

NOTL reaps **\$3.5 million** from broadband network sale

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town will receive about \$3.5 million of the initial proceeds from the sale of Niagara Regional

Broadband Network to a subsidiary of cable giant Cogeco Communications.

The sale of the broadband network to Cogeco Connexion was completed on Feb. 5, but a final purchase price won't be

determined until closing financials for the network are finalized.

This will occur when interest-bearing notes, currently paying eight per cent, come due in December 2026 (the date by which

payment is required).

The town announced it would be selling the Niagara Regional Broadband Network in early February.

"We've managed to get a great return for the town,"

said Tim Curtis, president of Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro, a partner with the town in Energy Services Niagara Inc., which represents Niagara-on-the-Lake's stake in the broadband network.

The town, through Energy

Services Niagara, held a minority stake — 25 per cent — in the internet, telephone and television provider company since it was formed in 2004 to

Continued on Page 5

Here are NOTL's members of the province's **\$100K club**

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It's that time of year again when taxpayers get a glimpse of who are some of the highest-paid public sector employees in the province.

Since passage of the Public Salary Disclosure Act by the Progressive Conservative government under Premier Mike Harris in 1996, public sector employees earning salaries of \$100,000 or more are required to make public, their pre-tax salaries (and taxable benefits received) made in the previous calendar year.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, 28 names made the cut on what is more often referred to as the province's Sunshine List, headed up by former chief administrative officer Marnie Cluckie, who was paid a salary of \$203,300.93 plus \$7,306.45 in taxable benefits.

Cluckie departed the town

Continued on Page 5

Kids **hopped up** for Bunny Trail



Willow Maidment, 7, and Gwenyth New, 6, enjoy some hotdogs during Saturday's Bunny Trail. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley | The Lake Report

The annual Niagara-on-the-Lake Bunny Trail and egg hunt brought hundreds of kids out to enjoy Easter festivities on Saturday.

It's a partnership between the

Niagara Nursery School, which runs a variety of kids' activities, a bake sale and touch-a-truck experiences, and the NOTL Kinsmen, who lead the egg hunt.

Organizers estimated more than 2,000 people turned out this

year, helping to raise more than \$10,000 for the school.

Janice Dodd, a mother of a toddler in the school, was helping to run the entrance to the outdoor activities.

"This is one of the biggest

events to fundraise and we're here to support," she said.

"All the parents bring baked goods and we all pour our hearts into it."

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Average NOTL home price tops **\$1 million**

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Whether it is Niagara-on-the-Lake or the region as a whole, there is one thing on which local experts can

agree: the COVID pricing days in the local real estate market are gone but the correction that many people are hoping for to restore pre-pandemic affordability is nowhere in sight.

First quarter numbers for

2024 are telling a story of modest price fluctuations since January of this year in NOTL driven by a new post-COVID stability that is enhancing confidence on both sides of the coin, but with buyers actually now re-

turning to the driver's seat.

"We are bumping along with moderate increases and while we are still not back to normal volumes (of sales), I believe this is not a

Continued on Page 2



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Rise in home prices reflects **confidence** in market

Continued from Front Page

bad market,” says Niagara-on-the-Lake Realty owner Chris Bowron.

Bowron reports that the average list price of a home in NOTL did lurch to just over the million-dollar plateau at \$1,014, 823 in March, having hovered just below that in January and February. In total, 87 homes were sold in the first quarter with an average time of 72 days on the market.

“In January of this year there wasn’t a very big change,” he says. “The biggest change we saw was in February where the benchmark price was down about 2.6 per cent but we were still up fairly dramatically in volume of sales.”

Despite February’s benchmark success, March saw the most dramatic sales increase across the board with 45 homes sold in NOTL. With that said, local inventory numbers are still very encouraging. Whereas during COVID low inventory levels created a buying and bidding frenzy which added to the dramatic increases in prices



Niagara Association of Realtors president Nathan Mitchell says some savvy homebuyers are looking to purchase now as home prices increase month-to-month and wait 12 to 24 months to renegotiate a lower interest rate. RICHARD WRIGHT

month-over-month, current levels are creating a much more favourable and lower-stress environment.

“The real estate landscape in Niagara-on-the-Lake is witnessing a gradual recovery, especially in terms of sales, compared to the previous year,” says Michelle

Reynolds with Royal LePage, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“Despite this, it remains a buyer’s market, with over 12 months of inventory available,” she adds.

Reynolds is also seeing a shift in who is buying homes in NOTL. Where traditionally the community

has a higher average age than many other communities in the province, new work models and lifestyle shifts in recent years is opening up the market to other demographics.

“The shifting face of retirement and the influx of younger families into the area

highlight a growing demand for active and thriving communities. With many individuals now opting for hybrid work models, allowing for remote work and occasional office visits, more people are exploring communities like Niagara-on-the-Lake for its lifestyle offerings.”

Interest rates

For people waiting on lower interest rates to purchase a home, this may not be the best tactic. Last year, the Bank of Canada raised rates from record lows over the past decade. Just two weeks ago, that key interest rate of 5 per cent was maintained.

Nathan Mitchell, president of the Niagara Association of Realtors, says with home prices continuing to increase month-over-month in Niagara, locking in now with a variable short-term rate and renegotiating in 12 or 24 months to a more favourable interest rate can balance things out.

“We have had some savvy buyers who are actually looking to purchase now, and in a year or two when the rates get lower lock into that different rate because the price of the home could be a lot different then. Ya, the rate is better but you may end up in the same place that you are today, depending on the price of the home, if they keep climbing.”

The current word on the street is that Canadians are in for a decrease in interest rates sometime in 2024.

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MLS 40525314 - Thomas Elltoft and Jane Elltoft



466 DORCHESTER STREET
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MLS 40501539 - Thomas Elltoft and Weston Miller



41 RICARDO STREET
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MLS 40520055 - Christopher Bowron and Nicole Vanderperk



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NOTL plans ahead for eclipse madness

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It will be go time Monday as the Town prepares to welcome an expected influx of visitors to view the April 8 solar eclipse.

Fire Chief Jay Plato, the Town's emergency management co-ordinator, has been meeting with counterparts from across Niagara for the past year to get a handle on what to expect in the days leading up to and on the day of eclipse. While Niagara Falls has been designated as the best place to view the once-in-a-lifetime event, crowds are expected across the region, including in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

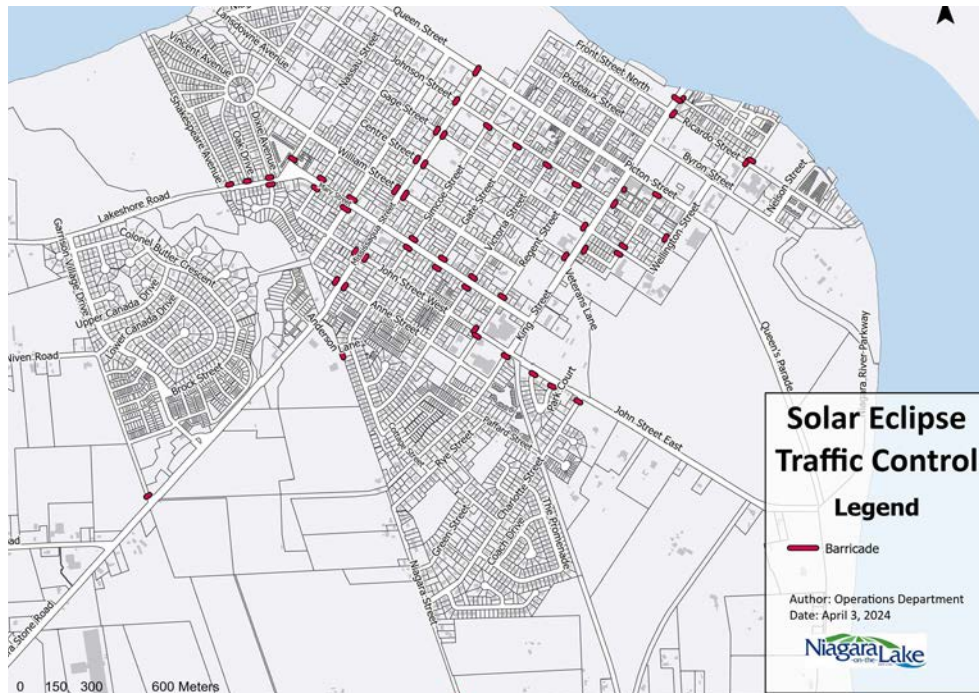
"Eclipses are predictable events," Plato said. "We've known we've known this has been coming for quite some time so we've been staying on it, making sure that we are prepared for what's about to come."

Expectations are people coming to town before eclipse day and sticking around to check out the sites around town.

"We're anticipating a lot of people coming here to enjoy our tourism, to enjoy the wineries, to enjoy Old Town and then managing that," Plato said.

It's not that the town has not had experience with large numbers of people coming into town for a special event. Plato pointed to concerts by The Tragically Hip in 2012 and Mumford and Sons in 2015. Both those shows were held at The Commons.

"What's unique with a concert is it's a very targeted area and people are coming into town going to that very specific location,"



Map shows residential roads that will be closed on April 8. TOWN OF NOTL

Plato said. "We're able to kind of guide and directly manage where people are going (and) how to assist them getting there."

But the eclipse will be different, he said.

"This takes place in the sky and you can look at it anywhere. So we can't necessarily control where people will want to go or where they will want to be if they're coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake to view it."

While the Town has no plans for an official viewing event, wineries across NOTL have events on tap so the expectation is for traffic to be heavy.

"We're just really going to be kind of managing where people seem to be going and then kind of pivoting from there," Plato said, adding that staff from across town departments will be located at various locations in town so that the impact of heavy traffic on town roads is mitigated.

"From a town perspective,

we've made plans to be able to have staff be able to pivot quickly to kind of handle certain situations."

Using water/wastewater staff as an example, Plato said it was important that the town be able to respond to issues such as a water main break when they arise.

"We don't want our own staff fighting traffic to try to get somewhere so we're going to have staff kind of positioned strategically around (town) to effectively still deliver community services."

For that same reason, fire stations in town will be staffed by volunteer firefighters in the event of an emergency, Plato said.

But despite that, traffic control plans are only to involve "soft road closures" on some residential streets rather than the hard closure of roads that will be instituted in other municipalities in Niagara.

"Fort Erie and Niagara Falls have got some hard road closures because

they're basically creating some pedestrian walkways," Plato said. "We're not looking to create any pedestrian walkways but what we do want to do is we want to keep traffic flowing and protect our neighborhoods."

Normal parking rules will apply throughout town with normal enforcement.

"If you're directly parking in areas that you should not be parking in, that may warrant getting a ticket," Plato said. "But if somebody is still in the car, it's about approaching them and engaging and educating them, saying you can't be here, please move along."

Niagara Region has declared a State of Emergency for April 8 and some facilities will be closed to help reduce traffic. Additionally, both the District School Board of Niagara and Niagara Catholic have designated the day of the eclipse as a Professional Activity Day.

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Town hires first economic development officer



NOTL's first economic development officer, Ashleigh Myers.

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town has reached into the Niagara radio business to find its first-ever economic development officer.

Ashleigh Myers, who has worked for more than two decades at Bell Media Niagara radio stations in St. Catharines, as a business development, marketing and advertising executive.

Myers has been with Bell Media since graduating from the Broadcast program at Fanshawe College in London, Ont., in 2003.

"It's sad in a way to be leaving," Myers told The Lake Report when reached for an interview. "But I'm also excited to get involved working with businesses at the grassroots level in (Niagara)."

Acting chief administrator Bruce Zvaniga praised Myers in a statement announcing her hiring.

"I look forward to seeing Ashleigh leverage her skills to propel Niagara-on-the-Lake forward in its journey towards economic prosperity," he said.

"By prioritizing sustainable development practices and strengthening

ties between the town and its business community, Niagara-on-the-Lake aims to create a vibrant environment conducive to long-term success and shared prosperity."

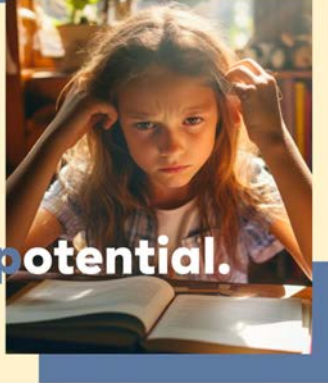
Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, meanwhile, said the hiring aligns with priorities set out in council's strategic plan.

"Ashleigh's hiring is a significant step toward achieving the economic development aspect ... which includes attracting and retaining businesses," he said.


Myers begins her new role in NOTL on May 6.

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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **46 JOHNSON STREET, BARKER HALL (PLAN 86 PART LOT 106)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

The subject property is located at 46 Johnson Street. The orientation of the built structure is such that it is placed close to Johnson Street and Regent Street and has a large backyard with accessory structures. The pedestrian access to the house is through a stepped podium facing Johnson Street.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property known as the Barker Hall has cultural heritage value or interest for its design and physical values, its historical and associative values and its contextual values.

Barker Hall is also of design and physical value because it exhibits a relatively rare example in Town of an asymmetrical façade and floor plan for a Georgian residence. The unique two-storey clapboard dwelling breaks away from tradition as it does not adhere to a rigid symmetry on the front façade which means the floor plan of the dwelling is also unique with the house's hall being slightly off

centre, creating a larger room to the right of the main entrance. Barker Hall features a low-hipped roof with two brick chimneys. The irregular three-bay façade is close to the street line. The original entrance to the dwelling still remains intact with a detailed doorway. The doorway features moulded wooden trim surrounds with an entablature and slender fluted columns on either side of the doorway. The doorway also contains a sash situated above the transom which has a lozenge pattern, a unique pattern of detail for its time in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The words "Barker Hall" is engraved on the polished brass doorknocker at the main entrance of the house.

Barker Hall is of value because of its association with early settlers in the area including John Barker, a prominent municipal official in Niagara and the captain of the Niagara Fire Company. He was involved in the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. As described by William Kirby in his Annals of Niagara, 'there was at that time a splendid fire company in Niagara, composed of the most respectable and active men in the town, under the command of their captain, Mr. John Barker, a sturdy English Loyalist'. John Barker along with his company took an active part in stopping the uprising. Other previous owners have included Thomasin Barker, who was the son of John Barker. Thomasin operated a boarding house at Barker Hall which played a part in providing refuge after the American Civil War, when Niagara became a sanctuary for several confederate politicians. 46 Johnson Street has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of confederate politicians that took boarding at Barker Hall during the American Civil War.

The Barker Hall has contextual value in supporting the historic character of the area. Barker Hall is within the boundaries of the National Historical District in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and is in close proximity to the Queen-Picton heritage district. The house design and layout of the subject property, in terms of the setback and materials, is in keeping with the surrounding properties, especially the Part IV designated property at 58 Johnson Street. The massing and style of both the properties is very similar.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of 46 Johnson Street include:

- Two storey Georgian style residence

- Hipped roof
- Red brick chimneys
- Clapboard siding
- Asymmetrical three-bay façade with symmetrical elements
- Symmetrical side elevation
- Main entryway with moulded wooden surrounds
- Entablature and fluted columns on main entrance
- Transom with lozenge pattern
- Rectangular openings
- Original brass doorknocker
- Setback from road
- Location within National historic district

Objections

Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to Grant Bivol, Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **May 4th 2024**.

Queries

Any further queries should be directed to Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner at (905) 468-3266 ext. 327 or through email at sumra.zia@notl.com.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 4th day of April 2024

GRANT BIVOL, CLERK

Broadband investment 'paid off': Zalepa

Continued from Front Page

fill the region's need for broadband services.

As a result, the energy group will receive 25 per cent of the proceeds of the sale.

The other 75 per cent will go to the hydro holding commission for the City of Niagara Falls, the majority stakeholder in the broadband network business.

An information report detailing the purchase agreement is scheduled to come before council at its April 9 committee of the whole meeting.

Energy Services Niagara has received \$8.56 million

from the sale since it was completed in February.

In addition to the town funds, \$2.7 million of the proceeds will be used to pay down a debt incurred through the purchase of a stake in the broadband network held by the City of Port Colborne and the Town of Grimsby.

Approximately \$1 million will be set aside for income taxes and the remaining \$1.3 million will be earmarked for investments.

Council passed a resolution last July that approved the money for Energy Services Niagara.

Curtis said the estimated

value of the notes is \$4.3 million, which will go to the energy services group when they come due.

It's not known how that money will be used, he said. "That's for (Energy Services Niagara) to invest," Curtis said. "That's part of my job."

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, meanwhile, said the return to the town as the result of the sale was because of "the 'excellent people (on the board)' representing the community.

"The investment made paid off," he said. "The sale to Cogeco achieved a good result for the town."

For now, Energy Services Niagara will continue to hold a minority stake in the company and will have one seat on the board until the note comes due.

Niagara Falls will have three members on the board with Cogeco occupying four seats.

As a part of the sale, the town has signed a standard non-compete agreement, meaning it will not enter a similar business for the next five years.

Cogeco, meanwhile, pledged to continue to make investments in broadband services across Niagara.

hutton@niagaranow.com

Sunshine List shows top public salaries

Continued from Front Page

for Hamilton in January after serving as the town's top bureaucrat since 2020.

Cluckie was followed on the list by former director of operations Romolo "Rome" D'Angelo, who earned \$167,237.24, plus \$6,714.04 in taxable benefits.

Also of note, Cathy Simpson, who was recently relieved of her duties as chief executive officer and chief librarian by the NOTL library board, also made the list with a salary of \$130,720.91, plus \$1,299.24 in taxable benefits.

Simpson was fired after an op-ed she wrote for The Lake Report to mark Freedom to Read Week, in which she quoted principles espoused by the U.S.-based Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR). The group has been accused of promoting far-right beliefs in its campaign against diversity and inclusion programs.

Following is a list of town employees who made this year's list (taxable benefits in parentheses):

x-Marnie Cluckie, chief administrative officer, \$203,300.93 (\$7,306.45)

x-Romolo D'Angelo, director of operations, \$167,237.24 (\$6,714.04)

Kyle Freeborn, director of corporate services/treasurer, \$148,070 (\$6,732.23)

Jay Plato, fire chief, \$146,626.21 (\$1,520.11)

Kirsten McCauley, director of community and development services, \$136,634.05 (\$6,614.47)

Kevin Turcotte, manager of parks and recreation, \$135,630.49 (\$1,329.53)

x-Richard Wilson, manager of planning, \$133,302.09 (\$1,329.53)

Darren Trostenko, deputy fire chief, \$132,476.29 (\$1,329.53)

Frederick Cervantes, manager of information technology, \$131,319.26 (\$1,329.53)

Sarah Stevens, manager of human resources, \$130,977.50 (\$1,327.37)

x-Cathy Simpson, NOTL Library CEO and chief librarian, \$130,720.91 (\$1,299.24)

Walter Klassen, chief building official, manager of building services, \$128,165.18 (\$1,319.14)

Lauren Kruitbosch, manager of customer experience and communications, \$126,663.93 (\$1,680.99)

Darren MacKenzie, manager of public works, \$126,409.65 (\$1,302.25)

Nicolas Alaimo, manager of finance, \$124,623.60 (\$1,239.03)

Daniel Maksenuk, supervisor of recreation, \$118,221.19 (\$897.40)

Victoria Steele, strategy and government relations officer, \$118,172.74 (\$1,101.78)

John Boyd Hopkins, supervisor of parks, \$114,251.26 (\$1,149.40)



Former NOTL chief administrator Marnie Cluckie.

Michael Komljenovic, supervisor of engineering, \$113,846.54 (\$1,149.40)

David Voogt, cemetery and ground specialist, \$112,925.95 (\$1,045.48)

Darrin Wills, engineering technologist, drinking water quality management standard, acting supervisor of environmental services, \$108,906.48 (\$983.13)

Gregg Stewart, lead hand of water/wastewater, \$106,723.06 (\$978.98)

Garry Doerksen, lead hand of facilities, \$105,138.58 (\$921.56)

Casey Sharpe, supervisor of roads, \$104,288.60 (\$1,079.91)

Shaunna Arenburg, deputy clerk and acting clerk, \$104,010.11 (\$1,108.65)

Raymond Hunter, lead hand of roads, \$102,251.41 (\$921.56)

Brett Ruck, supervisor of environmental services, \$101,250.01 (\$957.11)

Richard Nauta, heavy equipment operator, \$100,722.36 (\$770.82)

Across the province, Ontario Power Generation president and CEO Kenneth

Hartwick topped the list with a salary of \$1,925,372 plus \$7,539.84 in taxable benefits.

In Niagara, Niagara Health chief of staff/executive vice-president medical affairs Johan Viljoen, was paid a salary of \$587,406.15 with \$12,722.12 in taxable benefits.

Other notables across Niagara include:

Lynn Guerreiro, Niagara Health president and CEO, \$533,688.10 (\$16,332.72)

x-Bryan MacCulloch, former Niagara Regional Police chief, \$356,231.36 (\$39,416.55)

Lesely Rigg, president and vice-chancellor, Brock University, \$330,033.13 (\$37,457.21)

Sean Kennedy, Niagara College president, \$302,072.31 (\$4,281.01)

Ron Tripp, Niagara Region chief administrative officer, \$279,299.80 (\$11,256.43)

Warren Hoshizaki, District School Board of Niagara director of education, \$278,230.76

Camillo Cipriano, Niagara Catholic District School Board director of education, \$232,238.46 (\$10,300.24)

Jim Bradley, Niagara Region chair, \$136,178.82 (\$20,379.48)

David Adames, Niagara Parks chief executive officer, \$203,203.79 (\$568.75)

x- denotes no longer in position
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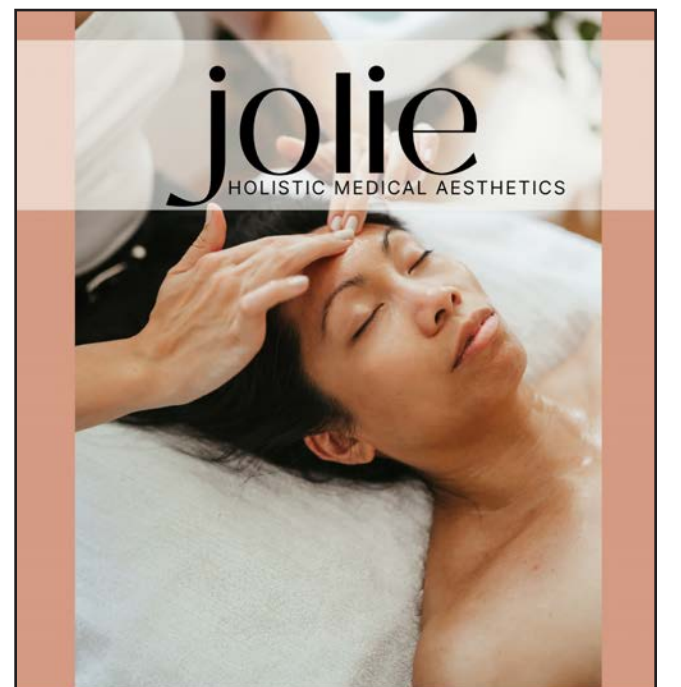
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NEWS

Simpson dismissal was **wrong**, U.S.-based library group says

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A second U.S.-based group has stepped forward in defence of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library's former CEO and chief librarian.

The Association of Library Professionals is a new organization – founded only last month – and is based in Virginia.

The group, which advocates for library collections offering materials reflecting differing viewpoints, said the library board was wrong to fire Cathy Simpson over the contents of an op-ed she penned for The Lake Report's March 21 edition to mark Freedom to Read Week.

Association president Erik Wilkinson penned an open letter to the library board, expressing its support for Simpson, saying her column illustrated her testament to the principle of library neutrality, in which the association believes.

In the column, Simpson cited the U.S.-based Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR), a group regarded by some as one that espouses far-right talking points.

FAIR's executive director defended the group and disputed the claims of it being far-right in a story in the March 28 edition of The Lake Report.



Cathy Simpson was fired last month as the NOTL library's CEO and chief librarian. FILE

"Cathy is one of our founding members," said Maggie Allbee, a spokesperson for the Association of Library Professionals. "So she, of course, reached out to the rest of us to tell us what had happened to her."

Simpson, when contacted by The Lake Report, declined to speak to the matter.

"I can't comment at this time," Simpson said.

Daryl Novak, chair of the NOTL library, stressed that Simpson was not fired because of what she wrote in the newspaper.

"I think the one part of the message that we have failed to get across is that Cathy was not let go because she wrote an article," Novak said. "It was never anything about Cathy's right to free speech."

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.

He added that she was asked to write a letter clarifying that she wasn't speaking on behalf of the board.

"She didn't do that," Novak said.

Allbee, meanwhile, said that the association believes libraries should be champions of free speech and defend freedom of speech, freedom of thought and intellectual freedom.

"We believe that responsible libraries will have books on the shelves that reflect a variety of viewpoints, not just one, not just two, but all," said Allbee. "Even to the point that maybe there's gonna be some stuff on the shelves that not everybody agrees with."

Simpson's story is not a new one, she added.

"I have several colleagues in (the association) that are in the organization for that very reason," Allbee said. "They've lost their jobs over expressing the desire for the libraries to have a variety of viewpoints on the shelf or for questioning collection development policies."

She said it is the job of libraries to provide information whether or not everyone agrees with it.

"Sometimes the information may not be something that everyone is comfortable with," she said. "That means that we're doing our job because we're not supposed to be taking a stance and limiting what goes on the shelf, or what gets put into people's hands."

hutton@niagaranow.com

Niagara garden club members reveal some **design secrets**

Elizabeth Goldman
Special to The Lake Report

At their March monthly meeting, Garden Club of Niagara members shared the techniques they used to create some of the spectacular designs that were on display during the Niagara on-the-Lake Rotary House Tour in December.

Their work had been displayed at the McFarland House and Willowbank.

Members described how they made exotic faux desserts out of clay and dried flowers to emulate the style of entertainment that would have been held in those two homes in historic times.

Other presenters demonstrated how they made a lamb's ear pillow cushion, how to make a fish design



Garden Club of Niagara member Diane Turner replicated an 1800-era dining table display. She spoke about drying flowers for her arrangements and matching the colours to the china on the table. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

using the flowering plant Lunaria and how to create a pavé turtle designed arrangement with beans and other edible materials.

The club begins making

plans for the Rotary House Tour in June and members start collecting flowers from their gardens in early summer in order to dry them out for their designs.

Lamb helps bring 'Taylor' and 'Pink' to Corks

Julia Sacco
 The Lake Report

If you couldn't get your hands on those Eras Tour tickets, Corks is bringing it to Niagara-on-the-Lake this weekend.

On Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6, Jessica Wilson is Taylor Swift and Angela Seeger is Pink for "Shake it Off! Pink & Swift," two nights of hit music for everyone.

Seeger has a long history of impersonations, performing as Adele, Janis Joplin, Barbra Streisand and more while touring with Ab-bamania Canada, an ABBA tribute group, and the tribute band the British Legends.

Used to making some physical changes to get into character, Seeger told The Lake Report that Pink may be her most extreme transformation yet.

"Well, I don't know if (my abs) will be ready for the show. So no promises," she joked.



With a little makeup and some hairstyling, Jessica Wilson embodies Taylor Swift for this weekend's show alongside Angela Seeger at Corks. KYLE PHELAN

Seeger said that in the past few years, she has lost about 30 pounds simply to accommodate the physical aspect of her shows. But for Pink she's going even further.

"I'm actually doing something I've never done before, which is getting my hair done because for

that hair you cannot find a proper wig," she said.

Wilson is all new to impersonations but has natural lookalike traits on her side.

"For years and years and years people would always ask me, 'Why don't you do a Taylor Swift you sound just like her?' and when I have my

bangs on and my makeup just right I look exactly like her," she said.

When she finally took the plunge to explore impersonations, organizer Ken Lamb was the person she knew could handle it.

"He had the idea to combine Taylor Swift and Pink and it has become something way bigger than I ever thought it could be," she said.

Lamb said the show will have a little bit for everyone, featuring hit songs and some deeper cuts.

He also distributed five tickets to each of the NOTL schools so that superfan students can have the chance to attend.

"It'll generate 15 kids and their parents who are die-hard Swift fans and probably die-hard Pink fans," he said.

The Friday is sold out but some tickets for Saturday are still available. Contact Lamb at ktglamb@gmail.com to reserve your spot.

Sam Roberts Band returns to Jackson-Triggs

Staff
 The Lake Report

A familiar face will kick off Jackson-Triggs' annual summer concert series in June.

Sam Roberts Band will open the series with shows on June 7 and 8 at the Niagara-on-the-Lake winery's amphitheatre.

"We keep coming back for that close connection we feel with the crowd," said Roberts, a six-time Juno Award winner as a solo artist. "We're excited to kick-off the series this year with two performances and keep the tradition going."

Roberts burst onto the Canadian music charts back in 2002 and formed Sam Roberts Band in 2011.

He scored his first Juno wins in 2004 on the back of his "We Were Born in a Flame" album, winning Album of the Year and Rock Album of the Year. He picked up a third award for Artist of the Year.

This year's appearance will be the 21st time Roberts has performed at



The Sam Roberts Band will kick off the summer concert series at the Jackson-Triggs Amphitheatre. FILE

Jackson-Triggs since the concert series began back in 2001.

The series took a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic but returned to the Niagara Stone Road winery in 2022.

Last year was the first time the series, which normally wraps up in August, was extended into September to mark Jackson-Triggs' 30th anniversary.

This year's series concludes on Sept. 14 with a performance by pop-rockers Dwayne Gretzky.

Other performers taking to the stage include Chantal Kreviazuk, The Sheepdogs, The Trews and Brett Kissel.

"This is another exciting summer that pairs award-winning Canadian wine with homegrown musicians, for an exceptional concert-going experience

that you can't find anywhere else," said Craig Swanson, Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate manager.

Great Estates Niagara Wine Club members will have early access to purchase tickets, with the pre-sale beginning April 2, 2024.

Tickets will go on sale to the general public on April 4 and will be sold through TIXR.com.

Here's the full lineup for the concert series:

- June 7-8: Sam Roberts Band
- June 21: Matthew Good
- June 22: The Trews
- July 5: David Wilcox
- July 6: Bruce Cockburn
- July 12: The Strumbellas
- July 13: July Talk
- July 19-20: The Reklaws
- July 26-27: The Sheepdogs
- Aug. 9: Chantal Kreviazuk
- Aug. 10: Matt Dusk
- Aug. 16-17: Bahamas
- Aug. 22: Brett Kissel
- Aug. 23: Jim Cuddy Band
- Aug. 24: The Rural Alberta Advantage
- Sept. 13-14: Dwayne Gretzky


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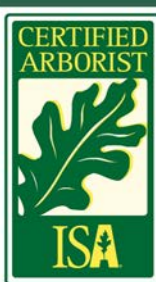
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From left, NOTL Cats volunteers Joyce Rice, Erika Buchkowsky, Tanya Rice and Janis Galster show off some of the planters the group had for sale at its spring fundraiser. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

NOTL Cats spring fundraiser plants seeds of compassion for felines

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

While many families scurried about last Saturday making last-minute preparations for Easter, the volunteers behind Niagara-on-the-Lake Cats were making sure their feline families are being taken care of.

The group staged its annual spring fundraiser, selling planters, chocolates and other goodies to raise funds for the cats they care for — and to help with an influx of kittens they’re anticipating as the weather warms up.

“It’s definitely going to be put to good use, especially with the influx expected for kitten season,” said volunteer Tanya Rice of the more than \$4,500 raised by the sale and a raffle at the Husky Truck Stop in St. Davids.

The sale raised \$4,140 while the Husky raffled raised a further \$409.

“Thankfully, we haven’t had any calls for kittens, yet,” Rice said.

The sale is one of two conducted annually by the group. The other is held close to Christmas and features holiday wreaths and floral arrangements.

“We sold 77 out of 85

plants (featured at the event),” Rice said. “We’ve given a few to local businesses (who support the organization) and we gave six to Upper Canada Lodge long-term care so staff and residents have something to enjoy.”

All funds raised by the same go back into care for the cats under the rescue’s care, Rice said, adding the group provides everything from veterinary care to its trap, neuter and release program.

Every effort is made to socialize cats brought in. If a cat can’t be socialized, they will be spayed or neutered before being released

back into the colony.

“We have to reduce the size of the colonies,” Rice said.

It’s a bit of a different story for kittens, however, as the group has a small window of opportunity to bring them into care and get them socialized.

“It’s important to get them by the time they’re six weeks old if we are to have any hope of socializing them.”

To make a donation or to find more information on NOTL Cats and photos of felines available for adoption can be found at notlcats.weebly.com.

hutton@niagaranow.com

Wayside Chapel hosts Easter sunrise service

Rick Meloan
Special to The Lake Report

The Living Waters Wayside Chapel was dedicated on May 20, 1965, and was intended to be a place to stop along the busy Niagara River Parkway.

It was meant as a place to enjoy a moment of rest and reflection or perhaps a prayer of thanks or for travelling mercies.

To stop anywhere along the Parkway is a treat and the little chapel brings another feature to the beauty of the area.

“Living Waters” is both a reference to the Niagara River and to Christ who offers us “living water.”

Several guest books are filled each year with messages and signatures from visitors all over the world and in a myriad of languages. Based on that we



The Wayside Chapel on the Niagara Parkway held its annual Easter Sunday sunrise service Sunday. The service has attracted visitors for nearly 50 years. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

estimate the chapel receives more than 10,000 visitors annually.

It wasn’t until the late 1970s that an Easter sunrise service was held and it is now an annual tradition.

With the exception of the

COVID pandemic and one rainy morning, it has hosted 7 a.m. services for nearly 50 years.

This has been a blessing to Faith Fellowship Church in Niagara Falls, which arranges the services, but

even more so to the community. There are familiar faces who faithfully attend each year.

This year I met a couple from the Muskoka area who have been coming for four years, specifically for the service.

An Easter service such as this reminds us of the resurrection of Christ and how early in the morning of that day his followers were surprised and amazed at the sight of his empty tomb.

So it is that on an early spring, often chilly, morning that Christians come together for a brief time of reflection, singing and fellowship to remember the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ.

And it is a wonderful blessing that we are able to do this in peace and freedom in this great community.



Support for  Niagara-On-The-Lake

Library Neutrality

Join fellow community members who believe in free speech, diversity of thought and neutrality

**Show your support
by signing the following petition:**

<https://www.change.org/NOTL-Library-Neutrality>

1. I object to the firing of Library CEO, Cathy Simpson, by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library Board, and the waste of taxpayer money to censor a competent and long-serving employee, who stands in defence of intellectual freedom.
2. I object to the NOTL Library Board's failure 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.



Other ways to speak up and be heard

- Write to NOTL Town Council
- Write to the NOTL Library & its Board members
- Write to the Ontario Minister for Tourism, Culture & Sport

Funded by the creators of the NOTL for Library Neutrality petition. Scan the QR code for full details and to learn more.



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Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "There are always flowers for those who want to see them." - Henri Matisse

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Gearing up for the season



Despite the cold and rainy weather this week, spring has sprung. Well, almost. And Grape Escape in Virgil kicked off its annual sale of used bikes last weekend. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

A step forward for NOTL health care

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

You're new in Niagara-on-the-Lake and don't have a family doctor in town.

Or you've lived here forever and maybe your doctor has retired or moved.

Or you've never needed one. Or perhaps your doc practises elsewhere in Niagara. Or in the Greater Toronto Area.

Or you're a visitor and you fall ill, develop a fever or flu and cold symptoms.

Or you run out of an essential medication.

After all, who hasn't wakened up feeling lousy and under the weather and in need of medical attention?

These are just a few of the many possible scenarios for which the addition of another nurse practitioner in Niagara-on-the-Lake is a godsend.

And starting Monday, April 22, at the Village Medical Centre (behind Shoppers Drug Mart on Niagara Stone Road), you will be able to see the nurse practitioner for morning appointments or at a walk-in clinic in the afternoon.

The NOTL Health Care Clinic adds a much-needed dimension to life in NOTL.

It is great news for a great many people.

If you are rostered with the Niagara North Family Health Team and see one of its doctors regularly, you already are fortunate (and are not allowed to utilize the new clinic).

That's because you already also have access to the health team's after-hours clinic and nurse practitioner, a privilege that non-rostered patients do not enjoy.

For years now, that has been an unfortunate reality in NOTL. If you're not with the health team, you have nowhere to go.

It's neither perfect nor fair but that's the way "the system" works as it is presently constituted in NOTL and across Ontario.

And for years now, many leaders in NOTL have been trying to change the situation here in town.

Because when your child or grandchild or spouse comes down with something, dragging them to

an out-of-town walk-in clinic or the emergency department can be a real crapshoot.

Sometimes you can be in and out in no time — sometimes it can take what seems like an eternity.

A lot of people have been involved in bringing this new nurse practitioner to town, but one person stands out for her persistence and tenacity.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor deserves our heartfelt thanks for the leadership she displayed in making this a reality. Without all her hard work, we probably would still be waiting for it to happen.

We take health care for granted in this country — until we really need it. And then we're able to see how lucky we are. It's not perfect, but few things in this world are.

So, looking ahead, here is some of the essential information you need regarding the NOTL Health Care Clinic:

It opens April 22 and will operate 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays.

It is inside the Village

Medical Centre at 101 Garrison Village Dr. The clinic can be reached by calling (289) 272-0441.

The clinic will have pre-booked morning appointments and a walk-in service in the afternoon.

As it makes clear on its website, the new service will only see patients who don't have a family doctor — plus visitors.

A nurse practitioner can diagnose ailments, order and interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe all medications and perform medical procedures. Here in NOTL they will be providing on-going chronic, preventive and urgent care.

But remember: If you are rostered with the family health team in town, you cannot visit the NOTL Health Care Clinic.

It's not known yet if Saturday walk-ins might someday be available. That's a big problem in a town that literally welcomes millions of visitors each year.

But Monday to Friday is an important start.

Let's build on that.

editor@niagaranow.com

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Just **slow down** and obey the speed limit

Dear editor:
I seriously don't get it. Last year, the paper featured opinion letters about speeders and private individuals investing their time to push the region to reduce speeds.

And now with measures put in place to address some of the speeding problems, people complain that it's a cash grab.

"It was a PD day, signs aren't big enough, no flashing lights any more."

No sooner are the new measures put in place and the first thing people think is what can I "get away with?"

The consensus is that with the region's speed cameras,



Writer Frank Hayes says people just need to follow the rules of the road and drive the speed limit. FILE

you'll get a ticket if you're travelling about 11 km/h over the posted limit. Whatever happened to abiding by the rule of law?

The difference between 40 km/h and 50km/h on a 500-metre stretch of road

will have zero impact on your day. Zero.

There was considerable awareness and marketing about the arrival of the cameras. Even signs saying "coming soon" were posted well in advance.

It highlights the fact that laws change and, as drivers, we are obliged to be aware of them and heed them.

At no point does the need of a driver to get from A to B as quickly as possible take priority over the safety of vulnerable road users.

The roads we have are part of a common transportation system to be used by all — safely.

Life is too short, too precious and too beautiful to squander away on a road incident. Let's all look to ourselves to improve our driving. No one else is going to do it for us.

*Frank Hayes
St. Davids*

Some pet owners **don't pick up** after their dogs

Dear editor:
I want to thank those many pet owners who over the past decade or so have transitioned away from letting their animal defecate throughout their neighbourhoods and now diligently pick up and bag your creature's business.

However, there are a few of you who need to more fully complete your responsibility.

Neither the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake nor Niagara Region provide a "bagged dog poop" pick-up service.

So please ensure that after



Darrell Gillespie took these photos of dog waste bags someone just left behind. you have tidied up Rover's digestive remains that you cart the little bag back to your house and not leave



it lying about the streets of our town. This is your responsibility and no one else's.



Thank you on behalf of a grateful community.
*Darrell Gillespie
Virgil*

Niagara EMS provided **top-notch care** when I needed it

Dear editor:
On March 13, my husband decided to call an ambulance as precaution. In 2020, I was diagnosed with stage 3 melanoma cancer and I've been on oral chemo since.

With long experience dealing with the side effects of these drugs, we've grown accustomed to managing them.

However, I had been dealing with a severe migraine for three long days and the severity had reached new, excruciating pain levels.

I had a new symptom, pressure under the left side of my chest from the night before. That morning, the pain was exasperated by nausea and crazy high blood pressure.

When we moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Toronto in 2022, one of the main concerns was leaving the comfort of being

cradled between four great hospitals.

As a patient at Sunnybrook's Odette Cancer Centre, I was hesitant to choose NOTL as a new home due to the distance to a major hospital.

And, of course, the publicized shortage of EMS responders in Niagara was an added concern.

It was a risk, but I figured I prefer to live my life doing what we loved, versus living in regret and fear. We indeed have been enjoying the lifestyle of wine country over the hustle of Toronto.

Our concerns finally became real when we had to dial for an ambulance.

The good news is it took only minutes for EMS to arrive to our home. My husband says the response was terrific and the care was first rate.

I was suffering, so I could only focus on my primary

provider, who was with me in the ambulance. I recall his calming voice, his genuine level of empathy, as he went through his analysis to identify if I was at risk for a heart event.

And then the focus became to alleviate my pain. He was amazing.

Hours later, after the pain was managed, I finally had the wherewithal to ask what his name was. It was Shane.

There have been media reports about too few paramedics in Niagara and extended offloading delays when patients get to hospital.

I understand this concern. Shane and his team member had to stay with me in the ambulance bay for a few hours before I was transferred into the hospital's emergency ward.

I even felt a tinge of guilt that I was holding up a valuable team of emergency responders. With CUPE Local

911 and Niagara Region in contract negotiations, I felt it important to acknowledge EMS Niagara for providing a great response time and great care.

A heartfelt thanks to Shane in particular, who offered a reassuring voice and great medical support that day. We never really know when is the right time to call EMS and women in particular will often second-guess themselves. I know I did.

Asking for help is not what I do best. On this day, I needed help and I'm especially grateful for the top-notch care I received.

My deepest gratitude to Shane and the first responders of EMS Niagara. We appreciate you and are lucky to have you.

We should do all we can to attract and retain top talent like Shane.

*Nancy Houle
NOTL*

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Send a letter to the editor to editor@niagaranow.com

Mandated fourplexes could mean **trouble**



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

On March 8, Premier Doug Ford held a press conference in Milton. During his remarks, he ruled out allowing fourplexes “as of right” across Ontario, saying it would be a “massive mistake.”

Back at Queen’s Park, Ford’s office later clarified the premier’s statement by saying that municipalities can still choose to allow fourplexes – even “as of right,” meaning allowable to be done automatically – but the province government won’t legislate these types of multi-unit dwellings across the board.

While I rarely find myself agreeing with the housing legislation and policy the Ford government has brought forward since the premier entered office in 2018, in this instance, I also believe it would be a massive mistake – understanding that my rationale does not align with Ford’s political agenda.

Now, my position on that “mistake” is not based on a criticism of true fourplexes – a single building that contains four separate dwelling units, each with its own entry.

On the contrary, widespread construction of buildings in a fourplex configuration should notably enhance the number of new housing units introduced into the market each year.

Further, fourplex units could potentially carry a more affordable acquisition price for the home buyer if certain challenges are overcome.

The principal challenge of an affordable fourplex offering is posed by legal barriers which make it simply too expensive for a devel-



With sympathetic architectural design, integrated into the streetscape and on the right lot, every town and city should have room for fourplexes ... but never as-of-right. LETSTALKRICHMOND.CA

oper to build and register a four-unit condo.

Alternatively, the cooperative ownership model has potential however, banks are very resistant to writing mortgages on ownership wherein the collateral is co-op shares rather than the actual property – credit unions and private lenders have been the principal source of mortgages.

In 2022, the federal government launched the Co-operative Housing Development Program, with \$500 million in funding and \$1 billion in loans.

To date, this program has made few gains in addressing the limitations in the existing co-op model.

As a result, and until a new, more feasible ownership structure can be developed to underwrite general market sales, fourplexes will principally address the rental market or those purchasers looking for a multi-generational family home.

That said, it’s not the fourplex that would be the mistake, rather it’s the “as of right” concept that could lead a community down the proverbial rabbit hole.

In his book “Land-Use Planning,” Howard Epstein defines “as of right” in the following fashion: “Entitlement of the owner of

property to use or develop it, without recourse to a public hearing process or a vote of municipal council, if the proposed use accords with the zoning bylaws.”

In short, a property owner can build, without any type of oversight, whatever they wish, provided it meets the bylaw(s).

Remember that, in and of itself, a town or city council must pass a bylaw – which would contain the required compliance criteria – to allow “as of right” fourplex developments.

To date, the cities of Toronto, Mississauga and London – spurred by the carrot of federal dollars incentivizing municipalities to increase housing stock – have passed such a bylaw, while Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and Burlington are busy working toward doing the same.

So, let’s take a quick look at some of the key provisions included in Toronto’s bylaw (read “multiplex” as fourplex). These include:

- Permit multiplex building types in residential detached, residential semi-detached and residential townhouse zones.

- Exempt multiplex building types from floor space index – the maximum permitted area on a piece of land for construction (argu-

ably a lot coverage consideration) – regulations.

- Permit multiplexes up to 10 metres in height in zones where the current maximum height is less than 10 metres.

- Amend the permitted maximum number of dwelling units on the lot to allow up to four units in all residential zones.

- Exempt multiplexes from zoning criteria which specify the maximum number of storeys permitted.

Now, let’s assume Toronto’s bylaw provisions will serve as a boilerplate for other Ontario municipalities, considering the “as of right” legal definition, and apply this to your local neighbourhood.

Without any oversight or limitation, a property owner may construct a building more than 10 metres, or 32 feet, tall.

However, because the maximum number of storeys has been exempted by the fifth point, this maximum height becomes a variable.

Further, since these buildings are exempt from floor space index values, the property owner has a valid argument to ignore (“as of right”) any lot coverage provisions.

Net-net ... following Toronto’s provisions, after

the municipal adoption of an “as of right” bylaw in this form, your home and streetscape could be dominated and overshadowed by a multi-storey building.

And neither you, nor your locally elected representatives, will have any opportunity for comment or recourse.

Should this resonate with you as draconian, let me assure you that it is.

When an elected government passes an “as of right” law or bylaw, it essentially abrogates its authority under law, deprives voters of their rights to be heard or enact any method of appeal and conveys these rights and authority to the whims of an individual property owner limited only by the provisions of the associated “as of right” law or bylaw.

So, why would every political party – with the exception of the Conservatives – at the provincial level endorse “as of right” legislation?

Simply because they have swallowed, whole hog, the narrative that NIMBYism is the challenge rather than deal with the decades-long failure of governments (at every level) to properly engage expert urban planners to create urban development zones – with associated transit connectivity – within

the official plans to embrace fourplex buildings.

The “coulda, woulda, shoulda” debate might be endless, but that’s all water under the bridge.

The question is, what can we as informed voters do to direct a future that embraces sympathetic – to the community, its neighbourhoods and streetscapes – housing for every demographic required within a viable community?

In some municipalities, this might take the form of petitioning council to have staff inventory all commercial, industrial and institutional zoned areas that are underutilized, either due to lack of development investment as a result of local saturation (availability of existing buildings serving these purposes) or the cost of replacing existing outdated buildings to meet the needs of 21st-century business.

Subsequent analysis of these areas could, and almost certainly would, yield many residential multiplex rezoning opportunities.

Following the same citizen generated petition imperative, most municipalities have residential zoned areas within their boundaries that, having no heritage value, are ripe for urban renewal.

There are various fellow municipally owned lands that could be lodged in land trusts, which could provide similar multiplex zoning opportunities.

All of which could be leveraged to provide this type of multiplex housing without undue interference to established neighbourhoods and streetscapes.

These are only two suggestions out of many, but all require direct community involvement to chart a path forward.

As someone far smarter than I once suggested, “You get what you earn. If you earn nothing by the work of your hands and the sweat of your brow, don’t complain – there’s no free lunch.”

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



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Niagara Region's speed camera program gets a **failing grade**

Dear editor:
How successful has Niagara Region's program been to educate drivers to reduce their speed in front of Crossroads Public School?

As a teacher with 38 years of high school and university experience, I would assign a grade of F.

The first reason is the removal of the flashing lights near the speed camera. They were replaced by small signs with a lot of text that requires a driver to practically stop in order to read all of it.

The region's reason for that removal, as reported in The Lake Report, is incomprehensible. It makes no sense.

If those lights cannot effectively or legally be near the speed limit signs, then move them half a kilometre away to warn drivers to watch their speed as they approach the school.

There's no doubt that a flashing light is extremely effective as a warning signal.

Do the drafters of this policy ever actually drive



Writer Wesley Turner says he doesn't understand why the region removed the flashing lights in the school zone. FILE

on the roads that are affected? I have driven on Niagara Stone Road for more than 20 years and wholeheartedly agree to lower speed limits in front of schools.

Next is the policy itself. Is the limit of 40 km/h in effect when the school is closed for holidays, PD days and over the summer? Those are legitimate questions. Could there not be large signs clearly and briefly providing answers?

When a driver receives a speeding ticket and tries to pay it in the most convenient way — online — it cannot be done because the site is not yet working.

Did its designer not think to test the system before the new speed limit policy was instituted?

Could the region not have in place a convenient method (a phone number, fine payable at any bank) of paying the fine instead of requiring drivers to travel all the way to Welland to pay in person?

Understanding laws is vitally important in gaining respect and regular adherence to them. The failure to realize this seems evident in whoever is responsible for this change on Niagara Stone Road.

Wesley Turner
St. Catharines

Town of NOTL **denies request** for copy of a public site plan

Dear editor:
I have been trying for over a year now to get an answer to the following question, "What private and personal information is on a site plan?"

I have filed a freedom of information request (FOI) with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in order to get a hard copy of a site plan.

When I filed my FOI request for a copy of a site plan for 14940 Niagara

Parkway, I was denied by deputy clerk Shaunna Arenberg, who refused to answer the question directly.

She provided me with sections of the Freedom of Information Act that were not applicable to the question asked.

Thus I asked the question again and it was turned over to the new town clerk, Grant Bivol, who also is not answering the question.

If the site plan in question contains so much private and personal information, why were my son-in-law and I allowed to go in and look at it? Why were we not allowed to have a copy of it?

The site plan consisted of a drawing with dimensions on it and a title block, with the name of the firm that drew it.

Kip Voegel
NOTL

Queen Street's COVID-era patios **cheaply built, poorly maintained**

Dear editor:
Scott Gauld's views on Niagara-on-the-Lake's patios ("Vast majority support NOTL's temporary patios," March 28) are biased by the fact he is one of the owners of the Sunset Grill on Queen Street.

In my original letter ("Temporary patios filthy and attract vermin," March 21), I did not mean the policy that distributes patio licences is unfair to restaurants, or their own-

ers. It is unfair to all businesses that don't happen to be restaurants.

Some of the patios are, in fact, filthy. Skunks and other vermin have indeed taken up residence under some.

Toronto has not kept its street patios. All COVID-era patios that were built on roads during the pandemic have been removed.

Only a few sidewalk patios remain. The ugly NOTL patios are partly

parked on roads. I have not seen the 2023 survey, to which Mr. Gauld refers, but I know that a sample size of 390 is not representative of the hundreds of thousands who visit the region or live here.

I still say that NOTL's patios are ugly, cheaply built and poorly maintained — and sit empty for most months of the year.

Rob Bongard
Toronto

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Niagara-on-the-Lake

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COMMUNITY NOTICE
ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each year, CN is required to manage vegetation on its right-of-way. Managing this vegetation contributes to mitigating fire risks and enhances the efficiency of inspection of track infrastructure. The spray program is not being done for aesthetic reasons.

To ensure safe railway operations, CN will conduct its annual spray program on its rail lines in the province of Ontario. A certified professional (Davey Tree Expert Company Ltd., 1-800-465-6367) will apply herbicides on and around the railway tracks (primarily along the 24-foot graveled area/ballast). Product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met.

CN may use the following herbicides and active ingredients: Credit Xtreme (Nufarm), Esplanade (Bayer), Detail (BASF), Arsenal Powerline (BASF), Navius Flex (Bayer), Gateway (Corteva), Hasten NT (Norac), Round Up Weather Pro (Bayer), Torpedo (Valent), Telar (Envu/Bayer), Clearview (Corteva), Aspect (Corteva), Garlon XRT (Corteva), Milestone NXT (Corteva), Glyphosate (540 g/L), Indaziflam (200 g/L), Saflufenacil (29.74%), Imazapyr (26.7%), Metsulfuron-methyl (12.6%), Aminocyclopyrachlor (39.5%), Paraffinic Oil (586 g/L), Alkoxylated alcohol non-ionic surfactants (242 g/L), Methyl and Ethyl oleate (esterified vegetable oil 75.20%), Flumioxazin (33.5%), Pyroxasulfone (42.5%), Chlorsulfuron (75%), Aminopyralid (52.5%-60%), Metsulfuron-methyl (94.5%), Picloram (97.5 g/L), 2, 4-D (360 g/L), Triclopyr (755 g/L), Florpyrauxifen (4.77%)

CN only uses herbicides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the province within which they are applied.

The program is expected to take place from May to October 2024.

Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation for more information or to make an inquiry, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

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Have an opinion you want heard?

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 Mississauga St., NOTL.

Does NOTL library **really** need a CEO?

Dear editor:
It seems to me that all the letters about the pros and cons regarding the dismissal of chief librarian Cathy Simpson, are all avoiding the “elephant in the room.”

My question is why are we paying a \$120,000 salary for a head librarian of

a small-town library? Is it perhaps because we give them the ridiculous title of chief executive officer? What is wrong with the title of chief or head librarian, and paying them a salary more in line with their responsibilities?

Especially, when in the same edition of your news-

paper is the article that town council has approved a 6.75 per cent tax hike.

I realize that it is almost impossible to find someone who is called a short order cook, a wine steward or even a clerk as today they are all chefs, sommeliers or administrators.

As a taxpayer, I say call

them what you wish, but don't overpay them with taxpayers' money.

Hopefully the library board will look more closely at salary when conducting its review and hiring of Simpson's replacement.

Peter Harvey
NOTL

Let's remember, all people are **created equal**

Dear editor:
Having read the letters both by Matthew French and Anthony Powell about fired chief librarian Cathy Simpson's opinion piece (“Censorship and what we are allowed to read”), I completely agree with Mr. Powell.

There is no need to repeat his excellent arguments, but let me merely note one point.

Mr. French writes, “The divisive, far right American culture wars have arrived at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library ...”

This reminds me of something I was told when researching my book, “Who Speaks for the River?,” about the injustices faced by a particular Indigenous people.

An old farmer said that long ago, “The innovations came north from the United States at the rate of about 10 miles a year.” Now, of course, the innovations, good, bad and mixed, arrive instantaneously.

In fact, American politics already arrived in Canada with the diversity,

equity, inclusion movement.

As a former defence lawyer and senior Crown attorney, I think the concern with injustice is laudable.

But the methods as applied in Canada are often illiberal and dangerous. We have jobs at times only available to people of one ethnicity, and at other times, one ethnicity is not even able to apply.

Such excesses do not even occur in the United States as a matter of law.

Thus when the Foundation Against Intolerance

and Racism came north to Canada, it was another new innovation and a response to a prior one.

My sense is that in Canada we have lost our way on these issues and must remember again that all people, whatever their background, are equal.

In this context, Simpson's public statement and the existence of FAIR are helpful antidotes to good ideas that, when pushed too far, become both bad and unjust.

Robert Girvan
Toronto

Library professionals **support** Cathy Simpson

The following is an edited version of a letter to NOTL library chairman Daryl Novak.

The Association of Library Professionals would like to express its concern regarding the firing of Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library CEO Cathy Simpson by the NOTL Library Board.

While the association has no wish to interfere with the internal matters or decisions of a public library board, it nonetheless feels compelled to offer its perspective on these events not only owing to the fact that Simpson is also a charter member of the organization, but because the principles at the heart of the events in question concern the association's commitment to library neutrality.

We concur with Simpson's views expressed in her Feb. 21 op-ed in The Lake Report, “Censorship and What we are Allowed to Read,” that public libraries need to aspire to neutrality and collect materials that may be unpopular and even offensive to some members of the community.

In setting out these arguments, Simpson ably exemplified the NOTL Public Library's own collection development policy, which says it is committed “to intellectual freedom ...



Cathy Simpson.

while protecting the collection from societal and political pressures. The library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox or unacceptable to others. The presence of an item in the library does not indicate an endorsement of its content.”

We are concerned that, in firing Simpson, the board in effect punished her for defending the principles in the library's own policies, ironically reinforcing the very concern that she was raising regarding the illiberal narrowing of per-

missible discourse in public libraries.

We also believe her firing sets a troubling precedent that will have a downstream chilling effect on the professional speech of other CEOs and directors.

Finally, in the aftermath of these events, the board's decision has drawn negative national and international attention on NOTL Public Library, all of which could have been avoided if the board had taken or encouraged a more dialogical, mediating path, rather than a punitive one.

Like Simpson, our association believes attempts to limit viewpoint diversity for adult library users should be resisted regardless of from which part of the political spectrum they come; that library professionals have an obligation and the right to comment in public forums on matters pertaining to the integrity of the profession, and of libraries as an institution; that it is the mission of the public library to facilitate through its collections and spaces robust and informed debate about controversial issues; that the communities public libraries serve are too diverse to restrict materials to only a narrow spectrum of views; and that events like Freedom to Read Week in Canada and Banned

Books Week (U.S.) should, accordingly, highlight the diverse range of challenged materials from across the political spectrum.

These convictions are spelled out in the association's Statement of Purpose: that it is intended “to advance, promote, and defend ... institutional neutrality, open inquiry, individual liberty, freedom of thought, freedom of speech and intellectual freedom.”

The association stands by Simpson's arguments that public libraries must uphold the essential value of institutional neutrality, for only in doing so can they create the conditions in which the freedom to read is possible.

By raising awareness of these issues among the profession and members of the public, we hope Simpson has helped to forge an opportunity for further dialogue and debate in the profession and among community stakeholders regarding these critical issues — a debate in which the association is also committed to engage.

We respectfully encourage the library board to reconsider its decision and restore Simpson to her position as CEO.

Erik Wilkinson
President
Association of Library Professionals
Manhattan, Kansas



NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **23 VINCENT AVENUE, PEAKE INN (PLAN 73A LOT 195)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

The subject property is located on 23 Vincent Avenue and is called the Peake Inn. It is located in the Old Town urban area. The subject property is located within the area that was designed and developed as the Canadian Chautauqua. The design consists of a spoke and wheel pattern with streets radiating from a central point. The residence has a moderate setback from the road. The open space surrounding the residence is landscaped with a few mature trees located towards the north and south of the subject property.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property known as the Peake Inn has cultural heritage value or interest for its design and physical values, its historical and associative values and its contextual values.

The Peake Inn has architectural value because it is a representative example of the Queen Anne Revival style. The two-storey rectangular plan residence has a complex gable and hip roof with overhanging eaves, symmetrical façade, a three-sidewrap-around verandah, red brick chimney, and colourful decorative shingles. The complex structure also features a combination of triangular and gable dormer windows with the façade gable end featuring a flat arched opening with rounded corners. The Queen Anne Revival house also contains intricate woodwork in the form of spindle work on the verandah, wooden columns, raised wooden railings, wooden brackets, and vergeboard.

The Peake Inn has historical value because it has historical association of being a part of "Crookston" that belonged to William and James Crooks. The brothers worked as merchants, farmers and also built ships. The subject property is also associated with the formation of the Canadian Chautauqua in Niagara. 23 Vincent Avenue has historical and associative value as being the residence of the Peake/McEwen family. It was bought by Charles Nicholas Peake in 1919, who was the son of Lewis Peake. Lewis Peake was the managing director of the Chautauqua and the secretary of the Niagara Assembly. The house is named Peake Inn, also named after the Peake family.

The subject property has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of the Chautauqua movement, the design principles that went into designing the Chautauqua neighbourhood, and the lifestyle and leisure activities of the people during that time period.

The Peake Inn is of immense contextual value in maintaining the character of the area. The playful Queen Anne Revival style of the subject property reflects the impact of the Chautauqua movement on the design of the cottages in the region. This is also reflected through other cottage styles found on Vincent Avenue. The subject property acts as a character supporting resource for the diminishing cottages reflective of the Chautauqua. 23 Vincent Avenue also has contextual value because it is

physically linked to its surroundings. The property is located on Lot 195 in the Chautauqua neighbourhood. It maintains the original demarcation of the Lot and is a part of the radial design of the neighbourhood.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of 23 Vincent Avenue in Niagara-on-the-Lake include:

- Two storey Queen Anne Revival residence
- Symmetrical facade
- The main entrance opening and rectangular window openings
- Complex gable and hip roof with overhanging eaves
- Wrap-around verandah
- Triangular and gable dormer windows
- Façade gable with a flat arched opening with rounded corners
- Colorful decorative shingles cladding
- Red brick chimney
- Intricate woodwork in the form of spindle-work on the verandah, wooden columns, raised wooden railings, wooden brackets, and vergeboard
- Location of Peake Inn within Chautauqua neighborhood
- Mature trees and landscaped lawns

Objections

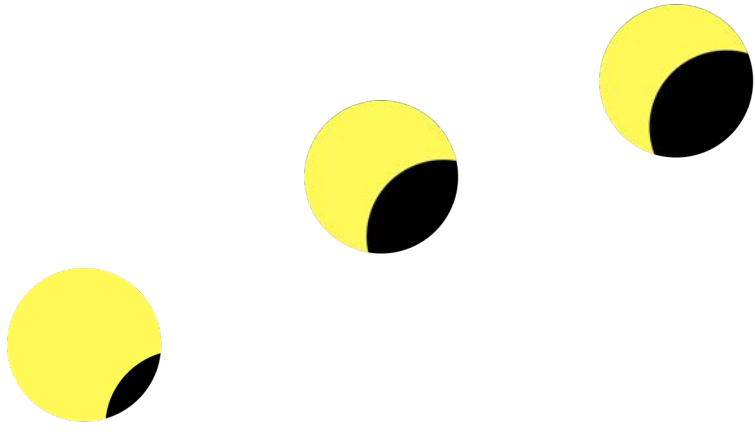
Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to Grant Bivol, Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **May 4th 2024**.

Queries

Any further queries should be directed to Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner at (905) 468-3266 ext. 327 or through email at sumra.zia@notl.com.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 4th day of April 2024

GRANT BIVOL, CLERK



Solar I

Niagara-on-the-Lake is in the Path of

Compiled by The

What to expect

According to Jan Vrbik, a Brock University professor of mathematics who studies the movement of the sun, planets and moons, the eclipse “completely blocks the sun and turns the daytime sky dark enough to see stars for several minutes.”

As with any regular day, the sun is going to be bright, so it’s important to follow safe viewing guidelines. There is an abundance of information online, plus check our viewing checklist on this page.

Interesting facts

A once-in-a-lifetime show

While a total solar eclipse occurs on Earth every 18 months, the Path of Totality is usually over water. The last time a total solar eclipse occurred over Ontario was in 1979. The next one won’t happen again over the province until 2099, making this a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

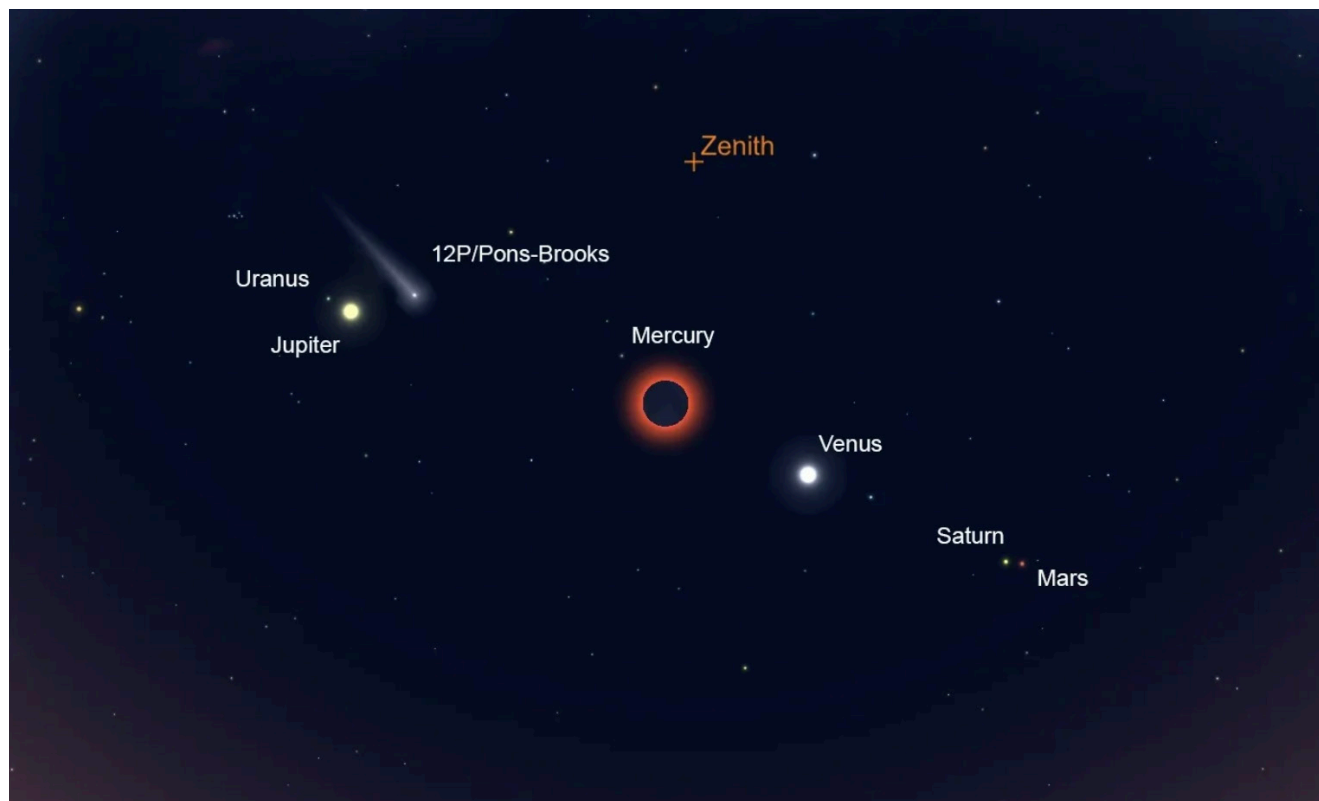
‘Devil’s comet’ could be visible

While officially named comet 12P/Pons-Brooks, the ‘Devil’s Comet’ might be visible during the total eclipse, according to NASA. The comet enters the inner solar system every 71 years and has a visible ion tail. If the comet has an “outburst” it will be significantly brighter and could be visible. Though NASA says that’s unlikely, and Astronomy.com warns, “Comets are notorious for not performing the way astronomers think they should, so don’t spend a lot of time searching for it.”

Woah, that’s a big shadow

The size of the moon’s shadow varies depending on how close in time the event is to when the moon is at its closest to Earth. Typically, the shadow is 150 kilometres in a circular area. A much larger part of the Earth’s surface, about 7,000 kilometres across, will at the same time experience a partial eclipse, in which only a part of the sun’s disk is covered by the moon.

The graphic below, created by Dave Weixelman using SkySafari, shows the location of comet 12P/Pons-Brooks in the sky during totality at the total eclipse of the sun on April 8, 2024. The comet’s dust tail is also shown. [HIGHSIERRAIMAGING.COM](https://highsierraimaging.com)



Just the right spot

The sun’s diameter is about 400 times larger than the moon’s, and the sun is almost 400 times farther away from us than the moon is. This combination makes the sun and moon appear nearly the same size in our sky, setting up a spectacular show when they align.

Corona will shine brighter

According to NASA, “Compared to the eclipse in 2017, the moon will be nearer its closest to the Earth, making its shadow larger, the sky darker, and the eclipse longer. In addition, the sun will be nearer its maximum in its 11-year cycle, so the corona, which can only be seen during a total eclipse, should be more spectacular.”

Venus and Jupiter will say hello

According to Astronomy.com, Venus and Jupiter will both be visible during the eclipse. Jupiter will come out first. According to NASA, “If the sky is clear during the eclipse, you will be able to see the planets and some stars that are not normally visible this time of year. Bright Jupiter will be to the upper left of the eclipse, with Venus, Saturn, and Mars to the lower right.” Jupiter is expected to pop into view during totality (and perhaps a few minutes before).

How to view safely

Grabbing a direct look at the sun is dangerous at any time. During a solar eclipse the temptation to get even just a quick glimpse of this once-in-a-lifetime event can be a pull too powerful to resist.

But safety is paramount because the affects and damages to your retinas are real. So, to remain safe and enjoy the event, keep these safety measures in mind.

Total eclipse? How about total abstinence?

To achieve this, do not view the eclipse at all. After all, it is seeing day turn to night in the middle of the afternoon that is the amazing part and that can be done without direct visual lines.

But since we are curious animals driven to impulse and mob mentality (everyone’s doing it), a proper method of blocking the sun’s dangerous rays is required when looking up.

Use ISO-certified eclipse glasses that meet ISO 12312-2 international safety standards. The manufacturer’s name and address must be printed on the product and do not use products that have scratched or wrinkled lenses.

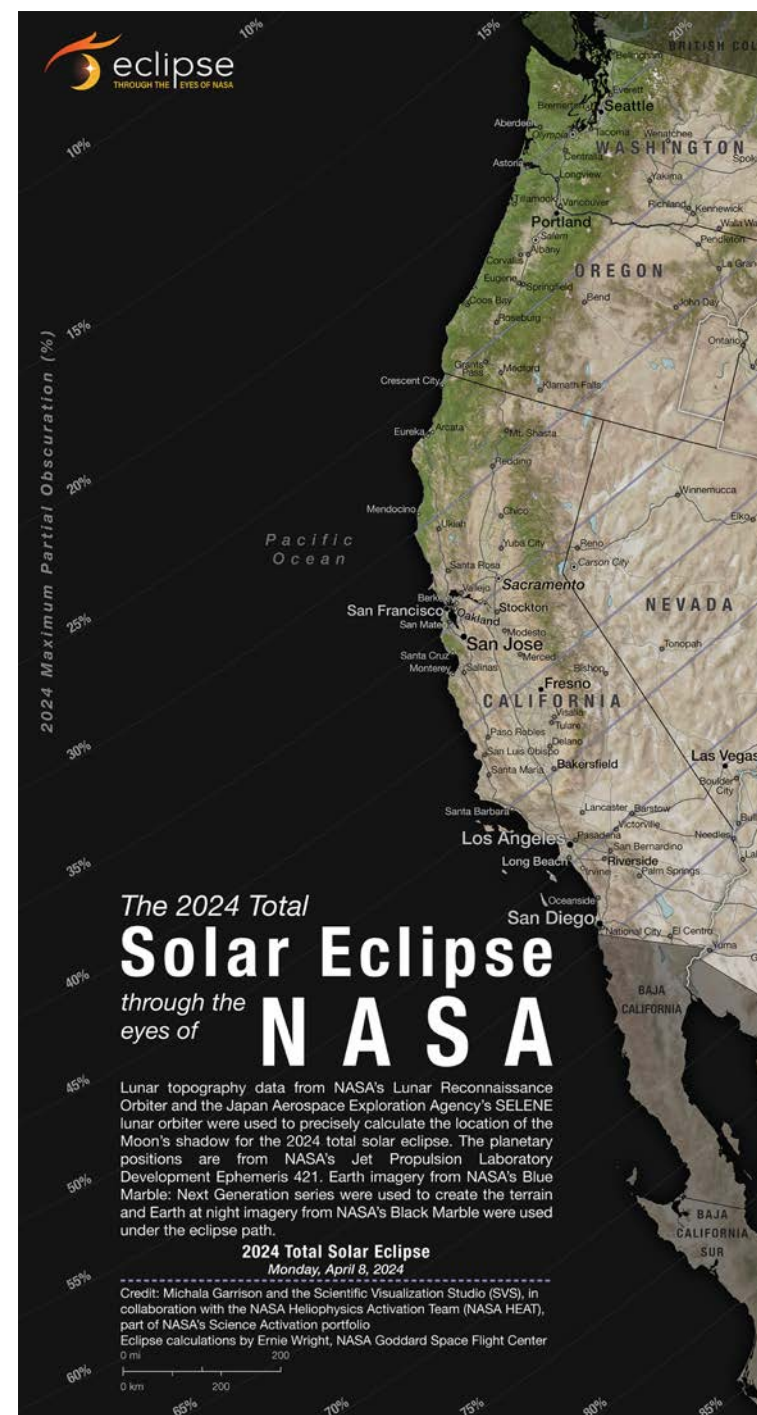
Remember, retinas are sneaky organs. They contain no pain sensors to tell you that your eyes are being damaged by looking at the sun, so trust in the science over the false narrative being given to you by your eyes.

Symptoms can take 12 to 48 hours to appear and can include retinal burns, permanent or temporary visual loss, and blurred vision. Once symptoms begin, it’s usually too late to reverse any damage.

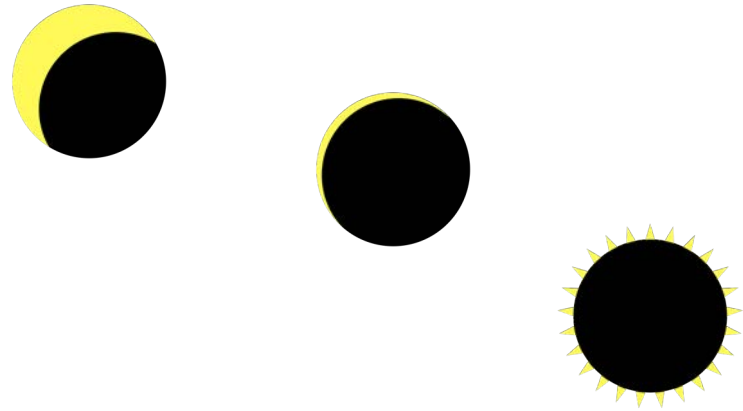
Where to find the proper glasses

Suppliers of safe solar filters and viewers (<https://eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety/viewers-filters>)

The map below illustrates the paths of the moon’s shadow across the blocks the sun while it passes between the sun and earth. The sky will



Eclipse



f Totality for the first time since 1979

Lake Report staff

A short list of some places hosting eclipse parties

Niagara Falls may be designated the go-to place to experience the solar eclipse on April 8, but that doesn't mean there won't be plenty of places to experience the once-in-a-lifetime celestial event.

It will be the first time since 1979 that Niagara has experienced a total solar eclipse, which occurs when the moon passes between the Earth and Sun, casting a shadow and – when totality is reached – plunging the area into temporary darkness.

In Niagara, totality is expected to occur at 3:18 p.m. and last for about three minutes.

Meanwhile, on April 8, Niagara-on-the-Lake will host events at venues across town.

Attendees will be able to raise – and don – their eclipse glasses to experience this cosmic phenomenon in the following locations:

Spirit in Niagara distillery is hosting an eclipse viewing party from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. with free admission, special cocktails and souvenir eyewear. There will also be live rock and blues music by the Wilber James Band.

Queenston Mile Vineyard is hosting an eclipse viewing party on April 8 from noon to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$50 per person and include souvenir eclipse glasses, pizza (one slice per person), salad and live music. Purchase tickets: www.queenstonmilevineyard.com/event.

Bella Terra Vineyards is hosting eclipse blind tastings, April 5 to 8 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Blind tastings include three mystery wines, "jar" coterie, a note card and pen. Tastings are \$34.95 per person. Book a spot: bellaterravineyards.ca.

Marynissen Estates, with Twist and Sprouts Food is hosting a yoga, lunch and wine event on April 8. Sessions are \$55 and will be held at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Information: marynissen.com/shop/ols/products/eclipse-event-ticket.

Ironwood Cider House and Runaway Greek are hosting an eclipse watch party from noon to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and include one drink and eclipse glasses. Information: facebook.com/ironwoodcider.

Palatine Hills Estate Winery is inviting people to view the eclipse from the winery's patio. The first 40 people will receive a free pair of eclipse viewing glasses. Information: facebook.com/PalatineHillsEstateWinery.

Wayne Gretzky Estates is hosting a viewing event. Tickets

are \$40 (\$20 for wine club members) and includes eclipse glasses, a branded black glass of Gretzky Brut, appetizers and a drink ticket. Information: my-winecountry.com/on/solar-eclipse-event-2024.html.

Reif Estate Winery is hosting an eclipse event from 1 to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$70 and include a barbecue lunch, food wine, eclipse glasses and live entertainment. Information: exploretock.com/reifestatewinery/event/465620.

Grape Escape Wine Tours and Ravine Vineyards are hosting "Sips & Eclipse" from 1 to 5 p.m. The event is sold out, but a waiting list is available. Contact to join the list: office@ourniagarawineries.com.

Konzelman Estate Winery is hosting its sold-out "Eclipse by

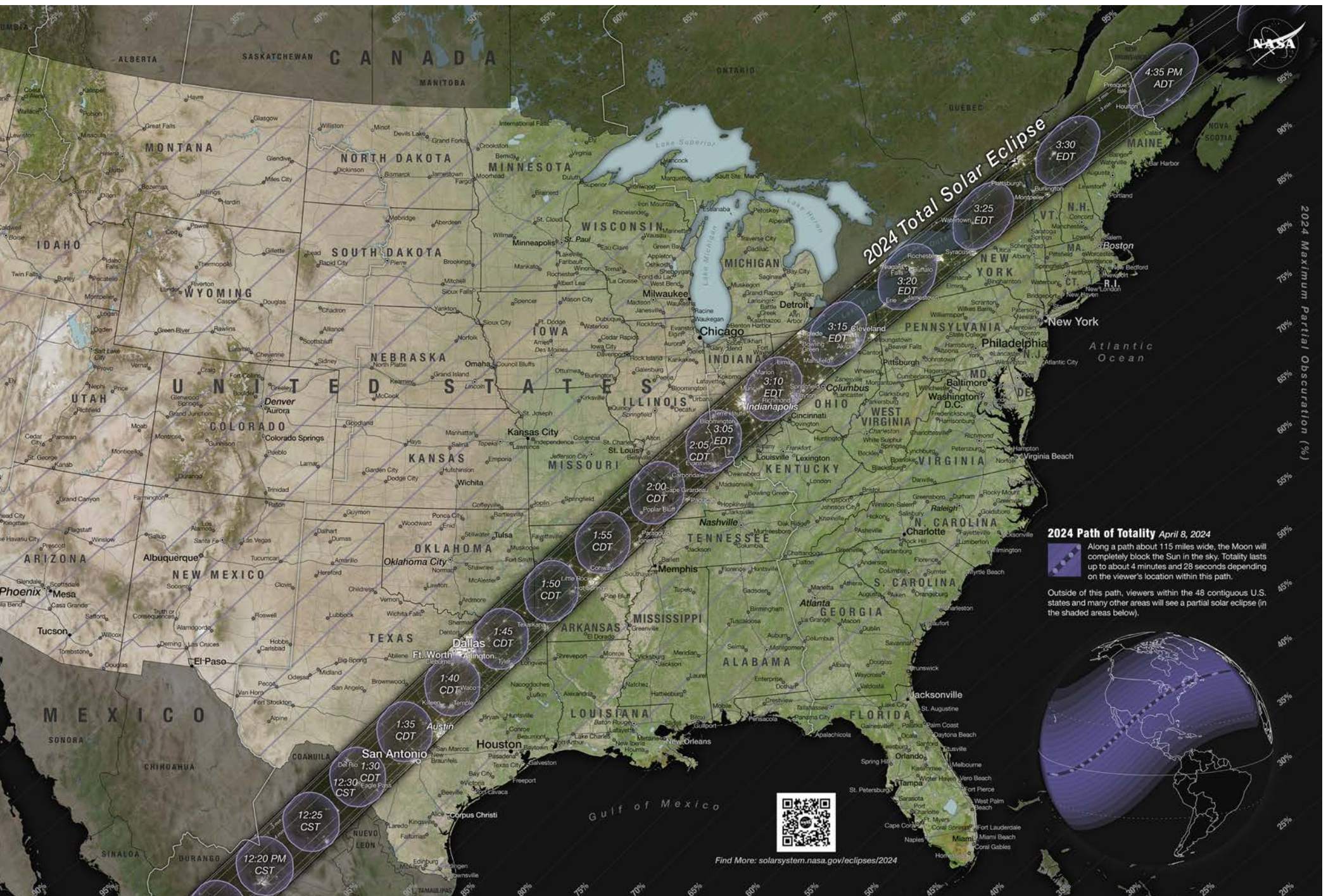
the Lake" event from 2 to 5 p.m.

Non-winery events

Weather permitting, **Niagara Cycling Tours** has organized a four-to-five-hour ride to witness the eclipse. Participants will experience an exhilarating journey through carefully selected trails for optimal eclipse viewing. Spots are limited. Information: niagaracyclingtours.ca/book-now.

Brock University is hosting "Eclipse on the Escarpment," an event featuring exhibits led by the university's researchers, educators and experts, from noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free and participants will receive a free pair of eclipse glasses. A viewing of the eclipse will be held on Alumni Field. Information: brocku.ca/mathematics-science/fms-solar-eclipse-event.

U.S. during the 2024 total solar eclipse. On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North and Central America creating a Path of Totality. During a total solar eclipse, the moon completely blocks the sun's light and those standing in the path of totality may see the sun's outer atmosphere (the corona) if weather permits. NASA'S SCIENTIFIC VISUALIZATION STUDIO



'Impossible for grief and joy to co-exist'

Three years later, family is keeping Matthew Wilson's memory alive

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

A lovingly crafted, home-made black cross marks the spot in a ditch along Lakeshore Road where Matthew Wilson died after he was hit by a pickup truck three years ago this week.

But rather than solely being a sad reminder of the tragedy that claimed his life, for his family and surviving friends and relatives, it is a way to celebrate the 40-year-old, taken too soon.

"We're celebrating his life, not mourning his death," says his mother, Colleen Franz. "It is impossible for grief and joy to co-exist."

Despite maintaining a positive disposition in three years since that fateful April 4 night, his mother remains inconsolable. Life doesn't get any easier, she says.

Counselling and the kindnesses of others help — though "the pain never goes away."

"People think that you just get over it and you get on with your life," but you don't, she says.

It's with her "every single day," it affects her husband John Franz, and Wilson's older brother Kirk and other family and relatives.

"It's harder. It's not easier. And I don't think most people can understand that," Franz says.

"The first year I think you're in a fog. You're in a mess and you just go through the motions."

The reality of the loss hits later and by the third year the longing has grown, she says.

However, their healing is helped by visits to the roadside cross and to his grave in Lundy's Lane Cemetery in Niagara Falls.

Whenever they do visit, they "have a little conversation" with Matthew. "I know it sounds silly, but that's what we do," she says.

Because it helps. As Easter season approached last week, bunnies and eggs and flowers were added to the Lakeshore Road memorial.

Two weeks earlier, it was puttin' on green for St. Patrick's Day and in the past it's celebrated Wilson's Sept. 23 birthday, Christmas, Halloween, his love of music, cars, golf and hockey, plus many other touchstones.

Wilson worked at Falls-



Clockwise from top left: Matthew Wilson, who was struck and killed by Rob Enns' truck three years ago, on April 4, 2021. Wilson's mother Colleen Franz and stepfather John Franz decorate his memorial on Lakeshore Road. It's located in the ditch near where his body was found. The family has taken care to change the memorial for special occasions like Wilson's birthday, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day and many more. The damage to Enns' truck. The family still has many questions of Enns, who was convicted of failing to report an accident.

view Casino but when it was were closed during COVID, to save money he moved in with his mom and stepdad in the Homestead area of Virgil.

He bought himself a large TV and built a pine shelf for it. After his death, his stepfather, John Franz, created the black cross from that pine shelf, insisting that it be a happy memorial, celebrating Wilson's life, not just grieving his death.

He builds most of the pieces himself and says the memorial is a way to show how much he misses his stepson.

"He loved Kirk and Matthew as if they were both his own sons," Colleen says, "and this is a way to pay tribute to Matthew."

"We don't want people to drive by and think sadness. We want people to drive by and think gladness, because he was a great person. He did a lot of good in this world."

Wilson was a walker.

A few years before he was killed, the Niagara College photography grad developed a blood clot in his right leg — a hereditary condition that was treated successfully but the doctor advised him to walk more. So, he did. A lot.

Late on the night of April 4, 2021, he was making his way home to Virgil after visiting a friend in St. Catharines. He was struck by Rob Enns' truck as he walked along the unlit south side of Lakeshore Road.

Enns, a prominent farmer and businessman in Niagara-on-the-Lake, was driving to his home on Irvine Road. He has never spoken publicly about the case. Attempts to speak to Enns this week and earlier through his defence lawyer, Vijai Singh, were unsuccessful.

As documented previously by The Lake Report, grainy, black and white surveillance video from a security camera at Seaway Farms, at Stewart and Lake-

shore roads, was played at Enns' trial in October 2022.

In the video, for a few seconds around 10:26 p.m., Wilson is seen walking along Lakeshore.

Eight minutes later, at 10:34 p.m., Enns' F-150 pickup truck passes Seaway. Twenty seconds afterward, off-camera, a thud can be heard.

Enns testified he circled back and stopped. He told court he thought he had hit a deer but admitted it also crossed his mind that it could have been a person.

He also said he drank a glass of wine earlier in the evening.

On Lakeshore Road, he used the flashlight from his mobile phone to look around and to inspect the damage to his truck. Some of this was captured on the Seaway Farms video.

In the pitch dark, using the light from his phone, he thought he had some broken lights and other minor damage, Enns said.

After the impact, he

didn't see any sign of a deer, or of Wilson. Nor Wilson's left shoe near the middle of the road, nor his brimmed, dark-coloured cap, nor his right shoe near the shoulder of the road, court was told.

Enns then drove to his home, about 1.5 kilometres away, on Irvine Road.

Wilson's body was discovered in the shallow, south-side ditch by the driver of a recycling truck headed toward St. Catharines about 7:20 the next morning.

He immediately called 911.

On Dec. 1, 2022, Justice of the Peace Mary Shelley quietly pronounced Enns guilty of failing to report an accident, a relatively minor Provincial Offences Act charge — not a criminal count.

Based on the available evidence and with no witnesses, it was the only charge investigators laid.

Enns was fined \$500 and given nine months' probation.

He was not in court in Welland that morning to hear the verdict, which surprised both the family and Crown prosecutor Henry Limheng.

Colleen Franz had hoped to read her more than 50-page victim impact statement to the court, but without Enns there, she didn't see any point.

In the immediate aftermath of the trial, she had some questions for him. Those questions — and many others — linger still.

"Why didn't you call 911?"

"Why have you never, ever said you're sorry?"

"Why did you not come to court to hear the verdict?"

Franz maintains that had her son got medical attention sooner, he might have survived. She'll never know.

"As the justice of the peace said, 'Seconds matter.'"

"He could have dialled 911. An Ornge air ambulance could have taken Matthew to an out-of-town trauma centre," Franz said.

Enns made that call just after 8:08 on the morning of April 5, 2021, when he realized the damage to his truck was extensive and when he heard police had closed Lakeshore to investigate a fatality.

While he told court he initially thought the truck sustained about \$1,500 in damage, the final total was more than six times that amount.

The family reached an out-of-court settlement with Enns' insurer, but did not sue him personally.

Taking any further action was deemed not worth the emotional toll a court case might have entailed.

Living in a small town like Niagara-on-the-Lake, it's inevitable that people's paths will cross from time to time.

Whether driving around NOTL, or face-to-face at the hardware or grocery store, Franz says she has encountered Enns several times in the three years since the tragedy.

And now his company, P.G. Enns Farms, owns Tina's Fruit Market, a small roadside stand a hundred metres or so from Wilson's memorial.

Their lives remain forever intertwined, but Enns and Franz have never spoken. She longs for that opportunity.



Clockwise from top left: Michelle Chappell helps her children Shayla, 4, and Arlo, 2, hunt for eggs. Carson Lobsinger is loving the equipment that was on site. Thomas and Tilda Strandberg explore the activities. Ava Dickinson rides in the NOTL Hydro truck. PHOTOS BY RICHARD HARLEY, HANS PAULS AND JASON CHOW.

Bunny Trail raises \$10K for nursery school

Continued from Front Page

She said her son James got into the school when he was one-year-old. “As a working mom, this means a lot to me,” she said, noting she registered him as soon as she found out she was pregnant because there’s a long waiting list. She signed him up for the school before she even

found him a doctor, she said. “That’s how long the waiting list is.” Brianne Hawley, a former board member of the nursery school, was out with her two boys, Merritt, 6, and Malcolm, 4. “The highlight this morning has been the touch-a-truck and the fire truck — and also they got way more eggs this year than last

year,” she said. “They were really into it. I also think that they could put their elbows up a little bit more this year.” They’ve been coming to the Bunny Trail since 2017, when they moved to NOTL and Merritt was a newborn. While her kids are now too old for the nursery school, they attend the summer camp. “It’s a really amazing

event because it not only supports the nursery school and fundraising for activities and equipment that they need, but it’s also a really great showcase of how many young families are in town,” Hawley said. People often say “there’s no kids in Niagara-on-the-Lake, but by having these types of community events, it’s a real showcase of the community.”



This week’s riddle is “Jeopardy!” style.
Category: NAMED FOR A PLACE

Lyme disease derives its name from the town of Lyme in this state, where cases were first observed in the 1970s.

Last issue:

Category: STORY TIME

Clue: In this 1818 classic, a Swiss scientist isn’t neutral about playing mix-and-match with some corpse parts.

Answer: What is Frankenstein?

Answered first by: Bill Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Jane Morris, Mike Gander, Brian Narhi, Claudia Grimwood, Catherine Clarke, Katie Reimer, Maria Janeiro, Sheila Meloche, Pam Dowling, Howard Jones, Margaret Garaughty, Mark Waking, Sylvia Wiens, Nancy Rocca, Edna Groff, David Spencer, Kathy Siamro, Hedy Wiebe, Marla Percy, Jim Dandy, Tuija Johansson, Daniel Smith, Wade Durling, Elaine Landray, Bob Wheatley, Lynda Collet

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)

*REMEMBER TO PUT “WHAT IS” FOR JEOPARDY QUESTIONS!

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Young survivors relive terror of Oct. 7 Hamas attack

Molly Bowron
The Lake Report

Many in the quiet crowd of more than 50 people were in tears last Wednesday night as survivors of the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on Israel told their stories in Brock University's Goodman Atrium.

Liel Shitrit and Shoham Cohen, both 20, survived the attack and are travelling together to share their stories. Shitrit said this is their new life's purpose.

Their appearance in Niagara was hosted by Chabad at Brock and the Brock Coalition Against Antisemitism.

The pair were with different groups attending the Nova Festival, a rave in the Negev desert in southern Israel, when the bloodshed changed her life forever, Shitrit said. She and Cohen reconnected in a survivors group.

The attack was the beginning of the latest war between Israel and Hamas.

About 6:30 a.m. last Oct. 7, as Shitrit retrieved her phone from her bag, a friend



Liel Shitrit and Shoham Cohen, both 20, survived the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. MOLLY BOWRON

remarked on the fireworks in the sky.

Shitrit looked up and said, "It's not fireworks, it's rockets."

People ran, started to scream and some lay on the ground holding their heads because there was no shelter.

Shitrit and her friends trekked to their car some distance away and a short while later heard gunfire. They wondered if terrorists

were trying to cross from nearby Gaza into Israel.

A friend called and warned that Hamas terrorists were attacking. "They are shooting people. They are shooting everybody."

"At first we thought he was messing with us because, you know, it's a rave and most of the people are high," she said. He was serious.

There was a big explosion and she saw "hundreds

of people just running and hundreds of Hamas terrorists chasing them and shooting them all."

"A lot of the people I danced with a few hours before were just getting shot in front of my eyes."

Even as bodies lay on the ground, the attackers kept shooting them, she said.

They fled in their Jeep, they fled but people who were not in cars were sitting ducks. "They had a lot of snipers hiding in the trees and on the hills."

Cohen said as the snipers fired, "everyone just ran in straight line," fleeing for their lives.

"I saw a lot of people falling, screaming and murdered," he said.

At one point in the chaos he returned to the party area and hid under the stage with about 30 others.

Panicking, "I took a piece of plastic and I thought that this piece of plastic will save me if the terrorists come and start to spray" them with bullets, Cohen said.

Shitrit and others met up with a colleague named Alex and headed toward

Kibbutz Re'im where they hoped to hide, she said.

Road 232 was supposed to be a safe escape route but instead it was littered with bodies and mangled vehicles. It remains an indelible, horrific memory, she said.

After stopping at an abandoned Israeli army vehicle, they encountered a group of eight terrorists in a truck and on a motorcycle.

While Alex and a friend named Gillard ran for cover, Shitrit and another companion drove the Jeep, zigzagging across the desert to eventually lose the terrorists.

They circled back for their friends but Alex had been captured by Hamas.

"Alex was kidnapped from there. He's already 172 days being held in Gaza. Two weeks ago, his wife gave birth to their second son. Alex doesn't know about it. He celebrated his 33rd birthday in Gaza," said Shitrit.

"We don't know if he is alive, the hostages that came back never saw him."

In the chaos and confusion, they continued to try

to escape to safety and contact police for help.

After several other chilling encounters with Hamas, they eventually made their way to a kibbutz and a place to hide.

With Gillard bleeding from a head wound, they hid in a bathroom for hours, while Hamas was nearby shooting and torturing people, Shitrit said.

"They were clapping their hands, they were singing, they were screaming because they were killing innocent people."

With Hamas so close, she feared for her life as they searched the area.

However, finally, Israeli soldiers arrived to rescue them.

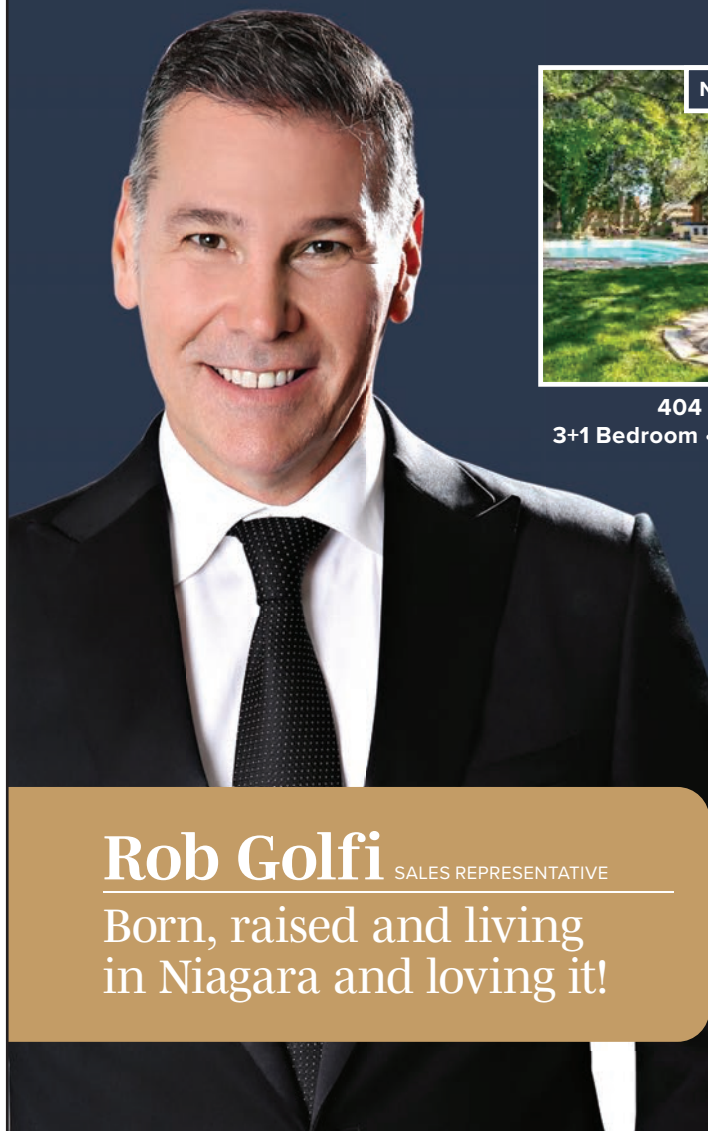
One soldier asked if Shitrit needed a hug.

"He just hugged me for two minutes and this is the first time I started cry the whole time because I wasn't feeling safe enough to cry."

"People call Hamas a resistance, they are not a resistance. Killing babies is not a resistance. Torturing women, the elderly and little kids is not a resistance. It is pure evil."

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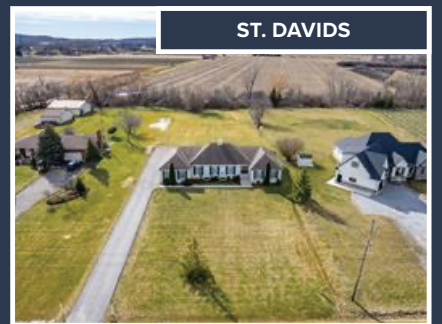
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The NOTL Wolves U13 Local League 1 team celebrates its league title. SUPPLIED

U13 Wolves win **Niagara District** title

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

All season, the goal of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U13 Local League 1 team was to win the league championship — and they rounded out the year doing exactly that.

Seeded first after a seven-game preliminary round-robin playoff, the Wolves won their semifinal over the fourth-ranked St. Catharines Majors.

Then they took on the number 2 team, the Stoney Creek Warriors, in the final and skated to a “thrilling” 2-1 victory to capture the Niagara District Hockey League title.

Mike Cwierniewski, who

coached the team along with Dan Plomish and Mike Pillitteri, is immensely proud of his young players, noting that “every single player stepped up during the playoffs” and played their best hockey of the year.

Winning the championship was a tough grind as “it gets harder and harder the deeper you get into the playoffs,” Cwierniewski said.

As a local league squad, the league title is the pinnacle and for these kids it is their Stanley Cup.

They came ready to play in the finale and Michael Collins popped their first goal soon after the puck dropped, Cwierniewski said.

The Wolves held that 1-0 lead until midway

through the second, when Stoney Creek managed its only goal.

“It was back and forth in the second,” Cwierniewski said, but late in the period Matteo Rapone netted what stood up as the winning goal.

In the final frame, NOTL just kept the pressure on and focused on defence. Goalie Lucas Pillitteri was solid in net again, as he was all playoffs, the coach said.

In that third period, Stoney Creek had a tough time even getting into the NOTL zone, Cwierniewski added.

“Everyone just played so well, a total team effort,” he said.

“It was a great way to cap off the season.”

NOTL U18s ready for **provincial finals**

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

It wasn't the finish the coaches or players hoped for but it was a good reminder that you need to play three full periods of hockey if you want to contend for a championship.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U18 rep team got a bit of a wake-up call last Wednesday evening at home when they lost 5-1 to the Port Colborne Sailors in a one-game, winner-take-all match for the Niagara District Hockey League title.

“The 5-1 loss was a tough showing for the group,” conceded head coach Devon Neudorf.

But it was really all decided in the final period.

“It was tied 1-1 after the second and the effort level coming out for the third just wasn't there,” Neudorf said.

“The fifth goal was an empty-netter they scored while we were in desperation mode.”

Braden Sawyer had the start in goal and played a strong game, making a handful of key saves, he noted.

The Wolves, who finished



NOTL's Noah Whyte (#47) fires a shot at the Port Colborne net during the Niagara league final.

atop the league standings a few points ahead of the Sailors, are in Kingston this weekend to compete in the Ontario Minor Hockey League Tier 1 championships.

Neudorf is hoping for a better performance from his players, who have found ways to win all season. He's confident they'll step it up.

One concern is a lack of scoring five-on-five. The Wolves' power play has been potent, especially in the playoffs leading up to them qualifying for the OMHA finals.

Their lone goal against Port Colborne again came via the power play.

“Five versus five scoring has been an issue for this team throughout the playoffs and is a key focus of the group heading into the

weekend,” Neudorf said.

But he's confident going in to their first game Friday, a 3 p.m. match with the Elmvale Coyotes, they'll be ready.

Then on Saturday, they play the Mitchell Meteors at 11 a.m. and Petrolia Oilers at 5 p.m. The top two teams in each division advance to Sunday's semifinals at 10:30 a.m. The championship game is at 4:30.

“All in all, it has been a great season,” said Neudorf.

“We've played four tournaments thus far — NOTL, the Midland Silver Stick, the International Silver Stick and South Huron — and have made it to Sunday each time.”

“We will look to stick to our guns and do the same thing in Kingston,” he said.

“The gameplan is going to need all 15 guys bringing a little bit extra each and every shift in order for the team to be successful.”

The loss to Port Colborne allowed for “another reset as a team to gain some accountability within the room which will hopefully lead to an OMHA championship coming home to NOTL.”

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U15s learn success is about **more than winning**

Tania Fera-VanGent
Special to The Lake Report

For Mario Kotsanis, coaching is all about heart. Although not handed a team that won often on the ice this season, Kotsanis and his coaching staff helped inspire the Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves U15 rep team to its own special victory.

“Coaching is more than hockey. It is about teaching kids to be respectful and to be good citizens,” says Kotsanis.

When he’s on the bench, those players are like his own kids, he says.

And his coaching philosophy reaches beyond sport.

He wants the players to be respectful and hard-working, to know that they are not entitled and to exhibit exemplary behaviour that makes their community proud.

The U15 coach, with Scott Wagar, whom he regards as his co-coach and rock, feels



Coaches Mario Kotsanis, left, and Scott Wagar with U15 rep team award winners, Holden Powell (most sportsmanlike), Boyd Hopkins (most Improved player), Levi Bayne (team MVP) and Nolan Rappitt (most dedicated player). GRAY POWELL

it is important to teach the kids life lessons.

For instance, at the start of the year, Kotsanis said about 70 per cent of the team hadn’t yet played contact hockey.

The players had to develop the confidence and ability to play with contact even though sometimes they were intimidated about

both giving and receiving bodychecks, Kotsanis says.

He is grateful to the team’s trainer, Ray Hunter, for helping the boys adapt and grow.

Fortunately for the U15s, Ontario Minor Hockey Association representative Chris Berube approached NOTL hockey Peter Flynn to ask if the team would

drop down from Tier 1 to Tier 3 based on results in the OMHA playdowns.

When the U15s were moved to a more competitive level, they flourished.

And in their final game, a March 21 semifinal against Plattsville, with only nine skaters available, they lost 3-2 in overtime — one

goal away from a trip to the OMHA finals that take place in Halton Hills this weekend.

With the help of the coaches, the team had grown and bonded.

For Kotsanis, “kids’ development is 90 per cent practice and believing in themselves. I am just really proud of the way these boys

developed, played hard and became a team.”

The team closed out its season last week with some special awards.

Levi Bayne was named most valuable player, Nolan Rappitt was most dedicated, Boyd Hopkins was most improved player and Holden Powell earned the best sportsmanship award.

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NOTL figure skater overcomes injury to claim **incredible season**

Richard Wright
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Like any other nine-year-old, Hailey Mitchell loves to jump. Not many do it all the way to the provincial stage.

On March 22, the Welland native, who is a member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Skating Club, wrapped up an incredible season with a silver medal at the 2024 Skate Ontario Provincial Championships in Brampton.

“She did exactly what I thought she would do,” says coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczkowski. “She practises exactly how she wants to perform, and she performed exactly how she practised.”

Mitchell entered the finals’ Free Skate competition of the Star-5 U10 category as the No. 1 contender, finishing the regular season atop the standings after five competitions, including a gold medal performance at the Provincial Series #13 in

Brantford, February 15-17.

“I wasn’t nervous (in Brampton),” she says. “It is really fun to do. I like the jumps and I like trying new things.”

That confidence could have easily been stymied before the season even began. Suffering from a broken ankle last summer, few would have blamed her for holding back during the first few months of the season.

“It actually made things better,” says Boyle-Krzeczkowski.

“It made her focus on the things that she doesn’t like to do on a daily basis. She became more well-rounded as a skater. When she came back (from the injury) she was more determined than ever.”

Mitchell credits her coaches and teammates as the reason she is able to focus so well. With many options in Niagara for training, she chose Niagara-on-the-Lake above all.

“I have a lot of amazing friends and my coaches push me to progress,” she says.

Boyle-Krzeczkowski echoes that sentiment.

An award-winning coach who has been at the helm of the NOTL club for more than 20 years, she annually receives requests from skaters across Niagara to come and train here. The club now numbers around 300 skaters.

“Every September people are wanting to come here. We have a good reputation for our Learn to Skate program, and at the level where Hailey is the kids are just so supportive of each other. Nobody is out against each other. There’s no jealousy, it’s complete support.”

Mitchell says she will be back next year to skate under the NOTL banner.

“I am looking forward to next season and being at provincials this year will push me to do even better.”



The NOTL Skating Club attracts athletes from all over the region. Hailey Mitchell, 9, pictured with coach Judi Boyle-Krzeczkowski, is from Welland. The young phenom won the silver medal at the 2024 Skate Ontario Provincial Championships. RICHARD WRIGHT



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NOTL Museum's spotlight on donors: **Geoffrey and Lorraine Joyner**

Barbara Worthy
Special to The Lake Report

"This is a big one, a once-in-a-lifetime project for us, and we hope others will see it that way too."

"The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum is the pride of the community," declared Lorraine Joyner, as she discussed the future of the museum and the reason she and her husband, Geoffrey, decided to give generously to the NOTL Museum's capital campaign project.

The NOTL Museum is the major repository for all things historical for the five communities of Niagara-on-the-Lake, from deeds, records, documents and photographs, to the finest 1812 collection in Canada, with more than 50,000 items making up the entire museum collection.

"We have a great affection for the collection," said Geoffrey Joyner. "The problem is that it is growing exponentially, and much of it can't be exhibited. It's extensive – which is why they have to expand."

For more than two decades, the Joyners have sponsored the in-person lec-



Geoffrey and Lorraine Joyner. SUPPLIED

tures at the museum, one of its most popular offerings.

But the Joyner's involvement hasn't stopped there. It has included co-curating art exhibitions and overseeing art and antique appraisals.

The wife Joyner, who also served as a board member for two terms, can often be found lending a perennial hand to the gardening crew.

In future expansion plans,

the research room will bear the Joyner name.

"It will be both our names, which is important to us because we're very proud of that," said the husband Joyner.

The Geoffrey and Lorraine Joyner Research Room and Reference Library will be named in recognition of the Joyners' contribution to the capital

campaign.

The couple are no strangers to the finer aspects of art.

Whether it be supporting heritage, restoration, or the visual arts, the Joyners are hardworking arts volunteers and dedicated philanthropists.

They arrived in Niagara-on-the-Lake from Toronto in the 1990s and soon became passionate supporters of local arts initiatives.

Organizations like the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, The Niagara Pumphouse Art Centre, RiverBrink Art Museum and Willowbank School of Restoration Arts, have all benefited from the Joyner magic.

Married for more than 50 years, this couple share a particular passion for Canadian art, and whether it be a sweeping Algoma landscape from the iconic A.Y. Jackson, or the joyful energy of local Niagara artist Babs Pritty, the Joyners' delight in sharing these works is powerful.

It all started when a young 19-year-old Lorraine arrived in Toronto from Quebec.

Soon, she met an equally young, up-and-coming

20-something arts specialist who decided she was the one to walk down the aisle with him.

Six months later, they were doing just that.

Lorraine Joyner's parents might have had some misgivings about a "used picture" salesman being entirely suitable for their daughter, but, as it turned out, this salesman became one of the most respected and renowned art auctioneers in Canada.

Geoffrey Joyner, "The Man with the Golden Gavel", helped create a highly lucrative market for Canadian artists that not only made him the world's leading auction authority on Canadian art but also helped establish Canadian artwork as collectible, original and a legitimate investment.

After 17 years of heading up Sotheby's of Canada, Joyner established his own fine art and appraisal company in 1985, eventually merging with Waddington's Auctioneers to form Joyner Waddington's Canadian Fine Art and the company continued to promote and accelerate the growth in Canadian art successfully.

Today, the Joyners enjoy being actively engaged with organizations that also support the very best and most significant in local arts heritage and collections.

"The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum was our first venture when we came to this town," said the wife Joyner, who eventually retired from her work as a translator, and from running a local B&B. "And I see it growing to be a major tourist attraction."

Her husband echoed her comments: "The museum is a part of our heritage tourism," he said, "and that can only benefit the entire town as well as the region."

From their bright, spacious home overlooking the Niagara River, surrounded by some stunning examples of Canadian art, both Joyners agree that being a part of the NOTL Museum has also been a solid investment.

"This is a big one," said the husband Joyner. "Being able to play a part in the museum's capital campaign is a once-in-a-lifetime project for us, and we hope others will see it that way too."

124 | Q | HOTEL & SPA

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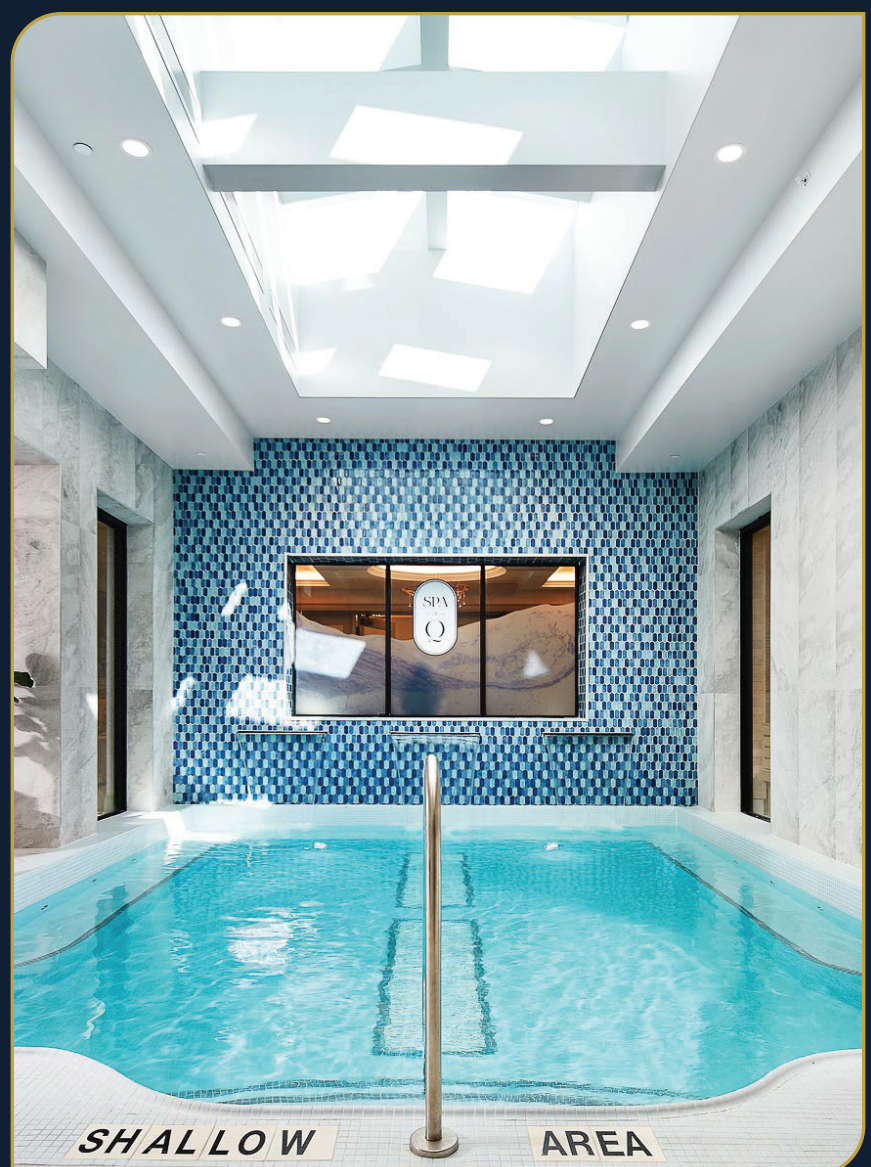
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Have some fun



Across

- 9. Systematically arranged body of facts (7)
- 10. Capriciously (2,1,4)
- 11. Plumber's pipe ring (5)
- 12. Per the schedule (2,7)
- 13. Out for number one (7)
- 15. Perhaps (5)
- 16. Self-esteem (3)
- 17. Long cold spells which come and go (3,3)
- 19. Contrite (6)
- 22. Frodo's friend (3)
- 24. Scottish landowner (5)
- 26. Left behind, in a way (7)
- 28. Celestial explosion (9)
- 30. Thermoplastic yarn (5)
- 31. For the best results (7)
- 32. Maria ---, the last House of Habsburg ruler (7)

Down

- 1. Advocate (7)
- 2. Pertaining to a son or daughter (6)
- 3. Candied culinary stalk (8)
- 4. Greek salad ingredient (4,6)
- 5. Airshow manoeuvre (4)
- 6. Jellied petrol (6)
- 7. Words of gratitude (5,3)
- 8. Small amount (7)
- 14. Moron carts off gluttons (10)
- 18. Made useless (8)
- 20. Protracted (8)
- 21. Historically memorable (7)
- 23. Kigali resident (7)
- 25. In a mysterious manner (6)
- 27. Painter's gadget (6)
- 29. Form of chalcedony used for cameos (4)

Crossword Puzzle

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Last issue's answers

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Will humans soon take evolution into **our own hands?**



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

In week three of this five-part series on the Middle Land, we examined how life began and evolved and the life cycle of stars, including the creation of heavier elements in the cores and subsequent implosion and outward blast of the death of stars in supernovae.

But for the most part, humans live in the present — preoccupied with the events and demands of the day, less often with what's coming, and totally oblivious to the marvels of life and the cosmos.

True, we sometimes fret about the future and ruminate about the past but for most of our time, we're preoccupied, like other mammalian species, with the here and now.

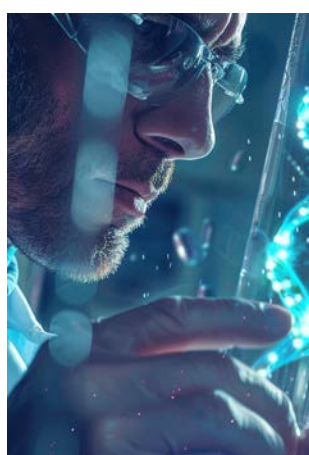
On a much longer time scale, we behave as if our species is fated to continue much as it has in the past and that even if, as individuals, we may not be immortal, our species is.

Here, the archeological, and more recently, genetic records, suggest a very different future for our species.

Past records strongly suggest that modern humans were preceded by a complex array of closely related ancestors, whose anatomical and cognitive traits evolved in response to changing environmental pressures at different times for the last six to five million years — of which but one, sapiens, remains.

Looking forward, it's hard for this writer to think that our species will last any longer than our ancestors, given that evolution based on natural selection continues to mould our species in response to continuing environmental pressures, which, according to some experts, may be speeding up.

Looking beyond natural selection, the recent introduction of gene editing technologies such as



CRISPR and now improved versions, which allow investigators to edit multiple genes at a time, promise to shake up evolution.

The technology to fix single gene disorders using gene editing became a reality recently with successes with thalassemia and sickle cell anemia — whatever the angst of some over the potential risks posed by the technology.

Beyond efforts to fix single mutant genetic diseases is the prospect of changing human traits such as height, physique and, most alarming for many, genetically upgrading cognition.

Cognition and behaviour are complex and probably

depend on the interplay of hundreds if not thousands of genes and much past the first few months of life, family, cultural and environmental influences.

That very complexity poses a hurdle, if not an insurmountable one, to gene editing in the future.

Working out which genes play key roles in cognition and behaviour is the first hurdle.

The second hurdle would be to edit the genome to incorporate those genes in their right places to create desired cognitive and behavioural traits.

Present-day gene editing works with single genes but modifying or inserting hundreds of genes poses a huge challenge.

Why? Because some genes have more than one function and inserting those genes may well be associated with unanticipated and undesirable consequences.

Even so, gene editing has moved beyond fixing single genes to possibly changing multiple genes, giving me reason to think that the ability to change behavioural performance traits is

coming — it's only a matter of time.

Adding to the complexity of cognition and behaviour, the brain's development is powerfully influenced by opportunity, culture and education, especially early in life.

The underlying mechanisms may involve epigenetic changes to the genome such as methylation of bases, alterations to which may turn some genes on and others off during development and possibly later in life.

Doing so could alter behaviour and cognition without changing the base sequence.

Recent evidence suggests that some epigenetic changes can be passed along from generation to generation.

If so, we can now add epigenetic influences to changes in the genome as possible avenues for changing traits.

It won't be easy to boost cognitive powers expressed as social intelligence, learning, reasoning, mathematics, imagination, creativity, language and artistic talents to

name a few interrelated and dependent cognitive traits.

But given the trajectory of brain research and genetics these days, the barriers to enhancing complex cognitive powers will likely be surmounted in this century or at least, the next.

This would put humans firmly in charge of their own evolution and that of all other creatures from single-cell organisms to complex highly developed intelligent animals.

This represents the first major challenge to evolution by natural selection since life began 3.8 billion years ago

Next: In the finale of this series, we tackle the question of whether our species will survive and, if so, will we, as all our predecessor species did, morph into other species cognitively and behaviorally, or come to an end — the last of the line and then gone.

Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the InfoHealth series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.



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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



107th anniversary of Vimy Ridge, April 9-12, 1917

Many historians consider the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge to be a defining moment for our country. The Canadian Corps was ordered to seize Vimy Ridge in northern France, which was heavily fortified by enemy troops. Previous French and British attempts on the ridge had failed, but with careful planning and training, four divisions of Canadian troops (15,000 soldiers) captured it in three days. However, it was victory that came at a heavy cost: 3,598 Canadians were killed and another 7,000 wounded. The battle became a symbol for the sacrifice of our young Dominion. In 1922, the French government ceded to Canada in perpetuity 91 hectares at the top of the ridge. In 1936, the stunning Vimy Memorial (featured here), designed by artist Walter S. Allward, was unveiled as a tribute to Canadian soldiers killed, and without a grave, in France.

Self-fulfilling eclipse prophecy just **might come true**



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Here on the Path of Totality, eclipse hype continues unabated.

Indeed, Niagara Region chair Jim Bradley has proactively declared a state of emergency ahead of the solar eclipse on April 8.

I know, I know, if something terrible happens, our elected leaders would be damned if they do and damned if they don't.

I was working at the Munich Olympic village in 1972 when members of Black September, a Palestinian terrorist organization, murdered innocent Israeli athletes, within 200 metres of our food service workplace.

And I was way too close to the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, standing next to a big black armoured vehicle marked Massachusetts Critical

Response Team.

Moments before the pressure cooker bomb exploded, I had remarked to a canine cop, "Seems like you're overdoing it a bit."

He responded, "You never know."

Prescient, eh? That domestic terrorist attack undermined more of the innocence in our lives.

Again, nothing can be sacred or preventable if evil people want to make their sick and horrible statement.

But where do we draw the line?

If we talk about the inherent problems of large gatherings, will we have to cancel Niagara-on-the-Lake's fabulously patriotic cake parade on Canada Day?

Some basement computer lone wolf might decide to ruin our innocent fun and jump into the Willow Bakery masterpiece.

Or, for even greater shock value and notoriety, jump out of the cake wearing just a red-and-white-striped Speedo.

Don't worry, I will be busy leading a free walking tour that day.

Now, don't touch our Santa Claus Parade, or our newly magnificent Tractor Parade.

Prepare for huge crowds



Ross Robinson says there's no way a million people are coming to Niagara Falls for the eclipse. But the truth, much like the eclipse, remains to be seen. **FIREFLY**

and disasters yes, and I don't purport to have all the answers.

But can we please let common sense prevail?

A professor of disaster and emergency management at York University commented last week she has never seen a pre-emptive declaration of emergency.

Our policing, ambulance and fire services must be

on alert, but how many thousands of hours of overtime will we taxpayers be paying?

Prof. Nirupama Agrawal at York emphasizes that these situations must be approached in good faith.

For example, the city of Niagara Falls must not declare an emergency situation in advance, just to access extra resources from nearby population areas.

Hard working and well-intentioned Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati, a long time pal of mine, can make hyperbolic statements without blushing.

Indeed, his summary of the Nik Wallenda tethered tightrope walk back in 2012 was a big deal — but, not a huge deal.

My buddy Joe Misk and his daughter Emily from Betty's Restaurant

in Chippawa (very famous for its fish and chips) and I rode our bikes over to Table Rock to catch the excitement.

There were about 30,000 people there, not the announced 150,000 limned by Diodati.

It's a mathematical calculation, my friends.

So, although the upcoming eclipse event will be "bigger than Woodstock, the Super Bowl and New Year's Eve combined," there will not be over a million people in Niagara Falls that afternoon.

People hear this number and get scared off.

I guesstimate 50,000, but remember, I am just an amateur and jaded prognosticator. I have sometimes been very wrong.

Wanting to be part of the action, I plan to drive up to Niagara Helicopters and then ride my bike over to Queen Victoria Park.

My backpack will contain snacks, beverages, a pair of free eclipse glasses and a flashlight with fresh batteries. I'll be wearing clothing to suit the weather forecast.

Can't wait. This is a rare and exciting and inexpensive opportunity.

I will report back after my afternoon in the Path of Totality.



NOTICE OF DECISION

What: Notice of Decision for an **Official Plan Amendment** (under Section 22 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended)

When: Approved at the **March 26, 2024** Council Meeting

Regarding: Character Study for Former Rand Estate and John Street East (File OPA-01-2024)

What is this?

Town Council for Niagara-on-the-Lake has endorsed the Character Study for the Former Rand Estate and John Street East report and approved Official Plan Amendment #92 (By-law 2024-020) to provide guidance and principles to clearly define the character of the area, concisely articulate character considerations, and provide policy to guide future change.

The subject area is bound by the Heritage Trail, Charlotte Street, John Street East and in proximity to the urban area boundary in Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (see location map).

The Official Plan Amendment includes:

Principle 1: Conserve, integrate and maintain significant cultural heritage features.

Principle 2: Protect, enhance and maintain significant natural features and functions.

Principle 3: Ensure cultural and natural heritage features are visible to the public.

Principle 4: Accommodate active transportation connections through the area as part of a system of connected natural and cultural heritage features.

Principle 5: Maintain compatibility and cohesion between distinct places.

Principle 6: Accommodate a mix of housing types and sizes and compatible commercial uses.

Principle 7: Respect the scale and character of existing development in the area and in adjacent neighbourhoods.

The last date for filing a notice of appeal is April 24, 2024.

A notice of appeal:

- i. must be filed with the Town Clerk;
- ii. must set out the reasons for the appeal; and
- iii. must be accompanied by the fee required by the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Further notice and appeal eligibility:

Only individuals, corporations or public bodies may appeal decisions in respect of a proposed Official Plan Amendment and/or Zoning By-law Amendment to the Ontario Land Tribunal. A notice of appeal may not be filed by an unincorporated association or group. However, a notice of appeal may be filed in the name of an individual who is a member of the association or group on its behalf.

No person or public body shall be added as a party to the hearing of the appeal of the decision of Town Council, unless the person or public body, before Town Council made its decision, made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to Town Council, or, in the opinion of the Ontario Land Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, **April 4, 2024**

Grant Bivol, Town Clerk (clerks@notl.com or 905-468-3266)

Town Hall, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0



Pruning roses reduces disease



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

How many of you just can't wait to get out in your garden every spring and prune your roses?

It probably isn't on the top of your list of things to do.

Knowing when and where to prune is difficult enough, but having to fend off all those thorns that feel the need to hook into your arms is a whole other thing.

If you have roses, though, you probably know that they do require some pruning to keep them growing healthy.

In fact, it is the best way to reduce disease and insect problems.

What does pruning a rose entail?

As with anything, there are always differing opinions on this subject, but here is what makes the most sense to me.

I know that there are people who always prune their roses down in the fall. There are several reasons why I do not recommend that you do.

Roses have trouble going dormant in the late fall and winter, that is why you will quite often see them still blooming into December with the leaves still green.

Therefore, you should always let the last flowers of the fall remain on the plant — this signals to the rose bush that it is time for them to go to sleep for the winter.

Pruning in the fall will stimulate them to keep growing into the winter and will result in more dieback on the canes.

The best time to prune your roses is the late dormant period-early spring just as the leaf buds are starting to swell.

A good indicator of the proper pruning time is when the forsythia plants come into bloom.



Joanne Young says when it comes to roses, it's important to always prune on an angle about a quarter of an inch above an outward facing bud. **FIREFLY**

Regardless of the type of rose you have, the first thing to do is to remove any dead (discoloured), diseased or damaged canes.

The next step is to remove any weak canes or stems that cross through the center of the plant or are rubbing against another cane.

Roses have alternate bud arrangement as opposed to opposite bud arrangement where two buds are located across the stem from each other.

All the power or energy of a plant is in the tips of each branch. So, when you prune a branch shorter, the next bud down — the one that is now at the top — takes on the power and will develop into a new branch.

By pruning to an outward facing bud, it controls the direction of growth to go out from the plant instead of it growing back through the centre of the plant.

This helps improve air circulation, which helps to cut down on diseases.

Make sure that you cut the stem at a 45-degree angle with the higher edge being on the side of the bud.

It is important to always prune on an angle about a quarter of an inch above an outward facing bud.

The angled cut allows for drops of water to roll off the

top of the cane and away from the bud.

Now that you have done the initial pruning of removing dead, diseased, damaged, weak and crossing canes, you now need to consider what type of rose it is.

Hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, miniature and carpet roses

Once you have completed the first pruning steps as stated above, you can now start to prune back the remaining canes.

The number of canes you will have left depends on age and overall health of the plant.

Usually, you will have anywhere from three to eight canes and if those canes are healthy and the plant still has an open, symmetrical form, work with what you have.

Cut off about one-third of the original length of each cane.

Hybrid tea and carpet roses can be cut back a bit further, but make sure you are leaving at least three to five buds up from the base of the plant.

Climbing roses
The term "climbing rose" is a bit misleading as they do not climb of their own accord.

The canes will not twine

themselves onto a trellis and do not cling to the wall or fence.

When training a climbing rose there is one critical and game-changing fact to keep in mind.

The vertical canes will only produce flowers at the tip of those canes.

So, to get that picture perfect image of a climbing rose that is loaded with flowers, you can carefully fend out flexible canes and tie them to a support so that the main canes are now growing horizontally.

Instead of there being flowers just at the tip of the cane, now every bud along the horizontal cane thinks that they are at the tip and each bud will produce flowers.

Once you have trained the main canes so that they have been fanned out, prune each lateral branch (branches off the main cane) back to two to three buds.

Now, your roses are trimmed up and ready for another growing season.

Oh, did I mention that you may want to put on a thick pair of gloves before you begin.

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

Easter contest winners

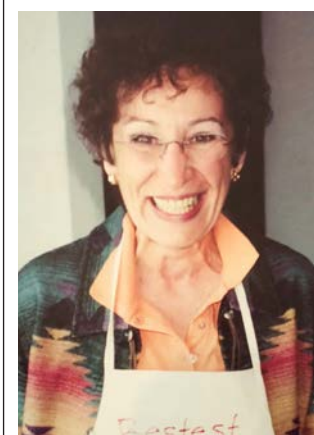


Congratulations to Regan Doyle, 9, and Frankie Bubnic Sluga, 4. The two young artists are the winners of our Easter colouring contest. Each will receive a \$25 gift card to the Sandtrap Pub & Grill, and an artisan chocolate egg from Sucre.



Obituary

Vicky Wright



WRIGHT, Vicky B (née Tobe)

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Vicky Wright, peacefully in Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Tuesday, March 5. Vicky will be greatly missed by her adoring and doting husband of 62 years, Harvey Wright. She was fiercely proud of her children Erin (Stacey Leavitt), Roz, and

grandchildren Jordyn, Abby, and Zoe Wright. Vicky is predeceased by her siblings Estelle, Allan, and Stephen Tobe. She was a devoted sister-in-law to Martha Tobe, Sally Tobe, June and Michael Laliberte, and took genuine interest in the lives of her many nieces and nephews.

Vicky was born in Niagara-on-the-Lake, July 22, 1941. She attended Parliament Oak and Niagara District High School, and Toronto Teachers College. She taught elementary school in Montreal and was a docent at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for many years. Vicky was an accomplished photographer, a masterful chef, homemaker, and confidante to many. She set high standards of excellence for herself and for those around her. The family thanks the Upper Canada Lodge staff for the fine care, respect and compassion shown Vicky for the six years that she was entrusted to their care.



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DID YOU KNOW..

Niagara is one of the best places in Canada to view the Solar Eclipse on April 8th, 2024. It will start at 2:04pm and will last approximately 2.5hrs!

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?
 The moon will completely cover the sun - the sun will be fully eclipsed from approximately 3:20 to 3:23pm. The sky will darken as if it were dawn or dusk. By 4:33 the sky will have returned to normal.



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