



PORT COLBORNE

**Mayor's report to city council
Tuesday, July 23, 2024**

WHAT A SUMMER SO FAR

What a summer it's shaping up to be! Port Colborne has so much going on! Since our last meeting was in June, I want to just take a step back to acknowledge the Port Colborne Optimist Club for the fantastic Canada Day in the Park event coordinated for so many Port Colborne families. It was one of the best-attended Canada Day events I recall. Council and I thank the Optimists for all their efforts, and for including so many activities for everyone as we celebrated our country's 157th birthday.

Likewise for the Niagara Antique Power Association annual Heritage Display on Canada Day weekend, the 52nd annual event celebrating our rural heritage. The opening ceremonies had to be postponed a day due to rain, but it turned out to be a terrific weekend. Thank you to the organizers, volunteers and sponsors for continuing to shine a light on our agricultural heritage.

CANAL DAYS PREPARATION

We are 10 days away from Canal Days, the city's biggest annual festival. On behalf of council, I extend thanks to our staff, our sponsors – we have more sponsors this year than we've ever had before, thanks to our communications team -- and the hundreds of volunteers who come out to

work and to support the event, one of the greatest single economic generators in our city.

Founded in 1979 at the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum, Canal Days has grown to include events and activities in venues across the city.

There are a dozen major sites to enjoy Canal Days, from the Craft Show in the Vale Centre, and the Car Show at the T.A. Lannan Sports Complex, to the Kids Zone in King George Park and the Midway downtown, to the concerts in HH Knoll Lakeview Park. In addition to the annual Boat Parade Lights, we have a Boat Show this year, right in the canal south of Bridge 21.

The Welland Canal figures prominently of course, and all the ships which pass upbound and downbound through our city. You'll hear master salutes all weekend – three long blasts followed by two short -- as ships sound their horns to acknowledge each other and to the crowds along West Street.

We look forward to welcoming thousands of visitors to our city, starting a week from Friday.

Staff and volunteers are in training sessions all this week, so everyone understands their role as Canal Days Ambassadors. We're ALL Canal Days ambassadors, whether we're directing traffic, emptying trash receptacles, or painting faces.

One of the first things we all do to prepare for Canal Days, is buy a Canal Days t-shirt from the museum. For the past decade or so, the t-shirts have been designed by Stephen Brule, who started out as a summer student at the museum, back in 2012.

The t-shirts have become one of their biggest fundraisers – I mean, everyone HAS to have an official Canal Days t-shirt. Be sure to get yours before they are sold out.

I hope you'll all refer to the City website, and Canal Days on all social media platforms, for the full schedule, and all the do's and don'ts. For example, please leave your dogs at home.

Thank you to our title sponsor, GIO Rail, and to all our sponsors and local businesses who partner with us in this tremendous civic enterprise.

SUMMER THEATRE, MUSIC, AND ART

Things are also hopping over at Lighthouse Festival Theatre, where the third play of the summer season opens tomorrow. Mary's Wedding runs until July 20 in the theatre at the Roselawn Centre. We are so fortunate to have Lighthouse Theatre in our city, a professional company of writers, actors, directors, set designers, who share their talents with their sister-company Lighthouse Theatre in Port Dover.

Inside Roselawn, Wonder and Whimsy is an exhibit of Port Colborne Folk Art from the museum collection. Drop by Wednesday to Saturday from 1 to 3 to see the colourful, inventive, whimsical works of art. Friends of Roselawn have established a Tiny Art Library, and an Art Tool Loaning Library, so if you are inspired by the show to make something, the tools are there for you to borrow.

The next of the Concerts on the Lawn at Roselawn will be the Toronto All-Star Big Band, on the Monday of Canal Days. The orchestra and vocalists of the All-Star Big Band have played in Port Colborne many times. They tell us Roselawn is one of their favourite stops along their summer tour.

You design your own stops along the South Niagara Artists Studio Tour the weekend after Canal Days Aug. 10 and 11. I encourage you to take in the studio tour, where you'll meet so many talented local artists, sculptors, jewellery makers, potters and for sure you'll find something unique.

PORT COLBORNE OLYMPIAN

The opening ceremonies of the 33rd Olympiad in Paris are this Friday. There will be almost 11,000 athletes from 206 countries competing in 32 sports.

A few weeks after, about a month from now, the Paralympic Games open August 28.

I'm thrilled to share with you that a young woman from Port Colborne will be competing in those games.

Emma Van Dyk, 21 years old, will be one of 4,400 paralympic athletes from around the world competing in Paris.

Emma is a swimmer. A sprinter. She broke the Canadian record for 100-metre backstroke three times in the last two years.

Like all Olympic athletes, she's had to work hard to qualify for the Olympics, especially after breaking her foot last spring when she fell down the stairs at home. She's in the pool at Brock eight times a week.

I met her this morning and gave her our city's best wishes. She said she's ready, and she's excited.

Well, Emma, we are excited for you. We'll be cheering you, and all Canadian athletes, at the Olympics and the Paralympics.