Asks, 35 Coli, 37 Nerd, Macau, 13 Smear, 21 Barr, 23 Writ, 26 Lean, 28 Trompe l'oeil, Take into account, 8 Eden, 9 Reread, 10 Ego, 11 Lunch, 12 Down: 1 Apps, 2 Marc, 3 Ivor, 4 Repudiation, 5 Asp, 6 Flora, 7

Iman, 71 Step, 72 Dates, 73 Loss. 59 Noses, 63 Dubs, 65 Waugh, 67 Euro, 68 Ella, 69 Ennui, 70 48 Optic, 50 Used to, 51 Hannah, 54 Cabal, 56 Ado, 57 Major, Tones, 40 List, 41 Nooks, 43 Memo, 44 Addis, 46 Last April, A, 25 Dalai, 27 Arthur, 29 Umpire, 32 Nadir, 34 Cataracts, 36 17 Prop, 18 Poker, 19 Once, 20 Scrub, 22 Renew, 24 C A Across: 1 Amir, 5 After, 10 Elms, 14 Pave, 15 Slade, 16 Guam,





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- Passionate to be of service
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