



Avery's birthday wish to help food bank

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Tommy Wilson takes on Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa in a game of air hockey and gets in some shots against him, although as the Lord Mayor said, "hockey's my game." Del Walker, Jayden Polgrabia, Madeline Bruce and Avery Williams cheer them on. (Penny Coles)

Kids love activities at drop-in session

Penny Coles
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Youth Collective has held its first session of an eight-week winter program that will include drop-ins every weekday after school, some social events, and some St. John Ambulance certificate classes.

Monday saw the program off to a good start, with 16 kids arriving to spend a few hours with their friends after school.

The majority were from local elementary schools, in Grades 7 and 8, with a few older teens as well, says Brenda Ferguson, one of the organizers of the drop-in. Most of them had pre-registered, she says, and those who hadn't came with parents and filled out the required documentation.

"The kids even signed a code of conduct, and I think most of them even

read it," she joked.

There were a total of 39 kids registered by Monday.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa dropped by to see how it was going, and stayed long enough to play a game of air hockey with some of the kids.

One of the kids enjoying the air hockey and basketball games as Del Walker, in Grade 7 at St. Michael. "It's pretty fun just hanging out with friends," she said, adding if she was at home, "I wouldn't be doing much."

She was certain she'd be back, "probably a few times a week."

Avery Williams, also in Grade 7 at St. Michael, played some pool Monday after school, a few board games, Foosball, and also spent time "talking and hanging out with friends. For sure I'll definitely come as much as I can but I play

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Austin Dill to perform at St. Davids Trivia Night

Mike Balsom
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Austin Dill sings with a purpose. This Saturday, the purpose of his combined music trivia night and song launch is to raise funds for Cerebral Palsy Ontario. It's a cause that's near and dear to the Stamford Collegiate graduate's heart.

Dill will open the event at the St. Davids Lions Club with a performance of his

new original song, *Never Give Up*.

It's a personal number, outlining some of the struggles the 18-year-old has faced living with cerebral palsy his entire life. Struggling to tie his shoes, to do the buttons up on his shirt. The stares he would get from people because he was different. His struggles with learning. Being told that his condition might affect his sight and his ability to speak.

As he sings, though,

"these issues don't need a tissue, I will rise above it all."

Beyond his own struggles, the song encourages others not to be afraid.

"Never give up, because you're doing great," he sings. "So don't you let anyone try to stop you from chasing your dream."

Dill lives in St. Davids with his mother Julie, his twin brother Jordan and his older sister Bridget.

About six years ago Julie approached the family's

neighbour, singer, songwriter and worldwide spina bificida and hydrocephalus advocate Danny Lamb, about her son's love of music.

"She said 'what do you think about Austin being able to learn the piano?'" Lamb tells The Local. "I said 'Absolutely!' He came over, and we started to figure out what he was capable of doing."

Austin's cerebral palsy has affected his left side. Lamb recognized right away that Dill would be able to use his

right hand to carry the melody on the piano. He also noticed that Austin's left middle finger was strong enough to play some of the bass notes.

"From the piano, that evolved into him playing the bass," says Lamb. "And he knew that I worked with a lot of young people on songwriting, and eventually he told me he wanted to write a song. So I picked his brain a bit, found out what he wanted to write about, and the rest is history, so to speak."

Lamb says Dill has great ideas that are honest, to the point, and beautiful. He brings a genuine sincerity to every project he begins. Lamb is planning to enlist Austin to sing the song for his PUSH (People United for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus) project podcast and worldwide live stream later this year.

The two are kindred spirits in many ways. Like his

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Icewine Festival launches Friday, village opens Saturday



There will be lots of activities over four days of the Icewine Village on Queen Street, and some evening events as well. (File photos)



The Icewine Cocktail Competition returns Jan. 28.

Local Staff

Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Icewine Festival is back, continuing over two weekends with icewine from local wineries and icewine-inspired culinary creations on offer from local restaurants on Queen Street.

The popular Icewine Village will be open Jan. 21 and 22, and Jan. 28 and 29, organized by Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“This year’s festival is back and better than ever, with unforgettable wine and culinary experiences,” a news release from the NOTL Chamber of Commerce promises.

New this year, guests are invited to enjoy live entertainment, an informative speaker series, and culinary and mixology demonstrations. As well, the first ever VIP Lounge area will offer an exclusive experience which includes fire tables, private seating, an ice-

wine cocktail bar and more.

VIP pass holders will receive complimentary tokens as well as elevated culinary offerings, with passes at \$150 per person.

To open the festival, the Sparkle & Ice Gala returns this year to launch the event on Friday, Jan. 20, from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Court House, featuring winemakers sharing their favourite wines paired with icewine-inspired culinary dishes.

The evening begins with a welcome icewine cocktail, continues with live entertainment and is topped off with an outdoor fireworks display.

The Icewine Cocktail Competition returns with a brand-new look on Saturday, Jan. 28 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., offering signature icewine cocktails for guests to taste and later judge. The historic Court House will be transformed into a glamorous lounge where guests are invited to enjoy musical en-

tertainment, a live DJ and fun photo booths. Included with the purchase of a \$75 ticket is the opportunity to taste up to three icewine cocktails.

“Winter is a unique and magical time to discover Niagara’s wine country and showcase one of our most cherished products, icewine,” says Minerva Ward, president of NOTL Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL. “We are excited to see the Sparkle and Ice Gala return, which is a must-do event to start the Icewine Festival and the new year. There are many reasons to celebrate Ontario wines this season right here in NOTL, and icewine is one of the finest wines we produce.”

But the festivities don’t stop there, says icewine committee chair Andrew Niven. “The Icewine Village in our downtown Heritage District is the highlight of the festival. Taking place over the last two weekends in January, visitors can enjoy culinary creations, live entertainment, ice displays, and of course icewine. There will be lots to do, with side trips inside the warm and welcoming shops.”

For more information or to purchase tickets, call 905-468-1950 or visit www.niagaraonthelake.com.

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Karl Dockstader takes on advisory role for Plenty Canada

He's also preparing for role hosting webinars

Mike Balsom
The Local

After resigning last month from his role as executive director of the Niagara Regional Native Centre, Karl Dockstader has landed a new position with Plenty Canada.

In a news release from its Six Nations Bureau office, the organization announced that Dockstader is being brought on board as an advisor for Indigenous content, culture and protocol.

"I'm looking forward to putting together a couple of webinars a month," Dockstader told The Local Monday after signing off from his CKTB show. "I look forward to learning more about Plenty Canada's projects, supporting their projects, and any cultural insight I can add to the great cultural work they're already doing."

"Well known across Niagara, Dockstader brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in Indigenous organizational management, visual and media arts, and cultural protocol and practice," said the press release of his hiring.

"Karl's knowledge of his Oneida culture brings a great deal of expertise to our work as we roll out projects in the region dealing with Indigenous-led conservation, Indigenous

education, and all manner of Indigenous cultural expression," said Larry McDermott, an Algonquin elder and executive director of Plenty Canada.

With Sean Vanderklis, Dockstader co-hosts the Indigenous-themed radio program One Dish, One Mic that airs in Niagara, London, Windsor and Hamilton. He is also one of three rotating talkshow hosts, along with former St. Catharines mayor Walter Sendzik and broadcaster Steph Vivier, on 610 CKTB's The Drive, airing weekdays from 2 to 6 p.m. Dockstader can be heard on CKTB two to three afternoons a week.

In addition to his radio work, Dockstader is familiar to viewers of CTV News Channel, where he appeared as a regular panellist on the politics show Power Play in 2021 and 2022. He has also done a variety of freelance work, generating bylines for CBC and Canadaland, a news site and podcast network.

With Plenty Canada, his role will include producing and hosting webinars that will focus on a range of Indigenous issues spanning culture, language and current events to matters of the environment. He will also represent the organization at Plenty Canada programs, events,

and meetings, and will attend events hosted by other partner organizations.

Dockstader's departure from the Niagara Regional Native Centre captured much attention when he was walked off the Airport Road property by board president Lacey Lewis and treasurer Wanda Griffin on Dec. 16. Subsequently, three other board members resigned from their posts, forcing an election later this year to fill enough seats for the board to operate and to qualify for funding from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Prior to being escorted out, Dockstader had already submitted his resignation, which was supposed to take effect last week.

"I felt one way, leadership felt another way," Dockstader said of parting ways with the Native Centre. "I chose to walk away. I made that choice. There are certain things that I brought to the centre, and there are certain things that I take away from the place that made me a better person. I'm just really lucky that I could add something to the centre for a couple of years."

Dockstader sees a lot of symbiosis between his new role and his continued work in radio.

"There is synergy between all the projects that I am involved with currently," he agreed. "The key is that I really love doing community work.



Karl Dockstader has moved from Niagara Regional Native Centre to Plenty Canada. (Supplied)

My job on the radio, and what I will be doing with Plenty Canada, is to find people that are already out there doing amazing work, and to give them a platform and an opportunity

to share that work with more people."

"I've really come to appreciate and respect Karl's considerable talents," says Plenty Canada senior advisor Tim Johnson. "He's a really perfect fit for what we are doing. As a broadcaster he's a phenomenal host and presenter. We thought he would be ideal to come on board with the organization."

Johnson added, "He's one of the leading authorities on contemporary Indigenous issues. To have someone with the organization that has that knowledge base, sensitivity and understanding is so important. He's a very talented artist, a cultural authority, a singer. I love his overall approach."

"I'm so excited about working with Tim," Dockstader said. "He's connected to so many people, and so connected to all of the things that all of the people he knows are connected to, in all of the best ways."

Plenty Canada was first incorporated provincially as the Plenty Relief Society of Canada in 1976, and then federally in 1984 as Plenty Canada. It's an Indigenous not-for-profit organization committed to reconciliation through the cross-cultural protection

of nature. Plenty Canada's many projects merge traditional Indigenous knowledge with western science to work toward a goal of sustainable living for all people.

Johnson says it is likely the focus for Dockstader's debut webinar will be on the environment.

"Larry (McDermott) and I spoke to Karl about this on his radio show about a year ago," Johnson says. "Climate change is the existential crisis that humanity faces. There's no escaping it. We'd love to come out of the gates with that."

Johnson adds that the organization itself, both at its Lanark, Ontario head office and the Six Nations bureau, walk the walk when it comes to the environment as a carbon-neutral operation.

"These are the principles that we work from," Johnson says. "It puts us in a good position to talk about climate change because we're already doing things about it."

Dockstader hopes to host his first Plenty Canada webinar by the end of January, but says he doesn't want to rush it.

"Just like with radio," Dockstader laughed, "I would rather do it well than do it fast."

Irish Harp gives back



The Irish Harp is always looking for ways to give back to the community, and a 50/50 draw during their music nights is one of the most popular, and profitable. The most recent one was for Newark Neighbours, and raised more than \$4,000, with owner Jovie Joki evening it out to \$5,000. The Harp is supporting Coats for Kids, has raised money for Red Roof Retreat, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and many others. Thanking Joki and picking up the cheque Monday were Pat Fryer, Susan Sparrow, Cindy Grant and Nancy Jackson, with Joki in the centre. "I continue to be amazed and gratified at the generosity of this community," said Grant. "Even after the overwhelming outpouring of help at Christmas, the support continues."

Brown leaving Virgil, but not before helping local youth

Penny Coles
The Local

While Kathy Brown has been chatting with customers about leaving the Virgil Avondale for another store for some time, she is now officially announcing her departure.

But before she leaves, she has one more goal to accomplish — she wants to raise money to benefit the community, and more specifically, the NOTL Youth Collective in Cornerstone Community Church.

“It’s a different world for kids today than it was when I was growing up,” she says, recalling getting home from school, playing with friends outside, when parents didn’t even know where they were.

There was little to watch on TV, and no social media.

Kids today face challenges parents couldn’t have imagined back then, and she applauds the NOTL Youth Collective for creating a safe after-school program space for kids. She hopes the donations customers will make when they see the jar will help fund some of the certificate programs the youth collective hopes to offer, such as the St. John Ambulance Home Alone, emergency first aid and Babysitting Basics courses.

And since it’s her last chance to raise money after seven years at the Virgil store, she says she really wants to do well for the

kids of NOTL before she leaves.

Those who are regulars at the Village Green Plaza convenience store know there is always a jar on the counter for donations to some cause, and over the years she has raised thousands for the community — for Red Roof Retreat, Socks for Change, the outdoor ice rink last winter, a cat rescue organization, food for food banks — there is always some group in need, and she loves to help out.

She says she supports the community, and the community supports her — every time the Avondale chain has a fundraiser, such as one for the Alzheimer Society of Niagara, she raises double or even triple what other stores can, thanks to the generosity of her customers.

“Virgil is phenomenal. But the best has been the fundraiser for Ceto Reid. Even after I had pulled the jar and he was coming for the money, I had people coming in wanting to donate.”

Last October, Reid, a farmworker from Jamaica, was finished for the season and planning to go home the next day when he was hit by a car in St. Catharines while returning to Niagara-on-the-Lake on his bicycle with a load of laundry.

“People were wanting to donate more than I wanted to be responsible for, so that’s why an e-transfer was set up to help him. And he sends all his money home to his family.”

She was delighted to meet Reid when he came into the store, she says, saying how grateful he was to everyone for all they’ve done for him.

Brown says she’s going to miss that about the community, along with the many regular customers who have become friends, some who come in daily. “There are locals I can set my watch to, coming in every morning at the same time.”

She mentions one woman who comes in every week for a couple of packs of cigarettes and a lottery ticket, and will stay for five to 10 minutes to chat. She has said how much she appreciates that Brown always makes time to talk to her. “She lives alone, and she says that makes a big difference in her day. That 10 minutes of conversation helps her.”

When Brown is behind the counter chatting with a customer, it’s not unusual to see a bit of a lineup. She says as she worries about them becoming impatient because she’s holding them up, “I’ll notice all of a sudden they’re busy talking to one another, and not at all bothered by the wait.”

Brown says her boss has told her if she spends a total of two hours chatting to customers, that adds two hours to her work day. “I’d rather work an extra two hours and make people feel comfortable,” she says, rather than rushing them out of the store and making them feel bad.

While it’s obvious to those who know her that she has a heart of gold, she also has a reputation for being a little outspoken, and a little sarcastic. “I have no filter,” she freely admits.

Her boss tells her he doesn’t understand why her customers like her. “You’re sarcastic, and you tell people off. I don’t understand why they keep coming back.” Brown says she doesn’t know either, but jokes, “they don’t even know they’ve been told off.”

Sometimes, she says, she has a hard time biting her tongue, and tries to be careful about what she says, but most people seem to like her candour, even if they don’t agree with her.

She speaks of one customer who always calls her Sandra. When she asked him why, “he asked me if I ever saw the movie *Miss Congeniality* (starring Sandra Bullock). It wasn’t a compliment, but he made it sound like a compliment.”

Martin Mazza gets that. He gets why people like her, despite her sarcasm.

He’s one of the Avondale regulars, usually stopping in around 10 a.m. most mornings to say hi when he goes to the post office, or any time he is in the plaza.

“Kathy’s part of the community, really in tune with the community. She understands it, she embraces it and she helps it. She cares about it as if she was born and bred here,” says Mazza.

About her fundraising, he says, “she never guilts people. The jar is just always there.”

“The store is always a good go-to, whether you need milk for your coffee, or a sympathy card, she’s got it all,” he adds.



Kathy Brown has a jar for the NOTL Youth Collective on her counter, the last one before she leaves. Martin Mazza stops in most mornings to chat and will continue to visit after she moves, he says. (Penny Coles)

“She’s built a good relationship with her customers, almost like family. She’s sarcastic, but people don’t mind. You can talk about anything and everything, and time gets away from you. It’s like an old-fashioned corner store,” he says.

But best of all, “she’s fun. Not enough people have fun at work, but you can tell she enjoys her work.”

Brown explains that at 13, she started working in a store her mother ran, and treated it like she was playing store. When she first started working at Avondale, “I was still playing store and still having fun.”

But then she reached a point in her life when she wasn’t having fun, she says, and quit.

After a couple of years doing something else — she took a job in a grocery store, and that was no fun at all — she returned to Avondale, “and I’m still playing store.”

And she will continue to for a while longer. Brown says it’s time

for downsizing. She’s looking ahead to retirement, not too far in the future, and has chosen to ease into it by moving to a much smaller store, one that will be less physically demanding. Located on Scott Street at the corner of Bunting Ave., it’s also close to home for her. And she hopes the friends she’s made in Virgil will drop in to see her — several have already said they will.

She thinks she’s leaving at the end of February, although she does not have a definite date. She’ll be posting it on Facebook when she knows, and saying her goodbyes.

“I’m going to miss the community spirit, the way everybody comes together to help each other,” she says.

“I want my customers to know how much they’ve meant to me, how much they’ve supported me. And I hope they come in to support the youth campus and the programs they want to do for the kids. They’re amazing!”



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The deadline for registration is Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

For more information and to apply, please visit www.notl.com or call 905-468-3266 ext. 248.





Kathy Brown says her biggest fundraiser so far was for Ceto Reid, a Jamaican farmworker who was hit by a car while riding his bike. He finished work in October but has had to stay here until his doctor gives him the okay to travel. (Supplied)

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EDITORIAL

Will private clinics save public health care or destroy it?

The big news over the last few days is Doug Ford's promise to allow some surgeries and treatments to be offered in private clinics.

Not unexpectedly, the response is mixed. Some doctors say it will destroy our public health care system by drawing money and staff away from it to invest in a privatized version. Others say there could be value to the idea, but that seems to be a hard-sell.

We might have to get used to the idea — there doesn't seem to be any going back, and many believe it is just the beginning of open-

ing the door to further privatization of health care in Ontario.

There are those who say Ford created a crisis in our hospitals by underfunding them and underpaying those who work in them, then magically came up with a solution to fix this crisis, one he has been planning for some time. If that's true, he also had perfect timing — a pandemic that would have created a crisis all on its own.

While there is no doubt the system is broken and a fix must be found, is this it? Or is it an inept repair by

someone with a very different agenda?

We know what the unions who represent health care workers think — that it will worsen an already failing system, and that the answer to fixing it lies in investing more resources in public health care, not taking money away from it. While of course it's the responsibility of the unions to protect their own, it seems like the logical solution.

Have any of you had a knee or hip replacement at the Holland Centre on Wellesley Street in Toronto, or know someone who has?

It is a branch of Sunnybrook Hospital, offering orthopaedic surgeries, including reconstruction and replacement of hips, knees and shoulders, as well as rehabilitation. Before the pandemic, there was little wait, certainly considerably less than in Niagara or Hamilton, and even since, with a backlog to catch up on, the wait is less than in other hospitals. The level of care is quite extraordinary in comparison to what we are used to — it's a testament to what health care could and should be in every Ontario hospital.

There is logic to clinics where certain kinds of health care could be provided, allowing for shorter wait times, but why not in a branch or a satellite associated with a publicly funded hospital? Does it make sense to offer it to private enterprise, where a profit is to be made, and expect to save money? It sounds like the unions might have it right when they say put money into the public system rather than an entrepreneur's bank account.

There are a lot of smart people, entrepreneurs themselves, in NOTL, people

with no agenda other than fixing our failing health-care system. We'd love to have them weigh in. What's the answer?

The staffing crisis has to be fixed whether or not private clinics are created, and the first line of offence is to give our healthcare workers the respect and remuneration they deserve. When that problem is solved, what next? Maybe then there won't be such an outcry against private clinics. Maybe they won't even be needed.

Penny Coles
The Local

A new year, with new challenges and new opportunities



Wayne Gates, MPP
Special to The Local

2022 was a challenging, yet exciting year. After navigating a difficult new wave of COVID-19 in the winter, we found ourselves in a provincial election in the spring. It was an exciting campaign, and it was wonderful to engage with the community each day. Having the support of so many in our beautiful

riding was one of the highlights of 2022, and provided me with a renewed sense of vigour to take on the challenges ahead of us. And in 2023, we face many challenges, but also many new and exciting opportunities.

As we've witnessed over the last year, our healthcare system continues to struggle with capacity issues, staffing shortages and surgical backlogs. As Canadians, we are proud of our universal healthcare system — it's a statement of our values as a country. We take care of each other. That's why I'm so concerned with the current direction of

this government. They have announced a renewed push towards privatization, beginning with funding for private for-profit surgical clinics. Even more concerning — they've left the door open for further privatization of the system, which could result in a two-tier healthcare system.

This is not who we are as a province. Healthcare is a fundamental human right. We cannot continue down this road towards privatization. The challenges facing our health care system were caused by decades of underfunding and further diversion of precious resources from our hospitals will not solve these challenges. If we invest in our universal system, stop disrespecting our frontline healthcare workers with legislation like Bill 124 and get new hospitals built, we can tackle these challenges.

Unfortunately, the government seems to be following a pattern in their policy decisions — selling off vital provincial assets to corporate interests. We saw this approach most recently with the decision to allow development on the Greenbelt.

Ford promised to protect the Greenbelt during his first term and yet here we are, again. Corporate developers are poised to make millions, if not billions, at the expense of our environment and agricultural lands.

The Greenbelt provides the unique character and heritage to communities like ours, and if we pave over it — we'll never get it back. So much of what brings people to Niagara-on-the-Lake is what comes from the ground — we must protect that. Just like the privatization of our healthcare system, these challenges presents us an opportunity. There is no denying our province faces a housing crisis, and I welcome the opportunity for us as legislators to dive further into that discussion. I firmly

believe we have the resources and capability to provide more housing options for our community, including the proposed 1.5 million homes, without building on our vital agricultural and Greenbelt lands. If we can work together, we can build the housing people need with local workers and still protect our environment.

In 2023, I want to commit to holding this government accountable for their actions and inaction, but also continue to leave the door open to work together with the province and municipalities to get good things done. The status quo is clearly not working for our community and many others; it will take unique solutions from everyone around the table to tackle these challenges.

But it won't work if we continue to put private interests ahead of our communities and province.

We have an opportunity in front of us — build one of the finest public healthcare systems in the world or allow private corporate interests to take over; address our housing crisis while preserving our heritage and environment or allow developers to pave over our Greenbelt. Together the former is possible, and I'll continue to make this case to the government.

We need to push for a government that is creating policy with communities and people in the heart of those decisions — not corporations. It's possible and I truly believe it's our only sustainable way forward as a province. In 2023 — that's my commitment.

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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, Fred Teichgraf correctly identified Ben was on the bridge over Four Mile Creek, across from Gales Gas Bar on Niagara Stone Road.

COMMENT

Local

LETTERS Red Roof says thanks to community for stepping up

I have spent the last 30 years saying “thank you”... a lot! How blessed am I to have had so many opportunities to do so?

I didn't think that way at first. When I was younger, I was a free spirit, very self-reliant, and honestly saw asking for help as a sign of weakness. How naive and silly I was.

Life changes our perspective, usually in good

ways if we are open to it. After having a child with special needs, I quickly learned that families like mine can survive this new journey, but only if they are willing to ask for help. The Niagara-on-the-Lake community stepped up so often in the early years. Service clubs, businesses, family and friends supported us, whether we needed specialized equipment, home

and van modifications, or childcare for our other children when we were out of town for medical issues with our middle son.

So how do you say thank you for all that? It never felt like enough. The only way I saw through that was to accept, say thank you, and use that gratitude to propel me forward and learn ways to give back. It felt like that would just be

good karma.

This led to the development of Red Roof Retreat, and helping families with children who had special needs. With family and community behind me, it has grown from a two-week summer camp in the year 2000, to a year-round, multi-location organization that serves the Niagara Region, and is supported largely by NOTL. And

now I have a whole career based on asking for help and saying thank you. The blessings continue.

As we wrap up the first month of the new year, I want to once again say thank you to all who supported us during our Gifts from the Heart Holiday Campaign. Together we raised over \$103,000. Every time we successfully reach, and often surpass

a goal, I am humbled and empowered to continue making this community proud of the work we do for so many special people. Cheers to a wonderful 2023.

**With thanks,
Steffanie Bjorgan
on behalf of Red Roof
Retreat Board of Directors
and the families we serve**

Winter is dreary and bland, but still full of life



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Has anyone else recently had a discussion about this unusual winter? If we were to personify the season, it would be dreary, sleepy, and boring as bricks. And when it wakes up, in the form of howling wind storms and freezing rain, it seems to be undeniably grumpy.

To describe this winter statistically, it is evolving into one of the warmest, least sunny, and most snowless winters in decades as we move into mid-January. An area exempt from this theme would be Lake Erie's shoreline and its recent lake-effect snow rollercoaster, accelerated by mild weather disallowing lake freeze.

Otherwise, this winter is quite balmy and feels remarkably bland. Even I find myself susceptible to feeling the sleepiness of it all. However, I cannot turn off my biology brain, and I hope sharing this epiphany will liven up the party in an otherwise grey and muddy world.

You are surrounded by the same quantity and quality of wildlife in the dead of winter as you are in the summer, with the exception of some migratory birds who flocked to



Although we've just had some snow, most of it is gone, Niagara's northern region has been without true wintery conditions for nearly a decade now, says Owen Bjorgan, “but does that mean the biodiversity and biological energy around us is any less?”

their subtropical resting places. This is where the term ‘snowbirds’ originates from.

This is something to think about while walking the brisk wintery rim of the Niagara Escarpment, or perhaps in the local woodland near your house. There are the same number of snakes, owls, beetles, frogs, newts and bats around you as there would be on a perceivably more ener-

gized summer day. This is a sort of psychological take on your experience in the woods.

When a person resides in the density of a big city, for example, we are subconsciously aware that there is a family living above, below, beside and across from us at all times. Sometimes, this collision of worlds is separated by nothing more than a thin wall. This is what is hap-

pening with the animals when you walk among the damp and dead-feeling forest at this time of year. They are unseen and tucked unimaginably tight into the recesses of tree bark, hollow logs, boulder piles and underground crevices all around you.

Some are hibernating until spring, and some are just seeking temporary shelter during winter storms. Others have

evolved to survive with a delicate middle ground approach, like bats.

I know of a locations along the Niagara Escarpment in NOTL where a species called the little brown bat takes refuge on the ceiling of a small cave. Locked into a semi-hibernating state, known as torpor, they are perhaps located several feet somewhere under your hiking boots, rather than flying around

you in the winter. You would never know, though.

Like skyscrapers in the city, let's consider all of the trees you see standing tall around you. They are essentially storage tubes for life over the winter months. Take a pause in the visually bleak forest, and an intentional moment to imagine you have infrared vision. There would be clumps of body heat stacked up and down the bareness of the trees.

Peeling away a sheet of bark would reveal up to a dozen different insect species clumped together, waiting for the heat of March. In the depths of a black walnut tree, a bundle of honey bees is quietly vibrating away and generating their own unified body heat, like some sort of super-organism. Although not a true hibernator, Canada's only marsupial, the Virginia opossum, will hole up inside an ancient red oak stump during nasty winter weather. In the meantime, true hibernators, like toads, will push their stubborn-looking faces deep into the unfrozen mud at the centre of a tree base.

I feel like a walk in the eerily uneventful forest is like walking into a kid's birthday party, where all of the children decided to play a game of hide and seek. You know they're still in there, just hiding away with perfection. If you really think about it, the energy is still in the room.

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Avery's wish is coming true, beyond his wildest dreams

Mike Balsom
The Local

When Krista London-Verticchio asked her son Avery what he wanted for his 10th birthday coming up on Feb. 7, she was surprised at his response.

"I want to give to the food bank," he told her.

The thing is, this conversation happened during the recording of one of London-Verticchio's TikTok videos. And she's not just your average TikTok user.

The mother of three has over 561,000 followers on the social media app. On a daily basis, she shares humorous and informative posts about life in her busy family via her account, thekristalondon. To date, her posts have collected nine million likes.

She and Frank got busy collaborating on an Amazon wishlist for what they are calling Frank's Birthday Fundraiser for Newark Neighbours, Frank being Avery's nickname. They shared it via Krista's TikTok account, and by day four of his fundraiser this Tuesday more than 50 boxes had arrived at their Virgil home.

As the pair speaks to The Local, yet another box sits at their front door waiting to be added to what Krista calls 'a grocery store' that is taking shape in their home. Items include peanut butter, diapers, cookies, cereal, soups, detergent, and Pringles.

"Lots and lots of Pringles," says Avery.

Each day since Frank's Birthday Fundraiser began,

Krista's TikTok has featured unboxing videos. In them an excited Avery reveals the donations hidden inside the many boxes with the familiar Amazon symbol that have been arriving at their door.

He has begun Frank's Wall of Fame, a collection of gift notes that have been included in the boxes, most of which wish him a happy birthday and commend him for his generosity to others. These notes have found a prominent spot on the wall in their home.

And the donations have been coming from around the world, from people who don't know what Newark Neighbours is, and maybe some who wonder where that letter "u" came from.

"Avery discovered the whole food bank situation this fall," says Krista. "His school was making a collection for the food bank because there were a lot of people in need. Since then, Avery has wanted to donate money out of his own savings account to Newark Neighbours."

"I want to make people happy, I want everyone to get food," says the selfless Crossroads Public School student. "Families don't make a lot of money from their jobs."

"And a lot of people lost their jobs because of COVID," his mother reminds him.

London-Verticchio contacted Cindy Grant of Newark Neighbours to get a list of the most needed items at this time of year.

"Donations typically drop off after Christmas," says Grant, Newark Neighbours board chair. "When Krista

contacted me, I thought 'oh my goodness, how awesome!' I wrote that back to her, in fact, and said how generous, thoughtful and awesome her son is to do this."

At the time, Grant had no real concept of the magnitude of London-Verticchio's following on social media. When she's told that already more than 50 boxes of donations have been sent, she is gobsmacked.

"That just sends chills up my spine," a flabbergasted Grant tells The Local. "Oh my goodness. It's so, so wonderful."

"Our wishlist has been emptied already so many times," Krista says. "And it's only the fourth day of deliveries. We're doing this for 21 days."

"Your mind will be blown if you see how much we already have," Avery adds.

The plan is to visit Newark Neighbours either on or around Avery's birthday to drop off all of the donations. But the fact that the big day is a school day presents a slight complication.

Avery is on the autism spectrum. Even though his teacher at Crossroads would surely understand and even encourage the young philanthropist to miss a day for such a noble cause, he wants to be at school.

"Avery is a rule follower to a 'T,'" Krista says. "He needs to go to school. And that's fine. We'll make arrangements for maybe after school hours, or on the Sunday before his birthday. We'll sort that out with Cindy soon."

In the meantime, the Am-

azon deliveries keep on coming. Krista says there are so many boxes that arrive at the door that the delivery truck usually saves their house as the final stop on their daily

rounds.

Avery's wishlist can be found at www.amazon.ca/hz/wishlist/ls/O19FFS71C33?ref_=wl_share.

"And if people don't want

to order off the wishlist," says Krista, "we encourage them to purchase an item or two at the local grocery store and drop it off directly at Newark Neighbours."



Avery can't wait to tear open the Amazon boxes when they arrive with more groceries for Newark Neighbours.



Frank's Fundraiser Wall of Fame displays all the thank-you notes he's received with the Amazon boxes. (Photos supplied)

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When I was a child, I was always told that if you didn't have enough, you should share what you have. I never really understood it until I joined United Way Niagara. I was a volunteer at the food bank, and I saw how much people needed help. I was inspired to start a program to help people in need. I started the "United Way Niagara Food Bank" and it has been a huge success. I have helped so many people and I am proud of what we have accomplished. I want to thank everyone who has supported me and my team. We are grateful for your help and we will continue to work hard to make a difference in our community.

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Loss of life a tragedy, says neighbour to explosions

Colonial Florist greenhouses are up and running again

Penny Coles
The Local

Ron van der Zalm of Colonial Florists, a large range of greenhouses that is a neighbour of Ssonix Products and owner Steve Baker, will certainly never forget the day of the explosions, Thursday, Jan. 12.

While some family members live in the Port Weller neighbourhood, he and his family are on Lakeshore Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake, not far from the site of the fire that burned most of the day after a series of explosions that lasted about an hour, and were reported to have been heard as far away as the Niagara River Parkway and Youngstown, N.Y.

Van der Zalm said he was getting ready to leave for work when he heard the first “very, very loud explosion.”

Just minutes later he got a call from his niece, who lives closer to the explosion, and was afraid that whatever was happening, their business might be part of it.

He also got a call from one of their growers, who was onsite, and his brother,

and they made their way toward what was a “massive fireball,” he says.

They arrived and went around the back to the side closest to the fire, “and the gentleman who perished was running toward the gate.”

However, he was fenced in between the two properties, says van der Zalm, who drove his pickup to the fence. He and a Colonial grower, with a constable who had arrived on scene, got the man over the fence, into the back of the truck and covered with blankets. Van der Zalm drove him to the gate to wait for the ambulance.

“He was still speaking, and he just kept saying he was cold, very cold.”

He was taken to St. Catharines Hospital, then to Sunnybrook’s intensive care burn unit, where he died.

“I met his fiancée on Saturday,” says van der Zalm. “She was so sweet. It’s so sad. He was only 36.”

Family members and staff, including some Mexican women who live on the property, evacuated to the safety of his home, until they were able to return around 4:30 or 5 p.m., once



Colonial Florists’ greenhouses are very close to the site of last week’s explosions in Port Weller. (Supplied)

the air was determined to be safe.

None of the farmworkers were hurt, he says, but they were very close to the explosions.

“We got them out of there right away, and there was no loss of belongings, but they were extremely shaken up, and we’re making sure they get counselling.”

Although he and others at the greenhouses did not leave easily, says van der Zalm, when the police told them to leave, they did. “The air was really awful, and I realized we shouldn’t have been inhaling it. As much as I wanted to get back to work, I realized they

made the right decision.”

Others who live in the neighbourhood were evacuated to the Kiwanis Aquatic Centre in St. Catharines but have reported they were well looked-after, and they too were able to return around dinner time.

Representatives from the Ministry of the Environment were onsite, air quality was being tested, and there were huge environmental trucks cleaning out the water run-off in the ditches, says van der Zalm.

There was extensive damage to the side of one Colonial greenhouse closest to the explosions, with

its side blown in, but there was no plant material inside.

There was other damage to water lines, and the family was worried about loss to much of what they had been growing to sell in the spring, such as wholesale plugs and plants to use for flowering baskets, but it didn’t get cold until Friday night.

“On Friday they weren’t going to let us in. I really had to plead my case, and once we were in, with the help of family and friends and a very long work day, everything was up and running. It’s just a band-aid solution, but it’s good

enough to keep us going until we can get things properly repaired in the summer.”

Van der Zalm said he has spent a lot of time in recent days talking to the St. Catharines fire department, the police and his insurance company.

He’s also spoken to his neighbour, Steve Baker, owner of Ssonix, which stores hazardous materials.

“We get along really well — he’s a straight shooter. He’s not one for cutting corners.”

The cause of the fire has not been released. The Office of the Fire Marshal is investigating.



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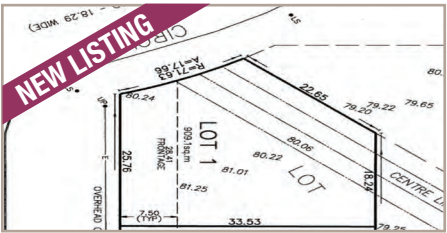
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Pink Pearl fundraising party at Ironwood Cider

Penny Coles
The Local

After holding virtual fundraisers for two years, Pink Pearl founder Elise Gasbarrino is excited to be finally hosting an in-person event.

She has chosen Ironwood Cider House as the venue, for a few reasons — it's just down the street from where she lives, she knows the staff are helpful and friendly, and she loves the new modern building and large open spaces it offers.

The event is called Hybrid Black & White with a Touch of Pink, and is being held Feb. 4, which is also World Cancer Day, to raise funds in support of young women facing cancer. It is also intended to raise awareness that young women face different challenges than others, with few resources available to help them.

Pink Pearl is a registered charitable organization that provides support, facilitates connections and empowers young women who are courageously overcoming the social and emotional challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

There are typically several Pink Pearl fundraisers a year, including an annual event at Ravine Vineyard



At a cheque presentation of \$35,000 for Pink Pearl from the Dustin family, which runs Harness the Hope fundraisers across Ontario, were George Gasbarrino, Mary Gasbarrino, Doreen Dustin, Brandi Dustin-Poels, Kristine Dustin, Elise Gasbarrino and Melaina Gasbarrino. (Photos supplied)

Estate Winery that will be held again in May, and the popular Purse Bingo at White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa.

The Feb. 4 event will be something a little different, says Gasbarrino, and is one of the first events Ironwood is hosting since it opened just as the pandemic started.

It has an open space downstairs, and a large event room upstairs, both of

which will be available for the fundraiser. "Downstairs will be more like a party atmosphere with dancing, and those who want to get a table and chat can take their drinks and food upstairs," Gasbarrino explains.

A local band, Undercover, will be providing the music.

Although "there will be a lighter mood," she says, "we will also be sharing some information about the charity,

and some of the programs available."

She explains in-person programs are slowly returning — a safe, outdoor family support day and picnic was held this summer in Simcoe Park, with 15 women and their family members attending.

"We're excited to be planning things for 2023. It will be nice to see people face-to-face again."

As happy as she is to host an event that will be fun to attend, Gasbarrino has learned through the pandemic that virtual meetings can attract and reach many more people. So for those who live too far away, and those who are just not comfortable at public gatherings, there's also an option to join the event virtually from home.

There will be a silent auction those watching from home can attend, she adds.

Reaching more people

virtually, Gasbarrino says, "is a bigger responsibility, and also a bigger opportunity to make an impact."

Gasbarrino explains how Pink Pearl came to be, as a result of her own experience with cancer.

"At 21, I was in the process of getting my business degree at Wilfrid Laurier University, and was doing a co-op term in Ottawa. I felt some pain in my abdomen, went through the process of surgery, and found it was ovarian cancer."

After two surgeries, then chemotherapy at Juravinski Cancer Centre, she discovered there were few women her age to talk to about her situation, and no resources geared to helping young women.

"There were great camps for kids, and programs for everyone else, but there wasn't a lot for young women. There still isn't," she says. "The 20s and 30s are defining decades," she adds,

when people are going to school, starting their careers, moving in with partners and getting married, "and then this cancer thing comes along."

Her experience led her to organize programs for the younger age group, including wellness retreats and social events, providing a means for them to conquer their issues together.

Some of the women who benefited from earlier programs now volunteer and help others on their journey, she said.

"We have an ambassador program, for women who want to stay involved and give back, as they have more time to give back."

This upcoming fundraising event, though, "is really all about having fun."

It gets its name from the very first fundraiser organized by her family in 2006. At the time, she explained, there was a popular TV show called The Black and White Affair — it makes Gasbarrino laugh to explain it now, saying it was early reality TV — and they used the name for their fundraiser, saying "let's have a party, like they have."

The fundraisers have continued as party events, and eventually the name got changed to Black & White with a Touch of Pink. "It gives it a theme. People can wear black, white and pink."

Some of those attending, she says, "were at our first event 17 years ago."

For more information about the Feb. 4 event, to buy tickets, register for the virtual venue, or donate, visit www.pinkpearlcanada.org.

The auction opens Monday, Jan. 30 at noon, and closes Saturday, Feb. 4 at 7:30 p.m.

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Pink Pearl held its first in-person event this summer in NOTL with a Family Support Day that included an outdoor picnic. At the picnic were women who had taken part in virtual programming during the pandemic.

Virtual museum lectures continue with variety of topics

Barbara Worthy
NOTL Museum

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is once again offering its popular series of virtual lectures, bringing together specialists, storytellers, hobbyists and lovers of history.

The series will be offered weekly, via Zoom, beginning Wednesday, Feb. 1 until Wednesday, March 8.

Lectures begin at 11 a.m. and will be recorded.

Lecture topics range from notorious criminals and local archaeological finds, to historic homes, Black History and great women of the past.

The virtual series kicks off with Megan Gilchrist's presentation on Scoundrels of St. Davids, an often-hilarious look at the lawless side of St. Davids history. Gilchrist a well-known local St. Davids historian.

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, NOTL Museum director George Webber will present Free at Last, a look back at the lives of early Black residents and the current exploration of the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground (formerly known as the Negro Burial Ground).

On Wednesday, Feb. 15, Dr. Ron Williamson,

founder of Archaeological Services, one of Canada's leading archaeological and cultural heritage consulting companies, will present a

lecture on The Discovery and Investigation of the John Butler Homestead: Perspectives from Two Decades Later, an in-depth analysis

of the spectacular findings at the Butler location, dating back more than 8,000 years.

Registration is required for the virtual lectures. Links

to register can be found at www.notlmuseum.ca.

NOTL Museum's in-person lectures will return on Thursday, April 20, at

7:30 p.m., and continue monthly until Sept. 21. More details on these lectures can be found at www.notlmuseum.ca.



George Webber's presentation will be Free at Last, a look at early Black settlers, and the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground (formerly known as the Negro Burial Ground). (File photo)



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Austin Dill meets Michael Buble backstage at a concert in Hamilton. (Photos supplied)

All Dill’s songs have a special meaning



Austin Dill records in Danny Lamb’s studio.

Continued from page 1

mentor, Dill writes songs to try to make a difference. Just take a look at this list of some of his earlier original compositions that Lamb has helped him develop and record: *Love is Love*; *The Joy of Giving*; *My Amazing Family*; *Everyday Heroes*; *The Power of Music*.

One song, *The World Will Never Be the Same Unless We Change*, takes on the environmental crisis.

“It’s not a negative song,” explains Dill. “It tries to get everyone to understand that we need to change. And *Everyday Heroes* is about the teachers who helped me when I was in school.”

When Dill and Lamb finished recording *The Joy of Giving*, Dill took a copy of the finished song and gave it to one of his Stamford teachers. Dill gave that teacher permission to pass the song on to a drummer friend of his for a listen.

“Austin started a GoFundMe page to raise \$250 for Ronald McDonald House, where the family spent a lot of time over the

years,” explains Lamb. “The night it launched, I went to the site and someone had already donated the full \$250. It turned out the drummer friend was Tim Oxford from the Arkells. He donated the money and shot Austin an Instagram post to applaud him for using his own story for positive change.”

Dill lists Elton John, Pink, Cher, Justin Bieber and Shawn Mendes as some of his favourites. He’s seen all of them live, usually with Julie’s mother, Jill, who loves to go to concerts. His own songs show the pop influence of such artists. They’re crafted at Lamb’s Niagara Falls studio and mixed by his friend Paul Gigliotti, formerly of Niagara Falls pop duo Wave.

Recently Dill and his grandmother were invited backstage to meet Michael Buble at a Hamilton concert.

“I made videos on TikTok about how his music inspired me,” Dill says. “He commented back and told me that I inspired him. It was amazing to meet him. He gives the greatest hugs.”

For the Saturday launch of *Never Give Up*, Lamb will accompany Dill on piano, with another Lamb collaborator, Jacob d’Souza, on guitar.

“I have never met anybody as passionate about music,” Lamb says about Dill, “and wanting to use music as a vehicle for positive change. He wants to do something good with it, so that everybody can just be included, be present. He wants to bring people together, to create a conversation.”

The first step in that conversation for Dill is this Saturday’s event. Lamb and his father Ken, a member of the St. Davids Lions Club, are helping to organize the trivia night, hoping to attract at least 100 people for a night of fun and to be the first to hear *Never Give Up* live.

“I want to change the world a little bit at a time,” Dill tells *The Local*, “with some songs that can uplift people. With this fundraiser, I also want people to understand a bit more about cerebral palsy, too.”

Asked if he’s a bit nervous about performing in front of an audience Saturday, Dill is surprisingly nonplussed.

“They’re my songs,” he explains. “I know them the best. If I was singing a song that was not mine, sure, I’d be a little nervous. But I wrote these, so I know them the best. I think I’m more excited than nervous.”

And it’s clear Lamb, too, is excited for the big night.

“He has a ton of potential,” says Lamb of his student and friend. “A ton of musical potential. And he’s a really, really good kid who is going to do incredible things in any song that he writes and anything that he does musically.”

The trivia night and song launch begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 per person or \$160 for a table of six to eight people. A portion of the proceeds will also go toward Lamb’s A Song A City initiative. For tickets, email Lamb at management@dannylamb.com.



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Tobey's first full performance in almost 20 years at Hare

Mike Balsom
The Local

When Paul Tobey sits at the piano at the Hare Wine Company Monday, Jan. 23 for his TD Niagara Jazz Festival performance, his comeback will officially be on.

More than 20 years ago, the Juno-nominated jazz pianist and composer was forced to walk away from a renowned musical career when he was diagnosed with severe tendonitis in both forearms. In addition, he began to suffer from tinnitus, a debilitating condition for any musician.

"The doctor at the musician's clinic assessed me and told me I couldn't play for the foreseeable future," Tobey tells The Local. "My arms were blown up when I played."

"The pain moved around to his back," his wife, Nancy Houle adds. "We'd be at the hotel after a gig and I couldn't get him off the floor. We would have to call a doctor to give him a shot so he could even move."

Tobey admits that over the years he had developed some bad habits at the piano. He played with his back bent over the keyboard, comparing his posture to that of legendary pianist Bill Evans, known for his work with his own trio and on the Miles Davis' album *Kind of Blue*.

To that point, the graduate of both Mohawk College and Concordia University music programs had recorded a number of albums. His 2001 Arkadia Records collection *Street Culture*, featuring accompaniment by Mike Murley on tenor sax, bassist Jim Vivian and drummer Terry Clarke, earned him a Juno nomination.

Around this time Tobey looked back on his Concordia degree, when he minored in computer studies. Houle pointed out to her husband how successful they had been selling Paul's music online. They were early pioneers of the effective use of search engine optimization before anyone knew what that phrase meant.

Inspired by a number of self-help books that were given to the couple by a friend, Tobey borrowed \$3,100 to take a five-day course called *Train the Trainer* in Vancouver.

"I went to learn how to speak," says Tobey. "I never had any fear, any stage fright, because I was a performer. But there I learned how to get an audience, how to talk to an audience, how to engage them 100 per cent of the time, and without a piano."

Tobey and Houle were



Paul Tobey will play at Hare Wine Company Monday night. (Photos supplied)

living in Toronto at the time. They rented a room at the Arts and Letters Club and began to offer seminars for fellow musicians and artists. Called *Success Tracks for Artists*, they would offer tips to help them more effectively sell their work.

"The musicians and artists started bringing their managers," Houle says. "And then the record labels started coming. Then curators for arts organizations, and they started bringing business people."

So the couple shifted once again, renaming their sessions to *Training Business Pros*, and began to focus solely on that, coaching business people on successful internet marketing.

"Nobody was doing that at the time," Tobey says. "There was nothing anywhere. We were the first training company in Canada to offer it. We had several courses that we offered, intertwining personal development and marketing."

It wasn't just the skills, but intrinsic motivation, too. And it took off."

The success of the business, combined with his physical issues, led to Tobey packing in his performing career. His last concert was in 2004. Since then he has helped thousands of companies across North America to generate tens of millions in new sales.

But two things happened to get Paul in front of a crowd next Monday.

The first occurred in 2016, when someone contacted Nancy to ask if Paul would play two songs for motivational speaker Bob Proctor's celebration of life at New York City's Carnegie Hall.

"Paul always said in his seminars that his big dream was to play at Carnegie Hall," Houle tells The Local. "Someone in Bob Proctor's office must have heard it and decided to give Paul his dream."

He told a very small bit of his story and played two

songs at the prestigious concert venue, including one from his original composition *The Road to Santiago Suite*, about his spiritual walk along Spain's Camino de Santiago. He received a standing ovation.

Then, the couple's only child, 25-year-old son Adrian, who had followed in his father's footsteps with musical talent on the trumpet and in both of his parent's footsteps as the owner of a successful technology business of his own, started trying to convince Paul it was time to return to music.

For three summers the family had rented a small Niagara-on-the-Lake waterfront house so that Adrian could enroll in the town's junior sailing school when he was a pre-teen. A few years ago Adrian and his fiancée, Allysha, familiar with the area, bought a home in Niagara Falls.

When the pandemic hit, Tobey and Houle decided to discontinue most

of what they had been doing with their business. They shut down their Toronto office and bought a house off Lakeshore Road in NOTL.

Adrian, meanwhile, had joined the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, and met Jazz Festival founder Juliet Dunn.

Dunn knew of Tobey, and even discovered that Houle, who used to book talent for venues in the Middle East, once arranged a gig in Abu Dhabi for her late husband, Peter Shea. She immediately asked Adrian if his father would be interested in performing for her Twilight Jazz and Blues Series, and the booking was made.

"It was like it was just meant to be," Tobey adds in an email. "I'm very grateful to (Dunn) for affording me this opportunity to get back up on a stage. It'll be a special concert. It's a privilege that I get to share this performance with new bandmates, new friends,

old friends and jazz lovers."

Since that Carnegie Hall performance, Tobey has been slowly working on getting his arms back in shape. While still in Toronto, he began a popular and successful YouTube channel called Jazzmentl, offering instruction in jazz piano via online videos. The couple is almost finished building their studio in their new NOTL home, where they continue to shoot Jazzmentl segments.

"As he's training the viewers, doing the tutorials," Houle says, "he's been retraining himself. It's given him a purpose to be at the piano and train. You can't go through an hour or so worth of playing without getting your arms back in shape."

"As I started making those tutorials, I started reinitializing my interest in learning music," Tobey adds. "And as I'm playing and recording now every day, I just woke up and realized I need to get out and find an audience once again."

The audience at Monday's show will enjoy Tobey's first full performance in almost 20 years. He'll be concentrating on some of his favourites from the Great American Songbook, with selections from Oscar Peterson, Ramsey Lewis and Bach's *Goldberg Variations* thrown into the mix. Tobey will be joined by Rob McBride and Adam Fielding, on bass and drums respectively.

Fourteen-year-old pianist Kai Oszlai will perform an opening set.

Tickets are \$39 and are available at niagarajazzfestival.com.



Paul Tobey has worked to strengthen his arms and resume playing.

Hanging out with friends a favourite activity

Continued from page 1

a lot of sports after school.” Tommy Wilson is a Grade 7 Crossroads School student who was impressed with the activities. “I heard about this from my friend and decided to see what it was all about. I will try to come as much as I can.” An information meeting last Wednesday had drawn a small gathering of parents and kids. The plan was to

have kids pre-registered so that when they showed up Monday, all their paperwork would be processed. The drop-ins are for kids from Grade 7 to 12, and the registration and signed waivers are to ensure parents understand their kids can come and go. The intention was that once the forms are filled out, parents could just drop them off and drive away and the kids could come and go.

But that wasn’t happening Monday, said Ferguson — the kids checked in and stayed, which is what they prefer, especially for younger ones. The weekday sessions are from 3 to 6 p.m., except for Wednesdays, when they will run until 9 p.m., and are held in a large room filled with a collection of cozy, comfortable chairs, a TV, air hockey table, pool table and lots of board games.

The air hockey table and a basketball game seemed to be the most popular choices Monday, with the pool table seeing some action. “I was pleased to see a group of kids playing chess,” added Ferguson — she had picked up the game on the NOTL Buy Nothing site, and was glad to see it used. At last week’s meeting organizers talked about the vetting process for volunteers, insurance, and other governance issues that have been offered by the church — even a donation and accounting system, that have been very helpful in getting the programs up and running. In addition to all the help the church staff have been able to offer, Caroline Polgrabia, who has been discussing and planning a place for youth to gather for about eight years, says when Cornerstone became a possibility, “it felt like everything aligned and this space was meant to be for youth.” A social event could include a movie night — she expects there to be at least one over the eight weeks — there could be workshops to cover topics such as job resumes for teens, and op-

portunities for the kids to give back to the community. They’ve also expressed an interest in finding ways to give back to the seniors community, says Polgrabia. This Friday, a PD day for kids, a St John Ambulance babysitting course offered by the collective is full, with a waitlist. “We have reached out to St. John to see if we can expand the Friday class size or book another date in the near future,” said Polgrabia, thanking the team at NOTL Realty for supporting delivery of the winter 2023 session certification courses, which could also include first aid and a home alone session. “They are clearly in demand and it is so wonderful to be able to offer them for our youth at no cost.” “Now that we are up and running,” continued Polgrabia, “we are taking this week to work through youth registration, check-ins and volunteer training. And we continue program development and design with the kids’ advice.” They have lots of ideas, community members are reaching out to get involved and support the kids, she added, and they are looking forward to announcing the weekly schedules as they

are confirmed. “We have some exciting surprises in the works for the remainder of the winter session.” The business community has been very generous with donations, she said, including NOTL Realty, which sponsored the Santa Run, a fundraiser which donated more than \$5,300 for the collective: Ruffino’s Pizza with Santa for a donation of \$3,000, and other partners, in addition to Cornerstone: Anchor Niagara; NOTL firefighters, who brought a fire truck to the first information night for kids to explore; D&H Balloons; the NOTL Lions Club; and Garrison House, which has offered to provide a snack for kids on Wednesdays. Kathy Brown has a jar on the counter of the Virgil Avondale to raise money for the youth collective, and Coun. Wendy Cheropita is working on the idea of a remote library. Other community organizations are making connections and offering to help the collective, Polgrabia said. “Word is getting out, and it’s resonating.” Brian Ferguson spoke to



Wendy Higgins and her daughter Marlo have some hot chocolate at the NOTL Youth Collective.

Continued on page 15

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Movie nights, St. John certificate courses planned

Continued from page 14

parents about the importance of having their kids pre-registered — until the documentation has been completed, parents cannot just drop their kids off, he stressed.

The kids have to sign a code of conduct — to act responsibly and “to show respect for places, people and culture,” he said.

The group has enough approved volunteers to begin their drop-ins, but are hoping to draw more, to help supervise the sessions and also for other jobs, such

as governance, including administrative duties and help with communications and community outreach, explained Ferguson, who outlined the extensive vetting process in partnership with the church.

While it might seem onerous, it isn't, she said — parents and volunteers would all rather have it in place for the safety of the kids.

Community members interested in learning more and getting involved can email INFO@notlyouth.com or visit www.notlyouth.com.



Del Walker, Avery Williams, Eric Warren and Madeline Bruce play air hockey at the first NOTL Youth Collective drop-in Monday. (Penny Coles)

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NOTL Hydro president lays out impact of electric vehicles

Demand for hydro will grow but should be manageable

Tim Curtis
Special to The Local

According to the stated objectives of the automobile manufacturers, we are moving towards a world where almost all new cars will be electric vehicles.

GM has a stated goal of all new vehicles being electric by 2035, Toyota has an aim of 70 per cent of all sales being electric by 2030 and hundreds of billions of investment dollars in electric vehicles have been announced by the automobile manufacturers.

There is much about this future world we do not know (it is in the future) but we can predict that most of the power for all these electric vehicles will come from the electricity grid. Based on this, we have analyzed the impact of widespread EV adoption on our local system as well as the provincial grid. There are four specific parts of the system we looked at:

1. The local transformer and upstream distribution system
2. NOTL Hydro's access to the provincial transmission grid
3. The transmission grid itself
4. Provincial generation

Coincident demand

When discussing electricity, it is important to distinguish between how much electricity is used over a period of time (consumption) and how much is used at any one time (demand). Most of the risk is with too much demand, and electric vehicle charging overloading the system at a point in time. For instance, if everybody plugs in their car when they arrive home from work, then what is already the peak demand at around 5 to 6 p.m. will get much worse.

The local transformer and upstream distribution system

Transformers are the green boxes (for underground systems) and grey cans on the poles (for above ground systems) that step down voltage from 16,000 V to the 120/240 V used at most houses. There are over 2,000 of these in NOTL. Each transformer provides power for up to 12 homes. Transformers are sized and installed on the assumption that an average house uses up to around 4 kW of power at any one time.

An electric charger uses much more power than the average household when it is in use. An average level

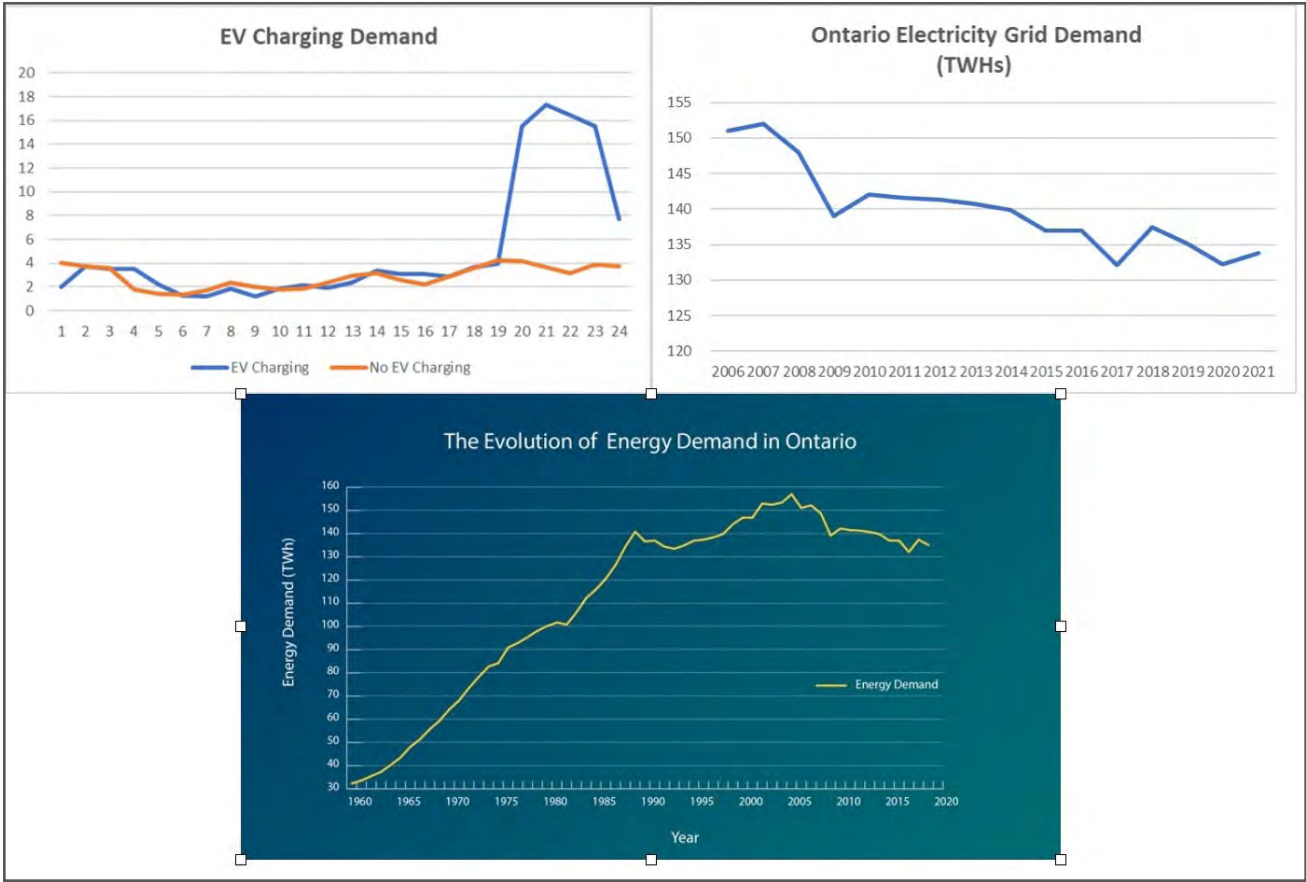
2 charger can use up to 7 kW. This chart is extreme, as it shows the charging of a Tesla, which has a higher charging demand than most other vehicles. At its peak, the combined demand of the house and charger is over 17 kW. Should you have several electric vehicle chargers operating at the same time, the local transformer could be overloaded. This creates the risk that the transformer could fail, creating a local power outage. Even if NOTL Hydro identifies that a transformer is overloaded, there is the risk that we may not be able to get replacements. Electric utilities will all have this issue, so will all be upgrading their transformers at the same time across North America.

We analyzed a number of scenarios, depending on how many chargers on a transformer were operating at any one time. The results were promising:

1. The number of transformers at risk of overloading was fewer than expected, so should be manageable. One of the fortunate reasons for this is that NOTL Hydro has been oversizing their green pad-mounted transformers to meet potential demand from unrealized electric heating and air conditioning load for many decades.
2. Most of the transformers at risk were the grey pole-mounted ones used for overhead services. This overloading can be corrected by either replacing the transformer with a larger one or adding an additional transformer to the system and rewiring the local connections. As the wiring is all overhead on poles this is much easier than with the underground system.

The upstream distribution system, including low voltage and high voltage wiring, also needs to be considered with increased local load. NOTL Hydro has specified low voltage wire to accommodate 200 amp residential services for decades. Existing 200 amp services are very likely able to accommodate the addition of an electric vehicle charging station in a residence. A service size upgrade may be required for additional loads beyond a single electric vehicle charging station installation.

Similarly, primary high voltage wiring has been sized beyond the installed capacity of the equipment serving the community. In most cases, there is enough room on primary feeders for



Graphs provided by NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis show the impact the growth in use of electric vehicles will have on hydro demand..

the additional electric vehicle charging load.

We do ask that if you buy an electric vehicle and install a charging station, please let us know so we can check the local transformer and upgrade it if necessary.

NOTL Hydro access to the provincial grid

As a result of investments over the past 15 years, NOTL Hydro has significant transformation capacity to take power from the provincial grid and convert it to our local voltages. In aggregate we have around 150 MW of transformation capacity and the current peak is around 50 MW. This extra capacity was put in place to provide a redundant source of power for the whole town but is also available to manage future growth like from electric vehicles.

There is another potential source of power to service electric vehicle charging, and that is additional solar power. Since the ending of the provincial contracts, the number of new solar installations in NOTL has been limited, but as the costs of solar continue to fall, that is changing.

Transmission grid

The transmission grid is responsible for bringing power from the various large generators (hydro plants, nuclear power plants, large solar and wind farms) to the local utilities that then distributing the power. The actual demand for power from the transmission grid has been falling since the 2007-2008 recession. It is only now starting to pick up. As a result, only limited new investments in the transmission system have been required. While I have the greatest respect for Hy-

dro One's technical staff, the combination of NIMBYism, multi-year timelines for projects, regulatory procrastination and bureaucratic inertia could make the transmission grid a choke-point.

NOTL is fed off a 115 kV line that runs from the Beck power plant, through St. Catharines and eventually connects with a 230 kV line. There is currently some excess capacity available on this line, but that can change quickly with growth. The worry is that if NOTL is competing with the rest of Ontario for upgrades to the transmission grid, it might end up lower in the queue.

Provincial generation

NOTL Hydro analyzed the impact of every vehicle in NOTL becoming electric. Our estimate, based on some very high-level assumptions, was that the increase in demand would be 25 per cent. While this is high, it is not extraordinary or unmanageable. Ontario has managed much higher growth in demand for electricity in the past.

I discussed this in more detail in my March 15, 2022 blog at www.notlhydro.com/electric-vehicles-and-electricity-demand/. One of the reasons why the increase in generation needed is not higher is that electric vehicles are much more energy efficient than those with internal combustion engines, which waste a lot of energy, and that is all the excess heat radiating from the engine.

Planning ahead – next steps

NOTL Hydro is confident it can manage the transition to electric vehicles in NOTL. No customer should be worried about their ability to charge a new electric

vehicle, though again, we do ask if you could let us know if you have installed an electric vehicle charger so we can check the local infrastructure.

Provincially, there is more of a challenge, not the amount of new electricity, but if it is all wanted at the same time. If the demand for electricity for electric vehicle charging largely happens in the late afternoon or early evening, then there is a real danger the transmission system and/or the generation capacity cannot cope.

The good news is the Ministry of Energy is fully aware of this challenge and is working to try to address it. One of their first steps will be the introduction of new rates later in 2023 that will have very, very low rates at night offset by higher rates in the late afternoon peak times. These new rates are

optional, but if you have an electric vehicle you should look into them. Charging your electric vehicle later at night will make it even cheaper to drive.

Beyond that, I am anticipating there will eventually be spirited discussions as to whether electric utilities will be allowed to restrict the charging of vehicles at certain times to prevent overloading the provincial system. This could mean giving the utility access to control, limit or program the customer-owned charger; potentially in return for a discount. Alternatively, it could mean penalties if charging is being done at the peak times or the new optional rates being implemented in 2023 could be imposed. It will all be about managing the demand for EV charging in the least costly manner.



Tim Curtis, president of NOTL Hydro. (Supplied)

Two Sisters, Treadwell make list of top 100 restaurants

Penny Coles
The Local

The online restaurant review and reservation website OpenTable has released its 2022 list of Canada's 100 top restaurants, based on more than one million ratings.

The website analyzed reviews of restaurant-goers between October 2021 and September 2022 to develop the list.

All restaurants with a minimum overall rating and number of qualifying reviews were considered, and then sorted by other criteria, such as overall rating and total number of reviews, to determine whether they would make the list.

Forty-eight restaurants in Ontario made this year's top 100 list of the best in Canada, four of them in Niagara.

"We are seeing strong interest this year in a variety of dining venues and experiences, and strong representation from traditional continental to diverse international cuisines," said Matt Davis, country director of OpenTable Canada, in a press release about the list. "This diner-generated reference guide stands apart from others because it's a reflection of diners' most beloved restaurants across the country."

From Niagara-on-the-Lake, Two Sisters Vineyards' Kitchen76 made the top 100, as did Treadwell Farm-to-Table Cuisine.

Lincoln's Vineland Estates Winery Restaurant and the Good Earth Vineyard and Winery are also included.

"We are so pleased to share that we have been named one of the Top 100 Most Beloved Restaurants in Canada by OpenTable diners," Two Sisters Vineyards wrote on Facebook following release of the list. "It is an honour to be named amongst all of the other truly incredible restaurants. We pride ourselves in offering incredible food, wine and atmosphere to ensure our guests have a memorable experience."

Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli and Angela Marotta spoke to The Local about what it means to be included in such a prestigious list.

"It feels really good to be recognized for doing something we love to do," says Melissa.

"Our recipes are curated by our family, and they are family recipes that have been tweaked a bit for the restaurant. They've been expedited ready well."

"Kitchen76 patrons aren't just coming for celebrations or special occasions," adds Angela. "They're coming on a regular basis, sometimes multiple times a week, because it's food that is to enjoy. It's not fancy, it's comfort food."

"We get a good mix of locals and visitors," she continues, "and we recognize how important it is to be one of the options for residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake to enjoy a good meal, because there's a good variety of options."

There is also a good variety

of wines, and the Kitchen76 menu has been curated with the wines in mind.

"When you get a lovely cabernet franc, we think, what are some of the dishes that really enhance this? And we look to braised lamb or beef dishes or a vegetarian option that would enhance that wine experience."

Melissa says their "excellent team" behind them also deserves credit for the recognition.

"The level of service they provide our guests is top notch. We want everyone to feel when they come in and experience the winery and Kitchen76 that it ticks all the markers and checks all the boxes for them."

Angela adds "100 per cent, every recognition we've received just makes us feel that much more fulfilled and proud, because we know we're doing something right. It makes us feel proud, and it makes the team feel very proud as well."

The restaurant has been closed over the holidays, to open again Monday, but the sisters are still spending a lot of time there — the winery is open for tastings and the retail store is also open. The break though allows them to "take a step back and access what we're working on, nail down what's working well and think about ideas for menu and seasonal changes," says Melissa.

"We're also thinking of repairs," adds Angela. "We always want everything at the winery to look refreshed and new."

James Treadwell of Treadwell Farm-to-Table Cuisine says he's delighted to be included on the list — and it's not for the first time.

It's especially satisfying this year, though, "after all the stress and all the issues the industry has faced, specifically being in a tourist town in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It's a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team."

His and his father's name is on the door, he says, "but at the end of the day we're a team," and making it on the top 100 list "is really a reflection of the team. I'm proud of it, but it's a testament to everyone's hard work. It tells us we're doing a good thing."

Being in NOTL, so close to the border, with international guests and visitors from Toronto, the recognition by OpenTable "helps us with that crowd, and those who follow it religiously. I would say come the spring, summer and fall months, we will see a response to it, in a positive way."

Is he looking forward to a good 2023?

"Usually in the quiet months, you reflect. You look at the short- and mid-term future," he says. "I'm a very positive person. I think perspective is important. As we emerge out of the pandemic I'm hopeful for the industry. 2022 was a good year for the restaurant and the industry in general in Niagara."

There are a lot of factors that weigh in to future success, he says, including weather and interest rates, "but I'm hopeful success will continue for 2023."

There will always be interest in Niagara, he adds, "because of all the experiences we offer here, and we've been very good over the last decade of really diversifying those experiences we offer, whether they be golf, wineries, distilleries, breweries or the Shaw. We're not just a place to come June to December — we're trying to make this a year-round destination, and we've done a good job of doing that, despite the challenges. I'm hopeful those successes will continue."

Treadwell says his wife works in health care in Toronto, "and again perspective is everything. The challenges we're facing could be a lot worse."

It was a very hard two and a half years for the industry,



Angela Marotta and Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli are proud to be recognized for doing what they love to do. (Supplied)

"there's no denying that, and everyone is taking away different things. We're fortunate to have a good landlord, other owners and great staff. Not everyone is so fortunate. A lot of restaurants don't have that luxury."

But there will always be

restaurants, he says, "and as a society you have to look at the big picture. When you consider the challenges of health care, long-term care, education — we're only a small little thing."

"I'm hopeful for 2023," he adds. "We're very fortunate our

restaurant has the reputation it does, that we have the team we do, and we're fortunate people think highly of the Treadwell brand. We're quietly confident that it's going to be a great year ahead, and we wish all the other restaurants the same success."

CROSSWORD (ANSWERS ON PAGE 23)

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Across:

- 1 Portion
- 6 Totals
- 10 Champion
- 14 Hot chocolate
- 15 Deck division
- 16 Styptic pencil ingredient
- 17 Countertenors
- 18 Heroic tale
- 19 Unconventional early 20th century art movement
- 20 Occult
- 22 Two fins
- 24 Very fine-grained soil
- 25 Suffix for a focused event
- 26 For ever
- 29 Puff
- 30 Huckleberry Finn's pal
- 33 Boyfriend
- 34 Split fifty-fifty
- 36 Prefix: very small
- 37 Admits
- 38 Faint
- 39 Book ID
- 40 Small amount
- 41 Roman Earth
- 42 Lecher
- 43 Technical degrees
- 44 Quarry

Down:

- 1 Bunco
- 2 Sacred
- 3 Deeds
- 4 Underlying reason
- 5 Without difficulty
- 6 Analyze
- 7 Two-fold
- 8 Excavate
- 9 One of a hundred in D C
- 10 In case you --- noticed ...
- 11 Panache
- 12 Bad-mannered

- 13 --- Bradley, five-star general
- 21 Broke
- 23 Sibyl's power
- 25 Act of kindness
- 26 Big banger
- 27 Jerry Lee ---
- 28 Collector's list
- 29 State of high honor
- 30 Skipper of the Argo
- 31 Out of favor
- 32 British W W II general
- 35 Had eight days according to the Beatles
- 36 Residents of Abuja, for example
- 44 Gaza Strip grp.
- 46 World's largest land
- 47 Reach by air
- 48 Chap
- 49 "Dragnet" creator Jack ---
- 50 Competent
- 51 Its capital is Vientiane
- 52 Conceited
- 53 Scent
- 54 Diamond team
- 55 New plant in the making
- 58 Walking in space



James Treadwell says inclusion on the list will help attract visitors from the U.S. and Toronto, but adds, "perspective is everything." (Supplied)

Welcome kits help ease arrival for farmworkers

Jane Andres
Special to The Local

We are only halfway through January but there are sights and sounds that remind us spring will be on its way in a few short weeks. The first clue is having bright green welcome kits, freshly topped up and dropped off on our porch by neighbours who have been filling them over the past few weeks. Last year at this time the kits started arriving daily, to be organized later for delivery according to farm and arrival dates.

The idea of welcome kits for migrant farmworkers started from a simple observation in 2008, when my friend Jodie Godwin and I travelled to Jamaica to visit our neighbours who work on farms near our homes in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was my second trip, and Jodie's first. We stayed with the farmworkers' families, travelling the length of the island, visiting churches and schools along the way. Our memorable visits with their families led to a greater understanding of the challenges they face while working here on the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

Every winter and spring farmworkers arrive, often very late at night, after an exhausting day or more of travel. Meals are no longer provided on flights. Some employers understand this and supply bread, eggs, peanut butter and a few other essentials for a light meal to get them through. Some arrivals, however, have to wait until the following day to go to the bank, buy groceries and finally start cooking their first meal by the afternoon. When we realized how long friends on neighbouring farms had to wait to get a proper meal, a few friends began to pro-



Courtney Mitchell, a Meyers employee for more than 17 years, drops in to greet the first arrivals of 2023. Left to right are Morris, Courtney, Gary, Tony and Orville. (Photos by Jane Andres)

vide sandwiches, snacks and water.

About seven years ago the welcome kit idea took root when we distributed bright green bags at a table at the Newcomers Club. The bags quickly disappeared and returned in January and February, filled to brimming by people new to the area and eager to participate.

Since then, the bags have proven to be a tangible and practical way to show appreciation to farmworkers. They have helped to create a sense of belonging with all participants, both giver and receiver, resulting in vibrant, vital connections that we all benefit from.

Easy and inexpensive to pack, they are a fun way for friends, families, and community groups to express gratitude. A thank-you note or child's drawing adds a personal touch that many take home to share with their families. Some of the welcome posters made by children are still there to brighten walls in their bunk houses years later.

Welcoming farmworkers is entirely a grassroots initiative. The number of kits provided to workers is determined by the involvement of the local community. We do not rely on outside grants or funding.

Those who are unable to pack a kit or are out of

town for the winter months can send an e-transfer and those donations are used to buy items in bulk. We turn up the reggae as volunteers gather to pack, a fun time to get to know each other and chase away the winter blues.

The goal is to deliver kits to the first 500 Caribbean workers as the men and women arrive. Due to growing interest and support in 2022 we were able to distribute a little more than 700 kits. When men and women from Barbados arrived in December to work at Vintage Hotels we were able to provide a warm welcome during their first experience with the Canadian cold.

The needs of Spanish-speaking farmworkers are served by Father Antonio Illas and his wife Cela, who organize the Migrant Workers Outreach Project, an initiative begun by the Anglican diocese more than 15 years ago. We often share resources and learn from each other's experiences to better serve the needs on the farms.

A list of contents for kits can be found on the Niagara Workers Welcome website. Bags to be filled can be picked up at Sweets & Swirls Cafe and Applewood Hollow Bed and Breakfast, 2230 Four Mile Creek Rd. Completed welcome kits can be dropped off at the

same locations. The Farmworker Hub will open its doors for drop-offs on Tuesday morning, March 14. Farm owners may also pick up kits for their Caribbean employees on this date upon arrangement. The hub is located at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd., back door of Cornerstone campus with the heart logo.

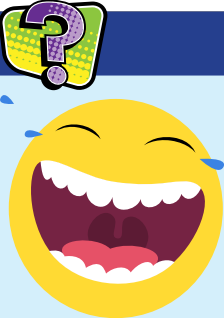
If you cannot pack a kit but would like to be a part of a warm welcome, a donation of \$25 will help provide the contents of a welcome kit for one farmworker. For more information visit the website at www.worker-swelcomeniagara.com or email niagaraworkerswelcome@gmail.com.



Maureen MacSween of Quiet Acres loads up welcome kits for farmworkers arriving last year.



Jake Pries picking up kits to deliver to Royalview Orchards in February of 2022.



RIDDLE

Tommy Turtle went to Texas to tell his tiny turtle brother to eat tacos. How many "T"s in that?

(„that", in the word „that")

Answer: 2 (There are 2 T's)

Local News

We hope everyone is having a wonderful start to 2023! We look forward to all of your Gazette submissions in 2023!

Theatre Review

A Review of *Nobody's Children* by the Gr. 4/5's at Crossroads P.S.

On Dec. 8, we went to the Yellow Door Theatre Project's production of *Nobody's Children*. We were all so impressed with the acting, professional singing, good accents and how the actors even kept their accents while singing! We were also amazed with how they used such a small space to create so many settings, such as a steamship on the ocean, a train ride, the streets of London, a circus and the inside of a fancy house. The costumes and settings were so realistic, too.

After we saw the play, we were totally shocked to learn that NOTL had British Home Children here in the mid-1800s! We were so surprised to read that Rye St. Heritage park had a home on it, run by a woman named Maria Rye. It was called Our Western Home. The home was closed in 1913 and demolished in 1923. Now that property is just a park that we play at. Next time you're at the park, make sure you read the plaque! This town has so many plaques all around that we sometimes just walk by. It's totally worth it to stop and read them because our small town is really rich in history.

We give this play a 5 star

rating and it is neat that it has inspired us to look into some of NOTL's history. Let's just say we are really glad that we

are living in NOTL as children in 2022, based on how some children were living here in the 1800s!

Artist's Corner by Issie R., 7



Interview with Sebastian

- Q. What is your ideal day in Niagara-on-the-Lake?**

A. I would go to Niagara Home Bakery for a cinnamon roll breakfast. Then I would chill at Balls Beach for a while, then go home for a bit. I would go to Gyros on the Lake for lunch. After lunch I would go for a walk to Fort George then meet up with some friends. For dinner I would go to The Angel for their poutine. After dinner I would go home and play some games before bed.
- Q. What is your favourite sport?**

A. Rugby, it is a very interesting and intense sport.
- Q. If you could be an animal for a day, what would you be and why?**

A. An elephant, because they do not seem to have any worries.
- Q. What kind of music do you like to listen to?**

A. All kinds, depending on my mood I listen to different genres.
- Q. What is your favourite flavour of ice cream?**

A. Goopy moeey from Cows.
- Q. In your free time, what do you like to do?**

A. I like to play Elden Ring and go for walks around town.
- Q. Have you volunteered in your community?**

A. I have. I volunteered at the Candlelight Stroll, a live nativity scene, and the Canada Games.
- Q. What do you want to be when you grow up?**

A. Entrepreneur.
- Q. What is your favourite book?**

A. *Berserk*. It is a manga series about a man who gets branded then is hunted by apostles.
- Q. What is your favourite TV show?**

A. I do not really watch tv.
- Q. What is your favourite food?**

A. Pasta. Any kind of pasta...red sauce, white sauce, meat sauce — I like it all.
- Q. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?**

A. Japan for the scenery.
- Q. What are three awesome things about yourself?**

A. I am a competitive swimmer, competitive sailor, and I am currently learning German.
- Q. What is a unique talent you have?**

A. I am good at impersonating people.
- Q. What is a big world problem that you would like to change?**

A. I would like to get rid of world hunger.
- 
- Sebastian Reese, 17

WORD SEARCH: FOOD

G	P	G	F	W	L	T	D	V	F	B	U	D	M	A	STRAWBERRY
C	T	O	N	A	E	Q	S	I	X	E	A	R	H		POPCORN
C	J	O	P	Z	Q	D	O	O	S	P	U	S	B	H	COOKIE
T	R	K	J	C	Y	R	U	P	H	Z	I	Q	H	N	SOUP
Z	G	A	T	O	O	B	P	E	M	E	C	B	J	C	SANDWICH
C	H	S	C	S	O	R	E	S	O	X	F	V	V	E	BANANA
H	U	A	T	K	A	T	N	S	X	P	V	L	I	R	PASTA
E	M	T	O	R	E	N	N	K	P	B	A	S	Q	E	CHEESE
E	M	Z	R	W	A	R	D	U	I	Y	X	S	S	A	CRACKER
S	U	H	P	Z	N	W	W	P	S	B	Y	T	L		CEREAL
E	S	T	V	I	I	O	B	G	I	Z	M	P	C	A	HUMMUS
V	B	Q	X	I	I	O	G	E	B	C	I	J	L	C	FISH
B	A	N	A	N	A	J	N	X	R	L	H	H	P	B	
Q	D	Y	B	J	L	Q	U	K	A	R	D	K	R	Q	
N	C	O	O	K	I	E	A	L	U	V	Y	G	M	P	

SUBMISSION INFO

The hope for this page is to get kids involved and interacting with the community in a positive way. We welcome submissions for all categories from kids of any age. Please keep the reviews positive and all submitted content appropriate for kids of all ages. Please send all submissions to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com and in the subject line please put the category for which you are submitting. Thank you.

CHARITY

We are looking for charities in which kids can participate. If you would like your organization to be highlighted here, please send your information to joyousnotlkids@gmail.com.

Sunday game takes Preds to fourth place in league

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara Predators' latest three-game stretch has vaulted them from seventh to fourth place in the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's (GMHL) Southern Division.

The Preds followed up a 5-1 loss in Bradford last Wednesday with a 6-1 Friday night win at home against the Tottenham Thunder. They wrapped up the week with a visit to Thornhill, where they also came out on top, in a 5-1 decision against the Streetsville Flyers.

In the mid-week loss, the second-place Bradford Bulls followed up a first period goal with four more in the second period on Niagara goaltender Ryan Santini, including two on the power play. Tyler Gearing picked up the sole Niagara goal in the third period.

"I thought we played well Wednesday," Taylor said. "We had a breakdown in the second period, there were some questionable calls, and the team seemed to unravel from there. We pulled it back in the third period, we won that period. But you can't give up a four or five goal lead to a team like that. I told the guys that we're not good enough to make the mistakes that we are making against that team."

The Preds righted the ship Friday night against Tottenham.

Jaroslav Dohnal led Niagara in the 6-1 victory with two goals and two assists in perhaps the team's most dominant performance thus far this season.

The Preds rained 51 shots on Thunder goalie Marco Squeo while, at the other end, their defence limited the Thunder to 21 shots, including just four in the third period. That helped goalie Warren Krogman come out with his second win in as many starts.

The Predators came out of the opening faceoff with a lightning-quick attack and kept it up the entire 60 minutes. Cameron Savoie got Niagara on the scoreboard 2:20 into the first period when he capitalized on a clumsy Thunder turnover just five feet in front of Squeo and buried the puck past the goaltender's outstretched right leg.

Another turnover put the Preds up 2-0 near the mid-point of the second period, when Squeo kicked away a shot by Cameron Savoie to one of his defenders, who bobbled the puck. Reese Bisci was there to grab it and slip it past Squeo's left side.

The Thunder got their only goal of the game at 6:47 of the second when Nicolas Tessier intercepted a pass in front of Krogman, who was left with no time to react. But Dohnal regained the two-goal margin for his team on an end-to-end rush where he deked out four Tottenham challengers before stretching his stick around

Squeo to score.

Dohnal notched his second goal of the game off a pass from Cameron Savoie 1:16 into the third period. Anthony Tropea made it 5-1 two minutes later with a beautiful shot from the right side of the net. And in his fourth game with the team, Andras Kehl picked up his first goal as a Predator later in the period off another Thunder turnover.

Head coach Kevin Taylor called Friday night's decision a good win, and was pleased with Krogman's performance in net.

"He's worked hard all year," Taylor said of the 19-year-old from Grimsby. "He doesn't get to see much game time, so this was an opportunity to come out. He should have had a shut-out. We didn't pick up the guy coming out of the corner (on the lone Tottenham goal)."

Against Streetsville Sunday, Anthony Tropea scored his 19th and 20th goals of the season, and also notched an assist on a goal by linemate Reese Bisci in the third period, to lead the Preds to the 5-1 victory.

The Savoie brothers, Cameron and Nick, rounded out Niagara's scoring with their 11th and fourth goals of the season respectively.

Taylor has Tropea, who leads the team in goals and points with 36 points, playing with Declan Fogarty and Bisci. "We had a fully balanced lineup Sunday, and got scoring from all of the first three lines. I

was happy with the overall performance," he said.

Ryan Santini picked up the win in goal, stopping 31 shots from Streetsville, the Southern Division's last-place team.

Though the Thunder and the St. George Ravens are currently tied with Niagara with 29 points each, the Predators have two games on hand up against St. George and five versus Tottenham. They also have two games coming up against the Northumberland Stars, who are alone in seventh place with 28 points.

"The division is a bit thick around the middle," Taylor acknowledged. "We're where we want to be right now. We're 21 points out of third place, and I don't think we'll catch Durham. But the rest of our schedule is mostly games against the middle and lower-tier teams. That will hopefully separate us from the rest of the pack, and I think we can hold onto fourth from this point on."

Before they get to those games, though, they have to take on the third-place Roadrunners this Friday at home. Durham has a 25-6-0 record and has won both of their matches against Niagara this season.

"I think they expect to walk through us," Taylor said of the Roadrunners. "I don't expect that to happen at all. I expect a good game. It'll be a good test. This could be a team that we will face in the second round of the playoffs."



Thomas McGrath is the Player of the Month for December. (Mike Balsom)

Game time Friday at Virgil's Meridian Credit Union Arena is 7:30 p.m.

Predators make a number of moves

Montreal native Gianluca Minicozzi is going to California. The Predators announced just before Friday's game that the 16-year-old will be moving on to the first-year Bakersfield Roughnecks, who play out of the Premier Pacific Division of the United States Premier Hockey League (USPHL).

Wais Ayubi was traded last week to the Streetsville Flyers, situating him a bit closer to his Toronto area home.

St. Davids resident and Predators captain Max Bredin was moved to the Bradford Bulls for cash considerations at Monday's GMHL trade deadline.

Last week Niagara brought

back Alex Andrews, who played 12 games for the Preds in 2021-2022 before singing with Tottenham this season. And 18-year-old Jacob Shuker from Stoney Creek joined the team after a deal with the St. George Ravens.

The Predators also acquired 6'4" goalie Zane Clausen from the Northern Division's Bradford Rattlers in exchange for a 2023 tenth round draft pick. The 20-year-old from North Dakota had a 9-1-0 record with the Rattlers.

They also gave up a 12th round pick to Northumberland to acquire Russian forward Timur Mirzaianis at the deadline. Woodbridge native Ethan Boyd is also on the way to Niagara from Durham, just in time to play against his former team this Friday.



Predator Anthony Tropea takes a shot on the Thunder goalie. (Mike Balsom)



Andras Kehl tries to clear the crease of attacking Thunder players during third period play Friday night against Tottenham. (Les Kapuscinsk)



Predators Leo Savin tries to beat Thunder goalie Marco Squeo. (Mike Balsom)



Declan Fogarty passes to Tyler Gearing while a Thunder defender tries to clear Nolan Wyers (11) from the crease. (Les Kapuscinsk)

Young basketball players respond to new coach

Mike Balsom
The Local

“Always be basketball players,” says Genille Kroeker, coach of the Niagara Rangers house league basketball program, as 31 enthusiastic athletes gather around her at centre court just before the conclusion of a Saturday session.

The kids, who range in ages from five to 11 years old, take that as their cue to move into the triple threat position. Legs apart, knees spread and ball cradled in both hands to one side, the classic basketball stance signals they are ready to shoot, dribble or pass.

“When they are on the court, my expectation is that they behave like ballers for the full duration of practice,” Kroeker says. “That way, when they show up to their local school tryout, they are used to staying in that role and focusing for long periods of time.”

The Virgil resident’s son Matthew is in Grade 4 at Crossroads Public School. When she discovered the house league program run out of that school’s gym didn’t have a coach this year, Kroeker stepped in to ensure that it could continue.

The former member of the Brock Badgers women’s basketball team (1998 to 2002) is an incredible asset for the Rangers to have. Kroeker spent the past three years running a similar program in Pelham, where the Panthers basketball program has become a force to be reckoned with across the province over the past few years.

She names her coaching mentor as Mihai Raducanu,



The full group of Niagara Rangers poses for a photo — all ages are practising together at this time. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Pelham’s director of player development. The native of Romania played for the Canadian junior national team and the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Coastal Carolina University Chanticleers. He is also the founder of No Limit Performance Basketball and has worked with numerous high level basketball players across Canada and the U.S.

“I learned so much from him,” Kroeker tells The Local. “His focus is not just on skills development, but character development, and that’s what I believe in. He was so valuable to me in my development as a coach.”

In previous years the Rangers operated the house league in two separate sessions — one for Grades 1 and 2, the other for Grades 3 to 6. To accommodate the District School Board of Niagara supply teacher’s schedule, Kroeker convinced Rangers founder Jennifer Caughill to bring all of this year’s 40-plus participants together for the

weekly 90-minute sessions.

With the help of a group of volunteers, the indefatigable Kroeker has no problem running a smooth session with absolutely no down time. She leads the large group this Saturday through dribbling and passing drills, then shooting drills, followed by layups and finally, wraps things up with scrimmage games.

Kroeker moves from player to player, most of whom she knows by name, offering support, encouragement and instruction. She’s a master at courtside manner.

Lori and Barry Smith travel from Thorold so their 11-year-old son Gunner can participate every Saturday.

“She knows every player, she’s dedicated,” says Lori. “She has a way with her words of getting the kids’ attention. She communicates with the parents. She cares, she means it, she’s in it for the kids.”

It’s Gunner’s first year in the Rangers program. It’s given the

Grade 6 student confidence to speak up for himself, and to try out for his school’s volleyball program. Barry says their son is a good sleeper, but eagerly wakes up early every Saturday to get to the 9 a.m. session.

“Genille goes step-by-step,” Lori adds. “She makes them know if they want to get there, they have to go here first. She knows that it takes time, and she drills that into them. And she sees things through. When she says she’s going to do something, she’s going to do it.”

Stratford native Kroeker didn’t start playing basketball until she was 14 years old. While attending Stratford Northwestern High School she was encouraged to come out for the school team by teacher Martin Ritsma, now the mayor of the town.

“I wouldn’t be here without my coaches,” says Kroeker. “Starting so late, I was playing catch-up, and he moved me along so fast.”

Kroeker was spotted by long-time Brock women’s

coach Chris Critelli at a tournament in her final year of high school. She enrolled at Brock and not only made the team but was named rookie of the year. In her fourth year she played with the Badgers in the national university championship.

Basketball has been a big part of her life since she first picked up the rock. It’s clear in watching her lead the session that the physical education and history major lives and breathes the sport.

Kroeker laments that many kids today aren’t as resilient as those of the past. The pandemic may have contributed somewhat to that. She’s pleased to see so many coming to the gym each week and staying active.

“I think that kids need to be in a position where they have to learn how to do something that is hard,” Kroeker says. “Learning how to do a layup is hard, especially for a little Grade 2 kid. And if they’re in a game and they lose, they need to learn how to lose graciously.

They need to be put into situations where they deal with difficulty and disappointment. It’s our job to teach them how to get up and try again.”

She’s committed to running the program for at least two more years, when Matthew will be in Grade 6. Kroeker anticipates that the age groups will once again be separated in the future to enable her and the volunteers to spend more time with each player. It will also allow her to work on more game-specific skills for the older group.

Kroeker is quick to deflect some of the success of the Rangers program away from herself.

“This can’t run without great parent volunteers,” she says. “They come consistently every week to help out, and they build a rapport with the kids. They build the relationships, and I play the role of the instructor.”

The 31 players there this Saturday are certainly buying into Kroeker’s instruction methods. Her positive reinforcement and gentle words of advice or correction are openly accepted. The drills and games feel like fun for each and every one of them.

As the practice session wraps up, Kroeker enlists the parent volunteers to help choose the Rangers’ On-Point Athletes of the Day, each of whom is handed a mini-pylon in congratulations. All the participants gather around to support their peers, then they end the day by “clapping it out of the gym” with a deafening roar.

They can’t wait to be back next Saturday.

Contact Jennifer Caughill at winnersdaycamps@cogeco.ca for information about the program.



Rangers game time — they play a short scrimmage at the end of their drills with coach Genille Kroeker cheering them on.



Niagara Rangers practise dribbling in the Crossroads gym Saturday mornings.



Two young Rangers work on improving their drilling skills.



Shooting drills are an important part of skills development.

LocalSPORTS

Outdoor pickleball a no-go for 2023, no promises for 2024

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club members are having a good winter on indoor courts at the community centre and the former Virgil School, but they aren't optimistic about outdoor play in town this coming season.

And there is no guarantee that it will return to the outdoor courts at the Centennial Sports Park in 2024.

President Tracy Booth says the club is currently offering 21 different indoor sessions per week, totalling about 42 hours of play.

There are three weekly sessions dedicated to beginners, with new members joining every week.

However, club members really enjoy playing outdoors, especially at the dedicated pickleball courts in Virgil, which have helped build membership from across the region.

But the outdoor courts will continue to be locked up tight this summer, at least to pickleball. The town did not appeal the provincial court ruling ordered in relation to a noise by-law infringement for a two-year probation period, an email to The Local explained, choosing



Pickleball club members are happy to have the Centennial Arena space when the ice is out, as they did last year, although some players had problems with the cement surface. (File photo)

to "respect the court's decision."

Rome D'Angelo, Niagara-on-the-Lake's new operations director, said in an email last week that the town is "exploring options" for outdoor courts.

The town is also in the process of preparing a request for proposals for consulting services for a parks and recreation master plan to be issued in early to mid 2023.

"The master plan will help ensure the town is responsive to the community's revolving parks and recreation needs and addresses them in a responsible, equitable and cost-effective manner," said D'Angelo.

"Once endorsed by council, the final product will guide parks and recreation programming and amenities over the next 10-plus years, including pickleball."

But that won't help the club this season.

Sports and recreation supervisor Kevin Turcotte told The Local Monday there is no plan for outdoor pickleball this summer. The town will wait for the master plan to be completed and approved by council, and that plan will determine where pickleball will be played in the future.

It seems there is a possibility that to use the courts for pickleball in 2024, when the probation period has passed, some noise mitigation might still be required, even with the new noise bylaw in place. "There is a requirement to mitigate noise in general, in any of the parks," Turcotte said.

That too would be determined by a council decision, and the budget process, he said.

In an email from the town clarifying the future of outdoor

pickleball, Turcotte said, "the town is consulting with its legal counsel about the potential return of outdoor pickleball to the Centennial Sports Park and, if so, what would be required to help address noise concerns. At this time, the town has nothing further to add about this."

He is suggesting the Centennial Arena be made available for pickleball, beginning in mid-April, to club members and the public, as it was last summer.

He has asked that there be no charge to play, "but that will depend on budget approval."

Although there was a discussion last year about options for using the courts for other sports, that will be a decision for the current council, and will be included in 2023 budget discussions, Turcotte said.

"Our recommendation will be for activities to be temporary in nature," he added.

The bylaw at the time of the October 2020 charge by a nearby neighbour of the Virgil Sports Park said "no person shall make, cause or permit sound or vibration at any time, which is likely to disturb the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment, comfort or convenience of the inhabitants of the town." The bylaw was in force from 7 a.m.

to 11 p.m.

The neighbour said the noise from the paddle hitting the ball was extremely disturbing to her and impacting her quality of life.

When no compromise could be found with the neighbour, the charge was heard in provincial court, with both the town and the pickleball club found guilty. The penalty imposed by the justice of the peace was a fine for both the town and club of \$1,000, and both were given a probation order for two years that prevents them from committing a further breach of the noise bylaw.

With that decision, the pickleball courts were closed by the town for the 2022 season.

The town amended its noise bylaw to match those of many other municipalities in June 2022. The amended bylaw allows "any emission of sound or vibration" on town-owned property during 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., from sporting or recreational activities, as approved by the director of operations or delegate of the town.

Booth met with Turcotte last week to discuss the club's options for this season and told The Local she wasn't surprised there would be no outdoor location this season, and that

nothing is certain for the future. Turcotte told her the master plan will determine that, and that the pickleball club would be considered one of the stakeholders to be consulted. "The club absolutely wants to be involved in that," she said.

While she accepts there seems to be no definite plan in place for the courts for the future, she added that she'd "be shocked if they didn't use them again."

She was happy to hear about the availability of the Centennial Arena for pickleball from about mid-April to mid-August, she said.

Although NOTL was unique with its outdoor courts, retrofitted from existing tennis courts at a cost of \$117,000 in 2019, the popularity of the sport has caused other municipalities to follow suit.

"There are all kinds of places where everyone can play outdoors," said Booth.

St. Catharines opened some tennis courts in Bourgyne Woods to pickleball last summer, putting down lines for both sports, "although you have to bring your own nets, for pickleball or tennis." They are far away from any residential area, so noise is not an issue — as is the case with other outdoor courts in Niagara, Booth said.

Welland has opened a beautiful new complex, "the Cadillac" of pickleball, with eight courts. The Empire Sportsplex is located in the Welland International Flatwater Centre, again far removed from any homes. There are others across the region, both new and converted, in Grimsby, Fenwick, Niagara Falls and Port Colborne.

Booth has played on most of those courts, and in other areas indoors — she is a competitive player, now down to "three serious games a week," and like others in that league, moves around so she can play against others at the same level. She sees other club members at many of those locations, she said.

The really good news for the NOTL Pickleball Club is that it is hosting its first sanctioned tournament in June. It will be held in the Centennial and Meridian Credit Union Arenas — there will be a total of 13 courts on the two ice pads.

John Hindle, former club president, is organizing the tournament, which runs from June 9 to 11.

On the first night, the club will host an exhibit of professionals playing. "The public can watch the pros play, and pick up some tips," said Booth.

June 10 and 11 are the tournament matches, with a social event for players Saturday night.

"We're really excited about it," she said, and hopes for a good crowd of spectators to come out and be excited about the sport as well.

LocalHAPPENINGS

Welcome Back!
2023 Fish Fry

FISH FRY

Every Thursday
4 - 7 p.m.

EAT IN OR TAKE OUT
CASH ONLY

1 piece \$11 2 piece \$15

with fries
and coleslaw
taxes included

Legion

BRANCH 124
NIAGARA ON THE LAKE

Royal Canadian Legion Br. 124 | 410 King St.,
905-468-2353 | legion124@gmail.com

St. Davids and District Lions Club

Friday Fish Fry

January 20th

4:30 to 7:00 pm

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

EAT IN or TAKE OUT

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

Refundable Bottle & Can Drive
EVERY FISH FRY FRIDAY

St. Davids LEOs will be on
hand to receive your empties!

PLACE YOUR COMING EVENT COMMUNITY SOCIAL HERE

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LocalWORSHIP

CORNERSTONE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday, January 22nd

9:45 a.m.
Kids Ministry Sign In
(Nursery - Kindergarten)

10:00 a.m.
Worship Gathering
Online & In-Person

Message:
Kevin Bayne
Overcoming the Enemy
(Matthew 4:1-11)

We will be celebrating
communion in the service

www.ccchurch.ca

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OBITUARY

LLOYD, EVELYN 'LYNN' (NEE DIPPEL)—Passed away peacefully on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at the age of 98 after a courageous battle with cancer. She was born in Baraboo, Wisconsin, on September 26, 1924 to Dr. Albert and Lydia (Isenberg) Dippel. She was predeceased by her parents and by her husband and best friend of 44 years Gilbert 'Gil' Lloyd, who passed away on September 9, 2014.

She is survived by her step-daughter, Annette 'Tig' Lloyd, her family in the US including her brother Albert Dippel, Jr. and four nephews Roger, Robert, Richard and Ross Dippel and their families, all much loved by Lynn. In addition,

her husband's sister Barbara and her husband Bala and their two daughters Sita and Sumithra and their families all living in Australia, also much loved by Lynn. In addition, Lynn leaves behind many close friends including dear friends Sylvia Humber, Keri Humber, Zofia Hall, Joan McNulty and the members of the women's group, Beta Sigma Chi.

Lynn began work as a dental assistant at the age of 21 and then became a medical researcher at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. In 1969 she immigrated to Canada after spending a weekend in Toronto and falling in love with the city. Shortly after moving to Toronto, she met Gil and knew she would never be moving back to the States. They were married in January of 1973. They moved to Barrie, Ontario where Gil managed a plastic manufacturing plant. Lynn became a part of the May Court Club, a charity group of women who have a shop of gently used women and children's clothes with the proceeds being used to help the local community.

Upon Gil's retirement in 1988, they moved to Niagara-On-the-Lake and built their retirement home. Lynn was invited to join the lovely women's group, Beta Sigma Chi, she made many, many special friends both through this group and the wider community.

Lynn was first diagnosed with cancer in April of 2020. She received treatment at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton and in October of 2020 she was cancer free.

Lynn began writing letters to her family when she first entered University and never stopped writing. She made time every week to correspond with her family and friends all over the world. She loved to write and receive letters her entire life. In addition, Lynn loved to read and always had a book or two by her side. She enjoyed photography, knitting and needlework - hobbies she got from her mother and father.

In lieu of flowers, Lynn would appreciate a donation to Doctors Without Borders, May Court Club of Barrie or the charity of your choice.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Morgan Funeral Home. Details of a Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date.

Lynn's was a life lived to the fullest.

BOGUSAT, LORRAINE—It is with both sadness and relief that I announce the passing of my lovely Lorraine after many years of living with Alzheimer's disease. She is most assuredly missed by her husband Howard, sister Karen Webb, and brother Clay Shipclark and his wife Evadene. Also missing her are her sister-in-law Ruth Opresnik, in-laws Walter and Alice Bogusat, in-laws Gloria and Kurt Meyer, as well as many nieces and nephews spread across the country.

Lorraine was born in Ottawa, but because her father was an army technician, they moved a number of times, primarily living in Calgary and Victoria. Army pay was poor in those days, so her father often took her fishing and hunting, sometimes for two days. I got the feeling that her father wished he had a son, but as a tomboy I don't think she disappointed him much. She worked for Alberta Gas and Trunk line, which is now part of Trans Canada (T.C. Energy). Later, she moved to Victoria, getting a job with a brokerage firm Loewen, Ondaatje, McCutcheon. They transferred her to Toronto. People there always spoke of attending the Shaw Theater so she decided to do the same. That Sunday she came to our church, which is where I met her. We strolled the town that afternoon and about five hours later I had a hunch that she was to be my wife, which happened in 1980. We built our house in 1981 and she lived there until her move into Upper Canada Lodge. Lorraine tried Real Estate sales, but it was the year when interest rates hit close to 20%. She then worked at the Lutheran Seminary by Brock University and really enjoyed her work there. In 1989 we formed Wood Be Perfect Ltd., doing hand carved signs in the area. Many of these are still visible today at Queen's Landing Hotel, Prince of Wales Hotel, Angel Inn, and St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Gold Leaf became our specialty. We also did a number of interior projects, where it was Lorraine's artistic abilities that were key to our success. While I did a lot of carving and lettering, she did the painting of the graphics and carving of faces etc.

When we retired in 2004, we were freed up to do more travelling. Over the years, Lorraine and I got to Europe twice, and added Portugal, Spain, and Tunisia later. Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, and Cuba were visited numerous times. She visited every province in Canada, including the Yukon and Labrador where we took the ferry up to Nain. Very few people can say that.

Lorraine was on the patron's board of Upper Canada Lodge when her mother was living there. So, when it came time for her to move there, she was more than willing to go. Nurses who have worked in many of the long term facilities of the area will tell you that it's a great place, so many thanks to the UC L. staff for her many years of excellent care.....Howard.

Lorraine was resting at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, where her family received friends on Sunday, January 15th from 2-4 & 6-8 pm. Funeral service was held at Christ Lutheran Church, 140 Russell Ave, St. Catharines on Monday, January 16th at 11 o'clock. Interment followed at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer Society or to Haiti Lutheran Mission Society Feeding Program.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

SUDOKU AND PUZZLE ANSWERS

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

Sudoku solution from January 11, 2023

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

Across: 1 Share, 6 Adds, 10 Hero, 14 Cocoa, 15 Suit, 16 Alum, 17 Altos, 18 Saga, 19 Dada, 20 Mystical, 22 Tenner, 24 Clay, 25 Fest, 26 Always, 29 Gasp, 30 Jim, 33 Beau, 34 Halve, 36 Nano, 37 Owns, 38 Swoon, 39 I S B N, 40 Mite, 41 Terra, 42 Goat, 43 B S, 44 Prey, 45 Trendy, 47 Flak, 48 Four, 49 Wallop, 52 Versions, 55 Dual, 8 Dig, 9 State senator, 10 Hadn't, 11 Elan, 12 Rude, 13 Omar, 21 Cash-strapped, 23 E S P, 25 Favor, 26 A-bomb, 27 Lewis, 28 Wants, 29 Glory, 30 Jason, 31 In bad, 32 Monty, 35 A week, 36 Netherians, 44 P L O, 46 Russia, 47 Fly to, 48 Fella, 49 Webb, 50 Able, 51 Laos, 52 Vain, 53 Odor, 54 Nine, 55 Seed, 58 EVA.

Down: 1 Scam, 2 Holy, 3 Acts, 4 Root cause, 5 Easily, 6 Assay, 7 Dana, 65 As red, EBay, 57 Peal, 59 Sadie, 60 Blot, 61 Evil, 62 In one, 63 Beso, 64 Ss, 44 Prey, 45 Trendy, 47 Flak, 48 Four, 49 Wallop, 52 Versions, 55 Dual, 8 Dig, 9 State senator, 10 Hadn't, 11 Elan, 12 Rude, 13 Omar, 21 Cash-strapped, 23 E S P, 25 Favor, 26 A-bomb, 27 Lewis, 28 Wants, 29 Glory, 30 Jason, 31 In bad, 32 Monty, 35 A week, 36 Netherians, 44 P L O, 46 Russia, 47 Fly to, 48 Fella, 49 Webb, 50 Able, 51 Laos, 52 Vain, 53 Odor, 54 Nine, 55 Seed, 58 EVA.

JAMES, URSULA—Ursula Hedwig Luise James (née Friemann, formerly Besteman) beloved wife of Clifford S. James passed away peacefully in her sleep on Tuesday, December 27, 2022 at the age of 98, in Niagara Falls. Ursula was deeply proud of her three sons Al Besteman (Maureen), Rick Besteman (Rashmi Biswas), the late Douglas Besteman, and of her two grandsons Scott Besteman (Jilliane), and Marc Besteman (Elizabeth).

Born in Münster, Germany on April 12, 1924, Ursula was the beloved eldest child of Hugo and Charlotte Friemann. Ursula is predeceased by her two brothers Diederich, and Hanns-Hugo, and is survived by her dear sister Ilse Besteman (the late Arnold).

As part of a large and loving blended family Ursula will be missed by Clifford's children: Eleanor James (the late Murray Schafer), Susan Barker-James (the late Robin Barker-James), Dianne Agate (John), Rod James (Terri), and by many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Along with her family, Ursula's loss will be felt by close friends Maureen & Bill Poutney, Richard Baker, Jennifer Graham, and extended family in Germany and the UK.

The family would like to express thanks to the staff at the Greater Niagara General Hospital, Rainbow Unit, for their kindness and professionalism in caring for Ursula. In keeping with Ursula's wishes cremation and a private service have taken place. Those who wish may make a memorial donation to the Niagara Health Foundation.

<https://ofnhs.akaraisin.com/ui/inmemory/donations/start>

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



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