

## ***NEW HAMBURG LIONS CLUB “NITHY the RIVER MONSTER” PINS***

It's been 63 years since the so-called Nith River Monster shocked and delighted New Hamburg residents in the summer but John Nielson and many other locals still remember the excitement of 1953. A handful of boys are pictured here with a crocodile made of dough by local baker John Nielson Sr., a baker who worked in downtown New Hamburg at the time. *(Nov. 01, 2016 New Hamburg Independent article)*



*Pictured here, from left, are Ken Richler, Howard Reibling, John Nielson, Jim Cockerton, Bob Ruthig and Craig Thomas, who is the son of George Thomas, New Hamburg's long-time police chief who has long been suspected in creating the monster hoax that put New Hamburg in headlines across Canada. - Photo Supplied*

As the town enjoyed the tale of this so-called monster, the elder Nielson decided to get in on the fun by baking up a crocodile, painting it, then placing it on a small island in the middle of the Nith River near the Harman Bridge downtown, as remembered by his son John when he brought this photo to the Independent in October.

The edible reptile was part of a busy summer that saw Tuffy Truesdell, the self-proclaimed “world's greatest alligator wrestler,” arrive in New Hamburg to help search for the Nith River Monster. Tuffy brought his very own alligator, and local kids also got to get close and even pick up an alligator that had its mouth tied shut, Nielson remembered.



Many long-time residents remember former Mayor Wayne Roth and Nithy appearing in local parades years ago. During those parades, the handler Wayne, would drive the Toot and Puff train with Nithy in a caged train car. To the delight of the crowd, Nithy would sometimes escape from the cage and charge toward the crowd. Mr. Roth would stop the train and chase Nithy back into his enclosure. The people

loved the fact that the float was interactive with the crowd. The float won many awards and gave Wilmot Township a great representation.

Nithy is a registered trademarked river monster character belonging to Wilmot Township. The New Hamburg Lions Club issued a series of Pins to commemorate Nithy's history in Wilmot Township.

According to Lion Paul Mackie, Nithy still exists today and shows up at various events and parades, throughout the Township.



*-Thank you Lion Paul Mackie for sharing this info)*