



**Pickleball pro
Adam Eatock
to play in
exhibition
games**
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notllocal.com JUNE 7, 2023 Volume 5 • Issue 23



There was something on the tires the second time, likely tar, that made it difficult to clean. (Mike Balsom)

After being defaced twice by vandals, the Pride crosswalk has been cleaned up. (Supplied)

Pride crosswalks, flag vandalism not uncommon

Mike Balsom
The Local

After hosting a celebratory and well-attended 10th annual Pride in the Park festival at Montebello Park in St. Catharines Saturday, Pride Niagara Chair Enzo De Divitiis was disappointed to learn that Niagara-in-the-Lake's new Pride crosswalk on Anderson Lane had been vandalized for a second time.

Disappointed, but not shocked, as many in the region's LGBTQ2S+ community would likely concur.

"Vandalism is going to happen," De Divitiis told The Local Monday afternoon. "Everyone needs to be expecting that. The key is to be quick to fix it. That's the whole point of being an ally, to be visual and take on the hate that normally we would take. Putting in a crosswalk is the town saying 'look at us, we are allies'."

To De Divitiis, once that visual representation of support for the LGBTQ2S+ communi-

ty is installed, the town has to stand by it. It has to be a visual proclamation all year long, not just during June's Pride Month festivities.

So, if a flag, a bench or a crosswalk like the one painted at Anderson Lane last week is damaged or vandalized, it has to be corrected.

"If you truly believe in it," De Divitiis explained, "it has to be fixed right away."

The tire marks that could only have been left purposely on the crosswalk twice last week are a common form of defacement of such installations, according to the recipient of a 2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Community Service Award from the federal government.

"It's the easiest thing for them to do," De Divitiis said of that type of vandalism. "It happened in St. Catharines right away, too, and in Welland. Each time, they did it right away. It's the easiest, weakest thing to do, because nobody has to see you.

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Clean-up challenging, but staff got it done Tuesday

Penny Coles
The Local

The Pride crosswalk, defaced twice in less than a week, is now clean.

CAO Marnie Cluckie says staff were still looking at how best to clean it Monday morning, after a second round of vandalism was discovered Sunday morning, and also discussing putting up cameras to prevent further vandalism.

Cameras are looking like a possible solution. "It will likely be the first step that staff will take," she says, and won't re-

quire a special council meeting. The cost, she says, "will fall under my operational budget."

She couldn't be sure of a timeline but says "we'll expedite it as much as possible."

While recognizing a quick clean-up is important, it proved to be a challenge, says Cluckie.

Town staff had consulted with the company that painted the vivid colours of the crosswalk last week, she says, to ensure they would be using "best practices" to clean it, and high water pressure was recommended.

By Monday morning, staff had identified the second set of

circular marks as made by tires coated with a substance, likely tar, and sought advice on how to clean it up without any further damage, Cluckie says.

They also had to wait until the police came out for a second look — Cluckie contacted them again Monday morning to let them know their investigation included two acts of vandalism, likely made by "a small vehicle, like a motorcycle, dirt bike or ATV."

But when town staff first made an attempt to clean off the tar and tire marks, it didn't work. However, they gave it an-

other try Tuesday afternoon, Cluckie told The Local.

In the end it was "a combination of hot, high pressure water, and a lot of elbow grease."

The Progressive Pride design of the crosswalk is the same as the one by the Niagara Region buildings on St. Davids Road.

"The light blue, pink and white represent trans and non-binary individuals, and the black and brown represent marginalized people of colour. The painting of this crosswalk serves as a visible reminder that all are welcome in Niagara-on-the-Lake," says

the town news release, and is intended be a visible way of celebrating, supporting and creating awareness of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Made aware of some comments on Facebook regarding people taking their lawn chairs out to sit and watch over the crosswalk to discourage further vandalism, Cluckie says, "I don't recommend people taking police matters into their own hands at all. But what I appreciate about that is it speaks to the overwhelming support we have in NOTL for inclusivi-

ty, respect and acceptance. That people are willing to do that warms my heart. They are saying 'we want to stand in unity against discrimination.'"

If there is any silver lining "to this horrible defacing of the crosswalk, it's that it brings those community members together who really care about acceptance."

And yes, she adds, "I 100 per cent believe the people in NOTL care about creating an inclusive community. I think most people will also be quite devastated by this action that

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NOTL woman organizes 50th anniversary of nursing grads

Mike Balsom
The Local

Plenty of stories of hijinks were shared this weekend by a group of 13 nurses gathered at a King Street bed and breakfast to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their graduation from the old Mack School of Nursing in St. Catharines.

It was organized by Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Betty Ann Chandler.

As the current president of the Mack Alumni Association, Chandler is tasked with organizing the annual gathering of all Mack graduates up to the 1974 graduating year. About 240 grads showed up Friday night at Club Italia, some of them toting their fragile nursing caps from many, many years ago. Chandler says that

there was even a member of the class of 1950 at Friday's party.

Begun by Dr. Theophilus Mack in 1873 at the St. Catharines General and Marine Hospital, The Mack School was the first such institution in Canada based on Florence Nightingale's school in England. Originally called the Mack Training School for Nurses, it was a hospital-based facility where student nurses were trained by qualified nurses, with many of them boarding on site at the school.

In 1970, it became the Mack School of Nursing, based at the St. Catharines General Hospital on Queenston Street. From 1970 to 1974, 511 nurses graduated from Mack, completing their practical education at that hospital and others in the region. After 1974, the nursing school moved to Niagara College.

The gathered retired nurses actually graduated 53 years ago. Their planned Class of 1970 50th reunion was supposed to happen in 2020, but the pandemic delayed the plans to this year.

"We've lost quite a few classmates," Chandler, who eventually went on to teach nursing at Niagara College, told The Local, "and some were too ill to attend. Two of my roommates from our 'East Street Gang' are here, but the other, a sweet, beautiful girl named Karen Kennedy, passed away."

Hagersville High School graduate Chandler, whose last name at the time was Wren, was accepted to study nursing at Toronto General Hospital. But her parents thought the big city life was a bit too hectic for their daughter. Her grandmother lived in Beavertons (now part of Thorold). Because she would be close to her grandmother, she applied and was accepted to begin her training at Mack.

Like many of her classmates, Chandler boarded at first in the Schmon residence and then the Leonard residence at the hospital, both of which later became hospital wings. In her third year, she and three friends rented an apartment on East Street, hence her 'gang' name.

Upon graduation, Chandler worked at Port Colborne hospital for a short time before moving to the Hotel Dieu hospital in St. Catharines after she married.



Nurses Carole Hawthorn, Betty Ann Chandler and Linda Stewart look at a photo of their late roommate Karen Kennedy in Mack's 1970 yearbook. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

She stayed there for 13 years, supervising the ICU, before signing on to teach at Niagara College, where she later taught English as a Second Language. Chandler retired in 2013.

"Attending that school was just the joy of my life," Chandler says. "And I met my husband Rick while I was in my third year there. We were so proud to be nurses, and to be graduates of the Mack School. It's what got us started."

Chandler pulls out a wire-bound book entitled The Spirit of Mack, a collection of stories about nurses who graduated from the school between 1874 and 1974. The profile of Betty Ann (Wren) Chandler on page 213 quotes her as being grateful that Mack gave her the opportunity to "be what I had always dreamed of being — a Nurse. The attributes that a nurse brings to society are too many to mention."

Though she and Rick live on one of the fire lanes in NOTL, her daughter convinced her to hold her class reunion at the bed and breakfast, which had enough rooms and beds to sleep at least seven of her friends, two of whom were visiting from British Columbia and one who

lives in Prince Edward Island.

In the King Street backyard, the women were clearly all having a rollicking good time, each wearing a lanyard adorned with their 1970 graduation photo. It was, after all, the first time they had all been together for 53 years.

The Local overheard stories of future nurses sneaking out of their residence rooms, stuffing their beds with cereal boxes to fool their supervisors. One remembered breaking the rules by cooking sauce in their room, while another got caught sleeping in the chapel after finding their door locked following a clandestine late-night journey.

Chandler was especially happy to have the chance to reunite with her surviving fellow 'East Street Gang' members, Carole Hawthorn of Burlington and Linda Stewart of Cornwall, PEI.

Hawthorn's first post-Mack nursing position was at London, Ontario's psychiatric hospital before she moved to Sudbury for a position on a long-term care floor. She later had stops in Kitchener, St. Catharines, Welland and St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton. She retired from Burlington's Joseph Brant

Hospital 15 years ago.

Stewart started her career at Hamilton's Henderson Hospital before moving to Calgary's Foothills Hospital. She and her husband moved back to his PEI home, where she got a job at a Summerside, PEI hospital, before finishing her career in home care. Today she runs her own laser business, helping a small group of clients deal with pain and quit smoking.

"We haven't spent a whole lot of time together in 53 years," says Stewart.

"It's like we never left," Chandler chimes in. "We fall right back into our friendship. It's so great to be together."

Hawthorn laments the stress faced by today's nurses in an overburdened hospital system.

"I think it's almost impossible for them to nurse the way they want and should nurse," she said. "It's because of the system. It doesn't allow them to be the good nurse they want to be. These issues have been going on long before the pandemic. There has been a shortage of nurses for almost 20 years." But that's not what last weekend's reunion was all about. It was instead a chance to update everyone on their families and reminisce about good times they had while preparing to be a nurse, and the contributions they all made to their communities during their careers.

And those stories The Local heard during the afternoon? They were tame by today's standards.

And if there were more risque recollections overheard from the ladies last weekend, The Local is sworn to secrecy.



Betty Ann Chandler holds up a photo of early Mack teacher Nellie Gadsby Purcell from 1901 and her own 1970 grad photo.

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Quick clean-up essential, says Pride Niagara

Continued from page 1

You can just rev your engine and spin your tires and then take off.”

People in NOTL and elsewhere have expressed shock, anger and sadness in seeing the crosswalk vandalized. De Divitiis says his fellow Pride Niagara board members and supporters have also expressed anger and sadness. But through many years

of advocacy for acceptance of the LGBTQ2S+ community, most say they have become somewhat inured to senseless acts such as those last week.

“When we started doing the flags in each municipality,” he recalled, “the first time we had it raised in Niagara Falls it was stolen in under an hour. That’s about 10 years ago now.”

De Divitiis and others organized the raising of the

Pride flag in all 12 of Niagara’s municipalities this year. Representatives from Pride Niagara toured to each municipality on June 1, meeting with municipal officials to hoist the rainbow flag at city and town halls.

“We put all the proposals in at each municipality,” he explained. “We purchase the flags. It’s our initiative.”

Of the theft 10 years ago of the Pride flag in Niagara Falls,

De Divitiis says the city didn’t replace it right away. Since then, most municipalities have learned they have to do everything in their power to get the flag back up, or clean up the crosswalk, as soon as possible.

“Hopefully by now they’ve made a statement that says that they are going to fix it,” said De Divitiis. “Hopefully they are going to do everything in their power to clean it up if they real-

ly care about it.”

There was an attempt to clean it Monday, town CAO Marnie Cluckie told The Local, but it turned out to be more challenging than anticipated, and wasn’t successful. Staff tried again Tuesday afternoon, and hot high pressure water “along with some elbow grease” got the job done.

With a Pride Month event (the Shades of Love patio party

from noon to 6 p.m. followed by the Queens and Cider drag show) coming up at NOTL’s Ironwood Cider House scheduled for June 10, getting the symbol at the entrance into the Old Town before that is crucial.

“Some people have already said they might not be comfortable coming to this event,” said De Divitiis. “Hopefully with this happening, it won’t affect that show.”

Residents saddened, not surprised by vandalism

Continued from page 1

was taken to deface it. It’s vital that we stand as a community against this kind of discrimination and intolerance, and that everyone helps to create an environment where everyone feels respected and accepted, and I think we’re seeing that.”

It was Lisa Simpson, who grew up in Niagara-on-the-Lake but has lived and worked in Toronto for the last 11 years, who saw on Facebook that the crosswalk was vandalized for a second time, and offered “to park a camping chair at the crosswalk for a 12-hour shift to protect it. Anyone else?”

Talking to The Local, she says she absolutely meant it, and on Facebook, called on Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa to organize it.

Seeing some of the negative comments posted, she says, made her think about when she came out in NOTL and announced she was getting married, she was afraid there might

be a backlash, especially against her family’s business.

Instead, she says, “exactly the opposite happened. I was showered with support.”

To see the negativity on Facebook so many years later “is really disappointing.”

She says she thinks it’s “creeping up from the States, and it’s happening here,” that some people possibly felt this way all along, but are deciding now not to stay quiet any longer.

Although she loves to see a Pride crosswalk, especially important as a “show of support for young people to see what, for them, is a sign of acceptance,” she’s not crazy about where it is, referring to the town’s decision on location as “performative allyship.” If they really wanted to make a statement about being visibly welcoming, Queen Street would have been the better choice, she says.

Coun. Erwin Wiens says he is very disappointed and saddened

by what he’s heard from those who are opposed to the crosswalk.

He has received the same emails and heard the same comments that have been published in letters to local newspapers from people who believe the town is not serving the majority of residents with its installation — that there should have been a survey or vote on how many people want a rainbow crosswalk in town.

“I don’t believe in surveys. I was elected to lead. Council was elected to lead. That’s a survey. In four years’ time there will be another survey and a chance to get rid of me if you don’t agree with me,” says Wiens.

He listens to what residents have to say, he adds, “but we have to do what’s best for residents in general, and listen to staff reports and recommendations. Staff are well-informed.”

He received one particular phone call at home Saturday night, and says the person calling was extremely rude and

swearing about all the reasons why the rainbow crosswalk shouldn’t be necessary.

Wiens says when council first voted on the inclusivity committee’s recommendation, he voted in favour of it, but added, “I was really agnostic about it. I wasn’t sure it was necessary, but if others thought it was then I had no problem with that.”

But as he heard the recent comments from those so strongly opposed to it, he says he came to realize “that this is showing us exactly why it is necessary. I’ve become an ally — I understand now that there is hate out there, and we need to show as a town that’s not acceptable.”

He can’t understand how it harms people who oppose it, he adds.

“It means a lot to some people and it doesn’t have a negative impact on anybody.”

If it’s an issue of how their tax money is spent, he takes out his phone and calculates that

at a cost of \$20,000, as cited by Cluckie, even without grants or donations, it would be slightly more than \$1 on a tax bill.

“There are lots of extras we do for people, such as flowers, parks and recreation. These are things we do to spruce things up all the time. They’re in the budget, because we decided we can afford it. The last council decided we could afford this.”

And don’t, he adds, blame the opposition to a Pride crosswalk on Christianity — he points to Cornerstone Community Church as committed to inclusivity. That, he says, “is what Christianity is all about.”

To those opposed to the Pride crosswalk who say there should have been a vote or a survey done to see whether the majority of residents support it, Cluckie explains the recommendation for its installation came from the town’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting in 2021.


It’s a committee of coun-

cil, made up of people from the community, and their recommendation was accepted by council to move forward, which was when the town began looking for a grant to help fund it, she says.

The same recommendation included five rainbow benches, one in each community, and a survey was put to residents in June 2022, to help determine the placement of the crosswalks and benches, says Cluckie.

There was also a place for comments, and although “there were a couple from people indicating they didn’t want it, the vast majority of the comments we received were overwhelmingly in favour.”

The rainbow crosswalk and benches as symbols of inclusivity are quite common in Canada and North America, Cluckie adds, “so this is not a novel idea. It is a good way to demonstrate that the community embraces inclusivity.”



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Newark Neighbours getting close to moving date

Penny Coles
The Local

Newark Neighbours is getting closer to moving to its new location, which will offer the local food bank and thrift store an area three times the size of what it has now — space it very much needs.

Cindy Grant, chair of Newark Neighbours, says their client list continues to grow, with more than 160 adults and children requiring help from the food bank.

Although the large front portion of the Virgil location, formerly Lincoln Interiors, will be dedicated to the thrift store, the size of the food bank at the back will be tripled as well,

says Grant, along with a new room specifically designed for client intake. Both are entered through a side door, allowing privacy for clients.

“The culture will change with this space,” Grant adds, as each area is not only more spacious but also more defined and separate for those using the food bank, and for volunteers to carry out their work.

The inside construction is well underway, much brighter with fresh paint, and the original terrazzo floor, now covered for protection from the ongoing work, has been refinished, says Grant, who is pleased with how well it turned out.

Last week the team of New-

ark Neighbours volunteers, some of whom have been helping out on John Street for more than 20 years, had its first meeting at the new location, says Grant. “The team is really excited to see this happen,” she says. Change can be difficult, she acknowledges, “but everyone is really embracing this. They are saying thank you, they’re grateful for having more space, and feeling it will be a good move, a good change.”

Grant is also pleased with the way the work is progressing, and envisioning its completion. She can picture a donor plaque on the side wall near the front, to be seen as people enter, and a beautiful wooden counter for checking out sales from the thrift shop.

There are slat walls designed for hanging things, the racks and shelving are ordered for the thrift shop and food bank spaces, so everything will have its place. And a day has been put aside for Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake members who have volunteered their help to arrive in force and assemble the fixtures.

Those who have visited the current John Street location will be able to picture volunteers behind the counter in a tiny space at the front sorting donated items as they arrive, then trying to find somewhere to put them in the small, crowded area that is the thrift shop.

Behind the new Virgil thrift



Cindy Grant can envision what the new space will look like, including the spot on the newly painted wall where she will hang the donors' plaque.



Cindy Grant, chair of Newark Neighbours, is looking forward to the day when the move can be made from the current John Street location, which is still open, to the new Virgil storefront. She is just hoping construction won't block off their driveway. (Photos by Penny Coles)

shop will be an entire room to sort — volunteers are really excited about that, says Grant. It will be closed off from the rest of the space, but with one-way windows that allow volunteers to work while keeping an eye on the store out front.

The plan for the next few weeks, if work proceeds as expected, will be for the doors of Newark Neighbours on John Street to close to the public for the week beginning Monday, June 26, when volunteers will pack in preparation for the move, and then unpack and fill all the new shelves and racks. Two Men and a Truck will do the moving, says Grant. And again,

if everything goes according to plan, Tuesday, July 4 will be “a soft opening” for the public.

Those who rely on the food bank will be informed ahead of time about the closure, but with food typically picked up by clients every two weeks, waiting for the reopening won't be a problem, says Grant.

Volunteers are still needed, she says, not for the move, which is covered, but for the new space once it is open and operating.

With so much extra space and sectioned-off rooms, the process of the work will be a little different, with more assigned tasks rather than everyone pitching in together, and also

extra hours of opening, including Saturdays and Sundays, and Thursday evenings. Volunteers now working at Newark Neighbours already have their days, and will likely continue them, “but we will need extra people to staff those extra shifts.”

Scheduling is flexible, and anyone interested in a volunteer application form can visit newarkneighbours.ca/volunteers.

For more information or to discuss volunteering, email newarkneighbours1@gmail.com.

A celebratory official opening is likely to be mid- to late July, Grant says, with a firm date “to be determined.”

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Kiana Woo (Lucy) and Qasim Khan (Aslan) with the cast of *Prince Caspian*. Photo by David Cooper.

EDITORIAL

Forest fire smoke creating air quality issues in Niagara

When a visitor from Toronto expressed concern Sunday about air quality due to smoke from the wildfires in Quebec, I thought he was overreacting. But on Tuesday, when I received a message from Carrie Plaskett, president of the NOTL Soccer Club, that all club activity that evening was being cancelled due to poor air quality, it became real. As a member organization of the Ontario Soccer Association, our local soccer club is required to follow all of the parent association's directives. A message had been sent out Tuesday to all Niagara referees from the provincial association, which had declared an emergency situation. "Due to all the forest fires burning in western (sic) Canada," said the message, "the

smoke from these fires has now drifted into Ontario. The air quality from the people that measure and rate air quality has said that it could be dangerous for some people to play outdoor sports tonight." In addition, Environment Canada placed much of Southern Ontario under a special air quality statement Tuesday morning, excluding some of the southwest area of the province. "Air quality and visibility due to wildfire smoke can fluctuate over short distances and can vary considerably from hour to hour," said Environment Canada. "Wildfire smoke can be harmful to everyone's health even at low concentrations." By mid-afternoon a murky haze and a smoky scent seemed to have descended upon

Niagara-on-the-Lake. It created an eerie feeling, especially in light of the fact that we are so far away from the actual fires. Town councillor Erwin Wiens, who owns farms in NOTL, explains that the haze and smoke may have some negative impact on local farmers. "I'm not a meteorologist," he says to preface, "but when forest fires start getting their own weather patterns, it negatively impacts precipitation. It also started dragging down the colder weather from up north." Wiens points to the frost we experienced right after the Victoria Day long weekend. "That was from the forest fires in Alberta, forcing the weather patterns to change," he explains. "When we have hazy skies it forces precipitation away. With

so much hot air going upwards, it creates its own weather system." Tuesday afternoon, meteorologists were saying they expected the haze and smell to stay with us in Niagara for three or four days. "It won't have a major effect on our crops," says Wiens, "but it will have an effect. It can be even worse when it happens earlier in the spring, creating late frost." It's hard not to connect this uncomfortable emergency situation with the deteriorated state of our environment. And what makes that worrisome is that there is every indication this kind of emergency, which I have never experienced in my lifetime spent living in Southern Ontario, is something we will face

repeatedly over the next few years. A Canadian Forest Services publication called Climate Change and the Future Environment in Ontario, published in 2005, predicted that increased temperatures will lead to a drier forest floor. That will result in an estimated 24 per cent increase in the number of lightning fires by 2040 and an 80 per cent increase by 2090. The number of fires caused by humans is expected to increase by seven and 26 per cent by those same two benchmark years. Overall, the report predicts a 30 per cent increase in the number of fires that escape initial attack by 2040, and an 80 per cent increase by 2090. Any firefighter will tell you those numbers are distressing.

The increases will make it more difficult and more expensive for firefighters to quell the blazes, leading to more smoke and haze drifting into Niagara. If those predictions, which are qualified as 'conservative' in the report, are true, we can expect to face more days locked up in our houses, facing dangerous Air Quality Health Index numbers. During these smoky, hazy conditions this week, meteorologists recommend people with lung or heart disease, older adults, children and pregnant women take precautions to protect their health and reduce their exposure to smoke. Thank goodness we all got used to wearing masks during the pandemic. **Mike Balsom**
The Local

Great ideas for promoting economy and environment



Owen Bjorgan
Special to The Local

Last Friday, the Niagara Trails Summit accomplished something that hasn't been done in Niagara since 1992. It corralled professionals, stakeholders, and decision-makers into a room to discuss the importance of Niagara's trail systems, and how the Niagara Geopark initiative can use our trails to drive visitors and locals to areas of natural, Indigenous and local significance.

The Niagara Geopark and its organizers want to consider trails used by Indigenous inhabitants from thousands of years ago, to current trails created since colonial times. When Niagara Region officially becomes listed as a UNESCO Global Geopark on the world stage, visitors will get access to a trail network created by a consolidated database of trails and attractions, or geosites, which will create a catered experience to get closer to local gems. During the meeting hosted at the beautiful NOTL Niagara College Campus, attendees and panelists had the opportunity to weigh in on how they see the Niagara Geopark becoming a driver of eco-friendly and

Indigenous-centric tourism. On a quick aside, I dare say that the NOTL Niagara College Campus is highly underrated as one of the most scenic, green and innovative post-secondary properties in all of Ontario — a fitting location to discuss the Niagara Geopark's next steps. Although I was fortunate to be a panel moderator, one theme that struck me as an attendee is how deeply ingrained Indigenous heritage, history and geographical relations are embedded in the Niagara Geopark's mandate. David Brown of Brock University's Geography and Tourism Studies pulled up fascinating maps showcasing where Indigenous trails crossed Niagara Peninsula's landscapes. The Welland River, the Twelve Mile Creek Valley, the Niagara River Corridor, among other noteworthy ridges and waterways were used by Indigenous peoples thousands of years ago. They are still followed with modern trails, cars and roads to this day, a testimony to how trails evolve over time. Phil Davis, the Niagara Geopark's Indigenous liaison, further emphasized the importance of these historical routes

for helping his culture share resources, goods and stories. He made a particularly striking comment about how Highway 8 is essentially a 5,000-year-old trail route used by Indigenous peoples. He made it clear why it is important that we contin-

ue to include these historical acknowledgements as we move into a modern age of technology and tourism. Between Davis and Brown, they really painted a picture as to how we must continue to include Indigenous geosites out

of respect for past generations on the land, yet also make these sites accessible for Niagara's visitors and residents. One thing that reigns true in Niagara and around the

Continued on page 14

Local LETTERS

Thank you for help in St. Davids

I would like to commend the gentlemen, Mike and Sam, who are operating the new St Davids Pharmacy. They have only been open a short while, but every interaction I have had with them has been positive. I was recently released from hospital after a major surgery. It was getting late in the day, and my brother and I were unsure if we would be

able to make it to the pharmacy before closing. I called and spoke to Sam. He immediately offered to deliver my required medications to my home after the store closed. Knowing I would have my medications relieved a great deal of stress on an already stressful day. We arrived at home just before Sam showed up. He left them with us and wished us well.

The next day, I sent my grandson over to settle the bill, and I called to thank them again. Mike said "No problem. That's what we're here for." It may have been a small thing to them, but for me it was a remarkable act of kindness. I'm very impressed with their level of professional service, and I wish them every success in their new location. **M. Marozzo**



View from the couch

Donald Combe
Special to The Local

Ted Lasso (Apple TV+ series) proclaims itself to be about football, but it is really about relationships. The series and each episode skillfully examines the complexities of the

many varied relationships in the drama, each as profound as the others. Ted Lasso's byword is 'believe' and it seems to work, even in the most extreme situations. In the 12th and final episode of this third series everyone is on an emotional rollercoaster ride. And

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



Where's Ben?

Eden student Ben Foster continues to discover new locations in NOTL, wondering how familiar others may be with them. If you know where this photo was taken, email penny@notllocal.com. This week, Lara Davidson was the first to tell us Ben was at Queenston Heights' Brock's Monument.

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Publisher: The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local	Julia Coles - outside NOTL julia@notllocal.com 905-934-1040
Village Media Regional Publisher (online sales) John Hammill John@villagemedia.ca 905-988-5599 ext 1157	Graphic Designer: Rosie Gowsell composing@notllocal.com
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COMMENT

Local

LETTERS We can have better healthcare with privatized services

Why are we so afraid of allowing some of our healthcare services to be privatized? Public healthcare for all Canadians will never disappear.

We can all agree that our current healthcare system needs improvement. In the article 'Niagara votes against privatized healthcare services' (The Local, May 31) the questions asked were very one-sided in generating a certain response. There is no question asking "if the addition of private healthcare options would improve our overall healthcare system while still providing public healthcare, would you approve?" Of course nobody wants only privatized healthcare over public healthcare.

One of the concerns raised was that the vulnerable or poor would not be able to receive healthcare. An article in the Globe and Mail published Feb. 14, 2023, said more than 2.2

million Ontarians were without a regular physician as of March 2022. The majority of this group is made up of children, newcomers to Ontario and patients who live in the poorest neighbourhood. The vulnerable or poor are currently and have been receiving little to no healthcare.

Another concern is that private healthcare will drain away doctors and nurses. We have had a shortage of both for quite sometime. How quickly we forget that during COVID Canadian nurses were allowed to cross and work in border towns such as Buffalo or Windsor. Doctors and nurses have been headed south to work for quite sometime. Just maybe private healthcare could keep these nurses and doctors working in Canada.

According to an RBC report published in the National Post Nov. 25, 2022, Canada would need to hire 30,000 more doc-

tors to match the average number of doctors per capita as our peer countries such as France or Germany by 2028. This is a problem created by our government who control the number of medical students accepted in Canada every year. No other profession in Canada such as lawyers or engineers is limited in enrolment. Canada loses approximately 1,000 Canadians to medical schools in countries like Ireland or Australia every year. Once these students graduate, coming back to Canada for a residency is next to impossible.

Private healthcare would actually increase the number of positions for doctors which would then allow the government under its current policy to increase the number of medical students enrolled and residency positions and actually increase the number of doctors in Canada. We should be more fearful of our own gov-

ernment in limiting the number of Canadian or foreign doctors in Canada then private healthcare taking doctors away.

Ontario has existing examples of private healthcare. Shouldice hospital in north Toronto has been around forever doing hernia operations and is recognized all over the world as a leader of hernia operations.

Another example is medical clinics that focus on preventative health. As such they are not deemed medically necessary under OHIP policy and can charge for their services.

An example is Medcan in Toronto that focuses on identifying health risk signs and symptoms before they occur.

How many Ontarians drive across every day to Buffalo for medical attention, such as cancer treatment at Roswell Center or Dent Neurological Center? Medcentra in Toronto

offers MRI services for automobile insurance claims, WSIB claims, third party services and non-residents. As these services are deemed non-medically necessary by OHIP it is allowed. Not to mention Cleveland Medical clinic in Toronto.

A two-tiered system is in effect in the majority of developed countries such as Japan and the U.K. and most of Europe. These countries have universal healthcare like Canada but also offer heavily regulated private healthcare. Canada stands alone among developed nations in maintaining a ban on private health insurance for anything covered by Canada Health. As a result we can personally pay for or are covered under employee benefits for health plans that cover dentistry, physiotherapy, or certain prescriptions but a big no for cancer treatment costs that go over the regular treat-

ment options. How many fundraisers have you attended for parents raising funds for their child with cancer?

I am grateful for the healthcare I receive at no to little cost, but we need immediate and drastic change. What's wrong with looking at what the rest of the world has done with their healthcare system outside of North America?

The new hospital to be built in Niagara Falls comes at a cost of \$3.6 billion. Imagine if a private group paid for that hospital instead and the government still had \$3.6 billion to spend, and that is only one hospital. As Canadians we should have no fear of losing our free healthcare but we should fear where our existing healthcare is headed, and openly explore all our options, including allowing a balance of regulated private and public healthcare.

**Anthony Orsini,
St. Davids**

Ted's thoughts: on Pride Month and its history



Ted Mouradian
Special to The Local

It's June and yes it's Pride Month where we celebrate the LGBTQ2 community and others, being truly inclusive. But what should be a celebration for everyone, a done deal, with the anger and hate behind us, has become controversial again, something I really don't understand.

This is a human rights issue that in my mind has been settled for a number of years now. The idea of it being anything more than a celebration of diversity

and inclusion is simply nonsense.

Let me give you a little history.

Prior to 1969, being openly LGBT was actually against the law. You couldn't dance together and you couldn't hold hands in public. If you didn't have at least one article of clothing that belonged to your gender at birth you were arrested. In New York you couldn't serve alcohol to anyone from the LGBT community.

In that year in New York at a bar called Stonewall a group of trans people, drag queens and others within the community, barricaded police in the bar for three days. They had had enough with harassment and discrimination. That was the beginning of the gay rights movement in North Ameri-

ca. A year later people began to march on the last Sunday in June to celebrate what that small group did at Stonewall.

Each year from then to now, Pride Month and the parades have grown and grown worldwide. What started as a political movement has now become a celebration of inclusion and acceptance. Pride harms no one and helps many. Young people who believe they are alone can now see that there are people who can live a normal and healthy life. So, maybe because of Pride Month, lives will be saved.

The sad part is we seem to be going backward in time. There are people who are against any type of celebration of this kind. We see it in Niagara-on-the-Lake, with opposi-

tion and even vandalism to a beautiful Pride crosswalk. There are now people making representation that Pride is somehow jamming a certain lifestyle down their throats. That is not what is happening. It is intended as simply a celebration of the fact that in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Niagara Region and all of Canada, prejudice and hate are not accepted.

I don't know why this is even an issue any longer. We are now in 2023 and the misinformation that is being disseminated is cruel and wrong. There have been no children harmed or killed watching a Pride Parade. No children have been harmed or killed watching a drag brunch. And certainly no child has been groomed or indoctrinated into turning gay.

What is harmful to the

children of this country are the parents who are teaching hate and discrimination. That is indoctrination. That is harmful, and that is killing our children.

I know when I was growing up as a teen in the 1960s it would have been great to see positive role models. Instead I was brought up to believe a man could not be soft or show any effeminate qualities whatsoever, as that would make him less of a man. I can't imagine how many young people who actually took their lives because they believed that they did not fit in or that it was against God's will to be gay.

Now because of Pride they can see that it is okay to be different and it is okay to love differently as long as it is consensual. And it is okay to be your true self.

Again I thought it was a done deal, but I guess we can never let our guard down as the haters and the bigots will always be hiding in the dark shadows to pounce whenever they see an opportunity to do so.

I am gay. I have been gay all of my life. I was not groomed. I was not traumatized. I am a normal and healthy 75-year-old who simply wants to celebrate with the members of my community who have made it this far no matter what the obstacles.

I may be your target, but I will not become your victim.

Ted Mouradian is an author and professional speaker. He is president of the 2% Factor Inc. and his videos can be seen on TikTok and Instagram. Ted can be reached at ted@the2percentfactor.com.

Going down road of privatization will destroy public healthcare



Wayne Gates, MPP
Niagara Falls riding

The Ontario Health Coalition recently organized a historic referendum, both here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and across the province of Ontario. The volunteers with the Niagara Health Coalition, the local branch of the Ontario-wide organization, set up polling stations across our community — including at the St. Davids Firefighters Association breakfast, where I stopped by to check in.

The questions posed by the referendum is simple: do we want more private, for-profit services replacing our publicly-funded, publicly-delivered healthcare, and here in Niagara, do we want to ensure all present Niagara hospital sites and services are protected?

The Niagara Health Coalition revealed after the votes were tallied that across Niagara, a total of 17,123 residents voted 'No' to privatization of our healthcare.

Firstly, I want to thank the volunteers for organizing the referendum, and I want to thank the people in our community, including here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, for coming out and making their voices heard on this issue.

Let me be clear: we do have a crisis in healthcare in the province of Ontario.

Today, in the province of Ontario, we have patients asked to wait months, sometimes years, for routine procedures.

We have nurses, PSWs and front-line workers crying in parking lots before heading into their shifts, and leaving the profession they love in droves, after three years of pandemic, increased workloads, staffing shortages, rising violence in hospitals and the disrespect and financial impacts of Bill

124, which limits their wages.

In Niagara and across the province, we are facing serious issues with ambulance offload delays at our hospital, and three of our hospitals here in Niagara consistently experiencing some of the longest offload times in Ontario.

Emergency rooms and urgent care centres across the province are closing, while this government is underfunding our hospital system by \$21 billion by 2028 — that's billion, with a B.

And what is the Premier's plan to deal with this crisis?

He's ending the current legislative session shortly, without a plan to resolve this crisis, and sending the legislature home until September.

This is wrong.

We should be here, working for the people of Ontario and addressing the urgent crisis in healthcare. And how do we solve this crisis?

It starts with the following.

Firstly, the government should drop the appeal on and immediately repeal Bill 124. Bill

124 has held nurses' wages below the rate of inflation, capping their total annual compensation increases to one per cent. These are the same workers who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, who risk their safety every single day to serve our communities and protect our health. The least we can do for them is ensure they are paid fairly for the work they do.

Once Bill 124 is gone, there is another Bill we need to address: Bill 60.

Bill 60 is the most dangerous Bill I have seen in my time at Queen's Park. By expanding the role of private, for-profit services in our healthcare system, Bill 60 will worsen wait times and the staffing crisis we see in public healthcare. And while the Premier says patients will only have to pay with their OHIP card, we know that not only is private more expensive than the same procedure in a public setting, but some patients, including seniors, are being extra-billed and surprised by hidden fees. We cannot allow this

to expand and harm vulnerable seniors here in Niagara.

We then need to ensure we are using our existing operating room capacity here in Niagara. We have operating rooms across the Niagara Region that we, as a community, could be using to deal with surgical backlogs without delays. Working together, we can make sure we get the funding and staffing we need right here in Niagara to make that a reality.

And finally, we need to — once and for all — end the cruel and ineffective system of private, for-profit long-term care in the province of Ontario.

We know that during the pandemic over 5,600 long-term care residents lost their lives from COVID — and the vast majority of the tragic deaths occurred in private, for-profit homes. We have seen this government refuse to take on the bad corporate actors in long-term care — in fact, they are awarding 30-year licences and fast-tracked expansion to homes

such as Orchard Villa, where the military had to intervene during the pandemic, and where some residents were left for hours in soiled diapers, or lost their lives from dehydration.

As I head back to Niagara, healthcare is going to be my number one priority.

As a community, we're going to ensure that we work together to get shovels in the ground for our new South Niagara Hospital as soon as possible. I also remain committed to increasing access to primary care services right here in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Finally, we need to ensure there are enough beds in long-term care homes, so that residents can stay here in the community they love, close to their families.

Working together as a community, I know we can get good things done for families and patients here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and we will continue to support our publicly-funded, publicly-delivered healthcare system.

UNESCO geopark could push Niagara to next-level tourism

Mike Balsom
The Local

There was a definite air of congeniality in the Niagara College conference room among about 70 attendees and participants in last Friday's Niagara Geopark Trails Summit.

Even more so there was a sense of excitement at seeing all the stakeholders from various organizations, businesses and governments from across Niagara together in one room.

They were at the Daniel J. Patterson campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake for a day-long event designed to get everyone on the same page when it comes to this fall's application to designate the region as a UNESCO Geopark.

It's a quest begun by geographer Darren Platakis back in 2017, when he first came up with the idea. Platakis, the founder and chair of the Aspiring Niagara Geopark's education outreach working group, along with board chair Perry Hartwick and special projects coordinator Ian Lucas, organized and hosted Friday's gathering, which was emceed by former St. Catharines mayor Walter Sendzik.

On the surface the meeting was focused on the many trails that snake through the region. But it was much more than a group of environmentalists and stewards of the land sharing their love of nature.

It was about the impact of working together on the UNESCO application, and the impact that can potentially have on local tourism and Niagara's economy as a whole.

Looking around the room it was easy to recognize representatives from Greenbelt Ontario, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, the Niagara Parks Commission and the Bruce Trail Conservancy. There were also professors from Brock University and Niagara College, principals from businesses such as Walker Industries and Arterra Wines, and councillors from many of the region's 12 municipalities.

After kicking off the day with some welcoming words from the geopark's Indigenous culture liaison Phil Davis, Brock geography and tourism studies professor Dr. David Brown was the first to speak to the crowd.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake resident made comparisons of Friday's event to a November 1992 meeting called the Niagara Greenways Trails Summit that he participated in.

"We had over a hundred people crammed into the Brock Senate room that day," Brown recalled. "We formed a group called the Niagara Greenways Network. It was the first systematic attempt to consolidate all the things we knew about the trails in Niagara and put it all in one book at the time."

To Brown and others who spoke and participated in panels, the time is now to link all of the region's beautiful geography together to earn recognition from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Keynote speaker Brooke Henry of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, also an ambassador with the World Trails Network, wowed the crowd when she displayed the website for Jeju Island UNESCO Geopark in Korea. The site, geopark.jeju.go.kr, is an interactive one-stop clearing house with a wealth of information about the geography of the island and the businesses that offer services there.

Panels included one led by Davis on Indigenous heritage trails, and a healthy living and visiting discussion led by Niagara Region landscape architect Julia van der Laan de Vries. NOTL Local columnist Owen Bjorgan, owner and operator of Owen's Hiking and Adventures, led another panel on sustainable economic benefits.

After the summit wrapped up in mid-afternoon, participants and politicians gathered at the college's Benchmark Restaurant for a reception.

"Today is an example of what's possible," said Niagara College president Sean Kennedy to open the reception, "when the private sector, the public sector, educational organiza-



Phil Davis leads the Indigenous heritage trails panel discussion. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

tions and governments all come together to dream about what's possible if we all work together."

Regional chair Jim Bradley, Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates and Niagara West MPP Sam Oosterhoff all declared their support for the organization's objectives. NDP Gates, however, couldn't resist an opportunity to take a swipe at the current provincial government's Bill 23.

"Our environment is under attack," said Gates. "They want to build housing on the Greenbelt. I'm not supporting that. We need to build 1.5 million homes, and we have enough land to build two million homes in Ontario. We do not have to build homes on the Greenbelt. We have to protect it. We're the luckiest people in the world with our trails, and we have to protect them."

Oosterhoff responded with a dig of his own at Gates.

"It is very hot outside," said the young MPP, referencing Friday's warm temperatures, "but only half as hot as it is under Wayne's collar."

Hartwick, who later paid tribute to the late Keith Sim-



Darren Platakis, Ian Lucas and Perry Hartwick at the summit.

monds, whose support of the geopark project through his position at Great Wolf Lodge was instrumental in the work done by the organization the last three years, was floored with the success of the event.

In front of a scrolling backdrop of beautiful aerial images of the myriad trails and natural attractions across the region, the geologist explained the concept of a Niagara Geopark.

"At its core it's a sustainable tourism-oriented model for our region that can help us reconnect to the planet upon which our very survival depends," he said. "The more we learn about

our place in nature, the better we will be able to understand our past and positively influence our future. That's what this is really about, promoting a sense of pride in our region."

The geopark push can be seen as the latest progressive effort to advance Niagara's tourism industry, which Sendzik pointed out has been mired at 12 to 14 million visitors a year for ages.

When considered along with the recent extension of GO Train service to Niagara, last summer's Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games and the current efforts of grape growers and winery operators to turn Niagara into a premium wine destination, it's clear that many believe the time has come to move the region into the next stage tourism-wise.

"I believe that going the UNESCO Geopark route is the best way to help that along," said Hartwick. "There's so much energy, effort and desire in the Niagara Region, and I think if some of that is tucked under this geopark umbrella that we can push forward together."

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First stage of archaeological assessment complete

Release of report expected next week

Local Staff

The Stage 1 archaeological assessment of the Negro Burial Ground (now officially the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground) has been completed, and is anticipated to be presented by town staff to council, says a news release from the fundraising committee.

The Stage 1 archaeological assessment, commissioned by the town and funded by Friends of the Forgotten, a town committee, is the first step in mandatory due diligence required by the Bereavement Authority of Ontario in advance of potential improvements to the property, the news release says. The study, conducted by Archaeological Research Associates, includes information about the geography and history of the area, the archaeological potential of the site, and strategies to proceed to Stage 2.

“The findings may not provide new details on the site,” explained George Webber, chair of the Friends of the Forgotten committee, “but we are confident the study will officially confirm the importance of the property and help determine the best course of action to proceed with its revitalization.

We are looking forward to the staff’s report to council.”

A formal Stage 2 archaeological assessment would have to be approved by council and then commissioned by the town under the guidelines of the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the bereavement authority. A request for proposals would be issued for this work once funding is in

place. To date, funding for Stage 2 has not been secured, the news release says.

Some options for revitalizing the site include creating a memorial, say the Friends of the Forgotten, confirming the interments, mapping and possibly recovering any potential headstones.

“As we continue to learn more about the process, we recognize the many steps

involved and the potential costs of each one,” explained Webber. “To fundraise for this project, we need to have specific outcomes and timelines. We also feel strongly that community input and support need to be gathered ahead of each step.”

In addition to the Stage 1 report, Friends of the Forgotten are continuing with independent research to fully understand the site’s role in the Black history of Niagara and learn more about

the people who are believed to be buried on the grounds. Discussions are underway with organizations in other jurisdictions, including St. Catharines, to learn about restoration efforts that are underway on other historic burial grounds.

Friends of the Forgotten in Niagara-on-the-Lake (friendsoftheforgotten.ca) was formed to honour the final resting place of Niagara Baptist Church parishioners, who were part

of the local historic Black community, by transforming the current unremarkable site into a memorial landscape. Their vision is to make the Niagara Baptist Church burial ground a point of pride for NOTL as a respectfully restored, serene memorial and historical site that honours the parishioners buried there, their role in the town’s heritage and the importance of Black history in NOTL, says the news release.



George Webber at the Negro Burial Ground, after the graves and stones were discovered through ground-penetrating radar funded by James Russell. (File photo)



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Perfect casting makes Shaw's *Gypsy* remarkable

Mike Balsom
The Local

It's hard to imagine anyone other than Kate Hennig playing the role of Rose in Shaw Festival's production of *Gypsy*. The nine-year Shaw veteran is a tour de force as the pushy, blindly-ambitious stage mother of two young performers, determined that first her younger daughter June, then her older daughter Louise, is to become a star.

Perhaps one reason Hennig embodies the role so well is that she stepped in for Nora McLellan as Rose when Jackie Maxwell directed *Gypsy* back in 2005, the last time it was performed at Shaw.

Experience must count for something. But with her look, her voice, her stage presence and her loud belly laugh, Hennig seems to have been born to play the mother of the well-known burlesque and striptease performer Gypsy Rose Lee. She owns the stage during the three-hour Shaw presentation, directed by Jay Turvey.

The original 1959 Broadway production, featuring Ethel Merman in the role of Rose, was based on the 1957 bestseller *Gypsy: A Memoir*, the often heartbreaking life story of America's most celebrated stripper. In that book the woman born as Rose Louise Hovick divides her life into three acts, the third ending with her journey to Hollywood.

The play, however, largely

shines the spotlight on the family's matriarch, a thrice-married woman obsessed with seeing one of her daughter's names in lights.

Act one begins with June and Louise as young children, drawn into their mother's scheming to find success for them on the vaudeville circuit in the early 1920s. The setting is Gypsy Rose Lee's hometown of Seattle, Washington, where Rose bullies and blackmails a local vaudeville producer, played by Allan Louis, into taking on the girls' act.

Rose's troupe of child dancers and singers performs the first of a series of rollicking production numbers here, with Baby June as the focus. A reluctant Louise is meanwhile relegated to one of her younger sister's supporting cast, through incarnations as first a newsboy and then a farmer, as Rose tweaks the children's act seemingly based on what props are available to her.

Then it's on to Los Angeles, where she meets Herbie (an excellent Jason Cadieux), whom she persuades to become the girls' manager. Hennig delivers a knock-out performance of *Small World* in her attempt to win Herbie over. He soon is hoping to be husband number four to the "pioneer woman without a frontier."

Early in *Gypsy*, Louise is portrayed by the talented Hannah Otta, a 12-year-old St. Catharines actor. In another perfect casting move, Hannah is almost the spitting image of Julie Lumsden, who plays the

older version of Louise for the remainder of the play. It might even take a few minutes and a couple of blinks before audience members realize there has been a change.

Winnipeg-born Ariana Abudaqa is the young Baby June in *Gypsy*. On the day The Local attended, though, Hannah's 10-year-old sister Sofia stepped into the role and performed it superbly. It was a special treat to see the two sisters, who are heavily involved in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Yellow Door Theatre Project, work together on the Festival Theatre stage.

Having worn out their welcome in California, Herbie and Rose drag the kids to Akron, which is where we first see Lumsden as Louise. In that Ohio city Louise celebrates her birthday alone in her room after Rose and the others chase away an angry hotel manager. Lumsden delivers a soulful, heart wrenching performance of *Little Lamb*, lamenting the fact that her mother won't even tell her how old she is.

Through Buffalo and Omaha, Rose pushes harder and harder to make the extroverted June (now played by Madelyn Kriese) a star, in the process continuing to neglect the quieter and less enthusiastic Louise.

Both sisters begin to tire of traipsing across the country with their mother. They fantasize about what it would be like if Herbie and Rose married and settled down. When that doesn't seem to be happening, June runs away to marry back-



Kate Hennig as Rose and Jason Cadieux as Herbie in *Gypsy*. (Shaw Festival, David Cooper)

up performer Tulsa (a wonderful Drew Plummer).

But that doesn't deter Rose, who comes up with a new plan to make her shy older daughter a star. Hennig belts out the well-known *Everything's Coming Up Roses* to conclude act one.

Act two is almost a completely different style of play. With the first act heavy on comedy and lavish production numbers, the second delivers the pathos and the tragedy of a mother pushing her daughter a little too far.

As the Great Depression arrives, vaudeville becomes a thing of the past. Rose and Herbie struggle to find work for Louise, who knows she will never be June. Louise winds up mistakenly booked for a gig at a burlesque venue in Wichita, Kansas, and finds herself sharing a dressing room with seasoned striptease performers.

Destitute and desperate to help her mother, Louise offers to perform a striptease act to earn some money. That leads to a highlight of the second act, *You*

Gotta Get a Gimmick, a hilariously ribald number performed by the strippers Tessie (Elodie Gillett, also Turvey's assistant director), Mazeppa (Jenni Burke) and Electra (Krystle Chance), complete with butterfly wings, a trumpet, and a strategically lit bra, respectively.

Realizing the end of her dream is near, Rose reluctantly agrees to marry Herbie and settle down, but at the last minute offers up her daughter to fill in for the venue's star stripper, who has been arrested.

Lumsden's face reveals the embarrassment and unease felt by Louise as she takes the spotlight for her first strip tease, stumbling through some awkward moves while singing *Let Me Entertain You*.

From there, it's off to Detroit, Philadelphia and New York City, as Louise becomes increasingly secure in her skin as a stripper. And Rose now realizes her daughter no longer needs her.

Rose's sad journey is encapsulated by the final number,

Rose's Turn. Her performance of the song is both poignant and somehow triumphant, as Hennig belts out the tune in front of a neon-lit sign proclaiming her name.

That neon sign is just one of the examples of the trademark attention to detail paid by designer Cory Sincennes and director Turvey. Others include a gilt-embossed arch embedded with a silent movie-style title card on both sides that announce the location of each scene and the strobe light effect by lighting designer Kevin Fraser that leads to the transition of the child actors to teenagers.

Then there's the orchestra. Directed by Paul Sportelli, the ensemble is as powerful and adept as it's ever been, delivering the horn-heavy music written by Jule Styne with lyricist Stephen Sondheim. Their performance alone would be worth the price of admission.

Gypsy is a must-see this season at the Festival Theatre, on now until Oct. 7. Visit shawfest.com for tickets.



Julie Lumsden as Louise and Madelyn Kriese as June in *Gypsy*. (Shaw Festival, David Cooper)



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St. Davids Lioness Lion Spring Market a success



(left) Elorabeth Thiesen and her father Greg check out the crystals.



(right) Leos Hardi Patel, Janci Patel, Maya Dueck and Carmen Rogers sell town tulip bulbs, a popular item at the spring market.

About 50 vendors lined the grounds and filled the pavilions at the St. Davids Lioness Lions Club's second annual spring market. Arts and crafts, specialty foods, homemade jams and preserves and clothing items were just a few of the items up for grabs. The tulip bulbs were flying out by the flat as the young volunteers in the Leos Club sold the hot item to raise funds for the McMaster Childrens' Hospital and to support construction at Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides school in Oakville. Event organizer Lioness Lion Diane Pewer was pleased with the turnout, adding that proceeds from the event go to the Niagara Children's Centre. Next on the agenda for the club is the annual St. Davids Carnival, scheduled for July 26 to 29. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Public Information Centre #2 Glendale Secondary Plan Update

Overview

Niagara Region and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake are working together to prepare an update to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Glendale Secondary Plan.

A Secondary Plan is a land use plan for a particular area, which includes detailed policies guiding future development. The Glendale Secondary Plan, which was originally approved by Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Council in 2010, applies to the area surrounded by Queenston Road, Concession 7 Road, the Niagara Escarpment and Homer Road in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The purpose of the update to the Glendale Secondary Plan will be to review and revise the existing policies for this area so that they align with the Glendale District Plan, which was endorsed by Niagara Region and Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Council in 2020. In support of this work, technical studies, including a natural heritage/subwatershed study, transportation assessment, infrastructure analysis, commercial/employment lands study, and financial impact assessment are currently being undertaken to assess the concept plan for the area that was prepared through the District Plan. The final outcome of the project will be an amendment to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Official Plan that will contain detailed policies and guidelines for future development in the area.

Purpose

The first Public Information Centre for the Glendale Secondary Plan Update was held in November 2022. The purpose of the upcoming Public Information Centre will be to:

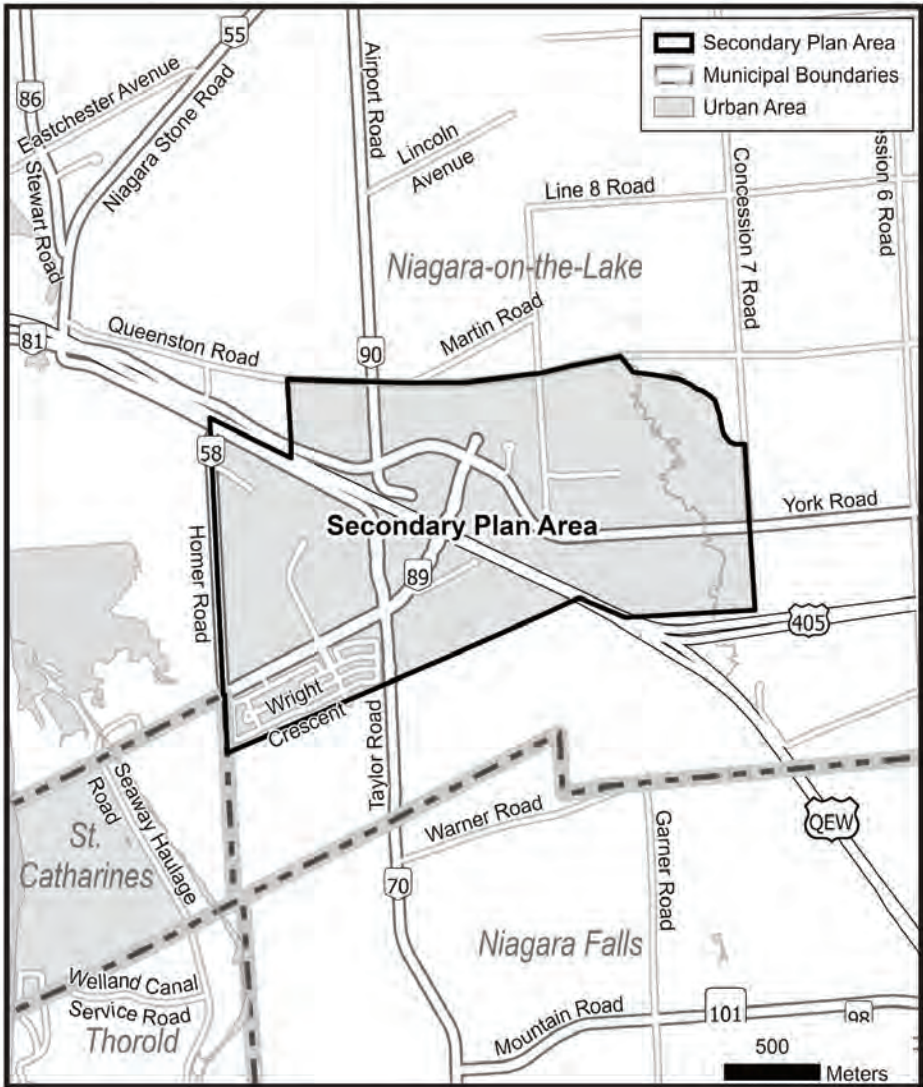
- Provide an overview of the purpose and scope of the project
- Share a draft Land Use Concept for the area
- Present the work that has been completed since the first Public Information Centre
- Explain the next steps for the project, including opportunities for public participation
- Provide an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments and feedback

Public Information Centre Details

Wednesday, June 21, 2023
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn, Garden View B
500 York Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake

More Information
For more information about the project, timeline and background, please visit niagararegion.ca/projects/glendale-secondary-plan-update, or contact:

Amy Shanks
Senior Planner, Niagara Region
Phone: 905-980-6000 ext. 3532
amy.shanks@niagararegion.ca



Kirsten McCauley

Director of Community and Development Services,
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Phone: 905-468-3266 ext. 243
kirsten.mccauley@notl.com

Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used, and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the

public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the **Privacy Office** at 905-980-6000, ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Special accessibility accommodations and materials in alternate formats can be arranged by contacting the **Niagara Region's Accessibility Coordinator** at 905-685-4225 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

McLaren cars draw an enthusiastic crowd



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa led a procession of 14 McLaren cars, ranging in value from \$300,000 to \$2.1 million, down Queen Street to the delight of the thousands gathered on the closed block between Gage and Victoria streets. It was a celebration of the British automaker’s 60th anniversary arranged by Alana Hurov of 124 on Queen Hotel and Spa, Jessica Taylor of the NOTL Chamber of Commerce, and Matthew Berenz, marketing manager for McLaren Toronto. Zalepa was impressed. “It’s a great machine. You could tell it really just wanted to take off. It’s very futuristic. I couldn’t even tell it was on at first, but when you push that gas pedal down you could really feel it.” Hurov said it was incredible to see all the people who came out for the event, which was pulled together quickly. “I’m taken aback by the response,” she said.

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Book Riot open, continuing at Gale Centre Arena until Sunday

Sale supports victims of domestic violence

Penny Coles
The Local

How many readers still love to pick up a good book, rather than reading on some kind of an electronic device? And who doesn't love a bargain?

Over the last while, volunteers have working like crazy getting about 100,000 books sorted for the 44th installment of the Book Riot, an annual fundraiser for Birchway Niagara. Formerly Women's Place, Birchway is a women's shelter in Niagara Falls with outreach services that help hundreds of survivors of domestic violence in South Niagara every year.

About 4,000 shoppers are expected to visit the Gale Centre in Niagara Falls from Tuesday, June 6 to Sunday, June 11, says Jennifer McQuestion, Birchway's communications manager, many of them from Niagara-on-the-Lake, with a large number of local readers returning each year.

McQuestion calls it "Canada's best and biggest used book sale," with everything donated by people who are aware of the sale and have shopped there over decades, and many who also, once the event is over, can start dropping off books at Apple Self-Storage units in the Falls for next year's sale.

"People just know about it," says McQuestion, and as books are dropped off, a core group of volunteers starts sorting books in the storage units almost every week until it's time for the boxes of books to be transported to the Gale Centre.

"We have a space

the size of an entire ice rink, with fiction on one side as you walk in and non-fiction on the other," says McQuestion. Volunteers also sort books into sub-categories to make it easy for shoppers.

In addition there is space for rare and vintage books, lots of children's books, and tables for CDs, DVDs, puzzles and games, she says.

There are volunteers who come to help from NOTL, including a group from Grace United Church to sort, Niagara Falls firefighters who truck the books from the storage units and deliver them to the arena, and minor hockey teams to help unload the boxes and take them into the arena. McQuestion estimates overall about 400 volunteers are involved in making this event happen.

One of them is Chamanjit Sidhu, a St. Davids woman who is on the board of Birchway, and has been a volunteer for the Book Riot for several years. Her children, an 18-year-old daughter and her nine-year-old son, volunteer as well.

"My son just asked me if we're going to volunteer again," she says. "He's really excited to do it."

Sidhu is a registered social worker, and has worked in the areas of children's welfare and mental illness, so a position on the Birchway board seemed a natural to her. "This is rewarding for me," she says, "giving back to the community, and making impactful decisions that help women."

She's been on the board for about four years, and this is her third year help-



The Book Riot, at 5152 Thorold Stone Road in Niagara Falls, has books sorted and classified by genre. (Photos supplied)

ing with the Book Riot. She soon decided she wanted to get her children involved, and her daughter now takes shifts on her own, while her son "loves being at the sale. He really wants to help out."

Sidhu says she is in awe "of the enthusiasm, passion and commitment of the volunteers and the number of volunteer hours they put in," many of them returning year after year.

"I'm truly honoured to be part of this community," she adds, especially with an increasing number of women looking for help, and 10 new beds to support, without government assistance.

This year, organizers hope to raise \$100,000, which is badly needed, McQuestion says.

The call for Birchway's shelter and outreach services has increased, and although there are those 10 more beds, both the Niaga-

ra Falls shelter and Gillian's Place in St. Catharines are often short of spaces for those who need them, and work together to try to find places, she says.

Most items at the sale are only \$3, although some may be more, says McQuestion.

There is a pre-sale Tues-

day, June 6, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is \$10.

Wednesday, June 7 it opens 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thursday is a regular sale day, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., with a daily special: buy two CDs or DVDs, and get one free.

Friday, June 9, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. the daily special

is children and youth titles, buy two, get one free. Saturday, June 10, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the daily special

is hardcovers, buy two, get one free.

Sunday, June 11, the final day, the Book Riot is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and it's Bag Day — fill a bag for \$5 or 3 bags for \$10.



Volunteers sort and pack books, preparing them for shipment to the sale.

Strawberry Social

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is excited to host its annual Strawberry Social event, returning to an all-in-person gathering!

Admission is free for all attendees.

WHO: Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents (65+)

WHEN: Thursday, June 22, 2023
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
(Doors open at 10:30 a.m.)

WHERE: Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre (14 Anderson Lane)

Registration is required. Please register online at www.notl.com/recreation-events/community-initiatives-events or by calling 905-468-3266 before Thursday, June 15, 2023. Space is limited.

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Writers' Circle book sale coincides with Strawberry Festival

It's also conveniently held across the street

Local Staff

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Writers' Circle is holding a book fair showcasing local authors' books to coincide once again with the St. Andrew's Strawberry Festival.

Books at the Barn will take place in front of the quaint red

barn at 322 Simcoe Street on Saturday, June 17, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., across the street from the Strawberry Festival.

Among those authors whose books will be for sale are Sally Basmajian, Sharon Frayne, Diane Martin, Paul Masson, Kathryn Recourt, and Richard West. In addition,

Circle author Randy Klaassen, who publishes books with local themes, will be displaying some of his published titles.

Sally Basmajian's exciting new novel, *So Hard to Do*, tells the story of a mother and her daughter who inadvertently fall for the same man. In this twisted triangle, can a happily-ever-after be

achieved? Or will someone's heart break and the mother-daughter bond be severed forever?

Sharon Frayne's *The Sound of a Rainbow* was selected by the CBC as one of the Young Adult books to read in the spring of 2023. It tells the story of Raven, a troubled 16-year-old whose divorcing parents have sent her to summer camp. At first she hates it, but the challenges she faces eventually lead her to form friendships and develop empathy for others.

Diane Martin has published a mystery/adventure book for children ages 8 to 12, *When Time Stands Still*. Three siblings, Megan, Nicholas and Brooke, think they are going on an uneventful family vacation. They couldn't be more wrong! They find themselves investigating the mysterious disappearance, many years ago, of their great-great-uncle Jack.

Paul Masson has just published the fifth detective novel in his series *The ABC Files*, entitled *Evil in Summerland*. Cameron and Carroll, Investigators, are asked to locate the daughter of a Canadian mining magnate. This leads them to Ottawa and

to the African country of Summerland. They try to unravel the threads connecting various events, but face mortal danger from those who do not wish the past to be disinterred.

Kathryn Recourt, a Canada Book Awards winner, will present her popular illustrated children's series about Sir Archibald Droolsalot: *Big Dog Blues*, *Big Dog Drools* and *Puppy Dog Blues*.

Richard West will have on display his intriguing sci-fi series about the Lightning People, who, though not immortal,

live much longer lives than we humans: *Lightning People: Discovered*, *Lightning People: Entangled* and *The Hive Revealed*, as well as *Recollections of War*, an account of his parents' memories of events in England during the Second World War.

Books at the Barn will be an opportunity to chat with local writers, perhaps purchase a book, and get the author to autograph a copy.

For more information about the Writers' Circle, please visit notlwriterscircle.com/.

Chamber offering a networking event that promises to be fun

Penny Coles The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Business Forum, a first-time event to explore the economy and how it affects local businesses, the state of the town, and the growing wine industry, which has an impact on both.

And, says the chamber's event manager Jessica Taylor, it promises to be not only an educational day for anyone interested in businesses in NOTL, but also a fun day, held at the Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery conference centre. Lunch is provided, and local comic Joe Pillitteri will be on hand ensuring there will be lots of laughs.

In the morning both town

CAO Marnie Cluckie and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa will speak, as will chamber president and CEO Minerva Ward. The three of them will then be involved in a "fireside chat" moderated by Paul MacIntyre, vice-president of operations at Lais Hotel Properties.

In the afternoon, Blake Landry will speak of his economic research and analysis of the local economy, information bound to be appreciated by and helpful to local business owners, Taylor says.

Also speaking will be Erin Henderson, founder and chief sommelier of The Wine Sisters, a Toronto sommelier services and wine events company. She will be sharing her valuable insights on business, wine, and as an entrepreneur, the resilience required for entrepreneurship.

"She's so sweet, and so successful," says Taylor. "Everyone's going to love her."

Ward says the chamber has been doing "state of the town" presentations for the last two or three years, but this is the first with this new council. This event is also focusing on conversations about the wine industry, and how important it is to the state of the town.

"We're blessed to be here in NOTL, and one of our biggest advantages is the wine industry. This is an opportunity to lead the pack in NOTL, when it comes to the growing wine industry."

The Business Forum is being held Thursday, June 15, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at niagaraonthelake.com.



Sharon Frayne signs her latest book, *The Sound of a Rainbow*, for a fan at an April book launch. It was selected by the CBC as one of the Young Adult must-reads this spring.

Trails built on respect for land

Continued from page 6

globe is how Indigenous peoples are known to show an immense respect and care for the land. With the Niagara Geopark's inclusion of both Indigenous and natural highlights across the peninsula, this will allow individuals to really appreciate a sense of place in Niagara and what our communities (and trails) are really built upon — the historical and current respect between people and the land. Quite frankly, that is not an experience or sensation you are likely to get with the biggest attractions and busiest tourism pits in the area.

So, you might be wondering how many trails are available to us in the Niagara Region as we speak.

"We don't really know how

many trails or what their total distances are in Niagara," said Ian Lucas, Niagara Geopark's project coordinator. He spoke with a tone of wonder, continuing on to explain that the Niagara Geopark team wants to "put them all together in a database that is accessible to everyone."

Speaking of everyone, it is no secret that Niagara is about to enjoy a post-COVID influx of visitors from around the world. Add these numbers to inevitable population growth quotas, and there will be a lot more feet on the various trails of Niagara in the very near future.

This current snapshot situation allowed me to ask panelists Sue Morin of Venture Niagara, Wolf Starchild of Barefoot Bushcraft, and Phil Lococo of Consult Niagara how they see

their businesses leading the way in maintaining environmental sustainability. My second discussion prompt was asking how we can break the narrative of "economy versus environment" when in reality they are more than capable of coexisting. This opened the floor to one of the many productive rounds of idea-sharing that occurred during this summit, which is exactly what we were all passionately there to do.

My final question for you, the reader — where do the trails of Niagara take you, and how will you explore our Niagara Geopark?

For more information on the Niagara Geopark and what it aims to do for Niagara Region, please visit niagarageopark.com.

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11:30AM to 12:30PM: Lunch
1:00PM to 3:00PM: Feature speakers



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President & CEO - NOTL Chamber of Commerce & Tourism NOTL



LORD MAYOR GARY ZALEPA
Mayor - Niagara-on-the-Lake



BLAKE LANDRY
Manager, Economic Research & Analysis - Niagara Region



JOE PILLITTERI
Host, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist and Comedian



MARNIE CLUCKIE
CAO - Town of NOTL



ERIN HENDERSON
Founder, Chief Sommelier, Journalist, Wine Educator - The Wine Sisters

Accessibility improvements moving too slowly, committee says

A group of five people standing outdoors on a paved area, holding a large white banner that reads 'JOINT ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE'. The banner also lists the names of the member municipalities: 'CANTON OF NIAGARA FALLS', 'TOWN OF NIAGARA FALLS', 'TOWN OF NIAGARA', 'TOWN OF NIAGARA FALLS', and 'TOWN OF NIAGARA'. The people are dressed in casual to semi-formal attire.

Niagara-on-the-Lake raised a flag for the Joint Accessibility Committee, which has a goal of making Niagara municipalities more accessible. NOTL resident and committee member Dave Antaya was on hand for the event Monday morning, with Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens, committee member Joey Hewitt from Thorold, and Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. Antaya says 50 per cent of NOTL businesses have accessibility issues. Hewitt, who finds the same problem in Thorold, says it's not good for business — her friends and family members won't support businesses that are not accessible. And with a legislative deadline looming by 2025, it's going to be a financial crunch for businesses that are not starting to budget and prepare for accessibility improvements, they say — it's time to start now. (Penny Coles)

Looking deeper into the water with JudyBlue Anderson

Maria H. Klassen
The Local

Blue! The many variations of blue! True to her name, JudyBlue Anderson's favourite colour palette is blue. Her name JudyBlue helps differentiate her from the other four artists named Judy Anderson. Her favourite subject for her current work features water, and *What Lies Below* is the name of her solo exhibit.

Anderson's own scuba diving experience in Ontario and the Caribbean inspired her work. Photos of deep sea shipwrecks shot by her friend

(in Lake Superior, Lake Huron and the St. Lawrence River) helped her create this new abstract series. The paintings explore the impressions of what lies unseen under the sea — they are not direct representations.

Anderson remembers painting as a child, first drawing on chalkboard and later taking art classes as an extracurricular activity. Professionally she was a technical illustrator and worked in print publishing.

She mostly uses acrylic now, does some watercolour in smaller sketches, and has

worked with mixed media, drawings, ink and charcoal.

Anderson builds layers of colour and patterns to create depth and texture in her compositions. "The paintings never seem to end up as they start. Many original marks never make it to the finished piece. I just let it take me where it needs to go," she says. The bold strokes and marks develop into images that depict the strong movement of water, and the calm it can bring.

Her hope for her collection is that it will portray the influence of nature in places that very few will go; that

viewers will feel the swells and motion of waves crashing, or the quiet peace of the depths of the sea. She wishes to convey the human-made tension in the rhythms of nature on man-made debris of shipwrecks, she says, as the power of water and weather in nature can cripple even a large freighter.

The exhibit, in the Joyner Gallery of the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre, is open to the public at no charge until June 25.



JudyBlue Anderson with *Bridge and Hatch*, an acrylic on canvas. (Maria H. Klassen)

Strawberry Social returns to community centre

Local Staff

The town's traditional Strawberry Social for seniors will be held June 22, with a registration deadline of June 15.

The food and fellowship event is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the community centre for residents aged 65 years and older. Admission is free.

"June is Seniors Month, and I can't think of a better way to celebrate than to host this wonderful community event for our residents," says Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa in a news release.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake is blessed to have many senior residents, several of whom contribute significantly to

the various groups, associations, and programs that make Niagara-on-the-Lake the special place it is. This event is a small way to show council and staff's appreciation for our seniors and celebrate the great legacy they have established. On behalf of town council, thank you to all of Niagara-on-the-Lake's senior residents for all you do to better the community. I look forward to seeing you on June 22!"

Registration is required and will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please register online at notl.com/recreation-events/community-initiatives-events or by calling the town hall at 905-468-3266.

In addition to the in-person event, town staff will be delivering trays of baked goods to residents living at the three long-term care homes in town.

"The Strawberry Social is a longstanding event which aims to honour the town's senior residents," says CAO Marnie Cluckie. "From residents who have always called Niagara-on-the-Lake home to those who have recently joined our wonderful community, we are grateful for your meaningful contributions. This is our way of saying thank you."

The town also thanks Seaway Farms for donating strawberries for the event, and PigOut for catering the lunch.

Volunteers plant pollinator garden at Newark Park



Janet Ennamorato and Shy Surian plant a pollinator garden.



Lynn Sawatzky tends to her well-stocked vegetable and herb garden.



Julian Trachsel and Shy Surian share gardening tips.

A dozen volunteers came out to the Newark Park Community Garden on Niven Road to help plant a pollinator garden Saturday. Working with garden coach Joanne Young, who planned the site, and volunteers from the NOTL Horticultural Society, the goal was to attract butterflies, bees and other pollinators to the area to help with the health of the vegetables and tomatoes most of the gardeners are growing. About 70 native and other insect-attracting perennials were planted in the 24-foot plot of land. "It will add some colour to the gardens and will help everyone to grow more vegetables," Young told The Local. "The impact will be pretty instant." There are almost 40 people tending garden plots this summer at the park. That includes Lynne Sawatzky, who is growing tomatoes, broccoli, eggplant, cabbage, basil, Swiss chard, cucumbers, peppers, zucchini, arugula, beans and more on her impressive garden plot, centred with a wooden boardwalk for added stability. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

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Farmerettes kept food production going through war years

Their story will be told at NOTL Museum June 15

Sharon Burns
The Local

"It is unbelievable how a tiny picture can change your life," said Bonnie Sitter, co-author of *Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz: Memories of Ontario Farmerettes*.

The picture, which measured two by two-and-a-half inches, showed three girls sitting on a running board of an old car. "One had a straw hat on and one had a bandanna on," said Sitter. The only clue as to the identity of the girls was the inscription on the back of the photograph, "Farmerettes, about 1946."

Sitter, who knew nothing about farmerettes, embarked on research that would eventually lead to finding Shirleyan English, who, as a young girl, worked on the Sitter farm. While Sitter is not one of the girls in the photograph, the two women became friends and co-authored *Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz*.

Sitter and English will present the rarely-told and incredible stories of Ontario's Second World War farmerettes at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum on June 15 at 7:30 p.m. Their book was nominated for a women's history award and there have been enquiries regarding making a documentary about the farmerettes.

Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz "focuses a lot on the experiences of women during the Second World War and after," said Shawna Butts, assistant curator and education programmer at the museum. "However, the farmerette program was also around during the First World War. It started in 1917 and resulted in thousands of women stepping up to fill the void on

farms since many of the men were overseas fighting. In 1918 alone, there were 2,400 farmerettes working in the Niagara Region."

According to Barbara Worthy, community engagement coordinator at the museum, when Canada went to war in 1939, just as they did in 1914, the loss of thousands of young men left farms and factories in dire need of labour. In Ontario, acres of farms, orchards and market gardens were in need of planting, hoeing, weeding, thinning, staking, picking, harvesting and canning.

Advertisements appeared showing men in uniform saying: "We Can't Fight If We Don't Eat!" and women were now the focus of recruitment posters. They were encouraged to throw off their aprons and join the Land Army or become Rosie the Riveter, make bombs or airplanes, and drive tractors, trucks and jeeps. Images of fighting soldiers told them "We won't eat if YOU don't help Ontario farmers this summer!"

In 1941, said Worthy, the Ontario Farm Service Force formed a homegrown brigade called the farmerettes. Girls were invited to 'lend a hand,' and the slogan 'You Can Do It' encouraged more than 25,000 high school students to sign up.

At 16 years old, Shirleyan English was one of them.

After Sitter's husband died, she was sorting through his pictures and found the tiny picture. Sitter realized that she had a friend who was a farmerette in the St. Catharines area in 1946. The friend had kept the 17 letters that she wrote that summer, and shared them with Sitter.



An original photo of three farmerettes. (Photos supplied)

Sitter wrote a story on the farmerettes for *The Rural Voice*, a farming magazine in southwestern Ontario. English read the article and "was brought to tears because, to her, even at the age of 88, she said it was the best summer of her life," recalled Sitter.

English, who had worked on the Sitter farm, recognized the family name and wrote a letter to the editor of the magazine. After Sitter read the letter, she found English's number in the phonebook and the mystery of the girls in the photograph was solved.

Back in 1995, English, a journalist, had put a notice in papers all over Ontario asking for stories from farmerettes for a magazine story. She received 300 letters, but never wrote the story. When Sitter discovered that English still had those letters, she said, "we are going to write a book."

"In the beginning, the farmers thought 'well, this is a lousy idea, how are you going to get girls from the city or town or northern Ontario, girls who haven't seen a farm, to do farm work,'" Sitter said. "The girls proved them wrong."

"It took a few weeks for their bodies to adjust to farm labour," said Sitter. "They thought their backs were broken and that they would never stand straight up again. But then they started working as a team and encouraged each other. They made up songs about their camps and sang them in the field and talked about their boyfriends and movies and school. And what they were going to do on Saturday night. Were they going to go to the roller rink, or see if there was a dance. And they hitchhiked everywhere. There wasn't gas and they didn't have cars."

They lived in camps es-

tablished by the YWCA and supervised by a camp mother, paid room and board, and worked up to 10 hours a day. The work could be gruelling, but there was time for fun, dances, soldiers and romance. "Many described it as 'the best times of their lives,'" said Worthy.

Butts provided a local perspective: "These women, from all walks of life, gave up their summers to pitch in and pick, pack and later can Niagara's tender fruits."

"Many farmers were apprehensive, to say the least, to have women working on their farms, but they eventually came to appreciate the help the women offered," said Butts. "In fact, it was said that one farmerette replaced three men. When women were needed again during WWII, there was much less opposition, and the program was even extended until 1953."

"For many of these women," said Butts, "who were typically aged 16 and over, this was their first time living away from home, and the job allowed them to earn their own money and achieve a sense of independence. This

program helped crack the glass ceiling for women entering the workforce. It didn't break it since it still took another couple of decades for women (in the workforce) to be a common sight. But the farmerettes proved that women can work as hard and as well as men."

The farmerettes were integral in keeping food on plates in Ontario. "If these girls had not stepped up, and there were probably between 20,000 and 30,000 farmerettes between 1941 and 1952, there would be nobody working on the farms," said Sitter. "The men were gone. In 1945, when the war ended, the men weren't coming back to farm. They were going to university and finding other work opportunities."

Sitter, who lives in Exeter, Ontario, has also co-authored, with Telfer Wegg, *The Beauty and Bounty of Huron County and Agriculture Today: A Portrait of Family Farms in Ontario*.

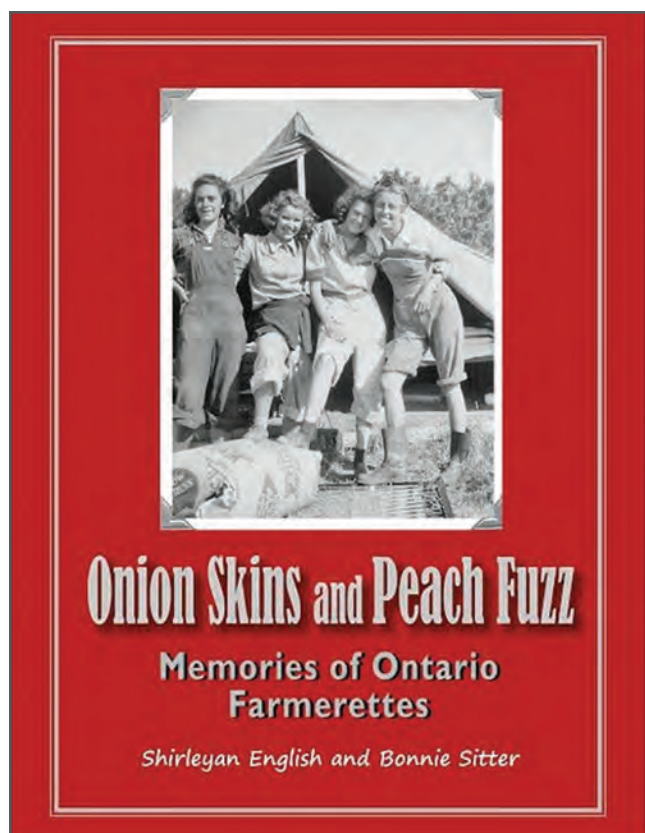
In 2020 Sitter compiled the memories of the four Wright children who lived with their parents, Bill and Helen Wright, in a school

car in Northern Ontario into a book called *On The Wright Track: Memories From C.P.R. School Car #2*.

English's experiences as a farmerette gave her a love of plants and working in the soil, which led to her becoming an accomplished gardener. She is past president of the Garden Club of London and the Garden Clubs of Ontario and is a judge in both Horticulture and Floral Design, both obtained through the Royal Botanical Gardens. She has competed internationally at the World Association of Floral Artists and won third prize when exhibiting at the association's show in Barbados in 2017.

A launch of Niagara Oast House Brewers' Farmerettes Farmhouse Ale this past International Women's Day involved a presentation by Butts about the farmerettes program, which caught the attention of Sitter and English.

Sitter and English's presentation is part of the museum's 2023 Lecture Series. Admission is \$10, and free for members. Worthy advises that seating is limited, so call the museum at 905-468-3912 to reserve a spot.



The cover of *Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz*, a book written about the farmerettes.



Women weeding an onion field.

LocalSPORTS

One more open house for those interested in lawn bowling

Sharon Burns
The Local

“We hope you all come back, and the reason is, you’re all so young!” exclaimed Angela Lynch, Niagara-on-the-Lake Lawn Bowling Club secretary, as she made closing remarks to 19 members from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Social Club at the lawn bowling open house this weekend.

The social club members, who endeavour to try new activities in the area, had an hour of coaching instruction at Canada’s oldest lawn bowling club.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Lawn Bowling Club was founded in 1877, according to the bowling club’s website. For the first 133 years, play was on grass on the grounds of the Queen’s Royal Niagara Hotel on the shore of Lake Ontario. Built in 1869, the hotel also offered tennis courts and a dance pavilion. When it closed in the early 1920s, that land became Queen’s Royal Park.

The lawn bowling club moved in 1922 to a green at the corner of Regent Street and Johnson Street, where it remained for the next 88 years. In 2011 the club moved again, this time to the Community Centre on Anderson Lane.

Lawn bowling is played with a special bowl that is contoured so that the path it follows is curved. At first, the bowl moves in a fairly straight line, but as it slows it will swing to one side, explained the pamphlet that can be found in a box attached to the fence at the club.

The club is open from April to October. “Bowlers can rent bowls for \$10 dollars a season,” said Julie

Hagan, who is on the club’s membership committee.

Hagan explained the playing schedule. “On Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, starting at 1:30 p.m., we play jitney-style,” she said. A jitney is a casual game of bowls without regularly assigned teams.

“On Mondays and Wednesdays, we move play to 6:30 p.m. because of the heat,” said Hagan.

Coaches are eager to teach newcomers how to deliver a bowl, the objectives of the game, its rules, and the etiquette that goes with it. Coach Rose Connolly, a member since 2012, said that “when we have a new person come in and they are interested in the game, I get called and we spend the afternoon with them and teach them lawn bowling. We have two sessions, play a few rounds, then for the second session we answer more questions.”

“We try to get people to

come out because it is a fun afternoon or evening,” said Connolly.

“We have a women’s league and a men’s league. It’s a soft exercise. It isn’t overly strenuous, but you definitely do a lot of stretching.”

Lynch, the club secretary, has been a member for 14 years, but has been lawn bowling for 30 years. “We’ve got about 70 members this year and can handle more,” she said. While lawn bowling is perceived by some as a sport for the elderly, Lynch says all are welcome. “The oldest player we have now is probably 90 years old,” she said. “Because we have carpet and it’s not natural grass, we can actually have people in a walker. We had one woman who was 93 who came with her walker.”

“We are very easy-going,” assured Lynch. “It’s the gentle exercise and fresh air and the social as-

pect we like. Every Saturday we have afternoon tea after the first game. We have a barbecue once a month for socialization.”

“You can bowl as often as you want or as little as you want, there is no commitment to a team,” added

Lynch.

There is one more open house for people to try lawn bowling, which has its roots in old England and was called Bowling on the Green. It has been played since the 13th century and is very popular in many

Commonwealth countries. More than 180 clubs exist in Ontario with about 11,500 members.

The next open house is June 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. “Coaches will be here for people who want to learn how to play,” said Hagan.



A sign on the lawn bowling fence encourages potential players to visit, and better yet join. (Photos by Sharon Burns)



There are instructors at the club ready to help someone who might be thinking of joining.

Tennis Spring Social



Jeremy Pukhkalo and Sameer Levesque learn how to serve from visiting instructor Simon Burden. (Photos by Mike Balsom)



Jeremy Pukhkalo tries to hit the fastest serve of the day.



Members play a sponge-ball 3-on-3 warm-up game.

About 130 members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club participated in its recent Spring Social. Organized by members Natalie Early and Nancy Marchese, it was a fun-filled day at Memorial Park, with members taking part in 3-on-3 soft-ball warm-up games and other activities that allowed members to connect and reconnect with each other on the courts. A highlight of the day was the presence of the Ontario Tennis Association’s Smash Cage. After getting a bit of instruction from Simon Burden of the association’s Club Strong, members of all ages stepped into the cage to measure the speed of their serve. To wrap up the event the members gathered under the pavilion to enjoy a dinner together.

LocalSPORTS

Pickleball pros demonstration adds 'buzz' to competition

Mike Balsom
The Local

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club's head professional Adam Eatock is agog with excitement over the three-day Pickleball Classic in Virgil this weekend. Especially for Friday night's professional exhibition at the Meridian Credit Union Arena, which he had a hand in helping to arrange.

Eatock will be taking to the courts as one of eight pickleball pros Friday in a series of competitive matches that he hopes will build up the buzz for the rest of the weekend's competition.

"We have some of the biggest names in the sport coming," Eatock tells The Local. "Matthew and Jessica Kowamoto from Hamilton are like the first family of pickleball. They are two of the Kowamoto triplets, all of whom play the game at a high level."

Eatock has taken on most

of the seven visitors at professional tournaments since earning his pro credentials in 2020. He earns his living as a pickleball instructor, teaching the game to players in NOTL and St. Catharines and accepting invitations from other municipalities and clubs to run clinics.

The former martial arts instructor who holds a second degree black belt took up the game at the suggestion of his competitive badminton doubles partner six years ago.

"He told me he had tried this game that was a mix of badminton, tennis and ping pong," remembers Eatock, "and he promised me that I would love it. He warned me, though, that the older folks would kick my butt. Sure enough I got my butt kicked."

Despite that butt-kicking, he was instantly addicted, a sentiment common within the pickleball community.

"A lot of pickleball is drop

shots," he explains about the strategy of placing the ball just over the net and into the non-volley zone, preventing your opponents from mounting a quick attack. "And you'll hear the terminology called 'dinking,' which is a type of drop shot. It's more strategic than tennis, where there's a lot of whacking the ball and driving toward the net. That's why people love it"

As an instructor he finds that the soft part of the game, the finesse element, is what resonates with newcomers, and what leads to their pickleball addiction.

There will be a lot of 'dinking' from the professionals Friday night, as competitors such as the Kowamotos are known for their mastery of the finesse side of the sport.

"For Jessica, her consistency is her huge strength," Eatock says. "She doesn't try to earn the point quickly. She uses consistency as a weapon. With Matthew, his strength is deception. You don't know which shot he's going to do. That can really catch a lot of people off guard."

The 30-year-old ran into the pair at last weekend's first ever Canadian National Pickleball League's eastern Canada tryouts held by Pickleball Canada in Ottawa. He now awaits the results of the upcoming western Canada tryouts to find out if he has made the league's cut.

Eatock competed at the national competition in Kingston in 2022, and plans to compete again this year in Regina, Sas-

katchewan. He is also looking forward to booking himself into tournaments across Canada and the U.S. to close out the 2023 season.

As a club professional as well as a competitor, the Port Weller resident is dedicated to growing the game he loves.

"I've seen a big progression," he says. "So many people of all ages are coming out to learn the game. And this tournament will go a long way toward growing the sport's popularity. At 30 my reflexes might be faster than some older players, but many of them challenge the younger folks with their patience and composure. Anyone can play this game."

The Governor Simcoe Secondary School graduate says he expects to recognize many members of the NOTL and St. Catharines clubs in the stands as spectators for Friday night's professional exhibition.

"They are so excited to see the pro players in action," he laughs. "I can't even tell you how many have told me that they can't wait to see the pro exhibition. There is a huge buzz about this."

And he's elated that YourTV will be carrying Friday's action, as well as the amateur competition on Saturday and Sunday.

"It's so great that they were willing to do this," he says of Jack Custers and the Cogeco-YourTV team. "Having people able to see this, to learn about pickleball, it should lead to them learning about their local



NOTL pickleball pro Adam Eatock has taken on most of the professionals who will play in the exhibition matches Friday night.



Pickleball visiting pros Jessica and Matthew Kowamoto from Hamilton will be participating in Friday night's event at the Pickleball Classic in Virgil. (Photos supplied)

Seasonal workers at Memorial Park for traditional cricket match

Mike Balsom
The Local

Seasonal farmworkers in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Lincoln will be dusting off their bats, gloves, helmets and wickets this week in preparation for the Caribbean Workers' Outreach Program's annual cricket match.

Scheduled for Sunday, June 11 at Memorial Park on King Street, the match be-

tween the Niagara Clippers and the Lincoln Lions carries on a tradition started nearly 30 years ago at the old Colonel John Butler School on East and West Line.

The game has long since moved to its current home on the Memorial Park turf, where workers, farmers, cricket enthusiasts and interested onlookers gather to take in the action. It's a big highlight for the workers,

especially the many from Jamaica, where cricket is both the national sport and the country's most popular athletic pastime.

The games are organized and officiated by Prophet Steel and Brian Burton, two of the offshore workers who contribute their labour on area farms each summer. The outreach program's cricket committee works behind the scenes on all of the other details.

The town provides the use of the park rent-free for the day.

After playing in their regular work or street clothes for a number of years, players were given uniforms to wear a few years ago, enabling them to distinguish the teams from each other. The uniforms were provided by Azzis Anjum, the owner of the St. Catharines Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen franchise and a huge fan of the sport, says Nancy Howse, longtime volunteer with the outreach program, in a news release about the match.

Anjum also donates trophies for each team, gifts for the players and the 66-by-eight-foot cricket mat where the bowler and batsman stand during the match, Howse says, also pointing out that win or lose, everyone goes home happy and stuffed full with a chicken dinner served by the volunteers.

The first game is slated for a 2 p.m. start this Sunday. Howse invites everyone to drop by and take in some of the exciting action. There is no admission fee to attend.

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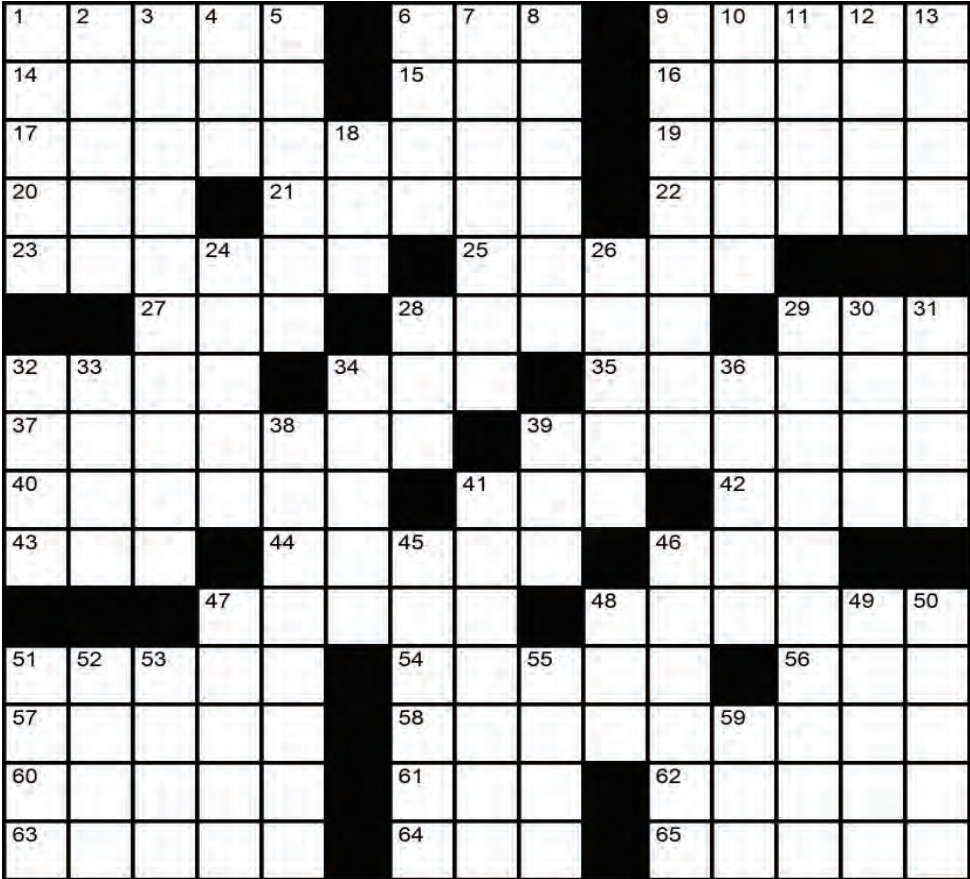
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- Across:**

1 Distant

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9 Jobs

14 "ER" actress --- Tierney

15 "--- Believer", Monkees hit

16 Start playing!

17 Tap

19 "Fear of Flying" author --- Jong

20 Snow runner

21 Less common

22 Buoyant

23 Old-fashioned cab

25 Lightweight tropical hats

27 Elite group

28 Gene Pitney was only 24hrs from here

29 Downloadable program

32 Small lake

34 Natter

35 Tenor --- Bocelli

37 Sidestepped

39 Splendors

40 Demeanor

41 Total

42 Capital of Norway

43 Source of formic acid

44 Jambalaya ingredient

46 Little one

47 "Band of Gold" singer Freda ---
- 48 Miscreants

51 Economizer

54 Succeed

56 One of New York's finest, perhaps

57 Nautical fastener

58 To

60 Carroll's rabbit-hole explorer

61 Wyo. neighbor

62 Extended area of land

63 Waterproofed as many showers are

64 Affirmative vote

65 Solemn promises
- 18 Rotating engine part

24 Welcome

26 Old Testament song

28 Sliver

29 Nobleman

30 Rind

31 --- doble (dance)

32 One of the Three Bears

33 "--- Almighty", in which Morgan Freeman played God

34 Nixon's successor, informally

36 Drivel

38 At peace

39 Rev up

41 --- Todd, barber

45 Chest pain

46 Am disposed

47 Serenity

48 Pro

49 Gun handle nick

50 Notices

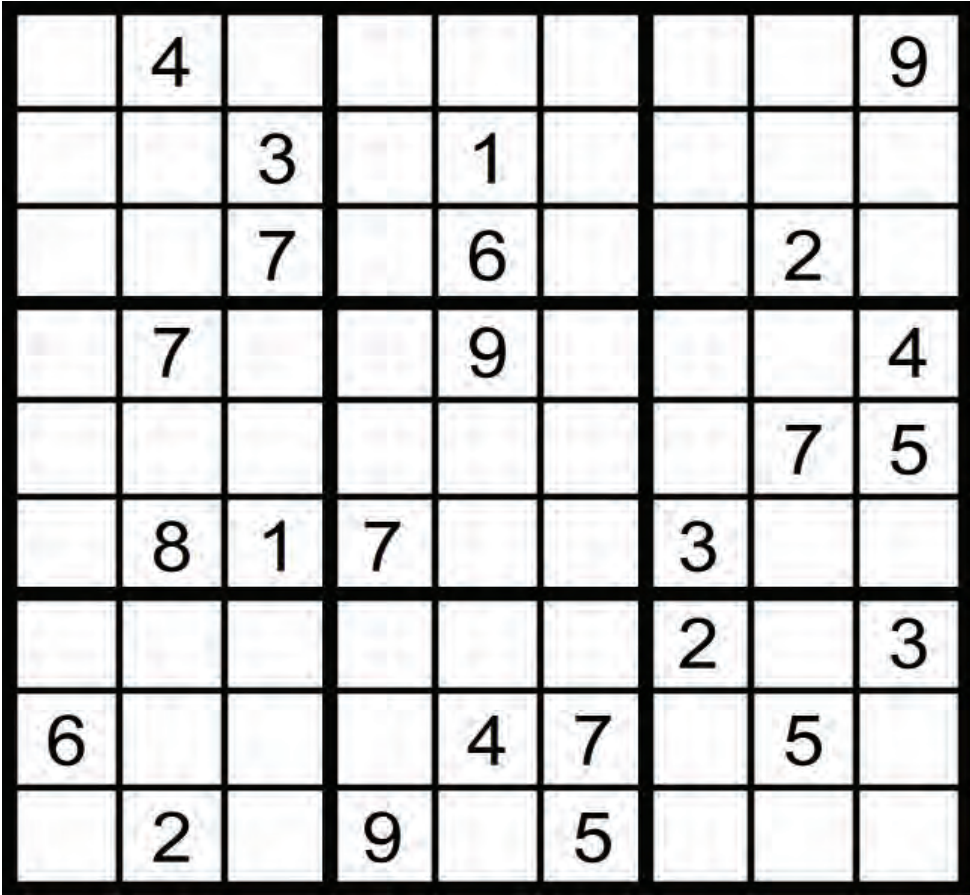
51 Get outta here!

52 "--- want is a room somewhere..." ("My Fair Lady")

53 Bridal wear

55 Start of a Hamlet soliloquy

59 Geological time composed of periods



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OBITUARY

BALL, William Lawrence — Bill passed away peacefully at Hospice Niagara on Saturday, June 3, 2023 in his 88th year. Bill is forever reunited with his beloved wife, Jean (1994). Loving Dad of Brenda Petrunick (Kirk). Predeceased by daughter, Cathy (2016), and son, Jim (2017). Very proud Papa to Eric, Jack and Kate.

Bill developed a love of the sea, and fishing at a very young age in Niagara, which was passed down to him from generations of family. He was the happiest on a boat with a line in the water, sharing great conversation and definitely a few fish stories, with family and friends!

In most recent years, Bill volunteered at the St. Catharines Game and Fish Association, where he shared his passion and knowledge for the sport with many, including the organization of Kids Day fishing in Port Dalhousie for many years. Bill is also remembered for his 25 years as a volunteer fireman for the town of Niagara-on-the Lake. He was proud to be an active member of our community.

Bill will be missed by his many nieces, nephews and fellow fisherman.

As per Bill's request cremation has taken place. Service will be held at Saint Marks Church in Niagara on the Lake at 11am on Friday, June 9, 2023. Interment will follow at Saint Marks Cemetery.

In memory of Bill, donations may be made to Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, St. Catharines Game and Fish Association (Kids Day) and Hospice Niagara.

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



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

Across: 1 Aloof, 6 Tip, 9 Tasks, 14 Maura, 15 I'm a, 16 Hit it, 17 Intercept, 19 Erica, 20 Ski, 21 Rarer, 22 Perky, 23 Hansom, 25 Topics, 27 Few, 28 Tulsa, 29 App, 32 Mere, 34 Gas, 35 Andrea, 37 Avoided, 39 Glories, 40 Manner, 41 Sum, 42 Oslo, 43 Ant, 44 Prawn, 46 Tot, 47 Payne, 48 Felons, 51 Saver, 54 Get on, 56 Cop, 57 Cleat, 58 In order to, 60 Alice, 61 Neb, 62 Tract, 63 Tiled, 64 Aye, 65 Oaths.

Down: 1 Amish, 2 Lanka, 3 Out in front, 4 Ore, 5 Farrow, 6 Tier, 7 Impetus, 8 Patrol, 9 The piano, 10 Aires, 11 Stir, 12 Kick, 13 Stay, 18 Cam, 24 See in, 26 Psalm, 28 Tad, 29 Aristocrat, 30 Peel, 31 Paso, 32 Marna, 33 Evan, 34 Gerny, 36 Drool, 38 Departed, 39 Gun, 41 Sweeney, 45 Anglia, 46 Tend to, 47 Pease, 48 For, 49 Notch, 50 Spots, 51 Scat, 52 All I, 53 Veil, 55 To be, 59 Era.

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