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 on his shirt. The stares he would get from people because he was different.

“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 bifida 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, figured 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....

Continued on page 14

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....

Continued on page 14
Icewine Festival launches Friday, village opens Saturday

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 icewine 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 entertainment, 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.

Paint Night & Dinner at the Pub

February 1 @ 6:30 PM

$90 Per Person Includes:
2-hour guided paint session, all paint supplies, dinner, dessert, large wine, beer, or cocktail, take home your masterpiece.

Dinner Options: Honey Almond Salmon OR Chicken Supreme
Dessert: Apple Ravioli - Apple, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Pastry & Custard

Have you or a loved one suffered a stroke?

Every year, an estimated 15% of people across the world will suffer a stroke. And over 66% of those people will experience some visual dysfunction as a result. If you’re experiencing symptoms such as double vision or blurry vision, headaches, or difficulties with facial recognition, contact us to find out how neuro-optometric rehabilitation can help.

Online Ad

For more information, visit our website: THEIRISHHARPPUB.COM (905) 468-4443 • TAXES & GRATUITIES EXTRA Credit Card Required To Reserve Your Spot • 72 Hour Cancellation Policy in Effect

NEW PATIENTS WELCOME EVENING HOURS AVAILABLE 905-468-3009

369 MARY STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE www.niagaradental.ca

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team

Care for all ages, infants to adults
358 Mary St., Unit 7, NOTL | 905.468.8002
8 Second Dr., St. Catharines | 905.682.9119
www.theeyedoc.ca

Local Staff

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team
369 MARY STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE www.niagaradental.ca

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

Every year, an estimated 15% of people across the world will suffer a stroke. And over 66% of those people will experience some visual dysfunction as a result. If you’re experiencing symptoms such as double vision or blurry vision, headaches, or difficulties with facial recognition, contact us to find out how neuro-optometric rehabilitation can help.

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team
369 MARY STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE www.niagaradental.ca

Care for all ages, infants to adults
358 Mary St., Unit 7, NOTL | 905.468.8002
8 Second Dr., St. Catharines | 905.682.9119
www.theeyedoc.ca

Have you or a loved one suffered a stroke?

Every year, an estimated 15% of people across the world will suffer a stroke. And over 66% of those people will experience some visual dysfunction as a result. If you’re experiencing symptoms such as double vision or blurry vision, headaches, or difficulties with facial recognition, contact us to find out how neuro-optometric rehabilitation can help.

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team
369 MARY STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE www.niagaradental.ca

Care for all ages, infants to adults
358 Mary St., Unit 7, NOTL | 905.468.8002
8 Second Dr., St. Catharines | 905.682.9119
www.theeyedoc.ca

Have you or a loved one suffered a stroke?

Every year, an estimated 15% of people across the world will suffer a stroke. And over 66% of those people will experience some visual dysfunction as a result. If you’re experiencing symptoms such as double vision or blurry vision, headaches, or difficulties with facial recognition, contact us to find out how neuro-optometric rehabilitation can help.

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team
369 MARY STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE www.niagaradental.ca

Care for all ages, infants to adults
358 Mary St., Unit 7, NOTL | 905.468.8002
8 Second Dr., St. Catharines | 905.682.9119
www.theeyedoc.ca

Have you or a loved one suffered a stroke?

Every year, an estimated 15% of people across the world will suffer a stroke. And over 66% of those people will experience some visual dysfunction as a result. If you’re experiencing symptoms such as double vision or blurry vision, headaches, or difficulties with facial recognition, contact us to find out how neuro-optometric rehabilitation can help.

Dr. Kevin Clark and Dr. Rebecca Zabek-Clark Dentists and their registered Dental Hygiene Team
369 MARY STREET NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE www.niagaradental.ca

Care for all ages, infants to adults
358 Mary St., Unit 7, NOTL | 905.468.8002
8 Second Dr., St. Catharines | 905.682.9119
www.theeyedoc.ca
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.

“Tim 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.”

“We know 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 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. 26. Sadly, the 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 bring 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. 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 that 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 Jovic 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.”
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 Coronavirus Community Church.

"It's a different world for kids today when 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 creativity in wanting to donate.

"I'd rather work an extra two hours chatting to customers, than 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."

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.

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 line. She says as she worries about them becoming impatient because she's holding them up, "I'll notice all of a sudden there's been a line up 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.

"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 of 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 do so, 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. 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 everyone 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!"
MAHABHARATA

WORLD PREMIERE!
ON STAGE FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 26

A modern retelling of the 4000-year-old Sanskrit poem

A TWO-PART EPIC THEATRICAL EVENT — on several dates, Mahabharata: Karma (Part 1) and Mahabharata: Dharma (Part 2) will be presented over the course of one day allowing you to enjoy this classic tale in its entirety with Khana, a community meal in between.

BUY BOTH PARTS AND SAVE 20%
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 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 opening 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, only to magically come up with a solution to fix this crisis, one he has been planning for some time. If that’s true, he also had the 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, it this? 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 there is a mess and they cannot wait, certainly considering that more in public health care, not taking money away from it. While of course the fix is the right direction, we also wonder if they are protecting their own, it seems they might have it right.

As for any of you who are nurses or hip replacement at the Holland Centre on Wellesley Street in Toronto, or know someone who has?

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. We need to 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.

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 here.

Where is Ben? Where is Ben?

Wayne Gates, MMP 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 pro-vincial election in the spring. We were proud of our universal health-care system — it’s a statement of our values as a country. We take care of each other. That’s why I’m so concerned.

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 promised access to our universal health-care system — it’s a statement of our values as a country.

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.

We have an opportunity to move forward in the province and municipalities to get good things done. The status quo is clearly not working for our province and many others; it will take unique solutions from everyone around the table to tackle these challenges.

A new year, with new challenges and new opportunities

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

Editor: Penny Coles pcooluxlocal.com 905-246-3878
Publisher: The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local
Village Media Regional Publisher (online sales)
John Hammill
John@villagemedia.ca 905-888-5999 ext 1157
notlocal.com @ facebook.com/notlocal @ Instagram.com/bentonlocal @ twitter.com/notlocal

Ad Sales: Julia Coles julia@notlocal.com 905-934-1040

Graphic Designer: Rosie Gowsell composing@notllocal.com

News: tips@notlocal.com

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@notlocal.com. Last week, Fred Telegraf correctly identified Ben was on the bridge over Four Mile Creek, across from Gates Gas Bar on Niagara Stone Road.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

The Trusted Voice of Our Community

Distress Centre Niagara
On phones: 905-689-3781

Mental Health and Addictions Access
On phones: 1-866-550-5205

Gambler’s Anonymous
905-351-1616

Kids Help Phone
Service for youth
416-586-8686 (Crisis Line)

Alcoholics Anonymous
Meetings vary

CRAIME STOPPERS
1-800-222-8477

ASSAULTED WOMEN’S HELPLINE
Mobile calls to: #SAFE (#7233)

DISTRESS CENTRE
For depression, distress and crisis
24 hour help line: 905-689-3781

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACCESS
1-866-550-5205

GAMBLER’S ANONYMOUS
905-351-1616

KIDS HELP PHONE
Service for youth
416-586-8686 (Crisis Line)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Meetings vary

CRIME STOPPERS
1-800-222-8477

ASSAULTED WOMEN’S HELPLINE
Mobile calls to: #SAFE (#7233)

1-866-582-2140 (Crisis Line)

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@notlocal.com. Last week, Fred Telegraf correctly identified Ben was on the bridge over Four Mile Creek, across from Gates Gas Bar on Niagara Stone Road.

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@notlocal.com. Last week, Fred Telegraf correctly identified Ben was on the bridge over Four Mile Creek, across from Gates Gas Bar on Niagara Stone Road.
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 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 working with the community proud of the work we do for so many special people. Cheers to a wonderful 2023.

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

---

**LETTERS**

**Red Roof says thanks to community for stepping up**

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 most snowless in decades as we move into mid-January. An area exempt from that theme would be Lake Erie’s shoreline and its recent lake-effect snow rollercoaster, accelerated by mild weather downscale from its source.

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

This is something to think about while walking the brisk wintry 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 perceptively more energized 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, 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 blank forest, and an intentional moment to imagine you have infrared vision. There would be champs of body heat stacked up and down the bareness of the trees. Prying away a sheet of bark would reveal up to a dozen different insect species clamped 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, Canadian’s only marsupial, the Virginia opossum, will hole up inside a hollow 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.

**FREELANCE JOURNALIST WANTED:**

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local is looking for an experienced freelance journalist to join our team. The ideal candidate should be able to work independently, ensure accuracy and balance in stories, work with editors to ensure stories are written to deadlines qualifications, and have excellent writing and communication skills.

If you feel you are a suitable candidate for this position, please send your resume and a cover letter outlining your experience to penny@nottlocal.com We look forward to hearing from you!
Avery’s wish is coming true, beyond his wildest dreams

Mike Balsam
The Local

When Krista London-Vertichio 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-Vertichio’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 her busy family life via her account, tiklornetldn. 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.

Since then, Avery has wanted to raise $2,260. Niagara Motors was so humbled by the incredible support of our local businesses. The celebration served a joint purpose, raise $2,260. Niagara Motors

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’s wish is coming true, beyond his wildest dreams. Avery’s Amazon wish list can be found at www.amazon.ca/hz/wishlist/ls/O19FF571C3?ref_=wl_share. “And if people don’t want to order off the wish list,” 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)
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 Sosnix 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 Lake 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 con- tainer who had arrived on scene, got the man over the fence 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 fiancee 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 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 didn’t 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 Kwanis Aquatic Centre in St. Catharines but have reported they were well looked-after, and they too were able to return around dinnertime.

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 whole sale 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 Sosnix, 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.
Pink Pearl fundraising party at Ironwood Cider

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 Melanie Gasbarrino. (Photos supplied)

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

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. "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 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.

“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 connect with others.

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.
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.

Notllocal.com

Royal Oak School

OPEN HOUSE
February 3, 2023, 176 Wellington St, NOTL

Curious about what more individual attention and engagement could look like for your child?
Join us for our annual Open House to learn more about NOTL’s Community School!

Why Royal Oak?
• Small class sizes, 1:6 ratio
• Enhanced core French beginning in JK/SK
• Community minded curriculum
• Inquiry based learning
• Inclusive, nurturing, and tailored instruction
• Challenging curriculum with Grade 9 math enrichment in Grade 7/8

RSVP required, please call or email 905-382-9592 or admin@royaloakschool.ca

Niagara on-the-Lake Realty
All Dill’s songs have a special meaning

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 to Lamb’s A Song A City initiative. For tickets, email Lamb at management@dannylamb.com.
Tobey’s first full performance in almost 20 years at Hare

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 tendinitis in both forearms. In addition, he began to suffer from tin-

nitis, a debilitating condi-

tion for any musician.

“The doctor at the mu-

sician’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 gradu-

ate of both Mohawk Col-

lege and the University of Toronto music programs had recorded a number of albums. His 2001 Arkadia Records collection Street Culture, featuring accom-

paniment 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 Con-

cordia degree, when he mi-

ni-a 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 effec-

tive use of search engine optimization before any-

one 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 nev-

er had any fear, any stage fright, because I was a per-

former. 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

living in Toronto at the time. They rented a room at the Arts and Letters Club and began to offer semi-

nars for fellow musicians and artists. Called Suc-

cess Tracks for Artists, they would offer tips to help them more effectively sell their work.

“The musicians and art-

ists started bringing their managers,” Houle says. “And then the record labels started coming. Then cur-

ators for arts organizations, and they started bringing business people.”

So the couple shifted once again, renaming their sessions to Training Busi-

ness Pros, and began to fo-

cus solely on that, coaching business people on success-
ull internet marketing.

“Nobody was doing that

at the time,” Tobey says. “There was nothing any-

where. We were the first training company in Can-

ada to offer it. We had sev-

eral courses that we offered, interwoven personal de-

velopment and marketing.

It wasn’t just the skills, but

intrinsic motivation, too. “And it took off”

The success of the busi-

ness, 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 compa-

nies across North Amer-

ica to generate tens of mil-

lions in new sales.

But two things hap-

pened to get Paul in front

of a crowd next Monday.

The first occurred in 2016, when someone con-

acted Nancy to ask if Paul

would play two songs for motivational speaker Bob Proctor’s celebration of life at New York City’s Carne-

gie Hall.

“Paul always said in his

fourth/five book when he

would play two songs for

motivational speaker Bob

Proctor’s celebration of life

at New York City’s Carne-

gie Hall.”

And it took off. “It was like it was just

meant to be,” Tobey adds in an email. “I’m very grate-

ful to (Dunn) for afford-

ing me this opportunity to

give him a purpose to be at

the piano and train. You can’t go through an hour or so with the goal of learning to play without getting your arms back in

shape.”

As I started making those

tutorials, I started re-realizing my interest in learning music,” Tobey adds. “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 Mon-

day’s show will enjoy To-

beys 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 Vari-

ations thrown into the mix.

Tobey will be joined by Rob

McBrade and Adam Field-

ing, on bass and drums re-

spectively.

Fourteen-year-old pi-

anist Kai Oxslaz will perform an opening set.

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

Mike Balsom

The Local

Paul Tobey will perform at the Hare Wine Company Monday night. (Photos supplied)
Continued from page 1

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

But that wasn’t happen-
ing Monday, said Ferguson — the kids checked in and stayed, which is what they prefer, especially for young-
er 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 volun-
teers, insurance, and other governance issues that have been offered by the church — even a donation and ac-
counting system, that have been very helpful in getting the programs up and run-
ning.

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 ev-erything aligned and this space was meant to be for youth.”

A social event could in-
clude 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 communi-
ty. 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 Pol-
grabia, thanking the team at NOTL Realty for supporting delivery of the winter 2023 session certification cours-
es, which could also include first aid and a home alone session. “They are clearly in demand and it is so wonder-
ful 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 communi-
ty has been very generous with donations, said, including NOTL Realty, which sponsored the San-
a Run, a fundraiser which donated more than $3,000 for the collective; Ruffinio’s Pizza with Santa for a do-
nation of $3,000, and oth-
er partners, in addition to Cornerstone: Anchor Ni-
agara; NOTL firefigthers, who brought a fire truck to the first information night for kids to explore; D&B Balloons; the NOTL Lions Club; and Garrison House, which has offered to pro-
vide 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 re-
 mote library.

Other community or-
ganizations are making connections and offering to help the collective, Polgra-
bia said. “Word is getting out, and it’s resonating.”

Brian Ferguson spoke to

Continued on page 15
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.

Continued from page 14
**NOTL Hydro president lays out impact of electric vehicles**

**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 the electricity 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 electric- tricity, it is important to distinguish between how much electricity is used by a customer on any particular time period (of 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 homes in NOTL. These are used to radiate from the engine. Each transformer provides power for up to 12 homes. Transformers are sized and installed on the assumption that an average house uses up to 12 kW of power at any one time.

An electric charger uses much more power than the average household when 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 a house and charger is over 17 kW. Should you have several electric vehicle chargers all running 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 replacement units. Electric utilities will have already had this issue, so will 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 replacing the green pad-mounted transformers to meet potential demand from realized electric heating and air conditioning load for many decades.
2. Most of the transformers at risk were the grey portrait-oriented 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 service is likely to allow us to accommodate the addition of an electric vehicle charger in any medium to large single-family residence. A larger service 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 space to house primary feeders for 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 upgrades 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 to the local utilities that then distribute the power. The transformation capacity cannot cope with the demand for power for all these 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 distribute the power. The actual demand for power from the transmission grid has been falling since the 2007-2008 recession. It is only recently 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 Hydro 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 Caithness 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 has been 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 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 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.

**Graphs provided by NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis show the impact the growth in use of electric vehicles will have on hydro demand...**
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 a variety of criteria, such as overall rating and total number of reviews, to determine whether they made the list.

Forty-eight restaurants in Ontario made this year’s top 100 list, with three in Niagara, four of them in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“We are seeing strong interest in this area in a variety of dining with great experience and strong represention from traditional continental to diverse international cuisines,” said Matt Davis, country director of OpenTable Canada, in a press release about the list. “This diverse generated reference guide stands out beyond others because it’s a reflection of diners’ most beloved restaurants across the country.”

From Niagara-on-the-Lake, Two Sisters Vineyards’ Kitchen 76 made the top 100, as did Treadwell Farms-to-Table Cuisine.

“Two Sisters Vineyards’ Kitchen76 made the top 100 list, as did Treadwell Farms-to-Table Cuisine. Niagara’s Vineilt Estates Winery Restaurant and the Good Earth Vineyard and Winery are also included.”

“Our recipes are curated by our chefs, and we’ve been very good over the last decade of really diversifying our menus and seasonal changes,” says Melissa.

“We’re also thinking of re-pairs,” adds Angela. “We always want everything at the winery to look refreshed and new!”

James Treadwell of Treadwell Farms-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.”

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,“ 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.”

Across:
1. Portion
2. 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. Zucchini
22. Two fins
24. Very fine-grained soil
25. Suffice for a focused event
26. For ever
29. Puff
30. Huckleberry Finn’s pal
34. Bodystock
36. Split fifty-fifty
38. Faint
39. Block ID
40. Small amount
41. Roman Earth
42. Locher
43. Technical degrees
44. Quarry
45. Fashionable
46. Adverse criticism
48. Little Joe
49. Hit hard
52. Editions
53. Global auction websites
56. Bong
59. --- Hawkins Day
60. Shaw
61. Wicked
62. How golfers want to finish every hole
63. Spanish kiss
64. Funnyman --- Canvey
65. --- as a lobster
13. --- Bradley, five-star general
21. Broke
23. Sifty’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 gp.
48. World’s longest land
49. Reach by air
48. Chap
49. "Dragnet" creator Jack ---
50. Competent
51. It’s capital is Vientiane
52. Conนคร
53. Scourt
54. Diamond team
55. New plant in the making
58. Walking in space

Down:
1. Squeeze
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

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!”

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

“My family’s names are 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 hoping 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 that success will continue for 2023.”

There will always be interest in Niagara, he adds, “because of the environment we offer here, and we’ve been very good over the last decade of really diversifying our experiences so whether they be golf, wineries, distilleries, breweries or the Shaw. We’re not just a place to go June to December — we’re trying to make this a year-round destination, and we’ve done a good job of that, despite the challenges. I’m hopeful these 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,” 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.”

Across:
1. Portion
2. 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. Zucchini
22. Two fins
24. Very fine-grained soil
25. Suffice for a focused event
26. For ever
29. Puff
30. Huckleberry Finn’s pal
34. Bodystock
36. Split fifty-fifty
38. Faint
39. Block ID
40. Small amount
41. Roman Earth
42. Locher
43. Technical degrees
44. Quarry
45. Fashionable
46. Adverse criticism
48. Little Joe
49. Hit hard
52. Editions
53. Global auction websites
56. Bong
59. --- Hawkins Day
60. Shaw
61. Wicked
62. How golfers want to finish every hole
63. Spanish kiss
64. Funnyman --- Canvey
65. --- as a lobster
13. --- Bradley, five-star general
21. Broke
23. Sifty’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 gp.
48. World’s longest land
49. Reach by air
48. Chap
49. “Dragnet” creator Jack ---
50. Competent
51. It’s capital is Vientiane
52. Conนคร
53. Scourt
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)

Angela Marotta and Melissa Marotta-Paolocci are proud to be recognized for doing what they love to do. (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 provide 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 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 outreach for donations.

The needs of Spanish-speaking farmworkers are served by Father Antonio Ilas 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 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.workerwelcomeniagara.com or email niagaraworkerswelcome@gmail.com.
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 read that Rye St. House was called Our Western Home. The home was named Maria Rye. It was called Our Western Home. The home was closed in 1913 and demolished in 1923. Now that Rye St. House is just a park that we sometimes just walk by.

Surprised to read that Rye St. House was once an orphanage here in the 1800s! We were totally shocked to read that Rye St. House was once an orphanage here in the 1800s! It was called Our Western Home. The home was named Maria Rye. It was called Our Western Home. The home was closed in 1913 and demolished in 1923. Now that Rye St. House is just a park that we sometimes just walk by.

Interview with Sebastian

Tommy Turtle went to Texas to tell his tiny turtle brother to eat tacos. How many “T's” is in that?

Actual Kid-Friendly News

January 2023 Volume 3 • Issue 1

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 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 Rye St. House is just a park that we sometimes just walk by.

Surprised to read that Rye St. House was once an orphanage here in the 1800s! We were totally shocked to read that Rye St. House was once an orphanage here in the 1800s! It was called Our Western Home. The home was named Maria Rye. It was called Our Western Home. The home was closed in 1913 and demolished in 1923. Now that Rye St. House is just a park that we sometimes just walk by.

Interview with Sebastian

Tommy Turtle went to Texas to tell his tiny turtle brother to eat tacos. How many “T's” is in that?

Actual Kid-Friendly News

January 2023 Volume 3 • Issue 1

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 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 Rye St. House is just a park that we sometimes just walk by.

Surprised to read that Rye St. House was once an orphanage here in the 1800s! We were totally shocked to read that Rye St. House was once an orphanage here in the 1800s! It was called Our Western Home. The home was named Maria Rye. It was called Our Western Home. The home was closed in 1913 and demolished in 1923. Now that Rye St. House is just a park that we sometimes just walk by.

Interview with Sebastian

Tommy Turtle went to Texas to tell his tiny turtle brother to eat tacos. How many “T's” is in that?

Actual Kid-Friendly News

January 2023 Volume 3 • Issue 1

Local News

We hope everyone is having a wonderful start to 2023! We look forward to all of your Gazette submissions in 2023!
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 Great-Er Metro Junior A Hockey League’s (GMHL) Southern Division. The Preds followed up a 5-1 loss in Bradford last Wednesday with a 4-1 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 Streetstville 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, but we aren’t 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 redeemed 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 goalie’s outstretched right leg.

Before they got 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. I’ll be a good test. This could be a team that we will face in the second round of the playoffs.”

Game time Friday at Vagil’s Mandarin Credit Union Arena is 7:30 p.m.

The Niagara Predators are currently tied with Niagara with 29 points respectively. The Northern Division’s last-place team.

The division is a bit thick 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.”

The Predators also acquired 6’4” goalie Zane Clausen from the Northern Division’s Bradford Rattlers in exchange for a 2021 third round draft pick.

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

The division is a bit thick 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.”

The Predators also acquired 6’4” goalie Zane Clausen from the Northern Division’s Bradford Rattlers in exchange for a 2021 third 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 Northumber-land to acquire Russian forward Timur Mirzaatum 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.

Mike Balsom  The Local

Game time Friday at Vagil’s Mandarin Credit Union Arena is 7:30 p.m.

Predators make a number of moves

Montreal native Gianluca Minneci 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 Brenn 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 signing with Tottenham this season. And 18-year-old Jacob Shuler 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 2021 third 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 Northumber-land to acquire Russian forward Timur Mirzaatum 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.

Mike Balsom  The Local

Game time Friday at Vagil’s Mandarin Credit Union Arena is 7:30 p.m.

Predators make a number of moves

Montreal native Gianluca Minneci 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 Brenn 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 signing with Tottenham this season. And 18-year-old Jacob Shuler 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 2021 third 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 Northumber-land to acquire Russian forward Timur Mirzaatum 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.
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, Pelham’s director of development. The native of Romania played for the Canadian junior national team and the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Coastal Carolina University Chants. 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 program founder Jennifer Caughall 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 course direction. Lori and Barry Smith travel in 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 every Saturday to get to the 9 a.m. session.

“Genille goes step-by-step,” Lori adds. “She makes them do what they want to get there, 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 Rittina, now the mayor of the town.

“I wouldn’t be here with out my coaches,” says Kroeker. “Starting so late, I was playing catch-up, and he moved me along so fast.”

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

“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 Caughall at winnersdaycamps@gmail.com for information about the program.
Outdoor pickleball a no-go for 2023, no promises for 2024

Penny Coles
The Local

Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club members are burning with a good winter on outdoor 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 or exceed a noise bylaw infringement for a two-year period, an email to The Local explained, choosing “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 to guide parks and recreation planning 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 trial period is over, some noise mitigation might still be required, even with the nearby noise bylaw in place,” Turcotte said.

“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.

“Once endorsed by council, the final product will guide the parks and recreation master plan to be issued in early to mid-2023.”

“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.”

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 in the process.

“The club absolutely wants to be involved in that,” she said.

While she said 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.

“The really good news for the Local was unique with its outdoor courts, particularly in Virgil, where everyone could play outdoors,” said Booth.

Catharines opened some of its courts in Port Colborne.

Welland has opened a beautiful new complex, “the Cadillac” of pickleball, with eight courts. The Empire Sportsplex is located in the Welland International Flawata Centre, again far removed from any homes. There are others across the region, both new courts and renovated courts.

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, 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 Midland Credit Union Arenas — there will be a total of 13 courts on those 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 press play, and pick up tips,” said Booth.

June 10 and 11 are the tournament matches, with a social event playing that 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.
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 3, 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, 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 her career 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 friendships 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 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. For arrangements, please contact 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 Orespink, 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, McCuthcheon. They transferred to her Toronto where 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, 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 Hall Lutheran Mission Society Feeding Program.

Sudoku solution from January 11, 2023

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 EBay, 57 Peal, 59 Sadie, 60 Blot, 61 Evil, 62 In one, 63 Beso, 64 Dana, 65 As red.

Down:
Wants, 29 Glory, 30 Jason, 31 In bad, 32 Monty, 35 A week, 36 Nigerians, 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.
Top Agent, Angelika Zammit, earns the HGTV Celebrity, Scott McGillivray Trusted Agent endorsement for Niagara-on-the-Lake!

From his experience with hundreds of real estate investments over the past twenty years, award-winning HGTV celebrity, executive producer, and real estate/renovation expert, Scott McGillivray, knows first hand about the value a knowledgeable, connected, and dedicated Real Estate Agent brings to the buying and selling process.

“Partner with the Agent I trust!” recommends Scott McGillivray, real estate expert and star of TV shows Income Property, Buyers Bootcamp and Scott’s Vacation House Rules.

“Selling a home can be a complex process so it’s important to use an experienced agent that knows your market,” advises Scott. “It’s important to partner with an agent with a strong marketing strategy that creates demand and gets your home SOLD for top dollar!’’ Real Estate Agents in the Scott McGillivray Trusted Agent Program have been selected based on a combination of their excellence in client satisfaction, depth of experience, marketing, and delivering results.

Angelika Zammit is proud to have been recognized as the exclusive McGillivray Trusted Agent in the Niagara-on-the-Lake market.

AngelikaZammit.com
Close to 6,000 Agents across 10 branches in Ontario.

T. 905.468.8777
C. 289.214.4394
www.angelikazammit.com
496 Mississauga Street
Niagara-on-the-Lake

#1 BROKERAGE in the GTA. The largest independent real estate brokerage in Canada.