



Oast House Brewery's Askha Koabel and Mary Beccario.

Glasses raised for farmerettes at Oast women's day celebration

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake brewery is paying homage to the women who ran the

family farms while the men were away during two world wars.

Oast released Farmerettes, the newest instalment in its Farmhouse Ale Collection, last week in conjunction with

International Women's Day.

The special batch, a fruity Saison-style beer with lots of head and a goldenrod colour, honours the women who were called farmerettes.

Senior brewer Askha

Koabel wrote the recipe in November after Oast co-founder Cian MacNeill came up with the idea of crafting a special batch for women's day.

Koabel said the beer gets

most of its flavour from Niagara-grown tender fruit, including strawberries, cherries, apples and pears.

She wanted it to be a

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Memorial sculpture urged for NOTL's Black burial ground

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

NOTL's Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground deserves a memorial to the survivors of slavery and an organization led by a Brock University professor wants to make it happen.

"It's really to memorialize the African diasporic people who lived, worshipped, were educated, were married, died and lived in this region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries," Prof. Lissa Paul told a presentation at the St. Catharines Public Library last week.

The talk was titled "Making Decolonization Visible on the Ground."

Paul is working with PhD student Hyacinth Campbell and Toronto artist Quentin VerCetty on the project.

The memorial would be about six feet tall and would be installed at the cemetery, formerly known as the Negro Burial Ground, on Mississagua Street in

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'30 seconds in' he heard four snaps

NOTL wrestler wins provincial gold, then dislocates elbow at nationals

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

He remembers hearing four distinct snaps.

Eden High School wrestler and Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Zubin Gatta was coming off a winning streak.

He had just placed first at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations' wrestling championship on Wednesday, March 8, in Ottawa and boasted a 25-0 high school record this year.

Next stop, the national championships two days later in Waterloo.

With gold and bronze medals around his neck after competing in the Canada Summer Games last August, he's developed a reputation as a winner.

Despite his success, he says he's at a bit of a disadvantage, competing at 56.5 kilograms in the 57.5-kilogram weight class.

In fact, he's actually pretty used to having his back to the mat.

"I go to practice and I get beat up every day," he said, explaining that he trains with the Brock University wrestling team.

Still, he had humble aspirations when he faced off against



Despite dislocating his left elbow, Zubin Gatta is looking forward to his next bout. SUPPLIED

Trey Trotman from Western University in his junior division match at the Canadian Wrestling Championships in Waterloo on Friday.

"He's definitely the best in my weight class right now. In the country," Gatta told The Lake Report.

But Gatta felt he could be a top six competitor at the national competition.

When he went up against Trotman he wasn't expecting a repeat of his winning experience at OFSAA, just a chance to stop his opponent from pushing him around.

"It was my first match at nationals," said Gatta and it was all over "30 seconds in."

"I popped my elbow," he said. "I heard it really loud. And then I looked over and then I saw it."

Gatta was on all fours defend-

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No end to phone, text and door-to-door scams, experts say

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

First in a two-part series
With Fraud Prevention Month well under way across Canada, so are

telephone, text message and door-to-door scams.

One scam in particular has been on the rise — the grandparent scam.

That's when someone calls a senior on behalf of a loved one claiming to be a

government official, family member, police officer or even a lawyer.

The scammers then scare the individual into giving money by saying the loved one is injured or needs help.

"They are targets because



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NOTL wrestler **dislocates shoulder** at nationals

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ing against his opponent.
Trotman, looking for the take down, rolled to the left and took Gatta with him.

Gatta attempted to stabilize his position by placing his left hand farther from his body.

It didn't work.

Trotman rolled over Gatta's left side, trapping the younger wrestler's arm between the floor and his body.

The torque on Gatta's elbow mounted with Trotman's motion and that's when Gatta heard what he described as four distinct snaps.

"It was bad," he said.
Bad enough to be his worst athletic injury and bad enough to put him in a cast for the next four to six weeks.

Gatta said it felt exactly as you might imagine it would – "getting your arm snapped behind you." But it was more scary than painful.

What scares the young wrestler more is the long-term toll from such an injury.

Serious injuries like this one could "stay with me my

whole life," making him wonder, if only briefly, it all is "worth it."

Fears aside, he intends to keep wrestling.

"I'm going to Brock. I got accepted," he said, adding that he's been talking to the coaches at the university about his future weight class.

Gatta already practises with the wrestlers at Brock and feels committed to his journey as a wrestler.

He even describes his future physiotherapy like it's meant to get him back into competitive shape.

Gatta is in Myrtle Beach now with a friend, unwinding from his victory at OFSAA and his injury at the nationals.

"I had to get used to sleeping comfortably on it," he said.

"I'm doing everything a little bit slower than the rest of them," he added.

Gatta remembers what happened on the mat in Waterloo pretty clearly, despite getting a little woozy at one point.

"I look up and I see the medic running over and she's yelling at me not to

“Funny thing is this same injury happened to my brother when he was wrestling at about my age as well.”

ZUBIN GATTA
WRESTLER



NOTL's Zubin Gatta, right, wrestles an opponent at the OFSAA championships, where he won gold. SUPPLIED

look at my arm, look away," he said.

His dad got to the mat at around the same time.

"I just tell him to tell my mom that I'm fine," Gatta said, adding he didn't want his mom to panic.

The medics on scene tried to pop his elbow back into place but it didn't work, so Gatta ended up leaving in the back of an ambulance.

When they lay him down to wait for the ambulance, "everything starts going

quiet and muffled," like he was about to pass out.

"My dad was with me the whole time. He kept telling me – like – keep breathing," Gatta said.

"It helped a lot."
It was about five hours from injury to operation.

"It was right in the beginning of that snowstorm that we got, so the ambulance was going a little slow."

In the summer, while competing in the summer games, Gatta sustained an injury to the same elbow while wres-

tling Eekeeluak Avalak in the semifinals of the men's 52-kilogram weight class.

The latest setback is unrelated to his previous injuries, he said.

"Funny thing is this same injury happened to my brother when he was wrestling at about my age as well."

His brother Cyrus told him to be prepared for when the cast comes off because his arm will be "pretty weak."

He said his father Kekoo, who coaches the Brock Bad-

gers junior wrestling team, has been very helpful and supportive.

"I'm gonna have to work really hard at the physio," Gatta said, paraphrasing the advice of his family.

The day after his injury, Gatta hopped in a car with some friends for the 13-hour ride to South Carolina.

Despite the seriousness of his injury, he thinks he's pretty lucky.

"There's people that have lost limbs, so I'm lucky enough that I got mine."

Three NOTL skaters qualify for **provincials**

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Three members of the NOTL Skating Club have qualified to compete in the Skate Ontario provincial championships.

Ashleen Hale, Samantha Frydryk and Ophelia Xie will skate in the competition set for the Stratford Rotary Complex from March 24 to 26.

Their performances extended the club's tradition of having skaters compete in the Ontario championships every year for more than two decades, said spokesperson Darlene Dortono.

The only years missed were 2020 and 2021, when COVID cancelled the competition.

Hale qualified in both her events – STAR 9 O14 Women and Gold Women.

At the end of the qualifying round, the Niagara-on-the-Lake teenager was ranked number 1 in Ontario in STAR 9 O14 Women and fifth in the province in Gold Women.



NOTL Skating Club members Ashleen Hale, Samantha Frydryk, Ophelia Xie will compete in the provincial championships. SUPPLIED

At last year's provincials, Hale finished third in Gold Women and fourth in STAR 9, while Xie was eighth in the STAR 5 U13 Women event.

Those results earned them spots on the Skate Ontario development team, said Dortono.

That meant they could attend a development camp and train with Skate Canada technical specialists and elite-level athletes.

Frydryk, from St. Catharines, is making her first

trip to the provincials and ranked 24th in the STAR 5 O13 category.

Xie, from Niagara Falls, finished 33rd in her STAR 6 Women's event to qualify for Stratford.

The three skaters all are coached by Judi Boyle-Krzeczkowski, the NOTL club's director of skating programs.

"These girls are terrific role models within the club," Dortono said.

"On top of their four to five days per week train-

ing schedule, they also volunteer their time four to five per week as on-ice program assistants for our CanSkate programs," she added.

In addition, they are top students at school and are involved in other extracurricular activities, she said.

The provincial competition will be live-streamed again this year and, once expected skating times are available, the NOTL club will post links on its Facebook page.

NOTL pickleball tourney attracts **260 competitors**

Staff
The Lake Report

The NOTL Pickleball Club now has 260 players – from 18 to 84 – signed up for its inaugural international tournament in June.

"With so many players, plus husbands and wives, the tournament will bring major benefits to the town as a whole," said John Hindle, co-chair for the event.

"It's rewarding to see how pickleball in this case is dovetailing perfectly with NOTL's well-known image as a tourist venue."

Players from as far away as Alaska, California, Florida and New York will join competitors from across Niagara and the NOTL club.

There will be about 180 teams spread across the men's, women's and mixed doubles events – as well as three age brackets and three skill level categories.

The club is partnering

with Cogeco YourTV to televise the professional exhibition matches on Friday, June 9, and tournament games on June 10 and 11.

The Lake Report is the event's major print media sponsor. Several local corporate sponsors have signed on, including Quinn Wealth Management, the 2024 Virgil Stampede, Eye Wellness, One Earth, Sandtrap Bar & Grill, Hotel 124Q, Bella Terra Vineyards and Selkirk.

And more sponsors are welcome, Hindle said.

The NOTL Pickleball Classic begins with the professional exhibition matches on June 9, "an excellent opportunity for the audience to see just how the game is played at the top level, in this case by eight of Ontario's top professionals," co-chair Ian Lagden said.

Tickets for that night are \$10. Admission is free for all the weekend matches on June 10 and 11.