



Town's restrictions on tree cuttings are **unfair**, councillors say

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Tree protections in Niagara-on-the-Lake don't cut it.
That was the sentiment

of councillors at a meeting Feb. 13 regardless of which side of the fence the tree fell on.
After two residents came to council to appeal staff decisions to bar them from cutting down trees on

their own property, some councillors took issue with the town's approach to tree preservation.
"I don't think we should be punishing any resident that wants to remove one of 11 trees on their property,"

Coun. Maria Mavridis said. Under current town regulations, residents need a permit from the town before they can legally cut down trees on their property.
Those permits can be refused by town bylaw

officers if the tree is found to be in good health and if the resident cannot provide a good reason for removing it.
Matt Dietsch wanted to cut down a large honey locust on his lot but bylaw

officer Harry Althorpe said staff refused his application because he had given "no legitimate reason" to warrant the permit.
"It's not causing any

Continued on Page 3



Volunteers help museum bring NOTL history to life

This is the fourth part in an ongoing series of stories to draw attention to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum as it embarks on a fundraising campaign for an expansion that would nearly double the size of the current museum on Castlereagh Street.

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Richard Merritt's links to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum go back long before he became a volunteer there more than three decades ago.
This was long before he even lived in Niagara.
"I grew up in London, Ont., and one of my great, great aunts lived in Niagara," Merritt said. "She'd tell me stories (about Niagara) as she fed me milk and cookies. I had an interest in

Continued on Page 6

And the **beat** goes on

Foot patrols bring 'nostalgic aspect' back to policing in NOTL



Const. Nicolas Hawrylyshyn and Const. Michael Malachowsky walk the beat along Queen Street in Old Town. RICHARD HUTTON

Richard Hutton | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

There's a saying that everything old is new again.
While it's most commonly used to describe things such as fashion, music and even home decor, policing can now be added to the list.

And officers from the Niagara Regional Police are back on regular foot patrols – walking the beat as it were – in Old Town. It is a practice the police service first brought back in 2022.
"We're reintroducing the nos-

talgic aspect of policing," said Const. Michael Malachowsky, a member of the department's Community Oriented Response and Engagement (or CORE) unit.
"It's an old tradition that has been brought back."

Malachowsky and Const. Nicolas Hawrylyshyn are two of five constables and one sergeant assigned to the unit for 2 District, which covers Niagara Falls

Continued on Page 7



Keeping it Green

Stacked effects of **climate change** could hit NOTL hard

Kyra Simone
Columnist
Minimal snowfall and balmy temperatures have caused confusion this winter.
A symptom of both the climate crisis and El Niño,

mild weather may have lasting effects for wildlife, farmers and greenspaces in 2024.
As scientific knowledge has evolved, the term "global warming" has become outdated.

Climate change is much more complex than areas across the globe gradually warming: it's better described as climate "weirding," where historically consistent patterns in local weather and temperature

go off the rails and become sporadic and severe.
Climate scientists determine long-term trends from hundreds to millions of years ago by studying paleoclimate records: ice cores, tree rings and layers

of sediments formed over long periods of time.
Trends on shorter timescales, even decades, vary greatly and must be compared to a long histori-

Continued on Page 20



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389-home subdivision **nears approval** on Con. 7

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A proposed subdivision on the outskirts of Glendale is one step closer to becoming a reality.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council rubber-stamped Modero Estates, a development proposal for 389 housing units, at a meeting Feb. 13.

The project by Hummel Properties Inc. and Marz Homes will be brought back for a final endorsement at a future meeting.

A report, signed by three senior staffers including the planning director and chief administrator, recommended the project on 38 acres on Concession 7 between York and Queenston roads be approved.

The project includes 55 single-family units, 128 on-street townhouses, 178 block townhouses and 28 units above commercial spaces, according to a staff report.

The report said the diversified housing stock “would cater to residents of different age groups, lifestyles,



This property on Concession 7 between York and Queenston roads is the proposed site of a new subdivision built to by Marz Homes and Hummel Properties. EVAN LOREE

incomes and household sizes.”

The proposed subdivision would increase density on the lot to about 56 people per hectare, which is consistent with development targets set by both the region and province, the report said.

As part of the build-out, the developer is asking to rezone the land from industrial and conservation uses

to low and medium-density uses with space for community facilities.

An engineering report filed with the project application said the development would be hooked up to existing sewage infrastructure.

Though most houses would be serviced by sewers, which use gravity to move waste, 67 homes would need to use grinder pumps, which help to move

sewage uphill.

When the project was discussed at a public meeting on Dec. 5, some residents raised concerns about the subdivision’s impact on traffic.

The staff report said the applicant filed a traffic study with the application, which showed the development would “not significantly impact traffic operations in the area.”

Coun. Sandra O’Connor expressed concern that houses in the development would need to rely on grinder pumps for proper sewage service.

Chief town planner Kirsten McCauley said staff are working with the developer on a servicing strategy for the project.

“We’ve tried to limit the number of grinder pumps that would be required here,” she said.

The town and developer discussed installing a pumping station in the development but the region was not in favour of the idea, McCauley said.

Director of operations Darren MacKenzie said it would cost more to maintain a pumping station than grinder pumps.

“To me, this is like the downloading of a municipal service to the property owner,” O’Connor said in response.

“If something goes wrong with the grinder pumps, they have to end up replacing it,” she added.

On top of that, residents could be without sewage if the pumps fail.

O’Connor said she couldn’t support the project without seeing a sewage management plan with alternatives to grinder pumps.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said residents in the rural area of NOTL “envy” grinder pumps.

Without municipal sewage services, rural residents who rely on septic tanks have no sewage access during power outages.

He said home buyers are responsible for understanding how their pump works before they buy the property.

Rather than trying to limit pumps, Wiens suggested the town should make sure residents “understand what they’re actually purchasing” when they buy a house with a grinder pump.

Coun. Adriana Vizzari worried the school board would be unable to accommodate an influx of new students if the development goes ahead.

“Currently the basement is flooded at St. Davids and the kids are in the library, so it’s hard to believe they can have 200 more homes go to that school,” she said.

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WestJet agrees to **rebook flights** for family of murder victim Ashley Simpson

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The family of Ashley Simpson will be able to attend a sentencing hearing for the man responsible for the St. Catharines woman's death after a change of heart by a major Canadian airline.

"Last night, WestJet called me and booked all the flights for June 11," Ashley's mother, Cindy, said Thursday after receiving the news from WestJet that the flights had been rebooked.

"They apologized and sent condolences."

The family had been booked to be on a flight from Toronto to Calgary and then on to Kelowna, B.C.

The flights were originally booked via the travel site FlightHub and it said any changes were WestJet's responsibility.

WestJet had initially refused to rebook those flights as it could not find the booking, said Madison Kruger, a strategist with WestJet media relations.

"There was a bit of confusion," Kruger said, adding that the airline needed what is called a "PNR (Passenger Name Record) number" that is created when a flight is booked.

"We were looking up names but it was difficult to identify which was correct," Kruger said.

Once the airline had the



Ashley Simpson vanished in April 2016 and was missing for five years until her remains were found in 2021. SUPPLIED

PNR number, the situation was resolved, she added.

"Once our guest services team had that information, we made the change."

Cindy was glad the situation was resolved.

"So much of my stress has been relieved," she said.

in late October last year, Derek Favell pleaded guilty to a second-degree murder charge in the disappearance and death of Ashley.

She vanished near Salmon Arm, B.C., in 2016 and her remains were found in 2021.

Favell was due to be sentenced on Feb. 15 after two days of hearings but the hearings were postponed until June, pending the completion of a Gladue Report.

Such reports "contain information on the unique

circumstances of Aboriginal people accused of an offence or Aboriginal offenders," Legal Aid Ontario states on its website. Courts can refer to the report's findings in determining sentences for offenders.

The family hopes that with Favell's sentencing, they will finally be able to move another step forward in their lives and gain some sense of closure.

Ashley's father, John Simpson, who lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake, was not going to attend.

He has stated that seeing Favell found guilty and visiting the spot where Ashley was found brought him enough closure.

"He will pay for his crime, I'm sure of that," John Simpson wrote in a post to the Justice 4 Ashley

Simpson Facebook page. "I need not waste anymore of my time on him."

FlightHub, meanwhile, said it was not its responsibility to rebook the flight.

"FlightHub strictly follows the rules and regulations outlined by the airlines," said David Masanga, vice-president of customer service for FlightHub, adding that as "basic fare tickets" no modifications were permitted.

"Our hands are tied in this matter and we are bound by the airline's policies," Masanga said.

He added that the company understood what the family was going through.

"We extend our deepest sympathies to the Simpson family for the loss of Ashley," he said. "We understand the gravity of their situation and the importance of attending the sentencing hearing."

Members of Simpson's family have been flying back and forth between Niagara and B.C. with the help of donations from supporters in both Niagara and Salmon Arm.

The Simpson family is still welcoming donations to support their travels back and forth from British Columbia.

The family will accept Air Miles and any donations to their GoFundMe page at gofundme.com/f/ashley-simpsons-family.

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Cutting trees causes **councillor kerfuffle**

Continued from Front Page

damage to the property," Althorpe said.

Dietsch said the tree was a pain to maintain and left little room to put up an inflatable pool for his kids.

Council voted to approve his tree-cutting permit after Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa suggested Dietsch be required to plant a new tree.

"We don't have a tree policy in the town to plant more trees," Coun. Erwin Wiens said.

Rather than penalizing

residents for cutting them down, he suggested council should set money aside in its budget to plant more trees.

"For us to put our town issues on Mr. Dietsch's backyard is not fair," Wiens said.

But Coun. Sandra O'Connor was against chopping down the "very large tree."

"Large, mature trees like this one store more carbon than small ones and are therefore better at fighting climate change," she said.

"We have stormwater

management issues across our municipalities and trees are the least costly approach to stormwater management by reducing the amount of runoff that enters storm systems," she added.

Citing regional statistics, O'Connor said the town has the smallest tree canopy of any town in the region at 18 per cent.

"It's not fair to say we need to plant more trees," Wiens said. As an agricultural community, "We're feeding the nation."

He said the low tree canopy was partly due

to a surplus of farm land across town.

Resident Mark Smith also appealed his denial of a tree-cutting permit, though he did not speak at the meeting.

According to Althorpe, Smith wanted to remove a blue spruce from his front lawn because of safety concerns.

The tree is in good health and did not present a safety hazard for pedestrians, Althorpe said.

Council sided with the bylaw officer and denied Smith's appeal.

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Left: The Lake Report is nominated for Best News Story for an exclusive breaking news report on a \$10,000 cash donation from prominent NOTL developer Benny Marotta to Coun. Gary Burroughs. Right: Award-winning photographer Dave Van de Laar is nominated once again for Photographer of the Year. His photos of a mother robin feeding her young, a fire truck cutting through a flooded street, an Easter service at the Wayside Chapel and a tight shot of a tennis player hitting the ball show a lot of diversity in his photo-journalism. The awards are among 27 in total for the paper's journalism and advertising.

Your Lake Report wins again

The Lake Report has been nominated for 27 awards in the Ontario Community Newspapers Association's annual Better Newspapers Competition. And the nominees are:

Briefly, here are the categories in which The Lake Report received awards:

- * General excellence (6,500 to 12,499 circulation)
- * Best editorial – Kevin MacLean
- * Best editorial cartoon – Alperen Albayrak
- * Best editorial page/section – Richard Harley and Brian Marshall
- * Education writing – Evan Loree
- * Feature writing – Evan Loree
- * Health and wellness – Julia Sacco
- * Best investigative news story – Somer Slobodian
- * Best news story (over 10,000 circulation) – Richard Harley
- * Best rural story – Somer Slobodian
- * Best feature/news series (over 10,000 circulation) – Somer Slobodian
- * Best sport and recreation story – Somer Slobodian
- * Best headline writing – Kevin MacLean and Richard Harley
- * Diversity coverage – Evan Loree, Kevin MacLean and Somer Slobodian
- * Best police/court story – Julia Sacco
- * Best guest/freelance column – Frank Hayes
- * Best feature photo (over 10,000 circulation) – Frank Hayes
- * Best photo layout – Richard Harley, Evan Loree and Somer Slobodian
- * Most creative grip and grin photo – Dave Van de Laar
- * Photographer of the year – Dave Van de Laar
- * Community service – "Off To The Races" – Special Edition: Election 2022 by the staff of The Lake Report
- * Best vertical product – our glossy magazine, "NOTL: A Guide for Distinguished Explorers: Summer 2023"
- * Best special section – "Off To The Races" – Special Edition: Election 2022 by the staff of The Lake Report
- * Best use of colour – Richard Harley
- * Best community website (over 10,000 circulation) – Niagaranow.com
- * Best online experience – NOTL celebration of International Women's Day
- * Best creative ad, Honorable Mention – Richard Harley



Reporter Evan Loree is nominated for Best Feature Writing for a story on a young diabetic who led a charity walk. The story contains a thorough look at what it's like to live with juvenile diabetes and how a young girl is overcoming it.



Left: Photographer Frank Hayes is up for a Best Feature Photo award for his shot of a blue heron taking flight.

Cartoonist Alperen Albayrak has been nominated for Best Editorial Cartoon for his illustration that was critical of a proposed Niagara-on-the-Lake housing development that would tower over neighbouring homes and could end up as illegal short-term rentals.

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Willowbank unveils \$200,000 bursary from Humeniuk Foundation

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Niagara's Humeniuk Foundation is donating \$200,000 to Queenston's Willowbank School of Restoration Arts as part of a five-year program to help students spend a summer at a top European heritage summer school.

The money, unveiled by Andrew Humeniuk, executive director of the Humeniuk Foundation and the Brown Homestead in St. Catharines, will provide financial support for up to four Willowbank students each summer over the next five years.

Students will be able to attend either Messors in Italy or the King's Foundation Summer School, which takes place at Dumfries House in Scotland and in London.

Each student will receive a \$10,000 bursary to cover tuition, travel and modest living costs.

The program is formally called the creation of the Humeniuk Scholarship at Willowbank: unleashing minds, transforming lives.

"We have employed numerous Willowbank



Andrew Humeniuk, left, and Willowbank president Dr. Faisal Arain signed a five-year agreement to provide a \$200,000 bursary for up to four students to attend a European summer school annually. SUPPLIED

graduates at the Brown Homestead over several years and have found them to be the passionate young professionals that the heritage community desperately needs," Humeniuk said in a statement.

"In our experience, the summer schools allow them invaluable access to additional perspectives and knowledge that benefit them in their careers and are also shared with their peers, Willowbank and the heri-

tage sector itself," he said.

Willowbank president Dr. Faisal Arain applauded the scholarship as an indicator of the commitment of the Humeniuk Foundation and family to the value of Willowbank.

"This level of support will enable Willowbank to broaden the depth of knowledge we are able to provide through our diploma program. It will add a very important global dimension to the Willowbank experi-

ence," Arain said.

Humeniuk said Willowbank offers "a unique education that enables its graduates to make a community impact through their diverse work in the heritage sector."

"The opportunity for Willowbank students to expand their learning by participation in two other world-class heritage training programs through the summer schools adds another layer to the Willowbank experience."

He committed to a five-year bursary program to give Willowbank the security of knowing the program is funded and allowing the leadership team to apply their time and efforts to other core needs.

"We foresee our relationship with Willowbank continuing beyond 2028, whether through continuation of the Humeniuk Scholarship or, if an alternative and sustainable funding opportunity is put in place,

another area where support," he said.

In a news release, Willowbank said the Humeniuk Foundation's "generous donation will empower aspiring heritage conservationists, fostering a new generation of leaders."

Besides acting as executive director of the Brown Homestead, the oldest property in St. Catharines, Humeniuk heads his family's 50-year-old foundation.

The organization helps fund "ambitious community building organizations" and its vision is "a world in which communities help people in need and individuals sustain their communities through philanthropic activity and volunteering."

Humeniuk joined the Willowbank board last June and is vice-chair.

As an internationally acclaimed, not-for-profit, private career college specializing in heritage conservation, the school has been at the vanguard of heritage conservation and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings since 2006.

The patron of Willowbank is King Charles III.

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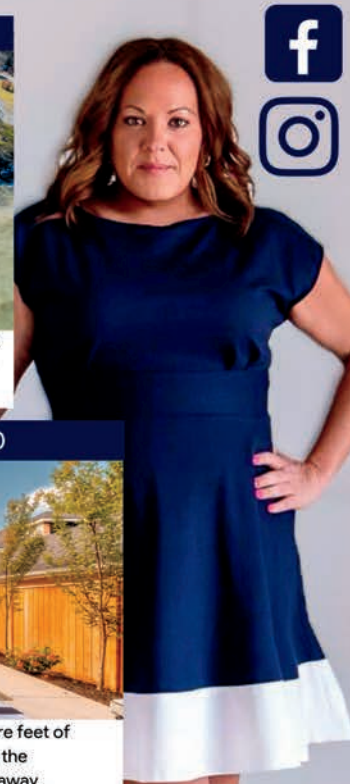
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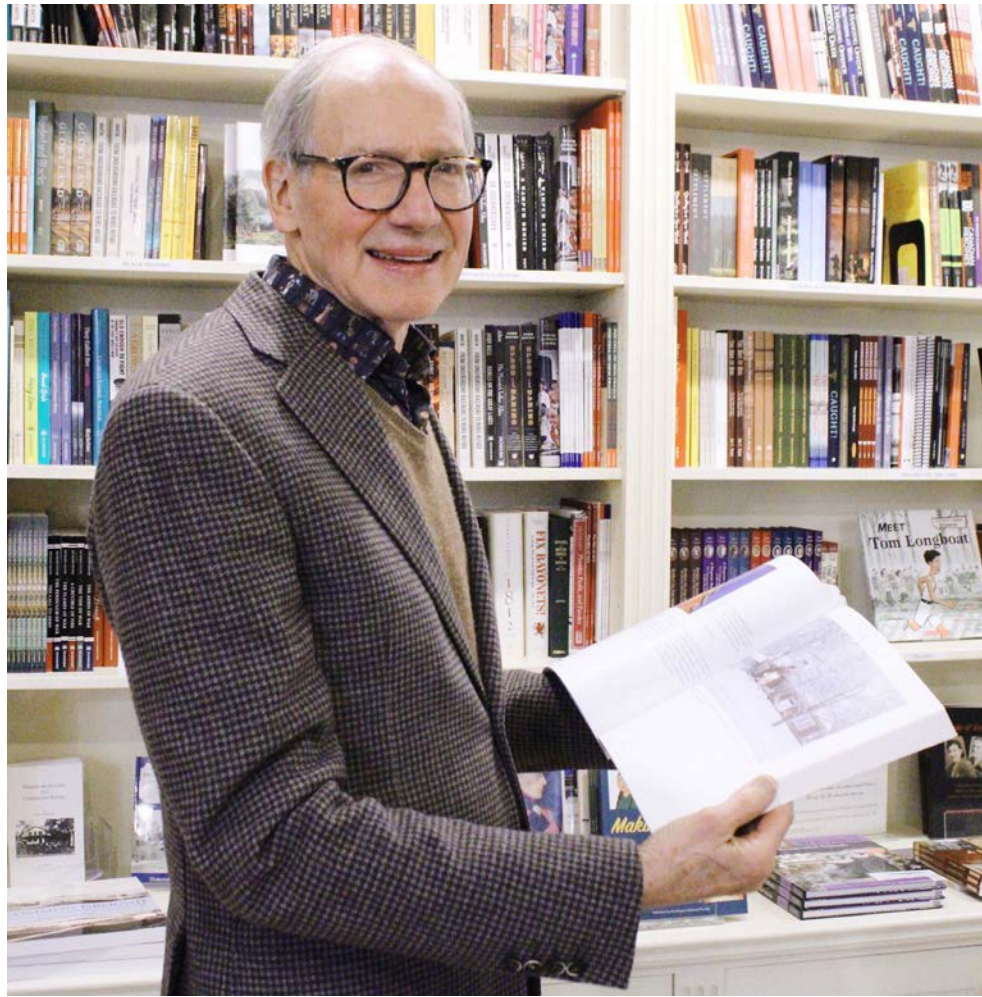


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Left: Richard Merritt has been a volunteer with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum for more than 30 years. Right: Rick Meloen became a volunteer with museum in 2011. RICHARD HUTTON

As town grows, volunteers keep **past alive**

Continued from Front Page

history all of my life.” And, as it turned out, his great-grandmother, Mary Ada Blake, was associated with the woman who would go on to found the museum – Janet Carnochan. “(My great-grandmother) was a student (of Carnochan’s),” Merritt said. “Then she was a librarian for 20 years afterwards in the courthouse.” So, with such a background, it was only fitting that Merritt would develop that keen interest in history. His passion for the past has resulted in him penning several books, including “On Common Ground: The Ongoing Story of The Commons in Niagara-on-the-Lake,” “The Capital Years: Niagara-on-the-Lake 1792-1796” and “Training For Armageddon: Niagara Camp in the Great War, 1914-1919.” All of them are available for purchase in the museum’s gift shop. And for each and every one of those books, he has counted on the museum as a source of some of the information found within them.

“When I first came here, there were two buildings,” he said. “I first came here in 1973. There’s been lots of renovations. The connecting portion between Memorial Hall (built in 1906 as a museum) and the building that was the town’s first high school, built in 1875. Having someone so well versed in the history of the area on board is a blessing for the museum, said Barbara Worthy, the museum’s community engagement co-ordinator. But when the museum produced a series of documentaries on such topics as Black history and history of the Chautauqua neighbourhood, it could also be a little anxiety-provoking. “We were terrified when he watched it in case we made mistakes,” she said with a laugh. Merritt, meanwhile, said the fact that the town even has a museum, is something that should be cherished, if not celebrated. “We’re lucky,” Merritt said, adding that a big city like Toronto doesn’t have one. “They have some great

stuff but it’s all locked away in warehouses.” While not as long-term as Merritt, Rick Meloen first became involved with the museum during celebrations marking the bicentennial of the War of 1812 just over a decade ago. **“This is probably, if not the best, one of the best for the size of the community, considering the history here and the significance of the town.”** RICK MELOEN NOTL MUSEUM VOLUNTEER It was there he met Sarah Kaufman, the museum’s managing director and curator. It was Kaufman who brought the idea of the tours to the committee tasked with co-ordinating celebrations that were to mark the war along with the 200 years of peace between Canada and the United States since then.

Meloen was quick to jump on board with the idea. “I said, ‘Yeah, I’m in.’ I really wanted to do that,” Meloen said. “I’ve been doing it ever since.” He is well known around NOTL, having worked for decades for the town, most recently as supervisor of public works, before he retired in 2009. Since then, he has become involved in several initiatives, including the creation of the town’s Heritage Trail, where is the chair of the committee. He also serves on the board of directors for the Friends of Fort George. And, of course, the historical walking tours, something he continues to do to this day. As an offshoot of the War of 1812 bicentennial, the tours at the beginning naturally focussed on historical sites in town that tied in with the conflict. “I still talk quite a bit on the walking tours about the War of 1812 because it did have such a big impact on the town,” Meloen said. But that is only a part of today’s walking tours, he said, adding that stops on the tours give him a chance

to provide a more fulsome history of the town. “We go through St. Mark’s Cemetery because there’s a lot of interesting people that are interred there,” he said. “So you talk about the history, but that also gives you an opportunity to talk about the churches in the town.” Then, there are the street names. “I stop by King and Byron (streets), and I’ll talk about the street names because the street names in town are interesting,” Meloen said. “They change on King Street. It drives tourists crazy.” The museum has embarked on the Building History, Strengthening Community fundraising campaign to help finance an 8,000 square-foot expansion – almost doubling the museum’s current 10,000 square feet of space – that will add to the facility’s storage and exhibition spaces as well as provide space to deliver programs for the community. Through the campaign, the museum hopes to raise \$5 million to cover half of the \$10-million cost of the

project, which will include a two-storey addition to the rear of Memorial Hall and more basement space for storage. Like Merritt, Meloen thinks NOTL is blessed to have a repository of the town’s history. “I think the museum for a small town is excellent,” he said. “This is probably, if not the best, one of the best for the size of the community, considering the history here and the significance of the town.” The campaign to fund the expansion is important as the museum has an important role to play in NOTL’s evolving history. The campaign is “doing well,” Worthy said. “People are showing their support. We just need to stir up their passion. The town deserves for this museum to be the best that it can be.” Donations to the campaign can be made in person at the museum, located at 43 Castlereagh St. during operating hours, 1-5 p.m. seven days a week, or online at canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society. hutton@niagaranow.com



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Town appoints committee to find new CAO

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Town of NOTL is looking for a new Jack Sparrow to captain its ship. Right now, Bruce Zvaniga has the helm as Niagara-on-the-Lake's chief administrative officer.

However, his role is temporary, meant to float the ship in the absence of former chief administrator Marnie Cluckie, who left in January to become city manager in Hamilton.

At a meeting on Feb. 13, council formed a committee to find someone to fill the chief administrative officer position long-term.

The committee is comprised of Couns. Maria Mavridis, Sandra O'Connor and Erwin Wiens, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Zvaniga.

When it came time to put names forward for the committee, councillors were eager beavers — five threw their hat in the ring.

"I do see great importance in this task," said Coun. Tim Balasiuk, who chaired the meeting.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita was the fifth to step up.

Cheropita and O'Connor bolstered their bids to be on the committee by appealing to prior experience in selecting a chief administrator.

Both were part of the selection process for Cluckie

when she was hired in 2020. "I think I have a lot to offer," Cheropita said.

Though O'Connor said it might help to have an odd number of councillors on the committee to prevent tie votes, Zvaniga was not too concerned by that potential outcome.

To ensure an effective interviewing process, the committee should be "relatively small," he said.

"The committee's role is really to vet the process, to help define it, bring it down and bring some candidates to council, so all of council is making the final decision," Zvaniga said.

Council took a short recess to vote via ballot for their preferred committee members and then returned to formally appoint the three winners.

The chief administrator is the only staffer who reports directly to council, which is why council has a say in who gets the job.

"The CAO is the only real employee responsible to council, so therefore hiring of a CAO is probably one of the most important things a council will do," Zalepa told The Lake Report.

He said the committee will hold public discussions on how the search will commence and the types of traits and qualifications council desires in the town's future head of staff.

evanlore@niagaranow.com

NOTL cops back on the street beat

Continued from Front Page

and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Other CORE units patrol St. Catharines (1 District) and Welland (3 District).

"The whole idea of us being out there makes us more available to come up to us casually to speak to us about anything under the sun," Malachowsky said.

"Whether it be a resident that's on the street who might ask us for or start talking to us about speeding in their particular neighbourhood. Things that they normally wouldn't maybe call in for now."

It's really a way for police to address issues of concern to a community at the grassroots level, he said.

"The idea behind this community unit is we have more time to engage with the community and look after or try to ... listen to their complaints or concerns and work with them."

Hawrylyshyn, meanwhile, said that while on patrol, officers will check in with local businesses as well as chat with residents and visitors to Old Town.

"You'll go into a shop and say, 'Hey, I'm Officer Nick with the CORE unit and we're on a foot patrol in the area. Are there any issues you want to talk about?'"

Officers will spend time with the business owners and learn what concerns



Constables Michael Malachowsky, left, and Nicolas Hawrylyshyn, right, with Meadow Cho and Joy Naemsch from Balzac's Coffee Roasters. RICHARD HUTTON

they may have, Hawrylyshyn said.

"You're there for about maybe half an hour to an hour and you're learning a bunch of stuff."

Those kinds of interactions cannot happen from a police cruiser, he said.

Meadow Cho, manager at Balzac's Coffee Roasters, said the foot patrols are a welcome addition.

"It's nice to have them around to help us if there is a problem," she said. "There's always a bit of excitement when we see them."

Colleague Joy Naemsch takes comfort in knowing police are nearby.

"There's times when I am working in the store alone and it makes me feel safe," she said.

Officers will also work

with businesses and residents to find solutions to issues they may be facing, Malachowsky.

For example, a homeowner may have experienced a break-in and when officers visit the scene, notice the front porch of the home has a lot of foliage and the view from the street may be obscured.

Malachowsky said the concept of crime prevention through environmental design — or CPTED for short — may be suggested to help the homeowner come up with a way to avoid further break-ins.

It could mean clearing away some of the plants that may be limiting visibility and, in turn, helping thieves.

"It may seem simple in nature, but the results

actually work and there's been a number of initiatives that we've done more so in Niagara Falls that have helped us tremendously in mitigating some of these issues," Malachowsky said.

Feedback from the community has been positive. "A lot of people are very pleasant when they want to come speak to us," Malachowsky said. "It's just different from the everyday where a lot of the time, people call the police for incidents that are not so nice."

And tourists, especially during the busy summer season, seem to appreciate their presence as well, Hawrylyshyn said.

"They always want to get a picture with us," he said. hutton@niagaranow.com

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Contributed by Patty Garriock
 "Confidence isn't optimism or pessimism, and it's not a character attribute. It's the expectation of a positive outcome." - Rosabeth Moss Kanter

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Free skate proves popular



A free skate day on Family Day, sponsored by the Fine Estates Team, brought out families from Niagara-on-the-Lake and beyond on Monday to spend a bit of quality time together. **More photos on Page 16.** JULIA SACCO

Editorial

Celebrating the **women of NOTL.** Again

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, nothing of substance seems to get accomplished without the efforts of a few men — and an army of women.

That's not a put down of men, but rather a reflection of the incredible role women play here in NOTL.

As we said a year ago, when we first conceived the idea of producing a special feature section celebrating the contributions and the roles of women in NOTL, this demographic group is indeed a force in the community.

Our simple idea last year grew out of what we did in 2022.

At that time we produced a small package of stories for International Women's Day about immigrant women, our town council's women and then-mayor, and a young dynamo, Maya Webster, who had convinced the province to cover the cost of glucose monitors for many people with diabetes.

All worthy of celebrating and highlighting.

Last year, to kick it up a notch, we reached out to women in the community hoping to get the attention of 20 or 30 notable movers and shakers — community contributors — and take a photo of them on Queen Street in front of the town's iconic clock tower cenotaph?

They'd be representative of the women of NOTL.

Well, that army of women we mentioned earlier quickly grew to more than 100 and the result was mini-biographies of scores of women all wrapped up in an award-winning print and online presentation, video and mass photograph taken in the middle of Queen Street.

As we noted afterward, an overwhelming sentiment expressed by women on that sunny March morning a year ago was, "Let's do this again next year!"

So, we are again inviting the women of NOTL to participate in The Lake Report's celebration of ... you.

In an email circulated a week or so ago to all the women to whom we'd reached out a year ago, we invited them — and anyone they knew — to come out again, at a new location, to celebrate International Women's Day a few days early.

If you weren't on that email list, our apologies. We are expanding it. But please come out on Monday, March 4.

In keeping with the themes of inclusion and celebration, please invite any and all women you know in NOTL — and ask them to confirm via email at kevin@niagaranow.com (just so we have some gauge as to the crowd size).

Friends, family, women you work with, people in organizations with which you are involved. The more, the merrier!

Whether 50 or 100 or 150 women are able to come out, we consider it will be time well spent.

That week, the regular edition of The Lake Report will include a special fea-

ture section to commemorate International Women's Day.

We're focusing on women in education and women in business — and we've received dozens of nominations from the community. We'll feature some of those women in the souvenir section.

As well, we are including a limited amount of paid advertising in the section. A portion of the proceeds from those advertisements will be donated to two women-focused charities: Gillian's Place women's shelter and NOTL's own Pink Pearl Foundation, which supports women dealing with cancer.

So, please join us as we assemble near the NOTL gazebo in Queen's Royal Park in Old Town on Monday, March 4, 2024, at 10 a.m. to again take a mass photo to celebrate the work and contributions of the women of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

We hope you can be there. editor@niagaranow.com

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Excited to read NOTL news **in print**

Dear editor:
Thank you for the great editorial, "The future of news in NOTL," (Feb. 15), about The Lake Report's plans to continue publishing its printed edition while also regularly updating your news website, niagaranow.com, for those who like to read the news online.

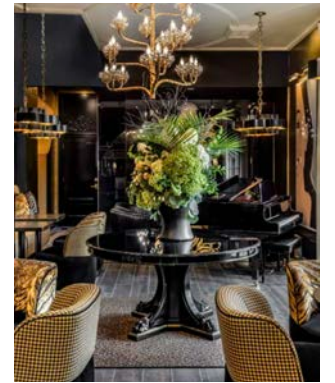
We are some of those people that enjoy reading our newspapers in hard copy form.
For us, it is much easier to go through 28 pages or more of our local paper with a printed copy in hand.
The ads are easier to notice and see. We can cut out the items that we are

interested in.
We enjoy working on the crossword puzzles and Sudoku.
We have enough other projects that take a lot of time on the computer, so reading our local news off-line gives us a nice break.
Erika & Bob Buchkowsky
NOTL

New NOTL hotel costs **\$1,500** a night

Dear editor:
All the good citizens of our town will want to wish the good ship The Scotsman a long and prosperous voyage.
The trip is an ambitious one, if only for the eye-watering room rate: at least \$1,500 per night, which makes it the most expensive hotel in Canada.
With the opening of Niagara-on-the-Lake's newest hotel, we can now claim

that particular crown, leaving Ritz, Four Seasons and Fairmont in the dust.
For a property not offering full food and beverage service and in the middle of NOTL low season this is a brave approach to positioning your product.
Let's hope that the owners have gotten their market studies right.
Philippe Borel
St. Davids



An interior shot from the Scotsman Hotel website.

Love letter: First love and last love were found here in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Dear editor:
Further to The Love Report section featured in The Lake Report on Feb. 15: I have spent more than 60 summers in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ever since my dad first rented a

cottage near Ryerson Park when I was 10 years old.
This little town is where I met many of my oldest friends, where I kissed my first girlfriend, where I laid my parents to rest.
If it's not my second

home, it's my first.
In all those years, though, one summer stands out.
In 1992, the 200th anniversary of Simcoe Landing, I took my girlfriend Laura in to town to

celebrate Canada Day.
As we biked along Niagara Boulevard, I pulled into a vacant lot on the waterfront "to show her the tall ships."
As Laura gazed out at the beautiful view across

the lake, I got down on one knee: "This spot is where I kissed my first girlfriend and this is where I will kiss my last. Will you marry me?"
She said yes!
We were wed nine

weeks later, had a son 15 months after that and, 30 years on, I still spend every summer here by the lake with the love of my life.
Dave Glasz
NOTL

Censorship and what we are **allowed** to read

Public libraries should be home to many viewpoints, not just progressive ones



Cathy Simpson
Special to The Lake Report

Almost as long as there have been libraries, there have been people asking for books to be removed from library shelves.

The American Library Association reported book ban requests in 2023 were the highest on record and we also see them on the rise in Canada. But what often goes unreported in both countries is another type of censorship happening behind the scenes in libraries.

This hidden library censorship takes two forms: the vigorous defence of books promoting diversity of identity, but little to no defence of books promoting diversity of viewpoint, and the purchase of books promoting "progressive" ideas over "traditional" ideas.

Librarians are quick to

defend books written by authors from "oppressed" groups and books that promote critical social justice. Library shelves are filled with titles offering positive takes on topics like systemic racism, transgender ideology, equity and decolonization.

This would be fine except books offering other points of view on these topics are rarely defended or even purchased. As a result, library collections are increasingly biased and offer one viewpoint justified by the claim the other viewpoints are "harmful" and must be excluded.

I first became aware of the pressure to suppress certain viewpoints in 2019 when writer and feminist Megan Murphy booked a room at the Toronto Public Library to discuss the impact of transgender rights on the rights of women and children.

The Toronto library was under immense pressure not to allow Murphy's talk but thankfully city librarian Vickery Bowles stood up for intellectual freedom and free speech — and the talk went forward.



As Bowles stated, while the Toronto library "encourages public debate and discussion about differing ideas, we also encourage those with opposing or conflicting viewpoints to respectfully challenge each other's ideas and not the library's democratic mandate to provide space for both."

A lot has changed since 2019 and many librarians no longer encourage those with differing viewpoints to respectfully challenge each other.

In fact, viewpoints that don't conform to progressive agendas are rarely represented in library collections and anyone who challenges this is labelled a bigot.

But the tide is beginning to turn. When the Peel District School Board removed all books published before 2008 to "promote anti-racism, inclusivity, and critical consciousness" there was a

big outcry, including from students. The CBC covered the story.

I began talking with librarians who believe in library neutrality and pluralism a year ago and was introduced to an organization called the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR).

It is an American organization with Canadian chapters, and now a library chapter. It stands for the following:

Civil rights and liberties guaranteed to each individual, including freedom of speech and expression, equal protection under the law, and the right to personal privacy.

Defence of individuals threatened or persecuted for speech, or those held to a different set of rules for language or conduct based on their skin colour, ancestry or other immutable characteristics.

Respectful disagreement because bad ideas are best confronted with good ideas and never with dehumanization, deplatforming or blacklisting.

Objective truth that it is discoverable and scientific research untainted by political agenda.

Pro-human and compassionate opposition to intolerance and racism rooted in dignity and our common humanity.

FAIR is marking the 40th anniversary of Canada's Freedom to Read Week by asking all writers, publishers, library workers, teachers and readers to acknowledge that pressure to suppress the availability of books can come from across the political spectrum, and that librarian activism restricts freedom to read by suppressing heterodox viewpoints.

The organization supports Freedom to Read Week's

principles of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to read and resistance to censorship.

In addition, FAIR in libraries supports the pluralistic principles of viewpoint diversity, library neutrality, and human individuality and autonomy.

As library professionals, we ask our colleagues to recognize their biases and recommit to striving for library neutrality and viewpoint diversity in collections.

We ask our colleagues to ensure "Freedom to Read Week" does not become "Freedom to Read What We Decide You Should Read Week."

We will only be truly free to read when authors are no longer afraid to write on any topic, publishers no longer prioritize an author's identity over their work's merit, teachers no longer present students with only one viewpoint on issues, and library workers ensure their collections are balanced to include a variety of perspectives on controversial topics.

Cathy Simpson is CEO of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.



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Origin of 'greige' homes dates to 19th century





Brian Marshall
Columnist

Since about 2010, the most popular colour palettes for the exterior treatment of homes have been muted tones dominated by neutral greys and taupes or a mix of the two, commonly referred to as “greige.”

Now, the proponents of these palettes claim they are classic neutrals that are calming and evoke tranquility, but on the other side, there are those like David Batchelor, author of “Chromophobia,” who states the following in a May 2022 article written by Elle Hunt for the Guardian:

“You can have a colour chart that says ‘bland’ and stick it all under that. It’s all so safe, that’s probably the most dispiriting part of it: it threatens nothing and no one, apart from with a slow, unadventurous death.”

Furthermore, this colour palette is the one most North American designers said during 2023 they would most like to see “go away.”

Off the top, let’s understand the “classic” reference.

Prior to the mid-19th century, nearly all pigments used to produce paint colours were based on naturally occurring materials – iron oxide, for example – mixed in a linseed oil/turpentine base solution.

This reality distinctly limited the colour options available to our ancestors.

So, this “classic” choice of a paint scheme is, in



Brian Marshall says a good way to pick the colour of your home is to spend time taking inspiration photos wherever you go. There’s nothing wrong with copying a colour you like.

part, an expression of these limitations rather than a representation of societal taste.

That said, certainly the most common exterior paint treatment for wood-clad houses of this period was white with green shutters – something the author Charles Dickens commented on during his 1842 visit to North America. He wrote: “All the buildings looked as if they had been painted that morning ... Every house is the whitest of white; every Venetian blind the greenest of green,” a “blind” being a louvered shutter.

Interestingly, the “white” that Dickens refers to was not what our eyes would interpret as “whitest of white.”

All 19th-century white paint was “warm” with varying degrees – based on the quality of materials and skills of the painter who mixed it on-site – of buttery undertones. Modern titanium white paint was introduced to the market

around 1925.

Three things occurred during the second half of the 19th century, which had a direct impact on colour palette options for buildings.

First, A.J. Downing, one of the most influential North American architects of the time, began to promote neutral tints.

In one of his many publications, he wrote that buildings should be painted “soft and quiet shades called neutral tints, such as fawn, drab, grey, brown, etc., and ... all positive colours, such as white, yellow, red, blue, black, etc., should always be avoided.”

Downing’s 1842 book “Cottage Residences” actually contained a hand-coloured palette of his recommended paint colours.

He then went on to spell out rules for the use of these colours, writing, “Choose paint of some neutral tint that is quite satisfactory, and, if the tint is a light one, let the facings of the windows, cornices, etc.,

be painted several shades darker, of the same colour.”

“The blinds may either be a darker shade than the facings, or else the darkest green,” he added. “If, on the one hand, the tint chosen is a dark one, then let the window dressings, etc., be painted of a much lighter shade of the same colour.”

Restrictive, yes, but it laid the groundwork for the notion of “classic neutrals.”

Second, the development of modern, chemically synthesized pigments was rapidly expanding the range of colour choices available in the market.

Third, the industrial paint industry was born based on the technology to grind pigments in oil, put them in sealed cans and then ship the resultant “pre-mixed” paint to anywhere in North America serviced by the railroads.

Given this manufacturing and logistical capability, these early paint companies put marketing into high gear, printing and broadly distributing colourful

brochures and architectural pattern books featuring the full range of their colour options while promoting the use of the new, richer colours.

So, in the simplest terms, the century between 1820 and 1920 had four major colour phases.

Circa 1820 to 1840, the colour palette was light, delicate and dominated by white.

Circa 1840 to 1870, was an era of pale earth tones.

Circa 1870 to 1890, the late Victorian palette was dark and rich (albeit somewhat muddy to modern eyes).

Then, circa 1890 to 1920, the palette gradually returned to whites and lighter pastels.

Today, my Benjamin Moore colour bag is a small suitcase containing nine distinct colour fans each holding roughly 100 paint colours.

And that’s just one paint company. It could be said that we are drowning in a sea of colour choices!

But, let’s get a little more practical – if someone is contemplating painting the exterior of their house, how does one navigate this cornucopia of choices?

Before we get into colours, here are a few points to consider:

1. Understand the style of your home: certain paint schemes and colours will accentuate the architecture of your home or diminish it.

For example, a collection of pastels would look jarring on a Ranch bungalow, while painting a Queen Anne in pale earth tones would result in the visual loss of its decorative elements and details.

2. Recognize your geography: the quality, intensity and seasonal angles of sunlight plus the type of vegetation and landscape can have a huge impact on the paint colours you choose.

That beautiful coral-pink stucco house in Bermuda or the wonderful burnt umber home in Arizona would look sadly out-of-place on a Canadian street.

3. Walk your neighbourhood: whether you wish your home to stand proud or blend in, there are contextual limitations imposed by the existing streetscape.

Too great a departure from the norm in the name of “standing proud” will result in your home looking garish, gaudy or out-of-place, while an over-emphasis on “blending on” will result in a house that is a milquetoast non-entity, lessening the streetscape.

4. Spend time taking inspiration photos wherever you drive: there is absolutely nothing wrong – and everything right – with being a copycat of a paint scheme you resonate with.

However, make sure that the paint scheme is on a house style similar to your own.

Falling in love with the palette of a 21st-century Modern will likely not translate well when applied to an Arts & Crafts home, and vice versa.

And, as a general caution, avoid at all costs, a stark modern black and white paint scheme ... no architectural style, except perhaps, the properly treated International style, can wear this scheme well.

Moving on to the actual selection of paint colours in the scheme for your house, I’ve run out of room for this week’s column.

But, stay tuned next week as we delve into the modern rendition of Issac Newton’s colour wheel as one of the principal tools you can use to make appropriate paint selections for your home.

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

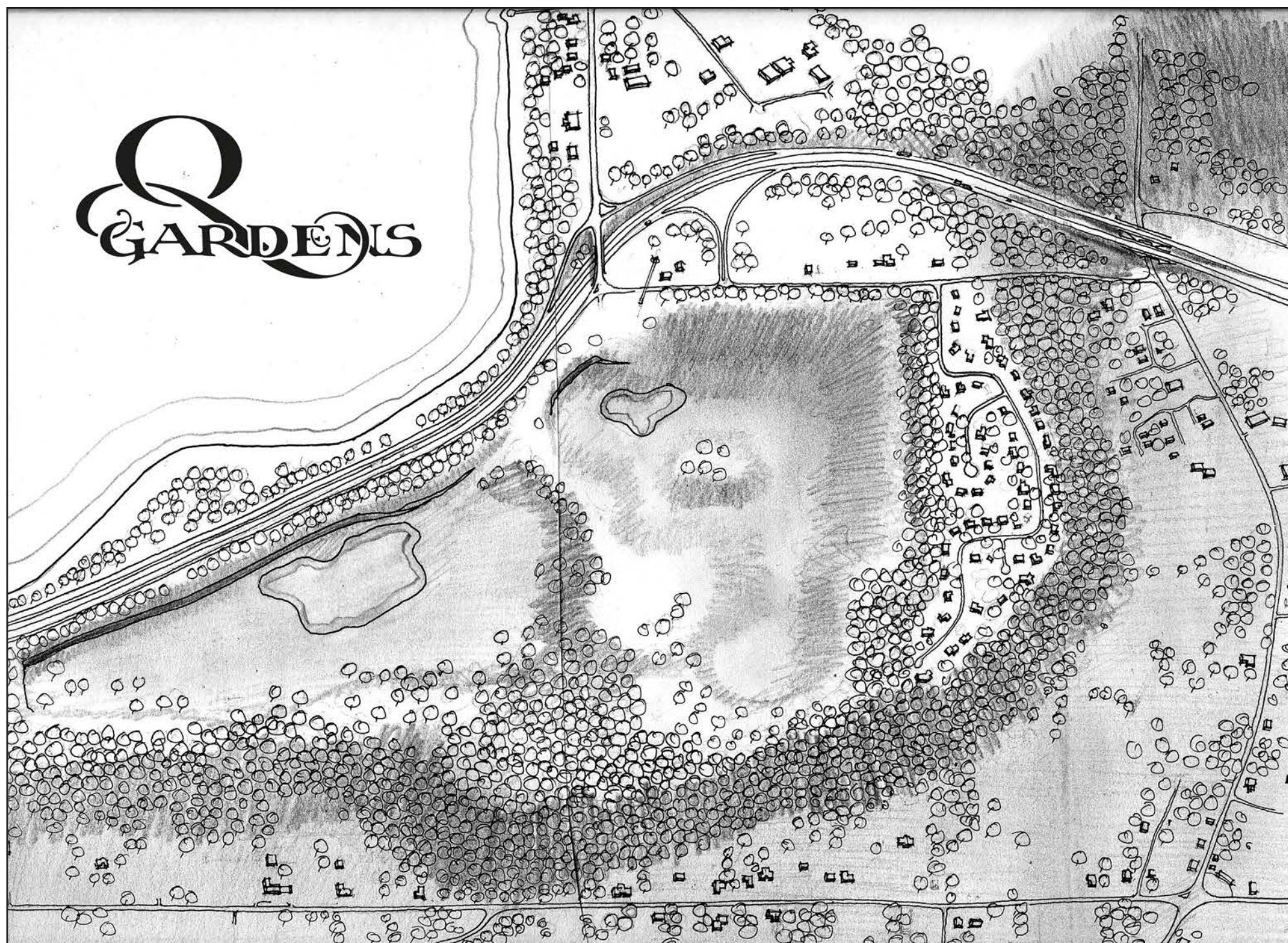


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Community Announcement #1 – February 22, 2024

Announcement Series: We are presenting a series of community announcements to inform the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, about who we are, the history of this unique site, our rehabilitation and naturalization plans and our vision for this very special landscape. As well, we seek to receive community input and feedback as we proceed through the design and approvals processes.

Who Are We: Purchased from Lafarge Canada in 2008, the owners of Q Gardens (also known as Queenston Quarry Reclamation Company Ltd.) are Joe Lamanna (founder, The G&L Group), NOTL resident Angelo Butera (Panoramic Properties) and a small founders group lead by NOTL resident, Frank Racioppo. E: fracioppo@rzcldlaw.com M: 905-941-5500

The Site: The Queenston Quarry property is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake, above St. Davids on the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, bounded by the brow of the Escarpment and Bruce Trail to the north, Bevan Heights residences to the west, Niagara Townline Road / Portage Road to the south and Queenston Heights Park to the east. Historically, the Queenston Quarry extended down to York Road to the north; however, the Queenston Quarry donated 98-acres consisting of all the natural and heritage features of the quarry being the brow and bench of the escarpment to Ontario Heritage Trust which was later transferred to the Niagara Parks Commission. Today, all lands to the north and east of the Queenston Quarry including the Bruce Trail are public lands under the stewardship of the Niagara Parks Commission.

Site Activity Since 2006: We took possession of the Queenston Quarry in 2006 from Lafarge Canada and legal ownership in 2008. Lafarge elected to sell to us (from six other buyer proponents) as we presented the most attractive masterplan vision and environmental rehabilitation plan. Since our possession in 2006 we have embarked on earth moving and rehabilitation with the objective to and successfully have achieved the highest / cleanest soil standard (i.e. the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Table 1 Standard). As well, since 1950's the Queenston Quarry obtained a Ministry of Environment permit to receive and stock pile foundry sand from various industrial foundry operations throughout Niagara. Lafarge had recycled a portion of the foundry sand into asphalt and road deep base throughout Niagara. Since our ownership 2008 with 200,000 tons remaining on site, we screened and repurposed this foundry sand by screening and shipping it to cement plants across Ontario. The foundry sand is baked in kilns which converts it to clinker, being the raw ingredient to make cement that is used to make concrete. We have repurposed and shipped all the foundry sand with only 15,000 tons to go.

Announcements to follow:

- History
- Quarrying Activities
- Approvals Processes
- Community Input
- Naturalization / Biodiversity Plan
- Masterplan and Amenities
- Architecture

Contact: Frank Racioppo 905-941-5500 E: fracioppo@rzcldlaw.com www.qgardenscanada.com

History buffs gawk at notable Fort George ho



From left, Dan Laroche, site supervisor at Fort George, shares a dragon's hoard of historical artifacts with an audience of about 30 people at Navy Hall. A specialized kettle used for pouring hot water was used to pour hot water on pewter dinner plates to cause poisoning from pewter dinner plates. This pewter serving platter was the oldest artifact at the table on Friday. EVAN LOREE

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Navy Hall was a veritable dragon's hoard of historical treasure Friday morning.

Site supervisor Dan Laroche shared 27 historical artifacts with almost 30 visitors who attended the latest in a series of fireside chats hosted by the Friends of Fort George and Niagara Parks.

Laroche, presenting the artifacts one by one, was dressed in the attire of Fort Maj. Donald Campbell, who died of natural causes in 1812.

Among the highlights were a map, a portrait, a pistol and a box of bullets.

The map showed the layout of Fort George as it was in 1804.

Laroche noted the fort was built in stages, starting in 1796. "It wasn't really until about 1804 that it looks like it does today."

The map was the most historically significant item he presented because it shows the fort as it was during the war.

But a close second was a portrait of Edward Cotton, a major who died an "absolutely horrific" death after being shot in the battle of Fort George.

"Poor chap took about five months

to die," Laroche said. "From a heritage value perspective, that is a pretty big deal for us."

After the talk, Laroche said the feeling of holding Cotton's portrait, knowing he had died at the fort, was like touching gold.

The picture of the dead soldier was displayed on a table covered in white cloth, along with the rest of the historical menagerie.

A double-barrelled pistol designed to be more accurate than standard issue sidearms was one of the rarer items at the table.

A former maintenance supervisor with Parks Canada found the

unique firearm under a tree root atop Queenston Heights at least 30 years ago, Laroche said.

He could not confirm that the gun was actually used in the battle, saying it was an extremely uncommon model.

He told The Lake Report its owner would have spent a pretty penny just to own it.

As far as boxes go, the wooden one Laroche displayed was far from garden variety.

It was an early 18th-century gunpowder box with three tin containers on the inside for storing different types of powder.

But the British army did not want soldiers to worry about multiple powder boxes, so the box more precisely belonged to a hunter – who was likely to need multiple powder boxes.

Under Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock, soldiers were encouraged to pick up hunting as a way to ward off boredom and keep them out of the pubs in Niagara, Laroche said.

The double threat posed by "booze and boredom" to the discipline of soldiers remains a challenge for modern military of Laroche said, recalling a conversation he had with a sergeant in the Canadian Armed Forces.



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ward of 19th century artifacts



chocolate. Lesley Stewart jokes that folks from the 19th century didn't live very long and so they didn't have to worry about lead

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Instruments of war were not the only ones on display. Laroche had several old kitchen gadgets and serving dishes on display, too. One was a black spice boat, used to cut and grind spices for consumption. He also shared a copper "half kettle" that could have been used to pour hot chocolate. And adjacent to that, he had a little cup and saucer, used to serve hot chocolate. The beverage was popular in its day, but "quite bitter" Laroche said, and not like the sweetened beverages available at your local coffee shop.

The oldest item on display was a pewter serving platter, the origin of which Laroche dated to about 1740. Though there were several residents in the crowd, like Lesley Stewart, who has "a general interest in anything old and historical," there were a couple visitors at the table, too. Ken Coker came all the way from Acton, an hour and a half away, to hear the talk. "I drive down for these things, they're that interesting," said the 64-year-old. Coker said he spent two summers working at Fort George in his teens

and never lost his interest in the stronghold. "Things could have gone very differently for the history of the country, had we failed here," Coker said. Laroche described his interest in the history of Fort George as an "occupational hazard." He took a summer job at the fort when he was still in high school and is still there 34 years later. The last fireside chat takes place this Friday at 11 a.m. at Navy Hall. Tickets can be purchased from the Friends of Fort George Special Events webpage. evanloree@niagaranow.com

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This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: TWO-LETTER WORDS

**A snippet of it:
...288419716...**

Last issue:

Category: CLASSIC ALBUMS

Clue: It won Best Rock Album and Album of the Year Grammys in 1996 and featured the Best Rock Song "You Oughta Know."

Answer: What is a Jagged Little Pill?

Answered first by: Lynda Collet

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Bill Hamilton, Claudia Grimwood, Bob Wheatley, Jane Morris, Mike Gander, Wade Durling, Jesse Agnew, Howard Jones, Pam Dowling, Katie Reimer, Nancy Rocca, Jim Dandy, Rob Hutchison, Edna Groff, David Spencer

*REMEMBER TO PUT "WHAT IS" FOR JEOPARDY QUESTIONS!

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

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College brewmasters hop to it for Pink Boots Society

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Students in Niagara College's program for future brewmasters are hard at work on unique batches of beer they're brewing this winter – all to support the often-underrepresented women in the beer industry.

For Melissa Quiverio and Lina Farfan, their version of the Pink Boots Pilsner will pay homage to a brew from New Zealand, simply called the New Zealand Pilsner.

"We decided the recipe hops selected for the Pink Boots Pilsner were similar in aroma and flavour," Quiverio said. "It's got some notes of citrus with a raspberry flavour."

She was one of a dozen or so participants in the open brew for the Pink Boots Society on Feb. 9.

All beers produced by the students will be available in time for International Women's Day on March 8.

Quiverio is an international student from Colombia who is in the second year of Niagara College's brewmaster and brewery operations



Allison Findley, head winemaker at Niagara College's teaching winery, left, and assistant winemaker Emma Smalley, examine hops from Yakuma Chief hops being used in the Pink Boots Pilsner. Their brew will be similar to a New Zealand Pilsner. RICHARD HUTTON

management program at the Daniel J. Patterson campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Farfan, like Quiverio, is an international student who came to Niagara from Colombia for the brewery program.

This was the first-year student's first time taking part in Pink Boots.

"There are not too many women in the industry," she said.

The hops chosen for this year's brew by the Pink Boots Society are a blend of HBC 638, El Dorado, Ahtanum and Idaho 7 varieties.

These will result in beers

with berry and citrus notes punctuated with peppery earthiness and floral notes, the society said on its website.

All of the beers will use the Pink Boots blended hops supplied by Yakima Chief Hops, which donates \$3 from every pound sold back to the Pink Boots Society to help women and non-binary people in the fermented/alcoholic beverage industry advance their careers through education.

"The whole idea of the Pink Boots Blend was meant to increase the involvement of women in

the craft brewing industry," said Sarah Casorso, Yakima Chief's regional sales manager for Ontario and western Canada. "It's intended to get women together."

And Casorso knows a thing or two about the industry.

She spent four years at Bench Brewing in Beamsville, where she held several positions including brewmaster and director of brewing operations before joining Yakima Chief in 2022.

Before her time at Bench, she was the head brewer at Lock Street Brewing Com-

pany in St. Catharines.

"I think any time that we can promote women in brewing, it's exciting," she said.

Tammy Joho of the Pink Boots Canadian chapter said the initiative wants to help women seeking a career in the brewing industry through scholarships.

"The idea is to provide a network and mentorship for women as they head into a career," Joho said. "We provide scholarships and focus on bringing visibility to women in the industry."

While Pink Boots started to help women, Joho said the initiative has been broadened by also extending support to members of the non-binary and transgender communities.

"We are trying to be inclusive," she said. "Cognizant of the fact there are non-binary and transgender people in the industry."

For Jon Downing, brewmaster for the college program, Pink Boots is a time for students to enjoy themselves and work together while continuing to learn the ins and outs of

crafting a specialty brew.

"It's always fun. For the college, it's a great way to promote women in the industry," he said. "It really is an interesting event," he said.

Downing noted that throughout history, it was women who took care of brewing beer and other fermented beverages.

Currently, 10 per cent of the students enrolled in the college program are women, he said, adding that in the past, participation by women reached as high as 40 per cent.

Pink Boots, he said, was a great way to expose a brewery career as an option for women.

"We're trying to get as many (women) involved as possible and keep the movement going."

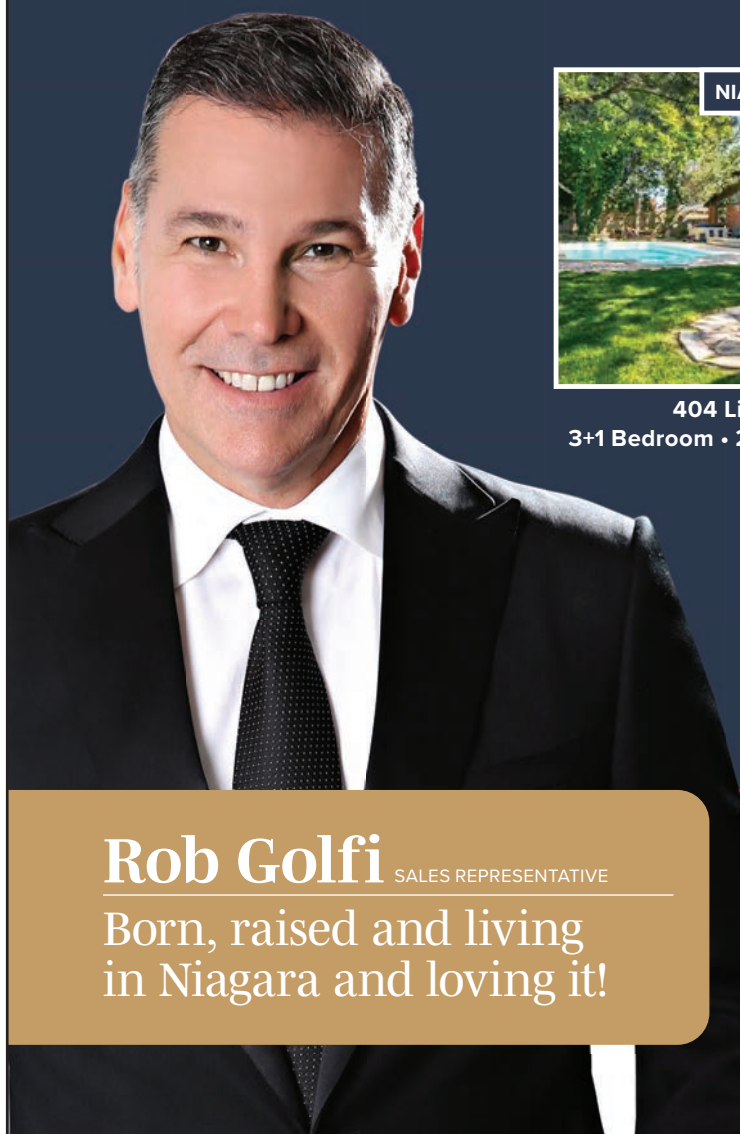
In addition to the release of brews created by Quiverio and others, an additional open brew will be hosted for Pink Boots on International Women's Day at the teaching brewery.

The beer has yet to be announced by students developing the recipe.

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Pet Valu and NOTL Cats Rescue team up

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Furry friends in search of a forever home were plenty to be found at Pet Valus across Canada last Saturday and Sunday – and the Virgil location was no exception.

Pet Valu's National Adoption Weekend, held four times a year, aims to support a community charity, with this year's choice being NOTL Cat Rescue.

Laura and John Kott, co-owners of the Virgil store, chose this group, which provides foster families for rescued cats awaiting adoption along with essential medical services.

Tanya Rice, director of fundraising with NOTL Cat Rescue said that their organization has already received several helpful donations from people and businesses in the community.

Grape Escapes donated a cheque for \$200 and for their upcoming spring fundraiser, NOTL Cats has been



Tanya Rice and Erika Buchkowsky hold Phoenix and Prince, two of the furry friends up for adoption last weekend at Pet Valu. JULIA SACCO

sponsored by Kauzlaric Farms on Concession 4, Bellyacres Farms on Reed Road and Handmade Presents in Garrison Village.

"We have zero start-up costs for our spring fundraiser, which will be on March 30," Rice told The Lake Report.

For those who wish to make a donation in the form of supplies, NOTL Cats are always in need of food and litter, particularly Fancy Feast wet food, or Whiskas for stray outdoor cats, said Rice.

Pet Valu's National Adoption Weekend is primarily focused on accepting donations and helping address the needs of pets in different places, Laura Kott said.

"It goes toward whatever the community happens to need. Like when pets are affected by wildfires, or pets that are affected by flooding in other provinces," she said.

However, Pet Valu itself is also in need of donations for sponsorship, specifically toward a larger in-store cage for events like adoption weekend.

"We're glad to have the cage that we do have, but the more room for cats the better. Unfortunately, that's expensive," Kott said.

The cost of a large cage, like the one in use at Pet Valu on Vansickle Road in St. Catharines would cost upwards of \$3,000.

During adoption weekend, the store received a \$500 pledge towards the freedom enclosure from a community business owner.

"It's on our wish list," Kott said.
juliasacco@niagaranow.com

Tickets go on sale March 1 for popular Red Roof pasta dinner

Staff
The Lake Report

They'll be dishing out the pasta for a good cause at John Michael's Banquet & Event Centre in Thorold on Sunday, April 28.

That is the date of the annual pasta dinner fundraiser for Red Roof Retreat, the Niagara-on-the-Lake-based organization that offers recreational and respite services to children, youth and young adults with special needs and their families.

Red Roof operates its main hub, called The Ranch, on Concession 6 and Kevan's House on Concession 2.

The Ranch is home to Red Roof's adult day programs on weekdays and children's respite on weekends. Kevan's House is home to the organi-

zation's adult weekend respite and emergency residential care.

Tickets go on sale March 1 for the dinner, which is one of Red Roof's signature events.

Last year's dinner raised \$105,000 for the organization.

Doors open for the event at 4 p.m. with dinner being served at 5 p.m.

The event will also feature a raffle alongside silent and live auctions

For more information about the event, to become a sponsor or to donate items to the raffle or auctions, contact Red Roof executive director Stefanie Bjorgan via email, stefanie@redroofretreat.com, or call 289-868-9800.

John Michael's is located at 1368 Upper's Ln. in Thorold.

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Family skate day in NOTL



NOTL players get free entry to Canucks Jr. game

March 1 will be Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Night at the Niagara Falls Canucks Jr. A game. On Tuesday, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa (a longtime former referee) was on hand at the NOTL Wolves U8 team's practice. So were Canucks players Dryden Allen, Adrian Diodati, Wolf Giles and Nate McFarlane and the team mascot Justin Beaver. On March 1, members of the U8 team will be special guests of the Canucks and they'll get a dressing room tour during warmups and play a mini game on the ice during the first intermission. Also, every player wearing a NOTL Minor Hockey Association jersey will get free entry to the Canucks game versus the Brantford 99ers. It's at the Gale Centre, 5152 Thorold Stone Rd., Niagara Falls, at 7 p.m. Parents, siblings and others can buy \$10 general admission tickets at the box office on game night. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Top: Alexander Mills helps two-year-old Asher Mills navigate the ice during free skate at Pillar and Post Gardens on Monday. Bottom: Rafael Aparicio and Jessica Armstrong skated at Monday's family day skate sponsored by the Fine Estates Team at the arena. JULIA SACCO

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TEAM OF THE WEEK

U15 Rep Wolves



The U15 Rep Wolves of the NOTL Minor Hockey Association are The Lake Report's featured Team of the Week. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: Levi Bayne, Boyd Hopkins, Theo Kotsanis and Lucas Rempel. In the middle row are: Chase Hunter, Alex Swec, Nolan Funk and Lukas Friesen. In the back row are coach Mario Kotsanis, Holden Powell, Tommy Wilson, Rylan Cerros, Jack Dill, Cole Wagar, Nolan Rappit and coach Scott Wagar. Absent are Stevie Pillitteri-Smith and trainer Ray Hunter. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



The Predators lost 3-0 to North York in their season finale and are down 1-0 in their playoff series. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Do-or-die time for Preds

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

It's do or die now for the Niagara Jr. A Predators. After finishing their regular season last Friday night with a 3-0 loss to the first-place North York Renegades and posting a season record of 17-21-4-0, the Predators launched their best-of-three preliminary playoff round on Monday.

It didn't go as head coach Kevin Taylor hoped.

The Predators came up short on the road against the Durham Roadrunners, losing 4-1 in Oshawa.

While Niagara outshot the Roadrunners 30-25 and never let their opponents

run away with it, Shane Kaplan's lone goal 16 minutes into the last period was too little and too late for his team to stage any sort of a comeback.

There's hope for the Predators, though, as they had some success against Durham during the regular season.

While Niagara finished nine points and three spots behind the Roadrunners, Durham has struggled to beat the Predators in the past and lost to them twice.

They host the Roadrunners this Friday, Feb. 23 at the Meridian Credit Union Arena in Virgil. The action starts at 7:30 p.m. It's a must-win game.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



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Photo by Peter Andrew Luszyk

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To save time and potential late fees, pay your taxes through a Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP) plan, online or through telephone banking. You can also request to receive property tax bills and Town notices by email. For more information, please visit www.notl.com/council-government/property-taxes. Thank you.

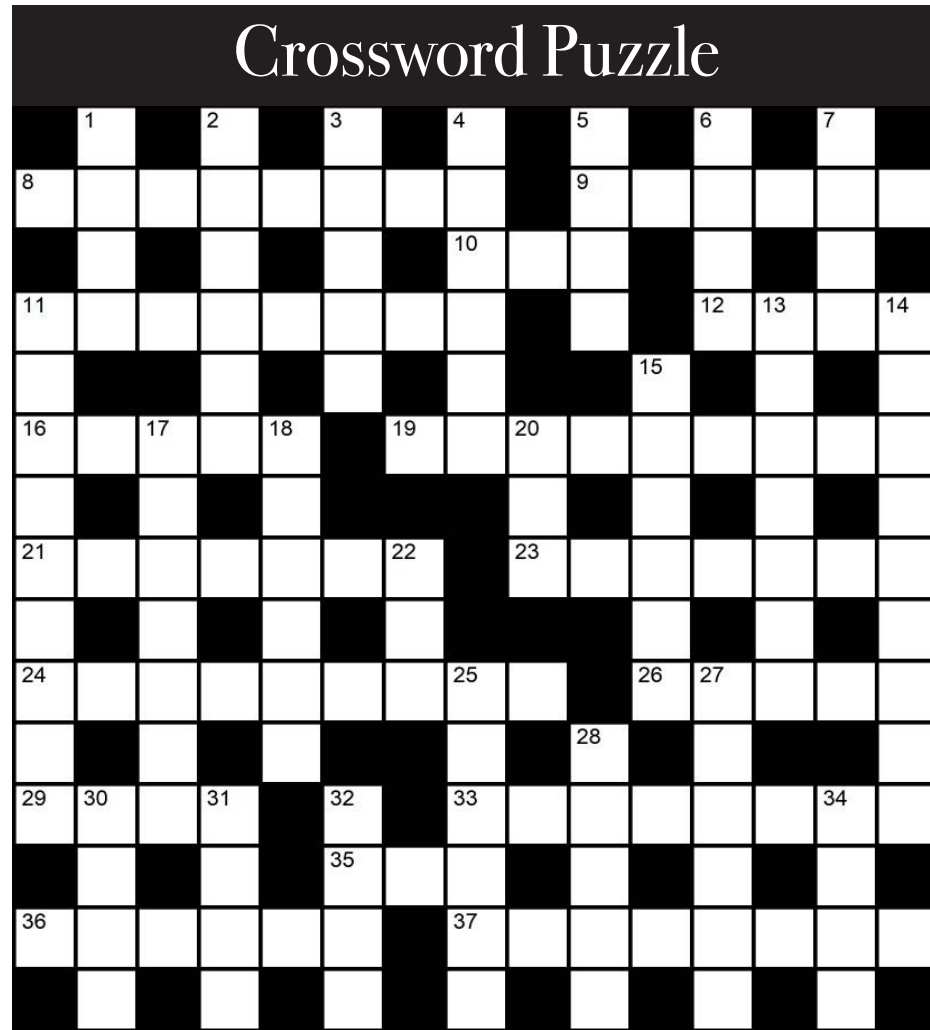
Across

- 8. Statuette (8)
- 9. Loudness (6)
- 10. Very small (3)
- 11. Eurasian religious symbol, now with appalling associations (8)
- 12. Belle's boyfriend (4)
- 16. Alleviates (5)
- 19. Numbered with fear (9)
- 21. It supplies tees and caddies (3,4)
- 23. Mythical horseman? (7)
- 24. Father of North Korea's current leader (3,4-2)
- 26. Anaesthetic liquid (5)
- 29. What the fourth Little Piggie had (4)
- 33. Cracks (8)
- 35. Alias, initially (1,1,1)
- 36. Nosy (6)
- 37. Takes a leisurely walk (8)

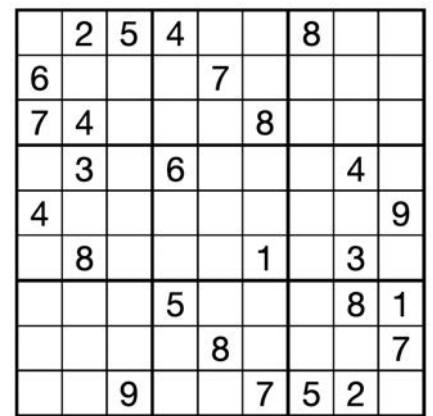
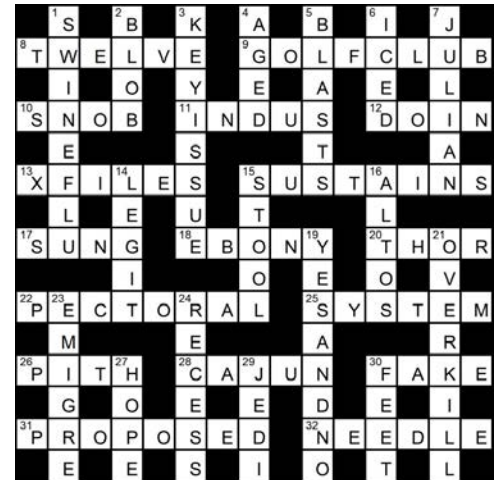
Down

- 1. Scenic vista (4)
- 2. Follow doggedly (6)
- 3. Sprite (5)
- 4. Relaxing music genre (3,3)
- 5. Declare formally (4)
- 6. Product of too much food and too little exercise (4)
- 7. Jane Austen's inept matchmaker (4)
- 11. Type of coat sounds like a ewe's relative (9)
- 13. Tomb inscription (7)
- 14. Militarily ready (5,4)
- 15. Churchill, affectionately (6)
- 17. Enter violently (5,2)
- 18. Instruct (6)
- 20. Special attention, briefly (1,1,1)
- 22. Snub-nosed dog (3)
- 25. Liquid way to pay (2,4)
- 27. Cocktail garnishes (6)
- 28. Blood component (5)
- 30. Barbarous person (4)
- 31. Send forth (4)
- 32. Narrative of heroic exploits (4)
- 34. Acquire through merit (4)

Have some fun



Last issue's answers





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Will humans **meet their match** in AI? It's possible



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

No one doubts artificial intelligence's ability to crunch huge amounts of data.

What surprises some, however, is how well it learns, innovates and even seems to intuit in ways eerily similar to human brains.

The human mind is very flexible and adaptive at finding novel solutions and figuring stuff out.

Just watch children play with iPads: through independent trial and error, they often solve problems their grandparents and parents struggle with – and unlike the latter, kids don't forget.

Modern smartphones pack the power of early-day computers, which filled a room and cost millions of dollars a few decades ago.

These days, who doesn't "Google it" when they want a quick answer to some esoteric question?

But Google and other search engines are only as accurate and fulsome as the data they're fed.

The same applies to chatbots such as Open AI's ChatGPT and Google's version, called Bard, which captured the imagination of millions of users, beginning with Open AI's first version in November 2022.

Chatbots are fun to use and, for most users, they're magic – even if they're prone to create fictitious data (called hallucinations).

ChatGPT generates plausible, well-composed term papers, grant applications and even research papers, plans holidays in Europe and, in the case of higher-powered versions, even novel music and art.

What intrigues me about AI is its talent for finding novel solutions to challenging problems and, in some instances, writing its own code to do so.

Those are properties we normally associate with the human brain. And like the



latter, in many instances, AI companies have no idea how their systems came up with such innovative capabilities.

In nature, natural selection determines which variants are favoured and which are not. Perhaps AI operates similarly by favouring some algorithms over others.

In some instances, AI goes further: when faced with coding roadblocks, AI appears capable of creating go-around algorithms.

That's a stunning achievement: until recently, when faced with a roadblock in an algorithmic network, human programmers had to step in, identify the hitch and write code to get around it.

Clearly, AI has crossed a

threshold from dependence on human programming to a measure of independence, which can only expand in the future.

This means future AI systems may be capable of evolving – much as biological systems do.

In short, AI has become very intelligent and like highly intelligent, creative humans, may not be able to tell us how it became so.

This is where AI potentially becomes a threat: should it ever develop and exceed the broad intelligence of humans? At that point, who's in charge?

Looking to the near future, the advent of truly powerful AI systems will change almost every aspect

of our lives.

Recently, I tried out what I thought were plausible tests of medical reasoning by presenting ChatGPT 3.5 with case material taken directly from the New England Journal of Medicine's weekly clinical-pathological conferences.

Just in case ChatGPT somehow had access to that material, I made up clinical cases and introduced ChatGPT to each case beginning with the history, checking to see what ChatGPT came up with, before feeding it more and more information to see how accurate it was.

ChatGPT got the right answer in all 10 cases at what I would estimate would be the performance level of a well-trained clinical resident.

Maybe ChatGPT and my patients don't need me! That's one of the big issues, isn't it?

Physicians take eight to 10 years to train, beginning with their first year of medicine followed by residency years in specialties.

AI, once trained and updated regularly, takes far less time and is as good

or better. It even provides all the notes, management plans, and lists of ongoing clinical trials on request.

That's very impressive, given that ChatGPT was not specifically trained in any form of medicine.

There are bugs to overcome but given the probable development trend, ChatGPT's successors will continue to evolve, and humans won't.

As a patient, I welcome the help of ChatGPT and its successors as partners in an overworked system with plenty of its own flaws and rough edges, with long delays at every stage and not-always-pleasant encounters between patients and healthcare workers.

So, I vote for AI-assisted health care.

True, it can't dress patients in medical gowns or dress wounds, but it is patient and respectful all the time.

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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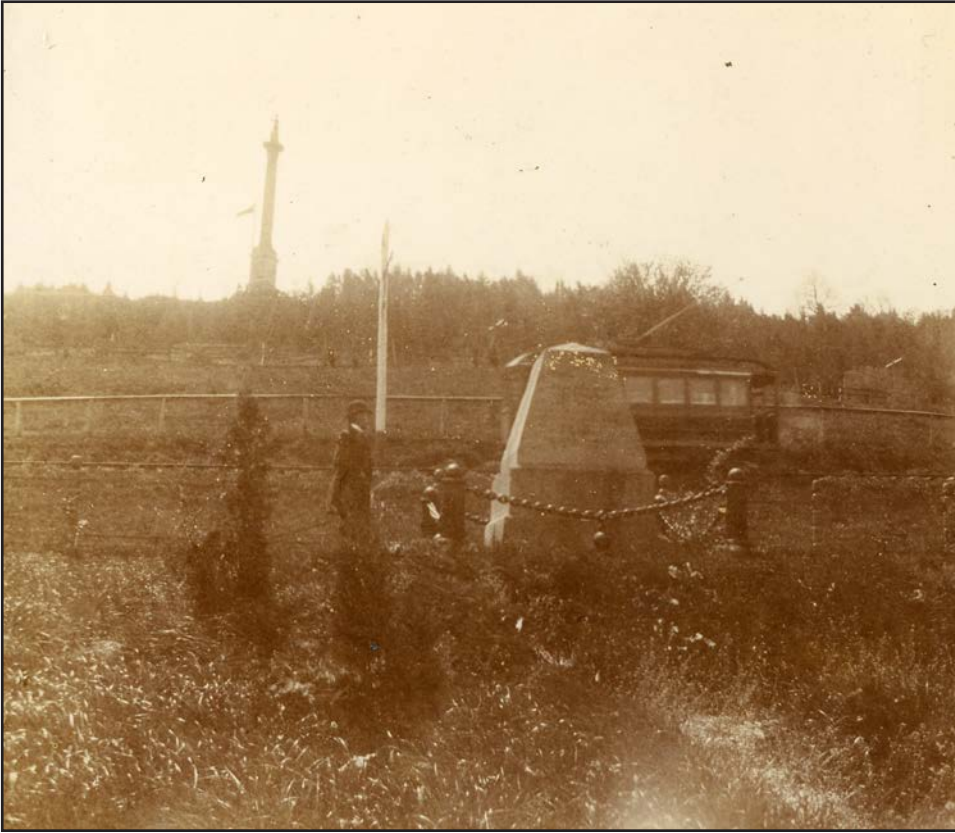
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EXPLORING HISTORY
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Brock's cenotaph

On Clarence Street, in the village of Queenston, stands this monument, placed by His Royal Highness, Edward Albert, Prince of Wales, on Sept. 18, 1860. The inscription on the north face reads "near this spot, Major-General Sir Isaac Brock KCB Provisional Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada fell on 18 October 1812 while advancing to repel the invading enemy." The new Brock Monument is clearly visible in the background (the original monument was bombed in 1840). It was completed in 1856 and was dedicated Oct. 13, 1859, the year before the monument in the foreground. An excursion car of the Niagara Falls Park & River Railway (the Great Gorge Route) is downbound toward Queenston Dock to pick up tourists arriving there from Toronto by boat. The track it is on is now Queenston Street. Another set of stairs leads to York Road, which also supported the rail line that carried the "Circle Route" Great Gorge cars across the Niagara River suspension bridge joining Queenston to Lewiston, N.Y. Note the white poles that carry the catenary, or the overhead electric cable, that the trolley cars used for power along the Queenston Street right-of-way, and also halfway up the bluff, just below Brock's Monument, where the rail line crept precariously up the escarpment. The car appears to be one of the 500 series J.G. Brill-built cars constructed in 1900 in Philadelphia and rebuilt locally by the International Traction Company in 1912. This picture was taken shortly after that rebuilding, well before abandonment of the line in 1932.

Climate change could have **devastating effect** on NOTL

Continued from Front Page

cal record before statements can be made about changes taking place.

Together, this mild winter is likely a result of a regular global event, El Niño, exacerbated by ongoing anthropogenic climate change (caused by human activities).

El Niño leads to high surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, when surface winds that normally blow east-to-west along the equator weaken or reverse direction.

This can raise global temperatures by a few tenths of a degree Celsius, for up to a year, with a peak during winter. It occurs between every two to 10 years, on an irregular basis.

A warmer winter could mean a difficult start to the growing season. Without much snow cover, there will not be large volumes of spring snowmelt to recharge soil moisture and groundwater. All that is a potential problem in Niagara

Farmers and gardeners alike could need supplemental irrigation to give spring growth a boost. Warmer,



Left: Family Day 2024 was a warm, sunny day with minimal ice at Niagara Shores Park. Right: Kyra Simone stands on a large ice shelf on the shore of Lake Ontario at Niagara Shores on Family Day 2021. ANN MARIE SIMONE



drier conditions continuing into mid-2024 could increase the risk of drought.

For gardeners planning spring plantings, native species are more resilient to changing conditions than ornamental varieties.

Rain barrels can capture and make good use of rainfall, especially at the start of the growing season when gardens may need extra watering this year.

Another symptom of climate change "weirding" is increased speed and magnitude of swings between high and low temperatures.

The effects on Niagara vineyards and tender fruit will depend on conditions

for the next few months: rapid cold snaps after mild winter conditions are particularly devastating.

Plants can be lulled into a false sense of security by warm weather; "false spring" encourages them to come out of dormancy and bud early. However, if temperatures subsequently drop below -20 C, buds freeze and could die.

In extreme cases the plant may not survive and large swaths of the crop may need to be replanted. In Niagara, peach and nectarine trees are most vulnerable, followed by plums and cherries. But apples and pears are resilient.

In mid-January, temperatures fell below this critical level in interior British Columbia, causing bud freezing that could reduce the 2024 grape yield more than 97 per cent.

Wildlife may find this winter especially difficult due to weather whiplash. Too little snowpack might make it hard to stay warm, lowering the likelihood of survival for some animals, like reptiles and amphibians.

Drier spring conditions could make it difficult for wildlife to find food. We may be more likely to see animals from all levels of the food chain, including

deer and coyotes, providing for their young when meals are scarce.

Consistently cold temperatures act as an ecosystem reset button. Populations of some invasive species, and those that are a nuisance from a human perspective, can be reduced by sustained cold. Included among those are ticks, mosquitoes, woody adelgids, stink bugs and buckthorn.

With prolonged cold, a longer period of ice cover on lakes is also beneficial. Less of an ice "lid" leads to increased evaporation and lower lake levels, which allows water to warm up more quickly.

Warmer water temperatures may facilitate algae growth, which can deplete oxygen and affect other aquatic species, as well as produce toxins that affect water quality for drinking and recreation.

For decades, climate experts have been clear about the need to prevent warming of 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. While society drags its feet on divestment from fossil fuels, this threshold looms closer than ever before: 2023 was the first year that temperatures consistently shattered this ceiling.

At this point, we will not avoid climate change completely; the effects of extreme heat and weather are evident in our gardens, lakes and vineyards.

And as temperatures continue to rise, urgent measures are required to curb emissions and transition to sustainable practices.

NOTL native Kyra Simone is a PhD candidate in environmental science, with master's degrees in biology and science communication. She studies climate change-induced wildfire and species-at-risk habitat in eastern Georgian Bay.



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Does **landscaping** boost your property's value?



GROWING TOGETHER 

Joanne Young
Columnist

Are you planning on putting your house up for sale this coming year?

Of course, you will want to get top dollar for your home.

The question that is often asked is if certain things can be done with your landscaping that will help your house sell quicker or even sell for more.

Landscaping can add thousands of dollars to the value of your property.

Or, more accurately stated, a well-designed landscape can add value to your property.

In fact, it is one of the few home improvements you can make that not only adds immediate value but also increases in value as the years go by.

While interior decor and design concepts regularly go out of style and mechanical systems wear down, plants grow fuller and more robust with time.

The value of an attractive, well-designed, well-executed, low-maintenance plan to a home's perceived value has often been stated to be an additional 15 percent to 30 percent.

Your return on investment can vary greatly depending on your neighbourhood, the current housing market and exactly what improvements have been made.

Stay conservative: You may have heard it said before, but something is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

If you put a lot of money into a landscaping project but install or create something that only suits a small portion of people, you might have a hard time finding buyers who also appreciate the yard work.

Instead, by staying con-



Joanne Young says a well-landscaped yard can increase your property value. MIDJOURNEY

servative with your yard work, you will find your return is better.

Also, by keeping it mild, potential buyers will more likely be able to see themselves enjoying the yard with their kids, or hosting summer dinner parties.

Pretty, but not too pretty: Of course, a home with beautiful gardens and magazine-worthy grass looks amazing, and you'll likely hear compliments from neighbours and friends every time they visit, but this kind of yard is a lot of work.

If you choose to invest a significant amount of money into landscaping with extensive gardens and trees, then your home may only appeal to a small number of people.

Having an overly high-maintenance yard can turn off potential buyers, especially if it's their first home or they live a busy lifestyle with children and growing commitments.

Nurture your lawn: Taking care of your lawn regularly is one of the most effective ways to increase the value of your property.

Make potential buyers long to walk barefoot on your lush, green grass by keeping it healthy.

When regular mowing and watering isn't enough, try natural fertilizers, aera-

tion, or even laying down a new lawn altogether.

Get rid of those ugly brown patches that distract the eyes of potential buyers and install edging for a trim and tidy look.

A well-maintained lawn will tell the future buyer that the home has been well cared for.

Add colour: Don't be afraid to stand out. A pop of colour brings style to an otherwise plain palette.

Reviving your front door with a fresh coat of paint adds charm and noticeability to your home without breaking the bank.

There are multiple options: a red door can balance out the blandness of neutral siding; royal blue breathes life into sun-faded brick; and sage green has a calming effect that blends in with the natural environment.

This quick and easy improvement evolves your entryway into a focal point that will catch any buyer's eye.

Even adding a couple of pots by the doorway with bright-coloured flowers can make a big difference.

Consider the buyer's perspective: Koi ponds aren't for everybody. Keep in mind that something could be of great value to one buyer while being a deal-breaker for another.

Even if you think a

swimming pool would look great in your backyard, not every buyer will want to take on the maintenance and added cost that goes with it.

Rather than gambling on a big investment that may or may not appeal to a future homeowner, make sure you've researched what buyers are looking for in the current real estate climate.

"Curb appeal" refers to what potential buyers see when they drive up to the house.

A beautiful garden, a spacious deck and shining new paint can all make prospective owners take notice.

Homes with curb appeal also tend to sell more quickly, which can be an attractive quality when you come to sell your home.

So, if you are thinking that you may be selling your home in the coming months, remember not to go overboard, but keep things simple and well-maintained.

Clear away any clutter. Something as simple as edging the gardens can go a long way in people's first impression of your home.

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

Obituary

Kenneth Hughes



HUGHES, Kenneth Roy — Our dear KENNETH ROY HUGHES, age 94, has sailed on to a peaceful rest. His beloved wife of 63 years, EILEEN, and daughters BRONWEN and VANESSA were at his side to see him off on his journey, second only to the epic voyage Ken and Eileen took in their sailboat Ithaca, which Ken built in the backyard and sailed to Florida. He is also loved by

his sons-in-law, Egidio and Murray, his nephews and niece by his sister Brenda, Patti, Craig and wife Suzy, and Lee, Marina, and our extended families in Canada and England. Ken is also survived by a brood of their children, who will miss his trouble-making, including Fun with Dentures, and teddy bear rides on the ceiling fan. You are loved, loved, loved by all, Kenny. As the English family say, *yer a Legend*.

A family funeral will take place this week, with a Celebration of Life to be announced soon.

Donations to the Walker Family Cancer Centre would be most welcome.



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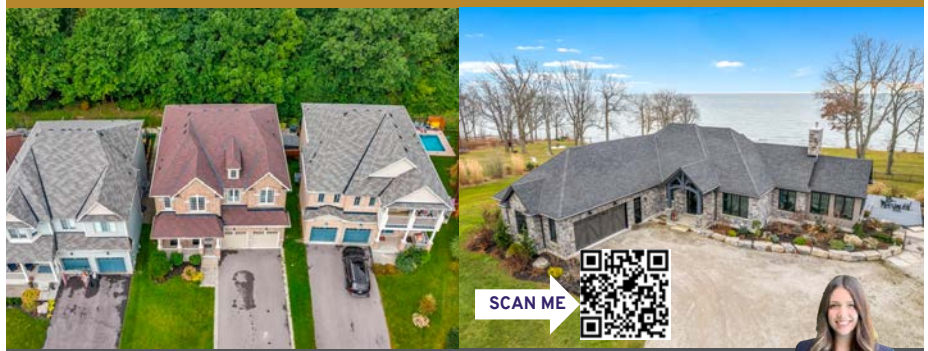
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