



OFF THE
STREET

Food truck owner
opens restaurant.
FOOD, 8C

OPERATION:
ISLAND CATS

NT project, months in the making, considered a success

BY JILL KEPPELER
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NORTH TONAWANDA — The two siblings, all huge eyes and trembling whiskers, caught in the same trap, stared from its confines on a recent autumn morning on Tonawanda Island.

The orange-and-white tabby cats, about 5 months old, were numbers 10 and 11 captured on the first day of the big trap-neuter-vaccinate-release push on the island. But their plight held a promise of a better life ahead — and the culmination of months of work on the part of local residents and animal-welfare organizations.

“We’ve only had traps on the ground for 30 minutes, so we’re doing pretty good,” said Danielle Coogan of North Tonawanda, who started the whole operation back in July after a trip to the island. “I only pulled their food yesterday at noon, so they’re not even that hungry yet.”

Within less than an hour on that bright fall morning, six feral cats were in covered traps in a volunteer’s vehicle, waiting for transport back to the Pets Alive WNY facility in Pendleton. And the numbers kept growing.

Sally Merritt-Braciak of Pets Alive WNY waited nearby, keeping lists of the felines with such descriptors as “bl+wh large,” “tabby” or “dilute torti,” as well as the date and the location on the island where they were trapped.

“I’m pleased at how it’s going so far,” she said. “Very pleased. Within 50 minutes, we’re up to 11 cats. That’s pretty good, I think.”

Minutes later, a volunteer carried up another trap containing two cats: A gray one with green eyes and another skittish tabby. By the time an hour had passed, the 10 volunteers already had 14 cats

Operation: Island Cats had begun.

TRAP-NEUTER-
VACCINATE-RELEASE

It all started over the summer, when Coogan paid a visit to the island — and realized how many feral cats and kittens lived there.

“There’s an area where there are some boats stored, and I was astonished at the number of cats. They were just everywhere,” she told the Tonawanda News back in August. “We saw pregnant cats

SEE **CATS** ON PAGE 6C



Danielle Coogan of North Tonawanda, who started Operation: Island Cats, holds a trap on Tonawanda Island.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cloud, a feral cat who lived for years on Tonawanda Island, is shown. The cat was caught, cared for and adopted after the North Tonawanda Common Council approved trap-neuter-release programs in the city.



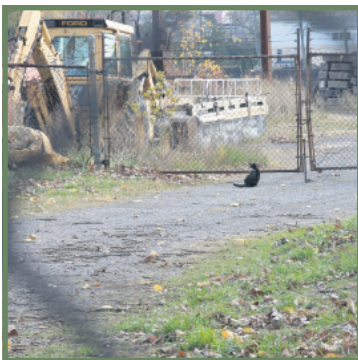
MIA SUMMERSON/STAFF

A cat runs past a trap Nov. 10 on Tonawanda Island in North Tonawanda.



MIA SUMMERSON/STAFF

A cat walks past a trap Nov. 10 on Tonawanda Island in North Tonawanda.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A feral cat is shown Nov. 10 on Tonawanda Island.



MIA SUMMERSON/STAFF

Two cats peer out from a trap Nov. 10 on Tonawanda Island in North Tonawanda. The pair were among those captured as part of Operation: Island Cats, an effort to trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate and release the feral cats of the island.



JOED VIERA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tina Goodridge fills pie shells with apples while Bob Hall works on the crust at Hall’s Apple Farm in Lockport, which sells more than 1,000 pies for Thanksgiving.

Farm makes it easy as pie

DESSERT: *Pumpkin, apple are top picks for Thanksgiving tables.*

BY ANNE CALOS
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Thanksgiving dinner might be all about the turkey, but Thanksgiving dessert is all about the pie.

Just ask the folks at Hall’s Apple Farm in Lockport — they bake up about a thousand pies each year for Thanksgiving tables.

Bob Hall is the fourth generation of the Hall family to run the farm and he’s been making pies for just about as

long as he can remember.

Hall, along with Tina Goodridge and part-timer Cindy Sanford, make every one of the pies by hand, and they make it look — well — as easy as pie.

There are three varieties of apple pies sold at the market: Regular, apple crumb and apple caramel, and all are made from apples grown right on the farm and peeled one-by-one on a hand-cranked apple peeler in the back room.

Right now, Hall is making the pies with Cortlands, but he said that throughout the

SEE **PIE** ON PAGE 4C

Beyond pink

CAUSE: *Niagara Falls couple work to diminish stigma of lung cancer.*

BY MICHELE DELUCA
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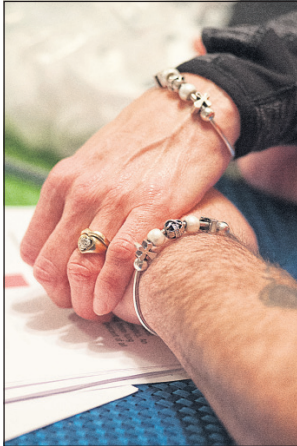
Sam and Tricia Giambattista try not to get frustrated when they see the color pink, especially when it represents such an important cause as fighting breast cancer.

It’s just that the Niagara Falls couple, passionately engaged in Sam’s battle with lung cancer, would just like to see a little more attention paid to the other cancers, especially lung cancer.

So, sometimes the color pink — so evident during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October — makes them see red.

The couple, who met about 14 years ago when they both worked at Dupont Chemical, say that Lung Cancer Awareness Month in November gets so little attention because so many people believe patients bring the disease on themselves by smoking.

Yes, Sam was a smoker. “I quit when I was 40,” he admitted more than two



Sam Giambattista and his wife Tricia bought matching bracelets to symbolize their united front battling his lung cancer.

decades later. But many die from lung cancer each day though they’ve never lit a cigarette, he said.

In fact, lung cancer is by far the leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S., according to the American Lung Association, which also notes that 78 people who never smoked die each day from the disease. Yet breast cancer research gets about seven times more funding, according to the ALA.

“There are 495 people dying each day from lung cancer,” said Tricia, citing

SEE **PINK** ON PAGE 4C



PHOTOS BY JAMES NEISS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sam Giambattista is surrounded by bracelets with the message “God’s Got This!,” the words he spoke to his wife after doctors told him he had lung cancer.



Sam Giambattista of Niagara Falls and his wife Tricia talk about battling his lung cancer.