



NOTL to the rescue | Page 7

Missing cat Zeus found, police say **no crime committed**

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

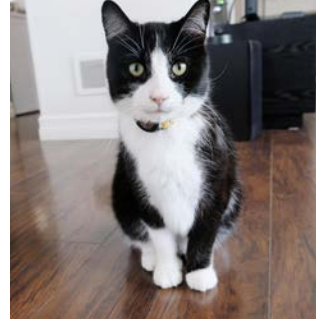
A St. Catharines man who admitted to trapping a neighbour's cat in his backyard and dumping it

in a rural area of Niagara-on-the-Lake will face no criminal consequences. "The matter has been investigated and concluded and no charges have been laid," Niagara Regional Police spokesperson Const.

Jesse Vujasic said in an April 23 statement. The three-year-old black and white male named Zeus was found by owners, the Clout family, on the evening of Wednesday, April 17 near Church and

McNab roads in rural NOTL. This was after extensive searches in that area and near the family home on Bowstead Drive in St. Catharines. He had been missing since March 4.

The Clouts first suspected the neighbour after overhearing a conversation between him and another neighbour April 10. They say they heard him



Zeus is back home.

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Niagara Foundation **buys** the Wilderness

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

After years of intense negotiations, the Niagara Foundation has obtained full ownership of the Wilderness property in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The organization announced Monday that it has acquired 100 per cent of the property, thanks to a \$1 million donation from the Goettler Family Foundation, as well as "several other significant donations from Niagara-on-the-Lake residents."

The forested property is located at 407 King St. in Old Town.

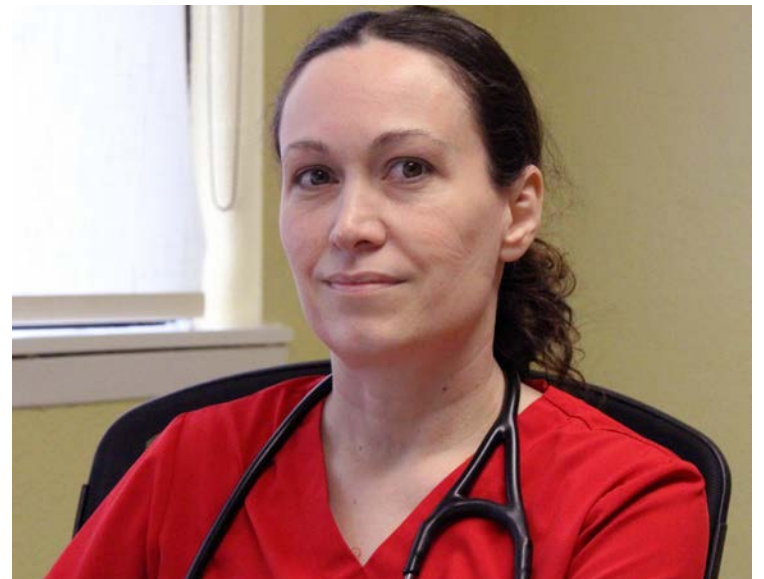
The Wilderness, "as it has been known for more than 100 years," is about five acres and "has significant historic, cultural, environmental and botanical importance within the Niagara region," said a news release from the Niagara Foundation.

The ownership of the property has been debated

Continued on Page 4

Room to grow

Niagara-on-the-Lake urged to do more for aging residents



Left: Amy Bolduc, NOTL's new nurse practitioner, began seeing patients on Monday. SUPPLIED Right: Dr. Anne Wilson joined the Niagara North Family Health Team in October. She says NOTL is in need of more family physicians. RICHARD HUTTON

CODE GREY

"Code Grey" is one in a series of stories in The Lake Report about health care in Niagara Region. In hospital parlance, "Code Grey" means loss of essential service.

Julia Sacco | The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is home to one of the largest populations of seniors in the province, but it may not be the best place for those who want to age in place. At least, not yet.

Compared to the rest of the province, NOTL has almost double the percentage of people aged 65 and older — 36.2 per cent compared to 18.5 per cent provincewide.

People aged 85 and older make

up 4.3 per cent of Niagara-on-the-Lake's population, again nearly double the province's 2.2 per cent, according to Statistics Canada.

In St. Catharines, for example, StatCan says people aged 85 and

up make up 3.2 per cent of the population while in Niagara Falls it is 3 per cent.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa thinks one reason NOTL is so

Continued on Page 5

Rand heritage landscape elements **called into question** at tribunal

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Which parts of the Rand Estate include historic Dunington-Grubb landscape elements?

It depends on who you ask, said a landscape architect retained by Solmar, which wants to build a 191-unit subdivision on the site.

Tim McCormick, an associate principal senior landscape architect and

certified arborist with Arcadis (once IBI Group), gave his testimony on day 10 of an Ontario Land Tribunal hearing, held Monday, concerning Solmar's proposal for the estate lands.

The proposal has met stiff

opposition from the town and some residents since it was first floated in 2018.

The development wound up before the tribunal after the town refused to grant Solmar permission to demolish structures on

the site, including the pool garden, the Calvin Rand Summer House and the old stable house.

Under questioning from Solmar lawyer Mark Flowlers, McCormick said features such as the panhandle

and whistlestop could not be proven to be designed by Howard and Lorrie Dunington-Grubb.

Throughout the early to mid-1900s, the Dunington-

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Elements **not proven** to be created by prominent designers: Witness

Continued from Front Page

Grubbs were responsible for landscape designs across Canada, including Oakes Garden Theatre in Niagara Falls.

“They have no evidence to prove they are designed by Dunnington-Grubb,” McCormick said.

On the other hand, the sunken garden on the property is a surviving element that was designed by the landscape architecture couple, he said.

“We have plans for it,” McCormick said. “It’s definitely clear that it is part of it.”

He acknowledged concerns were raised that the panhandle trees were also Dunnington-Grubb elements but McCormick said that was not the case and that 26 per cent of the trees actually predate the design work.

The 20-metre-wide panhandle, he said, was created when part of the property was severed for 200 John St. and used to access the property.

Solmar has put forth making panhandle an access route to the proposed subdivision.



Solmar Development Corp. wants to build a subdivision on the Rand Estate property. FILE

A circular driveway that has also been touted as being part of the Dunnington-Grubb design is also under dispute, McCormick said.

“It is my opinion that the element predates Dunnington-Grubb on the site,” he said. “And it was a constraining element to the sunken garden design.”

There are photos taken prior to the garden’s construction that show, he said, the presence of the circular drive that was in

existence “prior to the Rand ownership of the property as well.”

The Rand family took ownership of the property in 1909, he said, and photos of the property dating to 1905 show the driveway in place.

As for the whistletop, McCormick said a walkway being proposed for the development represented “an excellent commemoration opportunity while still conserving the overall heritage value of the site.”

McCormick also acknowledged that any access to the site will impact heritage attributes, including one access route proposed by Save Our Rand Estate, or SORE, from John Street, which would affect mature trees located between the Sheets and Rand houses.

An access route from Charlotte Street would impact the stone wall surrounding the estate, he added.

Given the heritage value of the property, he said he would like to see any impacts “isolated to the edge of the former estate, not through the centre of it.”

In her cross-examination of McCormick, Catherine Lyons, the lawyer representing SORE, asked about a curved roadway shown on a 1928 map of the property that showed a curved roadway leading to the bath house.

“Is it your evidence that the only purpose of that road was to access the pool garden or could it have possibly been used for something else?” she asked.

McCormick said the access was not just for the pool, adding that he wasn’t

sure what Lyons was asking.

“You called it the bath pavilion and its access drive,” Lyons said. “You didn’t mean it was a drive to simply access the bath house.”

“No,” McCormick replied.

On the subject of Dunnington-Grubb elements, Lyons noted that McCormick said he was looking for “factual, documented evidence.”

“Those are your words,” she said.

She questioned McCormick’s assessment that the bath house was not a Dunnington-Grubb element.

“You don’t have any evidence that it predates the pool garden,” Lyons said.

“I do not,” McCormick replied.

David Neligan, a lawyer representing Blair and Brenda McArthur, who live next to the Rand Estate at 210 John St., adjacent to the panhandle, also questioned McCormick.

Neligan took to task his assertion that only 23 trees would need to be removed when previous testimony last week and other experts stated as many as 50 trees could be removed.

“I’m aware of it,” McCor-

mick said, adding he hadn’t yet “dug into detail on those statements.”

But McCormick said he was only referring to removals that would take place within the panhandle itself.

Neligan then asked if it would be fair to say there was no certainty surrounding tree removal until the work was done.

“I would not 100 per cent agree,” McCormick said. “I think we’ve got a good sense of what’s going on.”

Nancy Smith, the lawyer representing the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, asked McCormick if his client (Solmar) ever asked him about the Rand lands being in compliance with the town’s property standards bylaw.

“No, they have not,” McCormick said.

The hearing had been expected to wind up May 29 but both sides agreed they will need more time.

Tribunal vice-chair Scott Tousaw, who chaired Monday’s session, offered several dates to the parties including the weeks of June 17, July 8, July 15, July 29 and Aug. 12.

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Petition calls for library neutrality

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Four Niagara-on-the-Lake residents have come together for a common purpose: to preserve what they say is the right of library patrons to have access to materials that express different points of view.

The group has launched a petition on change.org chastising the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library board for firing CEO and chief librarian Cathy Simpson and failing “to follow its own policies for protecting library neutrality and viewpoint diversity, and its attempts to ban books or change policies to restrict access to information.”

Two are retired lawyers, one is a longtime librarian and library board member, while the other is a local business owner.

As of Tuesday, 663 people had signed their petition.

“We want to be careful with what we say. We’re not putting ourselves forward as speaking for everybody,” said Tony Powell, one of the retired lawyers in the group.

“We tried to express what we thought was wrong in the petition.”

“Libraries are supposed to be a source of information,” Powell said.

The group feels that Simpson’s termination was wrong, he added, but “what we’re trying to express is why it was wrong in the petition. We assume that would resonate with people who have a similar feeling.”

Simpson was fired in the wake of an op-ed column published in The Lake Report in late February to mark Freedom to Read Week.

Simpson quoted talking points put forward by the U.S.-based Foundation



Andrew Porteus, left, and Tony Powell are members of a group behind a petition calling on the NOTL Public Library board to preserve library neutrality. RICHARD HUTTON

Against Intolerance & Racism, or FAIR, which has been labelled by some as a tool of the far right in the United States and has had its practices criticized by organizations and advocates in the realms of civil rights, social justice and equity.

FAIR executive director Monica Harris refuted those claims in an interview with The Lake Report and said accusations of the group being far right are misinformation.

A second group, the Association of Library Professionals, has also come to Simpson’s defence.

Simpson, so far, has declined to comment on the situation after being contacted on several occasions by The Lake Report.

The NOTL petitioners are not calling on the board to reinstate Simpson but rather maintain the concept of library neutrality by offering materials expressing different viewpoints, even those that some people may not necessarily agree with.

While the phrase “library neutrality” does not appear in the American Library Association’s library bill of rights, its second policy states that libraries “should provide materials and infor-

mation presenting all points of view on current and historical issues” and “materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”

Andrew Porteus, another member of the petition group, is a former librarian with the Niagara Falls Public Library and has sat on library boards in both Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

He said the debate about neutrality at the NOTL library started before Simpson’s firing.

“It started with the (op-ed) and then the letter to the editor expressing concern with it,” he said.

The letter Porteus was referring to was from resident Matthew French, who labelled Simpson’s column as right-wing propaganda.

“So the irony is she came out with this opinion piece in favour of neutrality and was concerned about self-censorship,” Powell said. “That was the main thing.”

Previously, library board chair Daryl Novak said Simpson was not fired because of the column.

“I think the one part of the message that we have failed to get across is that Cathy was not let go be-

cause she wrote an article,” Novak said earlier this month.

He also said that because Simpson signed the column as the library’s CEO, it gave the appearance that her opinions were also those of the board.

He said she was asked to write a letter saying the opinions expressed in the column were her own but did not do that.

“That, to me, is very frightening,” Powell said of this response.

Porteus, meanwhile, said one of the foundations of a library is self-education, as expressed by Andrew Carnegie, who spent the later years of his life building local libraries.

“There used to be a series of books, which was great, called ‘Opposing Viewpoints,’” Porteus said.

“They don’t publish them any more ... but they would take issues like abortion, for example, and they would give information like newspaper stories and from books on both sides of the issue.”

The group plans to bring the petition to town council and speak on the issue at the May 14 committee of the whole meeting.

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Niagara Parks refurbishing Queenston docks

Staff
The Lake Report

The Queenston boat launch has been off limits to users this week as Niagara Parks is rehabilitating the facility.

Construction on a new dock system at the boat launch property along the north Niagara Parkway and lower Niagara River began Monday and is expected to be completed by Friday, April 26.

Enhancements to the dock will include repairs to the concrete docking area, an extension of the concrete sidewalk adjacent to the dock, as well as the installation of a new custom docking

system designed to move with the levels of the river.

The work should be completed by the end of Friday with the launch reopening to boaters in time for the weekend.

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NOTL health provider **strives for equity**

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara North Family Health Team is looking for answers to help those most disadvantaged in the health care system.

In an effort to achieve health equity amongst all groups, the local team is conducting a survey of its

rostered patients to help achieve a goal of fairness and optimal representation.

Some NOTL residents may have noticed an email for the team asking for help by completing a survey.

“It has become known that some groups of people, because of their race, gender, sexual identity, languages spoken or annual income, are at a disadvan-

tage in the health care system,” it reads. “For various reasons, they do not receive the same health outcomes as other groups.

“Ontario Health recognizes this and has asked family health teams to start to collect data about these things from our patients, and we support that idea.”

The information gathered will not be shared with

anyone other than patients’ direct health care provider.

“When you complete the survey, your answers will go straight into your medical chart and be visible only to members of your health care team, who will use it to optimize your health care.”

Survey takers are able to pick and chose what they want to share. No question on the survey is mandatory.

Purchase price not revealed but ‘significant’ **donations** enabled organization to close deal

Continued from Front Page

for years, and been mired in legal proceedings since 2018.

The Niagara Foundation received a half-interest through the will of Ruth Parker, one of three sisters who owned the property.

Ruth died in 2013 and her will stipulated that the heritage elements of the Wilderness be preserved and maintained for the benefit of the public.

The executor of her will, lawyer Peter Janzen, selected the Niagara Foundation to follow Parker’s wishes.

The other half belonged to Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Ken Reid, 72, who has lived on the property for 23 years.

When the Lake Report visited the property Wednesday morning to speak to Reid, an unidentified woman who answered the door said he was not going to speak to media about the purchase.

“We’re saying ‘no comment,’” the woman said before proceeding to shut the door.

Reid inherited his half-interest in the property from his deceased wife Kea Reid, who in turn inherited from her mother Fran McKay (Parker’s sister).

Reid had taken issue with the interpretation of Parker’s will and rejected the foundation’s claim to 50 per cent ownership.

The will did not specifically name the Niagara Foundation as the body best suited for executing Parker’s dying wishes.



The Wilderness, located at 407 King St. in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake, has been purchased by the Niagara Foundation. RICHARD HUTTON

Reid challenged the foundation’s right to the property. However, in the end the Niagara Foundation was granted a 50 per cent share.

In 2022, Reid rejected an offer from the foundation to purchase his share of the property, before the court ruled on the legitimacy of the foundation’s claim to Parker’s half.

He did not disclose how much the foundation offered for his ownership stake, but at that time described it as “well below the property value.”

“It was basically just an insult offer,” he told The Lake Report in 2022.

Lyle Hall, chair of the Niagara Foundation, wouldn’t say how much the organization offered Reid for his share back then, nor how much the two parties eventually settled on.

“Acquisition of the Wilderness has been a goal of the foundation for some

time,” he said in announcing the purchase.

“We are pleased to have reached an amicable agreement with Ken Reid to acquire the 50 per cent interest not already under our control, giving us complete ownership of the property,” he said.

The transaction will close later this year. The release did not include a purchase price for Reid’s half of the property.

“We do not intend to disclose the purchase price. If Ken Reid decides to do so that’s his choice, but we have elected not to,” he told The Lake Report.

The future of the property remains to be seen.

“We intend to collaborate with heritage, planning and environmental experts to ensure we preserve the significant attributes of the land and buildings comprising the Wilderness,” said Hall.

“We also think there is

opportunity to draw on the breadth and depth of expertise and experience from within our community,” he said.

“The foundation will actively seek input from residents for project management and oversight skills as we consider options for use and interpretation of this unique asset.”

“The Niagara Foundation is most grateful to Ken Reid for facilitating this transaction and to the Goettler Family Foundation and our other donors for their financial support,” the release said.

On top of donations to help buy the property, Hall said, “additional fundraising efforts — from philanthropic individuals, corporate partners and grant-making organizations — will be required to ensure the project’s long-term success.”

- With files from Richard Hutton

NOTL has a **shortage** of physicians

Continued from Front Page

popular with seniors is because it has a lot to offer aging Canadians.

"I would say number one is climate," Zalepa told The Lake Report, citing the warm summers and idyllic autumn season.

"I'll say services as well," he added, such as the community centre, library, a strong sense of volunteerism and ample community events that take place in town.

Despite its many draws for seniors and retirees, Niagara-on-the-Lake might not be the perfect place to settle down in old age as there are numerous factors to consider.

Starting with housing: Zalepa says one of the town's greatest downfalls is addressing housing needs.

"We have a challenge there because we have a lot of older-style, single-family homes which are on what you might call larger lots. Those are not what seniors are looking for," he said.

Cindy Grant and a group of concerned community members in collaboration with Niagara College conducted an in-depth survey earlier this year to gather insights from residents aged 55 and up on the housing struggles they face.

Results of the survey haven't yet been released, but Grant said the need for improved seniors housing is obvious.

"It's clear from the conversations that myself and the committee have had over the last several months that there is a need for alternative supportive housing for seniors to either age in place or have an alternative to move to that would allow them to stay in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake," Grant told The Lake Report.

She doesn't think there will be a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather a combination of different forms of alternative housing.

Addressing those concerns is something that town council is working on by boosting housing affordability and developing more homes to meet the needs of the town's older residents, the mayor says.



The walk-in clinic at the Village Medical Centre opened to patients on Monday. FILE

Transportation and walkability can also be improved, Zalepa said.

"We are very fortunate in Niagara-on-the-Lake to have good connectivity with paths and walkways. We're going to continue investing in that," he said. Council is dedicated to adding sidewalks and connecting different subdivisions and neighbourhoods in town, he noted.

Medical care is another factor seniors should take into consideration when moving anywhere and NOTL is struggling with a doctor shortage.

Dr. Anne Wilson, with the Niagara North Family Health Team, has been practising in Niagara-on-the-Lake since last October.

And objectively, the biggest problem she has noticed is the lack of family doctors in town.

"What I'm hearing from patients is that they've lived here a long time and haven't been able to get into a family practice," she said.

When Wilson and Dr. Michael Grasic started in NOTL last year, there were already many patients on their waiting lists.

"Because they hadn't had a doctor, some of them were travelling back and forth to where their previous doctors were or they were doing remote care."

This is especially problematic for older patients who tend to have more chronic conditions like diabetes or heart failure. Without access to a family doctor, those patients are more likely to end up in a hospital.

For specific checkups, NOTL falls a bit short.

"I've noticed a difficulty with accessing imaging and this affects older patients as well," Wilson said.

For smokers in particular, CT scans to check for lung cancer are beneficial.

"When I'm ordering these CT scans locally, it is over a year for the first scan to get booked," she said.

"And this is a population again who didn't have family doctors and maybe weren't getting their regular screenings done and now we're having difficulty accessing scans."

This affects overall care, Wilson said, especially since many of the older patients cannot drive to different cities for scans, or rely on family members for transportation.

But she says there are many positives and she doesn't discourage seniors from moving to Niagara-on-the-Lake for retirement.

"I think that people with complex problems can move here, but we need to be on top of what those problems are and we need to advocate to the government to help fund these family health teams."

With increased government funding, Wilson said the family health team will be able to create special programs catering to the needs of seniors.

"For example, when I worked more rural, I worked for a family health team as well and we were able to get funding for a heart failure program," she said.

A nurse practitioner who helped patients monitor their weights and adjust medications, ultimately reduced emergency room visits.

While health care is far from perfect in Niagara-on-the-Lake, improvements are being made with the introduction of Wilson and Grasic, as well as the newly opened walk-in clinic staffed by nurse practitioner Amy Bolduc.

It opened to patients this past Monday, April 22.

Karen Stearne, executive director of Heart Niagara, echoed the goals of Wilson and Zalepa, saying that heart health is something to be mindful of everywhere.

But for those aged 80 and over, a nice place to live drastically improves quality of life.

"Fundamentally what people need is somewhere to live. They need something to do and someone to love," Stearne told The Lake Report.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake has it in spades in that area," she added, noting the tight-knit community allows seniors to build plenty of meaningful connections.

Her suggestion is simply to make living in NOTL more accessible for people with different levels of income.

"It has to not just be a friendly neighbourhood, it has to be affordable," she said.

If you or someone you know lives in NOTL and does not have a family doctor, stop in to the Niagara North Family Health Clinic for an application (or download one from www.niagaranorthfht.ca).

Wilson's and Grasic's practices are filling up fast and the clinic wants to include as many NOTL residents as possible before opening up to patients outside the area.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com

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Walking Group pitches in on Earth Day

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Walking groups are plenty, but those that save the Earth might just be a Niagara-on-the-Lake exclusive assortment.

Aptly named the “Walking Group,” 10 NOTL women out for their daily stroll along the trail system near the community centre used their Monday, April 22 outing to actively participate in Earth Day.

Under a beautifully cloud-free, sunny and crisp morning armed with trash pickers, garbage and recycling bags, the group foraged through the fresh spring ground cover collecting everything in sight not natural to the area.

And, boy, there was plenty.

“You can tell people that they should have bags in their cars,” said one member, assuming that much of what they were finding was thrown from passing vehicles.

Dog waste bags, cigarette butts, paper coffee cups, plastic bags and bottles were amongst the haul — a



A collection of NOTLers known as the Walking Group took it upon themselves to help clean up the walking trails near the community centre on Earth Day. RICHARD WRIGHT

total of 10 bags full.

However, included in their finds was a plethora of flowering bramble bushes, giving the women hope that all is not lost.

“This is a special day,” said Lori Kelly. “I think this is our fourth year in a row that we have been doing this. It’s all about keeping our Earth, ourselves and our community healthy.”

Held every year on April 22, Earth Day, is the annual

awareness day established in 1970 to mobilize environmentally concerned people in the United States into action.

By 2020, the movement had grown exponentially. Since then it has grown into a global phenomenon with over a billion people participating worldwide.

Two events were planned for NOTL this year.

On April 15, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and town

council members raised the Amnesty International flag at the town hall in Virgil in a first for NOTL’s Amnesty International group. Never before had it reached out to the community to boost such awareness.

On Earth Day proper, naturalist Owen Bjorgan gave a lecture at the community centre. The topic covered species that are threatened with extinction in Niagara.



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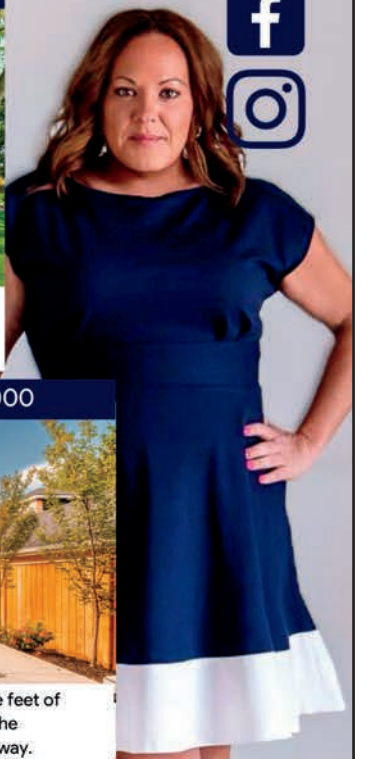


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To the rescue: NOTL's volunteer team is ready to help save lives

Civilian group helps military find lost people and planes

Evan Loree
The Lake Report

On a routine training exercise, a team of search and rescue volunteers spent Saturday morning trudging through Woodend Conservation Area in Niagara-on-the-Lake looking for one of their own.

Randy Klaassen, a search co-ordinator with the Niagara chapter of the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (known as CASARA), played the role of a lost and exhausted hiker while the rest of his team searched for him.

The volunteer group assists the Canadian military and coast guard by providing aerial support in searches for lost people across Ontario.

The civil search and rescue team is often deployed to look for downed airplanes and lost hikers.

Klaassen, who's been with the Niagara chapter for 16 years, said the work often takes volunteers to extremely remote locations.

The Niagara chapter, headquartered at the Niagara District Airport, has about 35 active volunteers and seven attended Saturday morning's training session.

A few NOTLers were in the mix, including Cathy Buis, Fran Doran and Klaassen himself.

But some, like Gideon Luty, came from as far away as Milton to participate in the training exercise.

"When I look at what I do as a correctional officer, I don't feel like I'm contributing to making the world a better place," said Luty, who works in a juvenile detention centre in Toronto.

He said volunteering with the search and rescue unit makes him feel like he's giving back to the community.

Luty also volunteers with the Oakville chapter of the auxiliary coast guard.

Though the team planned to train in the sky, aboard a Cessna 182 aircraft, Klaassen said the wind was too severe, so the team resorted to a ground exercise instead.



Gideon Luty, right, with Shane Barton, observes as the signal picked up by his homing device gets stronger as the two travel back toward the mobile command vehicle. EVAN LOREE

The crew at CASARA receives requests for aerial support through the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Trenton, which alerts the group whenever it receives a distress signal through an emergency radio channel.

People interested in learning more about NOTL's volunteer search and rescue unit are welcome to attend its next open house, this Saturday, April 27, in the CASARA building at Niagara District Airport. It runs from 9 to 4 p.m.

Klaassen noted planes have emergency beacons that go off if they crash. Some hikers also bring emergency beacons when trekking through remote areas.

These get picked up by the rescue centre in Trenton, which then musters a search effort, often relying on civil volunteers and military professionals to lead the effort.

Once the team in Niagara gets the call, they assemble a few volunteers and head to the search area, using their own radios and homing devices to close in on the signal.

On Saturday, it was about 10 a.m. when the crew debriefed at the airport clubhouse.

The volunteers then rounded up some essen-

tial gear, including warm clothes, high-visibility vests and snacks in case the search ran long.

They boarded a mobile command vehicle, affectionately known as the Pig, and took off in the direction of Woodend, where the emergency signal was coming from.

Though the team was using radios to pick up the signal, safety officer Glenn Osmond said it's common for emergency beacons to be damaged or destroyed in crashes. This can make search and rescue efforts much more challenging.

Luty said it's common for crash sites to go undiscovered, despite best efforts.

In his two years with CASARA, Luty said he's never been involved in a real aerial search.

"I'm not looking to have any experience on someone else's misfortune," he said. "I would rather have false alarms all day long."

Osmond, on the other hand, was involved in a search for two people who went down in a plane near Fort Hope in northwestern Ontario in March 2023.

Though Osmond was the first to spot the crash site, he said it was a team effort.

Klaassen, also involved in the highly publicized search, said it's exhausting and taxing work.

An aerial search team consists of a navigator, a pilot and two spotters who alternately scan a search area 20 minutes at a time, sometimes for eight-hour stretches.

Klaassen said the search took five days.

The passengers were dead when the plane was finally located near Chaucer Lake, north east of Thunder Bay, on March 4 of last year.

Despite the emotional heft, Klaassen said he feels an "adrenalin rush" when the team receives a request for assistance from the rescue centre.

Though many on the team profess a love of aviation, they have diverse professional backgrounds.

While Luty works in corrections, Buis is a retired nurse and team co-ordinator. Shane Barton parks cars in Niagara Falls.

For Buis, the reason to get involved was "exceptional."

"The possibility to hopefully find somebody is always great," she said.


The team arrived in Woodend at around 10:30 and spent about one hour looking for Klaassen before finding him.

The team split off into two groups of three and four, with Barton, a 40-year team veteran, leading the search.

The rocks, valleys and even wrought iron fences in the park area near Niagara College interfered with the signals of their homing devices, prolonging the search.


Klaassen told The Lake Report the terrain would challenge the volunteers but estimated they'd be done by 11 a.m.

The team finally reconvened, safe and sound, at the airport around noon, splitting a few pizzas after the chilly training exercise.



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Spring is in bloom



Joer Gonzalez prunes peach trees on Sunday. The blossoms are out earlier than usual this year and farmers are concerned about the chance of cold weather fronts harming buds. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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Contributed by Patty Garriock
"It always seems impossible until it is done."
 - Nelson Mandela

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Editorial

On service in the public interest

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

When it comes to leading and guiding community organizations, Niagara-on-the-Lake is fortunate to have scores of volunteers who give of their time, energy and expertise.

The people behind the town's many community groups, agencies and governance boards in many cases are the backbone of their organizations.

Most toil in anonymity, known only to those who have a direct interest in the groups these people help run.

But sometimes these volunteers find themselves in the spotlight unexpectedly, forced to deal with controversial, even uncomfortable, situations that they might prefer were never in the public eye.

But there's the rub for a lot of these organizations. Many are wholly or partially funded from the public purse or report directly or indirectly to public bodies, such as the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In that regard, the decisions, debates, meetings and plans of these groups are and should be subject to public scrutiny.

Obviously, there are some limits — something we've been reminded about twice in recent weeks.

Last month, after chief librarian Cathy Simpson's opinion piece about Freedom to Read Week appeared in The Lake Report, she was fired by the volunteer board that oversees the NOTL Public Library.

And just two weeks ago, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL suddenly parted ways with its CEO, Minerva Ward.

These are personnel matters and thus are shrouded in secrecy because that's how such matters typically are handled.

Those on the outside are left not knowing what really happened nor full details about what factors led to a dismissal or a resignation.

And, unfortunately, in both cases, NOTL being a small town, there has been a lot of speculation about "the real story."

Despite the public nature of the work they do, neither the library board nor the chamber owes the public a detailed explanation about a personnel situation. That's the way

the system works and we respect it.

However, we feel the people leading and working for such organizations need to remember that transparency and openness should remain hallmarks of their operations.

To be honest, as a media organization, until Simpson was fired, we never paid any attention to meetings of the NOTL Public Library board. There just was no news to report from the board's meetings.

That changed with Simpson's firing and last Wednesday evening the library board convened for its first monthly public meeting since her departure.

The Lake Report decided to send a reporter to cover the meeting, in case anything newsworthy occurred.

A day or so prior to the meeting, we were told that, because the room where the meeting is held is tiny, only a handful of outsiders are permitted and they must register in advance.

The room was now decreed full and we were out of luck, but could talk to the chair afterward if we wished. No livestream of the meeting was available.

We were told other local media accepted that

explanation, but we did not. Without trying to sound too self-righteously indignant about it, we told co-chair Daryl Novak that was unacceptable and we would be sending a reporter.

It was a public meeting of the public library board, after all.

In the circumstances, it is surprising that the board or library staff didn't recognize there would be greater public and media interest in the board's deliberations immediately after the firing of the CEO.

Thankfully, after some to and fro, Novak agreed to make it work and our reporter was on hand to freely take in the meeting, interview staff and board members, take photos and produce a story for our website and this week's paper.

A tempest in a teapot. A bit of inside baseball. But crisis averted.

We were able to report on the gathering. The public interest was served.

However, it is a gentle reminder to all who work in the public realm that the public interest always comes first.

And we respectfully suggest perhaps the library board could try to find a bigger room.

editor@niagaranow.com

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Let's demand a better animal welfare system

Dear editor:
I followed the story of Zeus, the family cat that was trapped by a neighbour in St. Catharines on March 4 and dropped off across the Welland canal in rural Niagara-on-the-Lake "because the neighbour didn't like cats urinating on his tires and windows."

Fortunately, Zeus was found last Thursday, April 18, six weeks after he was scooped up.

What the neighbour did should be considered animal abuse, theft of property and malicious intent. Niagara Regional Police have since launched an investigation but why weren't they involved earlier?

This case was forwarded to Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS), an agency of the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Why is this service under the solicitor general's ministry, which oversees criminal offences, if PAWS cannot investigate and charge the



Zeus the cat has a new Apple AirTag just in case he goes missing again. In March, he was kidnapped by a neighbour and dumped in a ravine in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Despite the neighbour's confession, and deliberate attempts to hide his actions from neighbours initially, Niagara police say no crime was committed. RICHARD WRIGHT

offender, given his admission of the offence and his threat to other families that own cats in the neighbourhood?

I called the PAWS line. After listening to an unpleasant, somewhat intimidating voice message, there was no help there — they could only take a message

and forward the concern on. "Sheila," the answering service employee, appeared just as shocked and upset by this event as I was. She encouraged me to write an email to the solicitor general's ministry (solgen.correspondence@ontario.ca) detailing our concerns and requesting some action.

I would encourage others to do the same with a copy to MPP Wayne Gates (wgates-co@ndp.on.ca), MP Tony Baldinelli (Tony.Baldinelli@parl.gc.ca) and Niagara Regional Police Service media relations (Stephanie.sabourin@niagara-police.ca).

I am appalled but not surprised that there are people like this in our communities. We need to stand up to them and ensure their illegal activities have consequences.

Pets are beloved family members and they rely on us to keep them safe. Cats are permitted to roam — as are wild animals such as skunks, raccoons, possums, squirrels etc.

I understand the irritation that some feel regarding others' pets but trapping, stealing and harming an animal is against the law.

Deal with the owner, not the pet.

Megan Wood
NOTL

Neighbour is not being denied access to site plan

Dear editor:

Re: Kip Voegel's April 17 letter "Like it or not, site plans should be public," I have to remind myself that the editors are responsible for writing the headlines on letters, not Mr. Voegel or myself.

Be that as it may, the question that Mr. Voegel has been posing to your readership since Dec. 7 of last year ("Do residents have rights when neighbours build next door?") is not whether a site plan or an address should be public, or "what private and personal information is on a site plan?" (April 3, "Town denies request for copy of a site plan").

His real question is: why can't he get his own personal copy of his neighbour's site plan? That's it.

He has seen the site plan at least twice, by his own admission. He is not being denied access to information; he is being denied his own copy for his own records.

The neighbours have done nothing wrong, they just won't furnish Mr. Voegel with his own personal copy of their site plan.

So he went to the town and named the two staff members in your paper when they also said "no."

Like the owners of the site plan in question, the town clerks let Mr. Voegel view the site plan. He just didn't get to walk out with a copy of his own under his arm.

In my opinion, it's irresponsible to keep publishing Mr. Voegel's narrative on "neighbour's rights" without doing some fact-checking first.

What rights have actually been violated here? Come

out to the neighbourhood and do some good old-fashioned journalism and get to the bottom of the story.

Did Mr. Voegel's digital antenna end up losing a channel or two? Has he lost his ability to watch some television? What does his view of the river actually look like now that this house has gone up?

Come take a picture. You've already published a picture of the front of his house, take one of the backyard now.

If you drove by, I'm sure you'd see that both of Mr. Voegel's properties have terrific views of the river and his claim otherwise is absolute nonsense.

Come ask his neighbours about drainage. Get a range of viewpoints if it's worthy to keep printing. My lawn got flooded, too, but I don't feel that I lost any of my rights to my neighbour's construction. The builders fixed the issue immediately.

As for his statement that "all addresses are public ... Google them," it's worth mentioning that when you Google the address in question, Mr. Voegel's letter to you is the first hit that you can read publicly without a subscription.

Yes, all addresses are public in the same way that all licence plates are public. If you're not doing anything wrong, there is no reason to publish the information in your local paper.

Residents don't get to deputize themselves and become de facto approval committees for their neighbours' building plans. Like it or not.

Jason Chesworth
NOTL

Public supports library, but not the current board

Dear editor:
I expect the failure of our library board to resign en masse will result in a town funding backlash come budget time.

In your online story after last Wednesday's library board meeting (NOTL library board remains tight-lipped about firing of CEO Cathy Simpson), co-chair Wayne Scott stated that with regards to how people in the community feel about it, "He is confident the community still supports the library."

That is correct. However, people do not support the board or its decision to fire chief librarian Cathy Simpson.

Scott further states, regarding the magnitude of the community backlash: "I personally don't have enough of a network in the community to make a judgment."

Why not? You are on the board and should have a sense of the residents' reading aspirations and their overwhelming support for Simpson.

Why was the NOTL Library Neutrality group formed? Your failure to resign and instead allow the tail to wag the dog, by bowing to a group of employees who colluded and stabbed Simpson in the back will come back to haunt you at budget time.

I, for one, support the library but will vehemently oppose spending a dime of my taxpayer money to support it while this board remains in power.

Furthermore, I will finan-

cially support the NOTL Library Neutrality group should it expand its opposition base and decide to rent the community centre for a taxpayer vote on future funding.

The narrative in the media may have temporarily abated, but not the overwhelming taxpayers' sentiments for the greater good and to not be censored in what they read.

We have long memories.

Samuel Young
NOTL

Man who trapped and dumped neighbour's cat should face consequences

Dear editor:
Your April 18 story about a man who trapped a neighbour's cat ("Cat kidnapped, dumped in NOTL"), then took it to an unfamiliar place and set it free, knowing it could not find its way back, makes me very angry.

If he cannot be charged with theft, then at the very

least he should be charged with causing unnecessary suffering to an animal.

Over the years I have known people like him, neighbours, who have this OCD complex about keeping their lawns and gardens perfect. Some of them have gone to ridiculous lengths, much to my amusement.

But this is different.

So a cat has been peeing on your tires, or doing its business in your garden? Well big deal, buddy.

The world isn't going to come to an end. What is wrong with you? You think it's fine to trap a neighbour's pet and do what you did, just because of that? You need your head examined.

I will say one thing in this man's defence and that it is not right or safe for people to let their cats wander. I know it is their nature, and I am a cat owner, but things are not the same as they were back in the 1960s and '70s.

You have fanatical people like this man, but

you also have coyotes and birds of prey increasingly coming into suburban areas and you are putting your pet's life at risk.

Unless you have an enclosed backyard, where the cat cannot get out, I think doing this is an unwise decision.

I still think this guy is in the wrong and I would

tell him that to his face — and he should be charged for what he did. But that's a moot point now, isn't it?

I'm happy to learn Zeus was found alive. But that doesn't excuse the fact that what this man did was wrong, plain and simple.

Martin Murray
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Wood can be a **happy answer** to design problems



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

Driving into the outskirts of Old Town, it is impossible to miss the steel and concrete edifice rising on Niagara Stone Road.

Now, this is not a commentary on the design – the rendering of which makes it appear vaguely like a temple – but rather the construction method and materials, which impose limits on architectural creativity and expression.

One can make a concrete and steel building look industrial, commercial or institutional and through decorative artifice and elements reduce its inherently cold, brooding and rigid appearance.

Further, a talented architect can create a building from these materials that is impressive, artistic and even inspired.

However, you cannot make it organically inviting nor warm and embracing on an intuitive human level.

Moreover, the cement and concrete industries are one of the two least sustainable industries in the world.

According to a November 2020 report from Princeton University, they produce over eight per cent of overall global emissions and 4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (production of each pound of concrete releases 0.93 pounds of CO₂) annually.

The highly energy intensive steel production industry isn't far behind.

The International Energy Agency 2023 publication, "Emissions Measurement and Data Collection for a Net Zero Steel Industry," reported that, "The steel industry accounts for around 2.8 gigatonnes of CO₂ emissions per year, or eight per cent of total energy system emissions."



Architectural artistry expressed through the medium of massive timber. BLUMER LEHMANN AG

There has to be a better way from both a sustainability perspective and for architectural design grounded at the intuitive human level.

The happy answer is look to wood – but, not just any wood as we will see.

So, several decades ago, I found myself just west of Bath, England, as a guest in a house built circa 1100.

The squire, whose family had originally built the house, showed me to my bedroom while apologizing that we had to step over the timber frame members that formed the structural integrity of the building.

But, each time I stepped over those timber beams, my mind asked, "How integral is the timber frame to the survival of this house for over more than 800 years?"

It turned out that, just like Ontario's 19th-century barns – many of which are still in active use today – a properly designed timber frame with mortise and tendon oak pegged joints is a marvelous structural construct.

In addition, it's one of the principal reasons for the longevity of many historic buildings.

That said, our ancestors were surrounded by plentiful old growth forests from which they could harvest long (species dependant,

they could be more than 60 feet), straight, strong, old-growth trees.

They are four to six times denser than secondary or tertiary growth with corollary benefits of greater tensile strength, stability, plus fire, decay, insect resistance and more – they were used as logs in their timber frames.

And, while it takes several centuries of species competition in a healthy forest ecosystem to yield old-growth trees, it only took humankind less than 100 years to largely eradicate North America's old growth forests.

Thus, by the early years of the 20th century, the majority of the wood available for construction was harvested from smaller and inferior secondary and tertiary growth – wood generally suitable only for stick-framing.

Enter the advent of steel. Steel suffers from few of the downsides of wood and has a higher tensile strength per cubic space inch occupied.

Yes, it was more brittle and prone to failure during seismic events.

Yes, it was more expensive – and remains so today – than traditional wood construction.

And yes, engineered steel construction limited full architectural expression.

But, it was readily available and a product of the late 19th and early 20th century "way sexy" allure of industrialization.

Given that steel and concrete have been the go-to construction materials for the last 100 years, while the use of available lumber is limited to sticking framing, why would I suggest that wood might be a "happy answer?"

Enter human invention in the form of engineered wood products.

Commonly known as "mass timber," these engineered products were developed to utilize the inferior wood produced in secondary and tertiary growth forests.

As a group, the products are made from dimensional lumber, veneer or wooden strands that are laminated – generally with glue, but may occasionally be doweled or nailed – together into "massive" structural elements such as panels, columns and beams.

The key mass timber products include cross-laminated timber, glued laminated timber, nail-laminated timber, mass plywood panels, laminated veneer lumber, parallel strand lumber and laminated strand lumber.

Similar to the manufacture of common plywood

- in which strength and stability are engendered through glued cross lamination of multiple layers of processed wood sheets, each type of mass timber product is manufactured through processes which are derivatives of or variations on this theme.

For instance, glulam is made by gluing parallel layers of finger-jointed lumber into columns and beams while laminated veneer lumber is made from glued layered veneer.

Parallel strand lumber and laminated strand lumber are produced from wooden strands impregnated with glue and formed into beams or columns.

Like its name suggests, mass plywood panels are massive sheets of plywood, albeit much thicker (up to 12 inches), longer (up to 60 feet) and wider (up to 12 feet), that can be used for floors, walls, roofs or formed into columns and beams.

Cross-laminated timber, on the other hand, is made by gluing alternating grain direction layers of machine stress-rated, finger-jointed, dimensional lumber into large panels suitable for use as roof, wall and floor assemblies and industrial mats.

Production happens in a factory, and when the manufacturer obtains

the engineered building drawings, the dimensions, measurements and so on can be inputted directly into the manufacturing process, thereby producing mass timber components of a size and configuration exactly matching the plans.

This leads to less waste and shortens construction time by approximately 25 per cent.

As a point of reference, mass timber products are not inexpensive, however, the columns, beams and panels, on average, weigh one-fifth the weight of concrete and steel materials, reducing shipping costs and requiring a smaller workforce to install.

Combined, these items (amongst others) and the reduced construction time are significant cost competitive advantages.

Mass timber is fire resistant – generally, well exceeding the fire ratings in North American building codes.

Recent mass timber buildings weigh approximately one-fifth that of comparable concrete buildings, which in turn reduces their foundation size, inertial seismic forces and embodied energy.

High strength-to-weight ratios enable mass timber to perform well during seismic activity.

And, it's sustainable: according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "the near term use of cross-laminated timber and other emerging wood technologies in buildings seven to 15 stories could have the same emissions control affect as taking more than two million cars off the road for one year."

But, at the beginning and end of the day, wood structures have a biophilic effect on people, increasing occupants' overall health and wellness.

Moreover, some of the most beautiful recent architecture has been built with mass timber.

So, yes, wood is a "happy answer."

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.



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Despite confession, police say nothing criminal happened in abandoned cat case

Continued from Front Page

remark that he “got rid of” followed soon after by “big black and white cat”.

A subsequent investigation by The Lake Report resulted in a full confession from the man. That story was published April 18, the same day police announced the investigation into the neighbour’s actions.

Now, with no charges being laid and the investigation over, the family wonders if the neighbour will feel free to repeat his actions in the future — if not to their pet, perhaps another family cat.

When asked if abandonment did not constitute a criminal offence, Vujasic answered via email without directly responding to the pointed inquiry.

“(The) investigation has determined that what was believed to be a stray the cat was removed from the area. The owners have since followed up with the investigating officer to inform them that the cat



Zeus was reunited with his owner Wendy Clout last Wednesday night. RICHARD WRIGHT

has been recovered. This investigation does not meet the threshold for criminal charges.”

The Clouts are obviously upset with that decision.

“This is frustrating,” said Wendy Clout. “The guy is not facing any consequences to deter him. No criminality? Does that

give him permission to do it again?”

Despite their concerns, the Clouts are happy their beloved pet is home. While they plan to keep him indoors, that’s not always easy with active cats.

They have purchased an AirTag collar to track his movements.

“We are going to try and keep him in the house as much as we can,” said Clout.

“He’s already made a few dashes for the door. With all the dogs going out and the kids coming and going, that is why we got the collar.”

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U of T experts helped Apollo 13 avoid tragedy

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Toronto, we've had a problem. Those exact words are imagined, but nonetheless echo the real sentiment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on April 16, 1970. It was a Thursday, three days after the world learned of an explosion aboard the Apollo 13 spacecraft en route to the moon, and one day before the three astronauts safely returned to Earth.

On the other end of the phone line was the University of Toronto's Institute for Aerospace Studies.

Dr. Rod Tennyson, now a resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, was a junior tenured professor researching materials science and space structures.

For the next seven hours that day, however, he became part of a team of Canadian experts whose intellectual contribution to the happy ending of this story has rarely been told.

But now, there's a group of NOTLers who can spread



Speaking to NOTL residents at St. Mark's Anglican Church April 16, Dr. Roderick C. Tennyson told the harrowing story of how he and a group of Canadian aerospace scientists helped save the Apollo 13 astronauts. RICHARD WRIGHT

the word of this country's incredible role thanks to the latest session of the Addison Hall Lecture Series at St. Mark's Anglican Church held on April 16 — exactly 54 years to the day that Canada got the call to help save the lives of three U.S. spacemen.

On a normal mission, only the command module of the spacecraft would return to Earth with the astronauts.

However, because of the explosion and resulting damage to the craft, the

moon landing was aborted and each of the command module, the lunar excursion module and service module were still connected to each other.

A 32-inch-wide tunnel between the modules made room for the astronauts to travel between stations on the craft.

"NASA asked us to calculate the pressure you would put into the tunnel to blow the lunar excursion module (LEM) away from the command module," said Tennyson.

"If the angle was too low it could cause the LEM to come in (on re-entry to the Earth) behind the command module."

That was not an acceptable outcome.

With too little pressure the separating craft might have collided and if there was too much pressure the lunar module's hatch could have been damaged, endangering the lives of all aboard.

Tennyson and the team got to work. The call came in at 9 a.m. NASA needed an answer by 4 p.m.

Simple, right? "But remember," he told the enthralled audience, "We had no laptops, no software and no kids to tell us how to do this," he joked. "We used slide rulers."

With the parameters of the task in hand, the team consisting of professors Barry French, Ben Etkin, Irv Glass, Phil Sullivan, Peter Hughes and Tennyson, broke into small or individual work groups.

In the end, the amount of pressure that was determined safe was 2 psi. That didn't mean the problem was solved, however.

"My job was not the calculation of pressure, but to take that number and see if it would damage the hatch of the module that the astronauts were in," said Tennyson.

"My calculations showed that the deformation would be small with that pressure — not enough to worry about."

Indeed, the numbers were good.

Astronauts James Lovell, John Swigert and Fred Haise were able to blow the hatch and make the separa-

tion without further damage to the vehicle. The craft made a successful re-entry on April 17, 1970, with the world watching, landing in the Pacific Ocean near Samoa.

Two days later, the team received another phone call from the engineer in charge of the lunar module. It was then they found out they were the only ones asked to come up with a solution for that problem.

"We assumed they weren't going to just rely on us," said Tennyson.

"When they said, 'You guys are the only people we called,' I thought to myself, 'Well, I'm glad I didn't know that at the time.'"

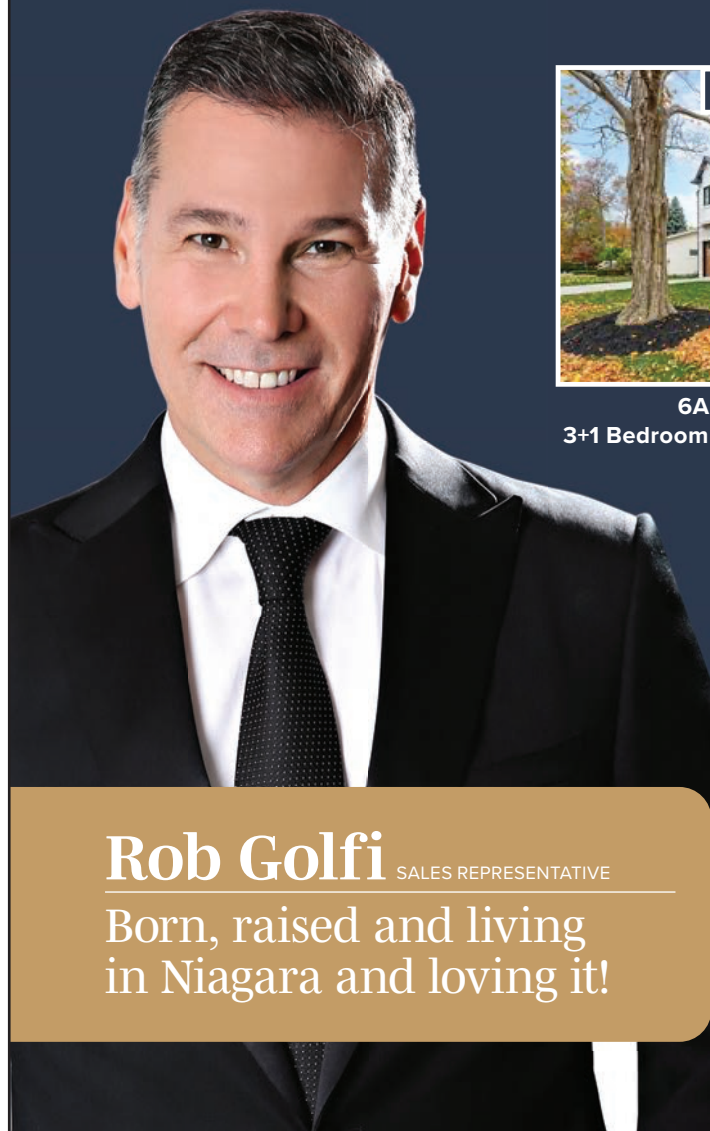
In 1995, "Apollo 13," a major motion picture starring Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton and Kevin Bacon depicting the harrowing event, hit theatres worldwide.

While the movie itself failed to make mention of the role Canada played, the University of Toronto's Institute for Aerospace Studies and the team were named and thanked in the closing credits.

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Revellers splash paint at Konzelmann

Evan Loree
The Lake Report

A few visitors to Konzelmann Estate Winery had to be careful not to dip their paint brushes in their wine glasses Saturday afternoon.

The estate winery hosted Ann Merritt, co-founder of You and I Paint, who led a few of the winery's visitors through a painting lesson as they tasted a sampling of charcuterie and vino.

"You don't need any art experience for an event like this," Merritt said, adding it was a very inclusive and therapeutic environment.

Merritt started the company with her older sister, Ban Markos in 2020. The two offer painting classes for private events, often bringing their services to the wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The company will be hosting another paint event at Peller Estates Winery for Mothers Day on May 12.

Tickets are currently on sale for \$115 a pop at the Peller Estates website.

Several of the amateur Van Goghs and would-be Monets were there celebrating birthdays.

Pamela Bursey was celebrating her 30th birthday with a few friends.

And Rebecca Haidary, with husband Omar Haidary, were visiting together



Above: Connie Li and Sandy Dupuis sit back to back for Ann Merritt's guided painting session. Left: Ann Merritt, co-founder of You and I Paint, shows her clients how to paint lavender leaves.
EVAN LOREE

from Hamilton in celebration of her 30th as well.

"You don't often see paint and wine together," her husband said.

Haidary said he and his wife were staying at the Prince of Wales Hotel for the night and stumbled on the paint and wine pairing while looking for a fun afternoon activity.

Bursey's friend Sandy Dupuis sat on the other side of a row of easels and half-painted canvases,

taking the occasional sip of Konzelmann's wine as a sommelier walked the guests through the floral and fruity notes of each vintage.

"We're just celebrating, doing something fun," Dupuis said.

As Merritt walked the group through the steps needed to paint a sky and field framed by stalks of lavender, Dupuis shared that it was a new activity for her. "You know what I did my

best. That's all that matters," she said.

Merritt said she and her sister used to work in architecture together before they made the switch to art.

"I've always followed my sister's footsteps," she said, adding they had two daughters each and were always spending time together.

And though it was hard to leave architecture behind to become "starving artists," she said they "always had a calling for arts."



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: HELPING THE PLANET

Carlsberg, a fine beer from this country, is helping out with the plastic problem by gluing its cans together.

Last issue:

Category: SPLITTING HAIRS

Clue: Let the difference be known — a top knot is on top of the head but a "man" this is near the crown or back.

Answer: What is a bun?

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jane Morris, Bob Wheatley, Angie Woods, Catherine Clarke, Lynda Collet, Susan Dewar, Pam Dowling, Gary Davis, Lynne Stewart, Esther VanGorder, Wade Durling, Carol Durling, Jim Dandy, Nancy Rocca, Mike Gander, Sylvia Wiens, Ather Alibhai, Sheila Meloche, Sue Rautenberg, Katie Reimer, Edna Groff, David Spencer, Marla Percy, Sigrid Wiens

Email answers to editor@niagaranow.com, with your name, for a chance to win a \$25 Irish Harp Pub gift card every week. (Subject line: Riddle me this)

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Donor spotlight: David Murray and Elizabeth Surtees

Barbara Worthy
Special to The Lake Report

A society that doesn't learn from its past is doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past — and it's a philosophy embraced by David Murray and his wife, Elizabeth Surtees, who have been decades-long supporters of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

"The more you know about your history, the more commitment and sense of belonging you have to your community. And the museum has that history," Murray said, as he reflected on the reason he and Surtees have given generously to the museum's capital expansion campaign — in the form of a significant six-figure donation.

The couple's support of the museum, since moving to Niagara in 2001, has resulted in the addition of significant learning and education platforms.

They have created pro-



Since moving to Niagara in 2001, David Murray and Elizabeth Surtees have helped create educational programming for the NOTL Museum, to keep locals informed of the expansive history of their town. SUPPLIED

grams as diverse as the hugely popular "Famous and Infamous" monthly lectures, the installation of several significant brass heritage plaques around the villages that make up Niagara-on-the-Lake, as well as sponsoring the nine-part "History of Niagara" documentary series.

"There are so many people coming to the Niagara area," said Surtees.

"However, many of them are not aware of Niagara's history. It's all there to

explore at the museum — but as the collection continues to grow, the museum itself must expand."

The need for expansion is nothing new.

The Niagara Historical Society was formed in 1895, and with its first president and curator, Janet Carnochan, it operated out of one room in the Niagara Court House — until the size of the collection demanded more space.

Under the formidable Carnochan, Memorial Hall

was built and completed by 1907 on Castlereagh Street, the first purpose-built museum in Ontario.

By the 1950s, it had grown to include the Niagara High School (circa 1875) and today is the home of the newly branded NOTL Museum.

The museum houses more than 50,000 archives and artifacts and presents more than 100 programs every year that explore Niagara-on-the-Lake's diverse history.

Murray, a history graduate of the University of Wales and later the University of Manitoba, brought his own unique world vision to the museum.

A retired labour arbitration judge, his career has taken him around the globe, from correspondent for the Thomson Media chain, to his role as a seasoned arbiter for municipal, academic, professional and civil labour disputes.

A critical observer of

people and places, Murray also has a deep appreciation for the rare and beautiful, as seen in his antiquarian 92-volume travel book collection, "The Twenty Shilling Series," published between 1901 and 1921.

Now housed in Brock University's library and special collections, Murray fell in love with their stunningly preserved colour illustrations and unusual detail.

While searching through one particular antiquarian book shop, Murray met another book lover, Surtees.

Originally from Dorset, England, and a graduate of the University of London, Surtees was manager of administration for CJRT Radio in Toronto (better known today as JAZZ FM91).

From under the shadow of the Toronto Gooderham Building, their shared love of books grew into love and admiration for each other.

That shared passion resulted in Murray and

Surtees undertaking a variety of philanthropic activities with the NOTL Museum, as well as being the major private donors toward the 2016 renovation and expansion of the NOTL Public Library.

"But there's the social aspect of the museum that we like so much," said Surtees. "It's a place where we feel connected to the community, and you just can't help but learn something new there."

Both Murray and Surtees have each previously served two terms as museum board members, during the initial development of its expansion plans.

"We've seen this need grow over the years, not just for the collection, but also in terms of accessibility," said Murray.

"This museum breathes history and is an historical structure in its own right. But the expansion is essential — and now it's time to make it happen."

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Gazebo painting is **cover** of new tourism map

Staff
The Lake Report

It's an instantly recognizable location you likely pass by a lot on Front Street and this summer artist Win Henstock's beautiful depiction of it will be displayed on thousands of maps given to tourists visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Henstock's painting, "Picnic in the Park," which shows the Queen's Royal Park gazebo on a sunny day, has been chosen as the cover design for Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake's 2024-2025 tourism map.

It was selected from among several other works submitted by artists. In addition to using her painting on the seasonal tourism map, Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake awarded Henstock a \$500 honorarium. "Win's artwork beautifully captures the essence of our picturesque town," said John Foreman, president of Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake. "Her painting



From left, Rima Boles, Pumphouse director, artist Win Henstock, and John Foreman, president of Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake. Henstock received a \$500 honorarium from Stay NOTL for her winning painting. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

embodies the appeal of Niagara-on-the-Lake."

With over 25 years of experience as a professional artist, Henstock is an elected member of the Society of Canadian Artists and the Toronto Watercolour Society. She conducts workshops at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre and various locations.

"Win's painting stood

out for its loose brushwork depicting the Queen's Royal Park gazebo," says Rima Boles, the Pumphouse's director.

"Her work represents Niagara-on-the-Lake's charm and will undoubtedly entice visitors to explore."

The Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake tourism map is a resource for those looking to explore the town's tourist

attractions, offering visitors not only a comprehensive guide to all that NOTL has to offer but also a listing of short-term accommodation options.

Distributed by Stay Niagara-on-the-Lake members, Tourism NOTL, area businesses and tourist information centres, copies of the 2024-2025 season maps are set to be released in May.

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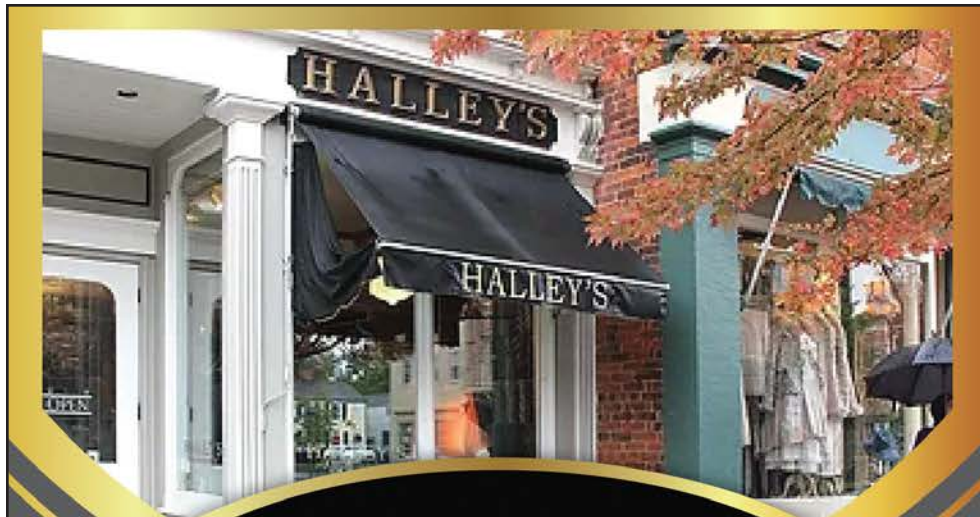
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NOTL senior completes her **fifth** London Marathon

Staff
The Lake Report

Marathoner Margot Devlin conquered London on Sunday for the fifth time.

Registered in the age 65 to 69 category, the Niagara-on-the-Lake runner even bettered her time from last year's rain-soaked race by more than 22 minutes.

She finished the demanding 26.2-mile (42-kilometre) London Marathon course in a time of 6:45.14.

"It was a cold, windy day but the crowds were unbelievable this year," Devlin said in a message from England.

"I think there were double the spectators from last year. It was wild."

With number 5 done she already has signed up for London Marathon number 6 next year.

The NOTL senior, who always says she's not fast, just slow and steady, ran her



NOTL's Margot Devlin holds the medal received for completing Sunday's London Marathon. SHAUN DEVLIN

11th New York City Marathon last November.

She has now finished 16 full marathons and several half-marathons.

One of her goals has been to complete 15 (or more)

Big Apple marathons.

"Because after you do 15, you get to wait for the start in a heated tent on Staten Island with all the elite runners and celebrities," she said previously.

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Library board remains tightlipped about CEO firing

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

While the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library board has officially appointed an acting CEO and chief librarian, what happened with the person who held that role previously is still percolating in the background.

The board met behind closed doors as a part of its Wednesday, April 17 meeting to discuss what the agenda labelled as “personal matters about an identifiable individual.”

Afterward, board co-chair Wayne Scott was reluctant to speak about what went on during the closed session or acknowledge it was about the library’s former CEO, Cathy Simpson, who was fired in March.

Wednesday’s meeting was the first board session since Simpson was dismissed.

Simpson was let go after an op-ed in The Lake Report meant to draw attention to Freedom to Read Week, drew flak for supporting the views of the U.S.-based Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism.



Laura Tait, left was officially named acting CEO and chief librarian at the April 17 library board meeting. With Tait is board co-chair Wayne Scott. RICHARD HUTTON

FAIR has been accused in some quarters of spouting far-right talking points.

“I think you can draw your own conclusions,” Scott said. Board co-chair Daryl Novak was out of town and joined the meeting remotely.

Asked if the board or town had received any notice of legal action in the Simpson matter, Scott remained tightlipped.

“It would be inappropriate for any of us to talk about and speculate about what’s going on with respect to the completion of that termination process.”

Simpson, when contacted by The Lake Report, apologized and said, “I can’t comment at this time.”

Both FAIR and the Association of Library Professionals have spoken out against Simpson’s dismissal.

As for Simpson’s replacement, the board formally appointed Laura Tait to take over the role as acting CEO and chief librarian.

It’s a job she has been doing since March after the board fired Simpson, who had held that position for 11 years. Tait previously was library manager.

“It gives me the freedom to carry on what I’ve been doing,” Tait said after the meeting wrapped up.

It is unknown how long Tait will do the job and when asked if she would consider taking on the role permanently if it was offered, Scott jumped in.

“I think that’s premature for the board and, perhaps, for Laura as well,” he said.

“There is in the background, the question of regional consolidation ... because that changes everything because we would be combined as a library with either Niagara Falls —

probably Niagara Falls — and St. Catharines.”

No further decision will happen “until there is enough information for us to take a next step and there is no timeline for that.”

As for the search for a permanent CEO, Scott said “there is no immediate plan to do that. The board has not even talked about the timeline on that.”

He refused to speculate on when the board might make a decision.

“We’re really in this story of transition,” Scott said. “I can’t responsibly give you anything more than that.”

While the board members were inundated with emails after Simpson was fired, things have calmed down considerably, he said.

“There are people in the community who feel very passionate about this,” Scott said.

“And they still feel passionate but it’s substantially less. There is a lower level of activity, communication.”

He added he is confident the community still supports the library.

“I personally don’t have enough of a network in

the community to make a judgment ... but I do know that we have evidence that there’s still lots of support in the community,” he said.

“The interaction between community members and library members and staff continues to be positive.”

Tait agreed. “And day-to-day, there’s no difference in usage,” she said.

In other matters, the board noted that its \$955,874 budget for 2024 has been approved by council. That was about \$20,000 less than the \$973,587 the board had requested.

The board made some changes in regard to its structure, elevating Scott from vice-chair to co-chair along with Novak.

The board also elected to remain at eight members for the remainder of the term and not replace Graham Bailey, who resigned from the board earlier this year.

The eight members include one representative from council — Coun. Adriana Vizzari — and seven residents.

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The Queenston Women's Chorus will be joined by several other vocal performers on Saturday, including Niagara Men's Chorus and Niagara Star Singers. FILE

Queenston Women's Chorus to perform on Saturday

Staff
The Lake Report

Saturday's performance by the Queenston Women's Chorus will centre on the theme of peace, hope and harmony.

Starting at 7 p.m. on Saturday at Trillium United Church in St. Catharines, the concert will feature different poetry readings about peace, performances alongside the Niagara Men's Chorus and songs from the Niagara Star Singers and the two winners of the Queenston Women's Chorus Scholarship.

"The Niagara Men's Chorus who are our guests are

also doing some songs on the theme of peace, which I think is rather topical right now in all of our lives," said choir director Lisa Brillion.

"At the end, we're all going to gather together and sing 'Let There Be Peace On Earth.' I think that will be a really wonderful way to wrap up the concert," she added.

Following the concert, there will be a reception for everyone to chat and celebrate.

All proceeds raised will go to St. John's Ukrainian Church, who send funds and supplies directly to Ukraine.

Tickets are available at the door on Saturday at \$20 for adults and \$15 for students.

Edison Singers return for spring concert Sunday

Staff
The Lake Report

The Edison Singers are returning to Niagara-on-the-Lake this weekend for a concert performance to help usher in spring.

The title of the concert at St. Mark's Anglican Church is "Warm Breath of Spring" and it comes from the late Gordon Lightfoot's song "Pussy Willows, Cat-tails," which was inspired by his upbringing in Orillia.

From traditional pieces like "Shall We Gather at the River" to more recent works from Eriks Esen-

valds and Billy Joel — and Lightfoot's "Pussy Willows, Cat-Tails" — the choir plans a charming program of traditional folk and spirituals.

The group is led by its internationally acclaimed artistic director and conductor Noel Edison.

The NOTL concert at St. Mark's, 41 Byron St., is at 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 28.

Tickets are \$45 for adults and \$25 for students under 18. They are available at theedisonsingers.com.

The choir also plans performances in Toronto and Elora in May.



Noel Edison, artistic director and conductor of the Edison Singers. The group performs at St. Mark's Sunday. FILE

Music Niagara summer season kicks off June 16



The Oakville Choir for Children and Youth will kick things off on June 16. SOURCED

Staff
The Lake Report

Music Niagara's 26th season kicks off this summer on June 16 with a diverse lineup and new additions for a summer of joyful sound.

A series of new performances are to be hosted at a brand-new venue, a tent at Ironwood Cider House here in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The tent will host Music

Niagara's new Pops series, which features a blend of live music with food and drinks.

Other NOTL locations featured in this season's festival are Ravine Estate Winery, St. Mark's Church, Grace United Church and Spirit in Niagara Distillery, where there will be a special Canada Day jazz performance.

The full lineup of artists

featured in the festival, spanning from June 16 to Aug. 16 is available online along with tickets, at music-niagara.org/concerts-2.

For phone-in, discounted tickets and student pricing, call the Shaw Festival box office at 905-468-2172 / 1-800-511-7429.

The Oakville Choir for Children and Youth will start off the season June 16 at Ironwood.





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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Niagara Camp, c. 1920

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum recently discovered a series of photographs of Niagara Camp taken by George A. Bash from Canton, Ohio. Although the exact location on the Commons is unknown, it is possible that this one may have been taken at the Lakeshore Road camp where the military engineers were training. Apparently, there were buildings located there as well. The men appear to be members of the Canadian Engineers. The engineers would practise building and dismantling bridges, seen on the right, or other defensive works such as the sandbag and wood structure seen on the left.

Have **quality leather shoes** gone the way of the dodo?



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

My mind has been rambling as the warmer weather approaches and I want to discuss a puzzling trend: what is happening to leather shoes?

I spend time on Queen Street downtown every day and observe thousands of shoes worn by people passing by the Court House.

I tend to notice shoes worn by men — and the relatively rapid decline of shoes made of leather.

Real leather, genuine leather and synthetic materials all share the marketplace, confusing the casual shoe buyer and wearer.

Is comfort the sole reason (pun intended)? What are the advantages and disadvantages of leather shoes compared to synthetic, manmade materials and what does the future hold for our feet?



Ross Robinson is a little old-fashioned and wonders why leather shoes aren't as popular now. FIREFLY

After Dr. William Brown's informative artificial intelligence seminars at our wonderful library earlier this year, it was simple to do basic research.

I confidently sat in front of my efficient laptop computer, an AI convert.

I learned that the now-extinct dodo bird was a flightless bird endemic to Mauritius, an island east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Extinct since the 17th century. Who knew?

It wasn't that long ago that Dack's wingtips and classic Oxfords were status

symbols, guaranteed to last and last and last.

Indeed, over four decades ago while selling Century 21 Real Estate franchises in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, my self-purchased reward for a successful sale was a pair of expensive new shoes or a sharp silk tie.

In Moncton in 1981, I reached a personal sales goal and proudly bought a pair of black, genuine leather Dack's.

For the past 30 years, I haven't worn them often, just on special occasions: With my kilt for St. An-

drew's Society functions, to funerals and weddings with my best bespoke blue suit.

Each time, I enjoy taking my Dack's off the shelf, and removing the cedar shoe trees. Sort of spoiling myself, as it were.

Way back in 1996, I even had three-quarter-inch risers inserted in the two heels, to lessen the vertical difference between my beautiful bride and me at our Palm Beach wedding.

Nothing is certain, but I fully intend to be wearing these faithful shoes in my

casket or at the crematorium if I ever pass away.

But enough rambling. Let me get back to my perceived point.

My frugal and abstemious father, a product of the Great Depression and a career purchasing professional, occasionally questioned my habit of purchasing silk ties and Dack's brogues: "Polyester ties are just as colourful, and much cheaper. And, less expensive shoes serve their purpose."

His practical, very understandable terms of refer-

ence never allowed him to truly appreciate my dashing neckties and wingtips.

He just didn't get it, eh?

Last evening I spent a few hours at the factory outlet mall over in Glendale.

The Cole Haan and Brown's stores were unhurried, as most shoppers were perusing soft new shoes sold by Puma, Adidas, New Balance, Nike, Aldo and Skechers.

More traditional leather shoes have been almost totally eclipsed by sporty, softer and more comfortable footwear.

It's the way of the world and the change has been relatively rapid.

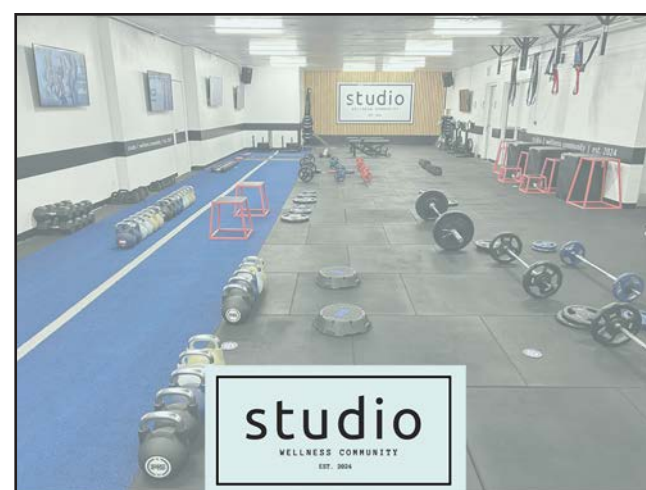
I also reflect on the many feel good shoe shines I enjoyed in airports around the world. It only cost a dollar or so, but the subtle psychological boost was always priceless. I was a big shot for a few minutes.

I sincerely hope that shoe shine professionals, so hardworking and pleasant, have been able to pivot as leather shoes disappeared.

Their prospective customers were, counterintuitively, men wearing shiny shoes.

They wanted to have shiny shoes, unlike people who were wearing scuffed up shoes.

Those people didn't care.



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Volunteers bring flowers to seniors

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Horticultural Society delivered spring plants and flowers to the town's three long-term care residences on Friday. The plants were assembled at June Floral & Garden and delivered in the morning. Pictured here are members Kim Mustill, Susan Dodd, Alice Rance and Hilda Ellard. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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A crash course on fertilizers



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young
Columnist



Joanne Young says it's important to follow the instructions on fertilizer packages. Twice as much doesn't mean it'll be twice as effective — it could actually harm your plants.

Now that spring is here, and the plants are beginning to send out new growth, it is a good idea to start thinking about applying fertilizers.

But what kind of fertilizer do you need to put down? Do all plants require the same fertilizer? What do the numbers on the bag or package of fertilizer mean?

If you are new to caring for plants, the aisle long display of all the different choices can be overwhelming.

First, let's look at the differences between inorganic and organic fertilizers.

Inorganic, i.e. chemical-based, fertilizers do not contain carbon and are generally manufactured, water-soluble products, meaning that the fertilizer is often diluted with water and applied in a liquid form, such as Miracle-Gro.

They can provide a rapid delivery of nutrients in a liquid form or a more controlled release of food in coated forms, such as Osmocote.

Inorganic forms are generally cheaper to purchase than organic fertilizers per pound of nutrient.

This is because it can be processed right there on site, whereas organic sources might have to be imported in from far away places.

These fertilizers are easy to use when calculating precise applications rates.

You will find that inorganic fertilizers have higher numbers appearing on the box when it comes to the N-P-K ratio (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, as represented by their chemical elements).

Some examples of inorganic, higher fertilizer would be 15-30-15 (Miracle-Gro) or an all-purpose

food, such as 0-20-20.

Because of the higher numbers, they have a higher risk for burning the roots of the plants and a greater potential for loss to the environment through leaching and runoff.

Organic fertilizers are carbon-based and derived from living organisms, such as fish emulsion or blood meal.

Organic forms of fertilizer are generally considered to be slow-release.

Micro-organisms in the soil breakdown the organic nutrients into plant-available forms, and this can take days to weeks to do so.

With chemical-based fertilizers, they are dissolved in water and can be taken up immediately by the plant.

I always try to use organic fertilizers as my go to. They provide a slower but longer feeder, which is better for the plant.

An inorganic food feeds quickly but does not last long. Organic fertilizers will always have lower N-P-K numbers than inorganic ones.

But this means that it also has a lower burn potential and are less likely to be lost to the environment.

Some examples of organic fertilizers are bloodmeal (13-2-0), organic tomato fertilizers (3-6-4) and fish emulsion (5-1-1).

You can also by composted sheep or cattle manure, which usually has been composted down to a 1-1-1 fertilizer.

A great organic product is one called Actisol, which is

primarily chicken manure.

Now, let's talk about those three numbers that appear on all fertilizer packaging.

When you think of those three numbers, which always represent nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (always in that order), think of up, down and all-around. So, the first number is nitrogen: think "up." Nitrogen is for upright, leafy growth.

If you use high-nitrogen fertilizers on flowering plants, or vegetable plants, you will get lots of leaf growth with very few flowers or fruit.

Take a tomato plant, for example, and use a high-nitrogen fertilizer: you will end up with large leafy plants and very few tomatoes on them.

For fertilizing your lawn in the spring, a product higher in nitrogen will help promote a thick, green lawn.

Nitrogen is considered to be mobile in soil, meaning that it moves with water, whereas phosphorus and potassium are more stable.

This means it is best to apply nitrogen when the plants are ready to use it — applied too early and it will have already been leached through the soil.

If you have sandy soil you may have to apply nitrogen more often at a lower rate as it will leach through the porous soil quicker.

Phosphorus is the second number — remember I said to think up, down and all-around.

So, phosphorus is the "down" part of the equation, meaning phosphorus is for healthy root growth.

It is also for blooms and fruit. Unlike nitrogen, phosphorus is not mobile in the soil and needs close contact with the plant roots to be taken up.

Therefore, a higher phosphorus fertilizer applied prior to, or while you are planting or transplanting, will help the plant to establish quickly.

Use a higher phosphorus fertilizer on flowering plants and on fruit and vegetable plants. A good organic source of phosphorus is bone meal.

The third number of the equation is potassium, or thin of it, "all-around."

Potassium is kind of like a Multi B vitamin pill. It is all around a good thing to have.

It helps support disease resistance and plant hardiness.

So, let's look at the example of lawns again.

In the spring, you would use higher nitrogen to promote deep green blades.

In the fall though, you want to strengthen the roots and the overall health of the lawn, so, a fall fertilizer higher in phosphorus and potassium is better suited.

Finally, remember to always follow the instructions on the package.

Just because a certain mixing strength is recommended, doubling the concentration does not make it twice as effective and may be harmful for your plants.

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at joanneyoung.ca.

Obituary

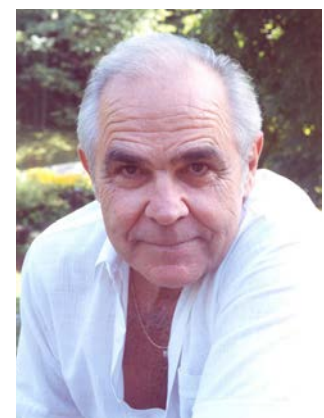
Hendrik Den Besten



Den Besten, Hendrik – At his home, surrounded by family, on Friday, April 19, 2024. Hendrik Den Besten, of Madoc, in his 90th year. Son of the late Anton and Bertha den Besten. Beloved husband of Hendrika Den Besten (nee Buyserd). Loving father of Leah Den Besten (François Grenon) of Montréal, Tina Den Besten (Harry Schepers) of Wardsville, Dennis

Den Besten (Pamela Skubel) of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Lisa Den Besten (Daniel van Leeuwen) of Waterloo. Dear brother of Arie-Piet den Besten of Doesburg, Netherlands, and Ellie den Besten-Spek (Kees) of Millay, France. Loved by his grandchildren Erika, Simon, Marc-André, Patrick, Timothy, Katie, Ellen, Alexia, Griffin, Nicholas, Matthew, and great-grandchildren Madeleine, Claude, Laura, and Kyran. Resting at Rushnell Funeral Homes – Madoc, 112 Durham Street South, on Saturday, April 27, 2024, from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Funeral Service to follow in the Chapel at 1:30 p.m. Reverend Caroline Giesbrecht officiating. Interment, White Lake Cemetery. If desired, donations may be made to Nature Conservancy of Canada, or White Lake Bethesda United Church. Online condolences at www.rushnellfuneralhomes.com/madoc

Celebration of Life



April 28, 2024.
Michael Kucan Jr.

A celebration of life will be held for our Dad and Papa, Mike (Jr.) Kucan on Sunday, April 28 from 1-4 p.m.

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The Lake Report welcomes your letters to the editor. Please, write early and often. Letters ideally should be under 400 words long. Occasionally, longer letters may be published. All letters may be edited for conciseness, accuracy, libel and defamation. Please include your full name, street address and a daytime telephone number so that authorship can be authenticated. Only names and general addresses (eg. Virgil, St. Davids, NOTL) will be published. Send your letters to editor@niagaranow.com or drop them by our office at 496 Mississagua St., NOTL.



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