



Worker dies after chemical plant fire
Page 2



NOTL wins three **design awards**

Spirit in Niagara, NOTL Museum and Pillar & Post take home top honours



Spirit in Niagara president Arnie Lepp made sure that the property's exterior design evoked a homey, approachable feeling. JULIA SACCO

'Kind-hearted' boy wants **food bank donations**, not birthday gifts

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

This year, toys are at the bottom of Avery London's birthday wish list.

When Avery's mom, Krista London, asked her son what he wanted for his birthday, she was surprised when he told her he wanted to donate items to Niagara-on-the-Lake's food bank.

"I'm very proud of him,"

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NOTL to host **international** pickle ball tourney in June

Staff
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club will play host to a major international tournament in June that's expected to attract players from across the country and the United States.

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Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake is known for its historic architecture and beautiful details, so it comes as no surprise that three of the town's design efforts were recognized at the Niagara Biennial Design Awards on Tuesday night.

Spirit in Niagara Distillery, the Gardens at Pillar & Post and the NOTL Museum's Poppy Project all took home outstanding achievement awards in architecture, landscape architecture and outdoor art respectively.

"Having this, where we can put people on the back for the excellent work they do, have the jury

report give them an award they can put in their office, it's good for everyone because we want to raise the bar and have excellent design," said project lead Julia van der Laan de Vries.

"Everyone wins, I think." Museum curator Sarah Kaufman and engagement co-ordinator Barbara Worthy accepted

the award for the museum's Poppy Project.

It was recognized for its "visually impressive design, with attention to lighting and spatial properties," as well as "leaving a lasting impression that is poignant," the jury said.

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GUEST COLUMN

The future is **electric vehicles** and NOTL Hydro is getting ready

Tim Curtis
Special to The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro is preparing for big changes in the near future, when electric vehicles dominate and gas-powered cars are a thing of the past.

Within the next decade, the majority of new cars sold are expected to be electric vehicles and NOTL Hydro has been busy preparing to meet the expected power demands of an increase in at-home charging stations.

There will be challenges, but we expect they will be manageable – even if every vehicle in NOTL is an EV.

There is much about this future world we do not yet know (it is in the future, after all) but we can predict that most of the power for

all these EVs will come from the electricity grid.

So, we have analyzed how four different parts of the system – local transformer and upstream distribution; NOTL's access to the province's transmission grid; the grid itself; and provin-

cial generation – might be affected by the widespread adoption of EVs.

In talking about electricity, it is important to distinguish between how much electricity is used over

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Worker killed in massive fire was newly engaged

Ryan Konkin's family and fiancé want answers, to prevent future tragedies

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

"I'll love you for forever and a day."
That's what Natalia Sepúlveda-Lastra's late fiancé Ryan Konkin told her just days before he died of severe burns sustained in the explosion and fire at Ssonix Products 2010 Inc. in Port Weller last week.

Sepúlveda-Lastra remembers that Sunday clearly. She and Konkin, 37, went around their St. Catharines neighbourhood to collect old Christmas trees to cut up and use for backyard fires.

"We have a fire pit at the back. That was our favourite activity," she said.

That evening, they decided to take a walk down to the end of their street, which overlooks the lake. It's something they did many mornings in their pajamas.

They sat down on a bench and watched as the sun set over Lake Ontario.

As they looked out across the water, he turned to her and said, "I'll love you for forever and a day."

It's one of her favourite memories with him.

He was a family person who loved people, animals and was just "a really good man," his sister Nicole Konkin, a wedding planner in Edmonton, told The Lake Report.

It's not yet known what happened at Ssonix last Thursday morning. But her brother arrived early for work.

Just before he was put on

life support last Friday, his sister said he told a nurse, "All I did was open the door."

The investigation is ongoing and could take a few weeks.

"I have to be strong for him now because this is gonna be a long road ahead" and she doesn't want his death to be in vain, his fiancé said.

"If it is something that happened at the facility, we want to see it through and see industry standards change so that everybody's safe to go to work," said Nicole.

Konkin lived in St. Catharines for more than a decade. He was born and raised in Yorkton, Sask., with his sisters Nicole and Allison and brother Garrett.

He has a 15-year-old son named Vincent in British Columbia and they just reconnected in 2022.

Konkin met Sepúlveda-Lastra about two years ago on July 6, at his favourite fishing spot in St. Catharines.

She recalls having a bad day and going to a spot at Sunset Beach to clear her head. Once there, she went to the very end where few people venture.

As she meditated in the water, she remembers turning and seeing him walking toward her — he was picking up pieces of garbage that washed ashore.

She recalls thinking, "Oh, he better not sit on my spot," she said with a laugh.

Turns out he was thinking the same thing.

He had messaged his



Residents living close to the Port Weller explosion scene watch as fire-red smoke engulfs the sky on Thursday morning. The explosion shook homes and could be heard and seen from kilometres away. The investigation is continuing. LESLIE IBBOTSON

sister and told her someone was at his fishing spot. He then told her, "She didn't go away, so I think I'm going to have to marry her," Nicole told The Lake Report.

He proposed less than a month ago, right before New Year's.

Sepúlveda-Lastra said she was just as happy walking down the aisles of Walmart with him as she was dancing in their kitchen together.

"He just wanted to see people smile and always left people better than he found them," said his sister.

He was someone who cared deeply about other

people and always formed deep connections. He also had a love for the outdoors — especially fishing.

They were only two years apart, said Nicole, 39.

"You don't realize until you lose a sibling, it's kind of like you don't realize that you have somebody that knows literally every single thing about you from your entire life," she said.

She recalled his love of animals and how they seemed to be drawn to him. She described a time when he found an injured bald eagle on the side of the road.

"He took it home and put it in the bathtub, healed it and then (it) flew away."

"You never met somebody more authentic than him and free-spirited," she said

His fiancé described him as a "badass" who "had style."

He also loved to cook, and when he did, it was for a whole army.

At Ukrainian Christmas — his favourite holiday — he cooked a whole meal for his fiancé's family. They are from Chile and had never celebrated Ukrainian Christmas.

"Instead of cooking for like six people, it was like 40 people, a mayhem of food," said Nicole.

"One of our last meals that he made me last week, (he) prepared a gorgeous seafood feast and he put two lobsters and calamari and he had a dish full of oysters," Sepúlveda-Lastra said.

His dream was to own a food truck. And the dream was close to becoming a reality.

The couple recently bought a food truck and were planning to turn it into a café lounge specializing in different types of coffees and food.

The day before he was killed, they submitted the forms to register their new food truck.

Sepúlveda-Lastra still plans to open the food truck, though instead of naming it Stardust Gateway, she plans to call it Ryan's Lounge.

"He lived vigorously and he just appreciated everything that life brought," she said.

She plans to be his voice now, and make sure something like this never happens again.

"He taught me everything I know," she said.

While his sister appreciates all the support from the community, her brother disliked conflict. So seeing a lot of anger directed at Ssonix is hurtful, she said.

"Even if something did go wrong there. He (would) just want it to change. He'd want to make sure that in the future, everything is different," Nicole said.



Fire crews from St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake spent Thursday battling the blaze that killed Ryan Konkin, pictured centre and right. Two trucks had ladders raised high above the flames so firefighters could pour water on the fire and a neighbouring business to keep it from going up in smoke. RICHARD HARLEY/SUPPLIED

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Fire investigation expected to **take more time**

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

An investigation is continuing into the early-morning explosion and fire that killed one person last Thursday at a chemical plant on Keefer Road in Port Weller.

Ryan Konkin, a 37-year-old man from St. Catharines, died after he was severely burned.

The explosion near the Welland Canal at Ssonix Products 2010 Inc., 20 Keefer Rd., was heard and shook homes many kilometres away at about 6:35 a.m. Initially, St. Catharines Fire Services sent out four pumps and two aerial trucks and a rescue vehicle.

Once they realized the seriousness of the situation they had six pumps on scene, two aerials and a

rescue. About 30 firefighters were there and roughly 50 police and EMS personnel.

"The fire is expected to be under investigation for the next seven to 10 days," Julie Given, corporate communications officer for the City of St. Catharines, said in an email to The Lake Report.

Crews from NOTL and St. Catharines battled the blaze and got the fire under control before 2 p.m.

Residents north of the explosion were evacuated and sent to the Kiwanis Aquatics Centre on Carlton Street in St. Catharines. About 53 people were evacuated.

People who were evacuated from the area were able to return to their homes by 4:30 p.m.

Police are appealing to the public who may have any footage of the explosion or fire.

Bus driver had front row seat to Thursday's massive **chemical explosion** in Port Weller

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Swimming with sharks was a little less scary than this.

Back when she worked as a marine biologist, Sher Donovan used to swim with sharks for fun.

After retiring and returning to Canada from Roatan, a little island off the coast of Honduras, Donovan picked up a job as a school bus driver with Switzer-Carty Transportation.

Most days are pretty much the same. Wake up at 5 a.m., out the door by 6 and then onto her daily route.

The morning of the fatal explosion and fire at the Ssonix Products industrial waste disposal facility, Donovan was filling up her tank at the back of the bus lot.

The air was cool and the first rays of morning sun had not quite pierced the sky.

She was gassing up her bus at about 6:30 a.m. when the big kaboom happened.

She heard it more than she felt it, as she was standing about 500 feet away.

"It was quite a shock when you're standing next to a fuel tank witnessing an explosion," she told The Lake Report. "I thought it was a fireworks factory at first."

Dropping the gas cap, she looked around the back of her bus and was startled to see what caused the big bang.

"What I saw was a plume of smoke about maybe 150 feet high," she said.



Bus driver Sher Donovan, pictured here in St. Catharines, saw the explosion from the bus lot next door to Ssonix on Thursday morning, from about 500 feet away. EVAN LOREE

It looked like there were fireworks and black cardboard boxes shooting out of the explosion.

It sounded like it, too, as the initial blast was followed by a series of smaller explosions.

Donovan didn't have much time to wonder at what it was, so she hopped in the bus and notified her team via radio to call 911.

Rounding the bend of Keefer Road on her way out, she saw her co-workers were already beginning to evacuate the offices of Switzer-Carty.

"I knew something had exploded but I didn't know why, or what the company was," she said

Some of her co-workers were already speculating and a few were close to the mark.

"They said it was a waste

management place and that, environmentally, something must be going on which caused the explosion," her colleagues were saying.

By the time Donovan reached the intersection of Keefer and Seaway Haulage roads, the police were already there blocking roads and directing traffic.

"They were letting people out. So, I got out and then just proceeded to do my route," she said.

For a day that started with a bang, it got back to normal fairly soon for the retired marine biologist.

"The wind was taking the smoke over the lake anyway," she said. "Even if they evacuate the area, I didn't see any big deal happening," she added.

She managed to keep in the loop throughout the morning, though, as a stu-

dent on her bus kept sharing updates as they came in.

Several bus routes were cancelled due to the explosion, but Donovan's wasn't one of them.

The bus drivers set up a temporary base at the Mandarin restaurant parking lot on Bunting Road in St. Catharines.

"Everybody came together to help drive anybody if they needed rides," Donovan said, adding she enjoys working for the company.

The fires were mostly out and the air was safe to breathe by the end of the day, so "everyone was back in the office by five o'clock."

As startling as the explosion was, the low point of her day was when Donovan found a \$75 ticket on her bus after having to park it off-site in downtown St. Catharines.

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Left: A work detail of soldiers totes pick axes, shovels, sledge hammers and other tools essential to digging trenches. Right: The First World War was fought from the trenches, literally. And when they were damaged by heavy rains or German artillery, it was the job of soldiers like the men pictured here had to repair them. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

THE MONUMENTS MEN

Adelburt Samuel Green died while repairing trenches

It's been a century since Niagara-on-the-Lake's iconic clock tower cenotaph was erected. Then, in 1926, the Township of Niagara unveiled its own memorial in Queenston. In recognition of those who fought and died in two world wars and beyond, NOTL historian Ron Dale has been researching the stories of the people – all men – whose names are engraved on the two cenotaphs. This is one in a series of stories documenting and remembering the sacrifices of those commemorated on the municipal memorial in Queenston.

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

Infantry soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force fighting in France and Belgium in the First World War normally served in the trenches in shifts.

The men would be in the front line for four days, moved back to support trenches just behind the front-line trenches for four days and then into reserve for four days before returning to the front line.

From time to time the battalion would be moved farther back from the battlefield to a relatively safe place for rest, much-needed baths, reissue of uniforms and resupply of deteriorated kit.

Men in the front-line and support trenches were frequently

required to repair their defensive positions damaged or destroyed by German artillery fire or collapsed by heavy rain.

They were also expected to foray into “no man’s land” to raid enemy trenches, hoping to bring back prisoners for interrogation.

The men in the reserve trenches and “rest” areas were also frequently required to work at a myriad of tasks.

Ammunition, rations and supplies had to be continuously transported to the front. Items shipped from Britain were sent by rail to depots where they would be collected by trucks, loaded onto narrow-gauge rail cars or into horse-drawn general-purpose wagons.

The items were transported to the reserve trenches from where they would be manhandled to the support and front-line trenches. It was a huge undertaking.

In August 1917, for example, 227,370 rounds of 18-pound and 4.5-inch howitzer shells were moved to serve the Canadian artillery in the Battle of Hill 70 which raged from Aug. 15 to 25.

In addition, several tons of rations for the men and fodder for the horses had to be moved by rail, truck or wagon.

Roads and rails had to be maintained, suffering frequent damage from

vehicular traffic, heavy rain and German shelling.

Soldiers spent more time on “working parties,” repairing damaged infrastructure, than they did manning the front-line trenches.

It was while engaged in this type of labour that Adelburt Samuel Green of St. Davids met his end.

Adelburt was born in St Davids on Sept. 13, 1897, son of Samuel Green and Emma Goff.

He was the middle child with two older sisters and two younger brothers. He was 15 when his father died and from that point he worked to help support his family, finding employment as a teamster.

Six months after his 18th birthday, Green enlisted to fight in the First World War. On March 24, 1916, he travelled to St. Catharines and attested to the 176th Overseas Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Green spent almost a year training in Canada before finally boarding the SS Olympic in Halifax on April 29, landing in Liverpool a week later.

On arrival, he was assigned to the 12th Reserve Battalion before being sent as a replacement to the 75th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, which had suffered severe casualties in the previous months fighting in France.

He joined the regiment at the front on July 16, 1917, in time to take part in the Battle of Hill 70. A few months later he survived the bloody Battle of Passchendaele, part of the 3rd Battle of Ypres, from July 31 to Nov. 10, 1917.

Green's battalion was in reserve in late January 1918. A week earlier the Canadian front had been struck by a severe storm with torrential rain and gale-force winds.

Roads and pathways were flooded out, the wooden walkways known as “duck boards” that spanned mud-filled craters were blown or washed away, and sodden trenches collapsed. Hasty repairs had to be made, even under enemy artillery fire.

According to the official record of his death, Green was killed on Jan. 23, 1918, while working to repair the damage.

“Whilst on a working party at Lievin he was seriously wounded in the breast and stomach by pieces of shrapnel from a high-explosive shell. He was conscious only a few minutes after being hit and died on reaching the Regimental Aid Post (the first-aid station near the front line).”

Adelburt Samuel Green was the last resident of St. Davids killed in the First World War. He lies in the Villers Station Cemetery in the Pas de Calais, France.

Organizations honoured for outdoor art displays landscapes, architecture

Continued from Front Page

The massive Poppy Project included thousands of handmade poppies that were hung outside the Court House and the museum.

Worthy and Kaufman extended their thanks for the “thousands of hours of hand labour put in by more than 40 volunteers.”

“We are so honoured that they saw the value in commemoration and the value in community spirit,” Kaufman said.

“We couldn't have done it without the Davey Tree Service, our partnership with the town and the Legion,” said Worthy.

“We may be the captain but we all know the footsoldiers do all the work.”

Spirit in Niagara Distillery on Lakeshore Road won for its excellence in architecture, specifically its “reflection on Niagara's architectural heritage” and “many sustainable aspects,” the judges said.

Company president Arnie Lepp was incredibly proud to accept the award for something that he was so passionately involved in.

“I don't really want to use the word honoured, because it's a lot more than that. It's the final line of a long story and it gives you some kind of validation of what we did here,” said Lepp.

With Spirit in Niagara, Lepp hoped to create a space that was approachable and looked like a

home, drawing inspiration from 1800s limestone homes on Queenston Road.

Sustainability was also in mind in the design of the site, down to the use of an old barn on the property in the design and manufacturing of the new space, to recycling vintage furniture pieces from Habitat for Humanity.

“Everything here is a personal thing,” Lepp said.

Similarly, the Gardens at Pillar & Post were recognized for their effective design and for evoking “the hospitality and culture of Niagara and the residential estate landscape heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake.”

John Redekop, project manager at ACK Architects, was part of the large team that accepted the award for the Gardens and expressed how great it was to celebrate great work in design.

“What's really nice is that it's in person, we used to have the Community Design Awards that we went to yearly and those were cancelled for around four years. It's great to see everyone again,” he said.

NOTL Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser was on hand to support the awards.

“It felt right to come out as a new councillor to support and to learn more about the developments and design that's going on,” she said.

“I am so thankful. We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the world. It's corny but it's true.”



NOTL Museum curator Sarah Kaufman and engagement co-ordinator Barbara Worthy accept the outstanding achievement award. JULIA SACCO

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Check out our news website, NiagaraNow.com, where you'll find all these stories. And plenty more:



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- *New housing law could cost town \$1M, staff warns ministry
- *Virtual documentaries planned by NOTL Museum
- *The spotted lanternfly is a major problem for farmers, but all hope is not lost
- *Newark Neighbours sees more than 100 per cent increase in food bank visits
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- *NOTL Youth Collective's winter program has officially begun
- *Bands battle it out for spot at The Irish Harp Pub

**All the NOTL
news that
matters to you**

The
Lake Report

Relieved growers finish icewine harvest amid **unseasonably mild** winter

Jill Troyer
The Lake Report

Make hay while the sun shines, or in this case, pick grapes while the temperature plunges.

Grape growers in Niagara have had only two short windows of opportunity to harvest their icewine grapes this winter.

Temperatures must be -8C, or lower, in order to pick grapes for icewine and the first time the thermometer dropped low enough was with the winter storm that arrived on the doorstep of Christmas.

Workers at Huebel Grapes Estates on Line 3 Road, like many, harvested what they could during that first, and short, cold snap.

"We picked around Christmas, but we could only get about half our crop in," said Aaron Oppenlaender, vineyard manager for Huebel Grapes Estates.

"It was cold enough for two nights, but the first night we had that blizzard, and we just couldn't get out. We didn't want to put anyone in danger, so we picked early Christmas Eve morning."

It was a similar situation elsewhere.

Wade Stark, vineyard manager for Andrew Peller Ltd. said, "We picked the morning of the 24th, we harvested Riesling off a Creek Road site, and Vidal in Queenston. The grapes



Workers harvest icewine grapes for Huebel Grapes Estates on Jan. 14, amid a brief cold snap. SUPPLIED

had frozen thoroughly during the previous 24 hours in the driving blizzard."

Vidal grapes at another site weren't fully frozen that morning, so they were left on the vine to await the next cold spell.

That came over this past weekend and had growers heading out to the vineyards to take advantage of the frigid dip.

"We picked on Saturday in NOTL on Line 2 and on Line 4 in Queenston. It sure is nice to have it all in," exclaimed Oppenlaender.

"The quality and flavour in the grapes is excellent," he said, adding the downside is that the longer the grapes have to wait on the vines, the more the volume decreases.

"Between birds eating the grapes and the grapes

dehydrating, we could have lost as much as one-third of our yield," he said.

It has been a mild winter, with few nights cold enough for harvest, and none in the forecast.

"December was very mild until we had that storm near Christmas," said Geoff Coulson, a meteorologist with Environment Canada.

After that storm, "December finished very, very mild. On Dec. 30 the high in Niagara was 14 and the trend has continued almost unabated for January," said Coulson.

"So far, January has looked more like late November," he said.

According to Coulson, the long-term mean temperature for January in Niagara is -3.7C. This January, so far, the mean temperature

is plus 0.8C, a great deal warmer.

Another comparison, between average highs and lows, shows the same trend.

Coulson said long-term average temperatures for mid-January are highs of -2C and lows -8C.

Instead, the average temperatures so far in January have been daytime highs from plus 2C to plus 5C, with overnight lows of plus 2C to -2C.

Only two mornings last weekend have had normal cold temperatures and the forecast again is milder than normal.

The volume of grapes harvested for icewine is down this year, according to the VQA Vintage Report released last week.

The report notes that "For 2022, icewine grape registrations total 763 estimated tonnes, down substantially from the previous year. With the total wine grape crop in Ontario roughly half of that harvested in 2021, grapes are in high demand for table wines. This has contributed to the reduction in grapes netted for icewine."

For 2021, 1,952 tonnes were registered for icewine.

Another factor is the reduced demand for icewine since COVID. Travel restrictions have had a significant impact on icewine sales and they still have not fully recovered to pre-COVID levels.



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Canada The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.

COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 69
Region active cases: 710
Region deaths: 699
Region total cases: 50,517

**Jan. 18 data per Niagara Region Public Health.*

Public health warns that "Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, limited availability of testing, and changes to case and contact management practices, case counts shown (above) are an underestimate of the true number of individuals in Niagara with COVID-19. Data should be interpreted with caution." Case data for municipalities is also now being interpreted in 28-day cycles.



Contributed by **Patty Garriock**

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and then you will do your best."
- Katherine Johnson

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Good time for a sled



Photographer Dave Van de Laar captured this photo of kids tobogganing at Simcoe Park on Sunday.



Editorial

Making a difference in the community

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Like Niagara-on-the-Lake, our community food bank and thrift store is growing, changing and moving with the times.

Newark Neighbours has always been associated with Old Town – and even draws its name from the town’s historic moniker.

Long having outgrown its location near the Riverbend Inn on John Street East, it is gratifying to see that Newark Neighbours has found a new place to call home, one that met its many criteria (easily accessible, a storefront with high visibility, among other requirements).

In a few months, the former Lincoln Interiors store on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil will provide a spacious and much-needed new site for this important

community service.

Living in a caring and affluent town like Niagara-on-the-Lake, it’s easy to forget that not everyone has it easy.

As Newark chair board Cindy Grant told us, food bank usage since 2020 has more than doubled. In real numbers, what was 30 visits a month barely two years ago is now 80 – and it’s not dropping.

The volunteers who sort goods at the food bank and thrift store are the backbone of such a community-driven operation.

Their selflessness and help are commendable. Without these many volunteers, this vital social service agency simply would not be able to operate.

All the folks in the community who give goods and food to Newark Neighbours provided plenty of donations for these volunteers

to sort and itemize – and, as Grant has told us many times, those donations make a difference in the lives of the clients of the agency. People who might be your neighbours.

Thanks to organizations like Newark Neighbours, every so often we hear a heart-warming and touching tale related to the work it does.

This week it is the story of young Avery London, who is about to turn 10.

Instead of seeking toys and gifts for himself, Avery told his mom Krista he’d like to collect donations for the food bank.

As a student at Crossroads Public School, he learned about the needs of some people in the community and he selflessly decided he could help. And make a difference.

Thanks to his mom’s

position as an “influencer” on TikTok, over just a few days they have accumulated a large number of donations, including cash, in response to Avery and his mom putting the word out.

And they’re just getting started.

Kudos to Avery for showing that a single person can make a difference, in their community and in the lives of others.

It really is touching and a feel-good story, the kind we love to tell readers about.

But it also is a compelling human saga about the power of social media and of one boy to be the change, and to inspire change, in his community.

We all can learn a lot from the unselfish actions of this almost 10-year-old. Thank you, Avery, for showing what is possible.

editor@niagaranow.com

We welcome your letters

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.



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NOTL hydro is gearing up to meet **high electricity demand**

Continued from Front Page

a period of time (consumption) and how much is used at any one time (demand).

Most of the risk to our hydro system is with too much demand and EV charging overloading the system at a point in time.

For instance, if everybody plugs in their car when they arrive home from work, then what is already the peak demand at around 5 to 6 p.m. will get much worse.

Transformers, those green boxes (for underground systems) and grey cans on the poles (for above ground systems), step down voltage from 16,000 volts to the 120/240 volts used at most houses.

There are over 2,000 of these in Niagara-on-the-Lake and each transformer provides power for up to 12 homes. Transformers are sized and installed on the assumption that an average house uses up to about 4 kW of power at any one time.

But an EV charger uses much more power than the average household as an average level 2 charger can use up to 7 kW.

As well, charging a Tesla puts a greater demand on the system than most other vehicles. At its peak, the combined demand of a house and charger can be more than 17 kW.

If we have several EV chargers operating at the same time, the neighbourhood transformer could be overloaded, causing a local power outage.

And even if NOTL Hydro identifies that a transformer is overloaded, we may not be able to get replacements because electric utilities will all have this issue – and will all be upgrading their transformers at the same



Electric vehicles are here to stay, says NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis. He wants to make sure NOTL's hydro grid can support the demand for more power. SUPPLIED

time across North America.

We analyzed a number of scenarios depending on how many chargers on a transformer were operating at any one time. The results were promising and we learned the number of transformers at risk of overloading was fewer than expected so it should be manageable.

One of the fortunate reasons for this is that, for many decades, NOTL Hydro has been oversizing its green pad-mounted transformers to meet potential demand from unrealized electric heating and air-conditioning load.

Our analysis also showed most of the transformers at risk are the grey pole-mounted ones. This overloading can be corrected by either replacing the transformer with a larger one or adding an additional transformer to the system and rewiring the local connections.

As the wiring is all overhead, it is much easier than with the underground system.

The upstream distribution system, including low-voltage and high-voltage wiring, also needs to be considered.

NOTL Hydro has specified low-voltage wire to accommodate 200-amp residential services for decades. Existing 200-amp services are likely able to accommodate the addition of an EV charging station in a residence.

An upgrade might be required if a home needs more than one EV charging station.

Similarly, primary high-voltage wiring has been sized beyond the installed capacity of the equipment serving the community. In most cases, there is enough room on primary feeders for the additional EV charging load.

However, we do ask that if you buy an EV and install a charging station, please let us know so we can check the local transformer and upgrade it if necessary.

As a result of investments over the past 15 years,

NOTL Hydro has significant transformation capacity to take power from the provincial grid and convert it to our local voltages.

In total, we have about 150 MW of transformation capacity and the current peak is around 50 MW.

This extra capacity was put in place to provide a redundant source of power for the whole town but is also available to manage future growth – such as EVs.

Solar power is another potential source of power to service EV charging. Since the province cancelled renewable energy contracts in 2018, the number of new solar installations in NOTL has been limited.

However, as the costs of solar continue to drop, that is changing.

The actual demand for power from the transmission grid has been falling since the 2007-2008 recession and is only now starting to pick up.

As a result, only limited new investments in the

transmission system have been required.

While I have the greatest respect for Hydro One's technical staff, there is a major concern that the combination of NIMBY-ism, multi-year timelines for projects, regulatory procrastination and bureaucratic inertia could make the transmission grid a choke-point.

NOTL is fed by a 115 kV line that runs from the Beck power plant, through St. Catharines and eventually connects with a 230 kV line. There is currently some excess capacity available on this line but that can change quickly with growth.

The worry is that if NOTL is competing with the rest of Ontario for upgrades to the transmission grid it might end up lower in the queue.

We analyzed the impact of every vehicle in NOTL becoming electric. Our estimate, based on some very high-level assumptions, was that the increase in demand would be 25 per cent.

While this is high, it is not extraordinary or unmanageable. Ontario has managed much higher growth in demand for electricity in the past.

One reason why the increase in generation needed is not higher is that electric vehicles are much more energy efficient than those with internal combustion engines. Gas-powered vehicles waste a lot of energy, especially all the excess heat radiating from the engine.

NOTL Hydro is confident it can manage the transition to EVs in NOTL. No customer should be worried about their ability to charge a new EV – though, again, we do

ask you to tell us if you installed an EV charger.

Provincially, there is more of a challenge. It's not the amount of new electricity but if it is all wanted at the same time.

If the demand for electricity for EV charging largely happens in the late afternoon or early evening, then there is a real danger the transmission system and/or the generation capacity will not be able to cope.

The good news is the Ministry of Energy is fully aware of this and is working to try to address it.

One of their first steps will be the introduction of new, optional rates later in 2023 that will have very low rates at night offset by higher rates in the late afternoon peak times.

While the new rates will be optional, if you have an EV, you should look into them. Charging your EV later at night would make it even cheaper to drive.

Beyond that I anticipate there will eventually be spirited discussions as to whether electric utilities will be allowed to restrict the charging of vehicles to certain times to prevent overloading the provincial system.

This could mean giving the utility access to control, limit or program the customer-owned charger, possibly in return for a discount.

Alternatively, it could mean penalties if charging is being done at the peak times or perhaps the optional rates being introduced this year could be imposed.

It will all be about managing the demand for EV charging in the least costly manner.

Tim Curtis is president of NOTL Hydro.

Bad experience with health system is **symptom** of a larger problem

Dear editor:

I read in The Lake Report the letter from Bud and Leslie Moulson ("Broken leg and a broken system costs patient over \$1,000 in medical bills," Jan. 12) about Bud's plight and am very sympathetic about his experience during his hospital stay.

It's unfortunate, but I believe that it's just one pebble on a whole beach of national and global health care problems. It's all about money and no government has enough of it.

So, we have nurses going on strike south of the Cana-

dian border and in the U.K., and no doubt other countries that just don't make the news.

And those nurses south of the border are even offered recruiting bonuses, retention bonuses and other incentives. Someone has to pay for it.

South of the border, it's the patient who pays – woe to those who can't afford it. Here, it's government – at more than one level.

I believe that Bud may have experienced what I first encountered in the American financial community some 40 years ago – value pricing.

If it costs the company

\$5 and it's worth \$50 to a desperate user – charge them \$50. That's a healthy profit margin. But who is getting that profit?

If it's the hospital that benefits, it might be understandable. They all need more money.

If it's the private sector that benefits from all these charges, maybe the hospital should at least be more aggressive about negotiating profit-sharing.

The best example of value pricing that I ever encountered was decades ago at the elegant Harrod's department store in London.

If you wanted to use their washroom, it cost you 2 pounds (about \$4) if you didn't have a sales receipt.

Poised reluctantly at the entrance, your heart may have said, "That's too much money" but your bladder pressure would have overcome any financial value reservations.

And hospital food? A year ago, I had a stay at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. The food was fine.

I didn't expect anything amazing. And I didn't get anything amazing.

As a professional accountant, I know that it's all

about "cost per bed per day" and my priority would be to focus on providing fine nursing care over a steak (or even hamburger) dinner.

My hospital food "beef" (maybe I shouldn't use that word) was the waste, particularly in the packaging.

Remember those little milk cartons at the school cafeteria? No pouring spout and King Kong himself could not have pried the cartons open.

And there were the nice pieces of packaged cheese – sealed more tightly than a space capsule.

It was impossible enough

for me to open and I cringe at the plight of the patient with arthritis. I saw many unopened packets taken to the garbage.

Bud, I have known you and Leslie for many years, and I sympathize with your experience.

Being in a hospital is no fun in any case. One is there because one needs to be.

The only consolation is that we have a hospital and you were able to access it. Please continue to recover.

And let's hope that 2023 is a better year.

*John Sayers
NOTL*

Repeating past **mistakes** for the benefit of a few



Brian Marshall
Columnist

To say that I am not a fan of the Ford government's More Homes Built Faster Act (Bill 23) is akin to suggesting that Mount Everest is a tall hill. In fact, I believe this legislation is a trainwreck that will fundamentally alter the face of Ontario's lands and communities for the worse.

Once a farmer's fields are stripped of their top soil then buried under pavement and houses, those fields are lost forever. When a wetland is drained, backfilled and water "managed," the ecosystem it represents can never be recovered.

Demolish a piece of our shared history and not only is the heritage it represents

within the warp and weave of a community irrevocably altered, but the lessons of the past become ghosts that condemn our society to repeating the mistakes of our forebearers.

In my opinion, Bill 23 resets the clock back to the rapacious days of the 20th Century when tract subdivisions spread across our province like a cancer, creating vast suburban deserts that, to this day, lack any real sense of community.

In real terms, these subdivisions can justifiably be likened to giant storage facilities designed to warehouse middle-class families in the most cost effective manner possible — each dwelling unit an island unto itself.

Then, to really ensure these "storage facilities" were completely specialized to "warehousing," eliminate any retail within subdivisions, pushing it out to concentrated satellite locations serving various subdivisions.

Build large, centralized schools that require children be driven or bussed to receive their education, effectively minimizing neighbourhood social interaction



Doug Ford's plan will plaster the province with subdivisions, to benefit a few wealthy developers, says Brian Marshall.

by focussing socialization opportunities in "remote" locations.

Cease building/maintaining local parks and gathering places, once again, cleaving to centralization by constructing one large facility, typically located outside reasonable walking distance from most of the surrounding subdivisions — spontaneous community events and activities are replaced by organized sports, etc., because the participants (young and old) need to be driven there.

The converse of all of these things, amongst others, are elements in creating and maintaining community.

And it is all of these things that the Ford government and their legislation are doubling down on. They seem determined to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Let's examine for a moment one of those "other" elements.

This past weekend I was watching a program on PBS. One of the program hosts was walking through a middle class neighbourhood that had been built in the years between 1900 and 1920. The host observed that the houses, even those built at the same time by the same builder, were each unique — no two were the same with a wide variety of architectural styles, roof lines and setbacks.

He commented that this type of neighbourhood was not only visually interesting but experientially gave one a feeling of warmth and association.

As he spoke, in the background one could see a person emerging from a corner store with shopping bag in hand as they stopped and chatted with someone headed into the store. In an adjacent park, young children played apparently

unsupervised by any attending adult but, of course, in a community there are always "eyes-on" by one neighbour or another.

This has been lost in suburbia, however, to this point in time, it is something that Niagara-on-the-Lake has retained. It is "something" that Bill 23 now threatens.

So, to be fair, there are a few worthwhile nuggets in this piece of legislation.

The provision to provide permitting the conversion of a single family home into a multi-generational dwelling being one. It is clear that in the last ten years the cost of acquiring a first house by young adults has become cost prohibitive for many.

And, on the other end of a life span, the opportunity to "age-in-place" is a very attractive alternative to an institutional "senior's residence." The multigenerational house, with separate spaces for young families, parents and grandparents is something that is not only necessary but long overdue.

Equally, expediting rezoning (which is a tortuously long, slow process fraught with high risk of denial) of

old, unused, often vacant industrial and institutional properties for residential redevelopment — particularly when adaptive reuse of the building is possible — is of vital importance to many of Ontario's cities.

Toronto, for example, has a huge inventory of these type of properties on which the zoning, for political and/or bureaucratic reasons, has been rigidly maintained ... to the point of silliness. Breaking up that log jam is certainly important to the long-term viability of the city.

That said, one would think that targeted legislation directed at solving real problems would have been the logical and responsible action for a government to take.

Of course, that methodology would only have addressed the needs of our society and not provided the opportunity to further enrich those GTA developers who have contributed to the Conservative party's coffers.

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




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Are the people or their pets the **top dog** in NOTL?



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Thank goodness for pet dogs or many locals would get no real exercise outdoors in the fresh air – especially in the winter, when dog owners take their pets out two or three times daily for exercise.

Surely, our dogs are spoiled compared to just one generation past. Not that long ago, pet apparel was not a huge business.

Coats, caps and even booties are fashion statements now, even in our comparatively mild climate. I love to see such indulgent treatment of our pets, but it wasn't always that way.

Back when men were men, and dogs were dogs, I lived in Kirkland Lake and

Winnipeg. Our wee short-haired fox terrier Rocky would accompany me every day on my paper route, even when the temperature was minus-40 F or less.

Bring on the Canadian prairie weather and wind, we had our Winnipeg Free Press customers waiting for their news. And every second Saturday, I had to collect \$1.40 per week, at each door.

Hey, I was clearing about six bucks a week. More than enough for a movie and some bad habits.

I was dressed up to suit the weather, but somehow naked Rocky never got cold and never whined about the weather. He seemed to be happy being out and about with me. Or with my sister Pat, who also had a paper route.

I had my own route when I was seven, about 45 papers. Heavy papers, with lots of ads, and the Saturday edition with Gregory Clark.

Add a hot chocolate, and life was good. Later, there was "Hockey Night in Canada" with Foster Hewitt and Murray Westgate and Rocket Richard.



NOTL dogs really get the treatment, says columnist Ross Robinson. DREAMSTUDIO AI IMAGE

We in Niagara-on-the-Lake seem pretty normal compared to the folks at the annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show on Long Island.

It's the second-longest continuously held sporting event in the U.S. – number 147 last year. Every year I watch some of it as the

owners and dogs give new meaning to the term "Top Dog."

Weird, but to each his own, eh? The good Lord makes chocolate and vanilla, and many other flavours. The owners and dogs fast walk, they prance and they trot.

The dogs are perfectly

groomed and trained. Jumping, rolling, heeling, they compete for Best of Breed ribbons and Masters Obedience braggin' rights.

Let me ramble back to the canine scene in NOTL. Each winter, canine sartorial standards seem to elevate another level.

Burberry patterns, thermal fabrics, Gore-Tex, booties with grips, where will it end? Or will it end? Soon, dogs will devise a way to carry an umbrella.

And dog names. Not too long ago, just one generation, dogs were called Rocky, Ruff, Fido, Bowser and Rinty Tin Tin. Now, they wag their tails to Sadie, Cassie, Charlie, Fitz, Leo and Ceol (pronounced "kale").

But owning a pet is a commitment and can be pricey, eh?

To that end, let's open up our minds and think about the sharing economy. RideShare, AirBnB, timeshares on Hilton Head Island and at ski resorts around the world. Just go on the proper app, and the world is yours. Book an Uber, it's that easy.

Why not "DogShare"? A convenient app for our

smartphones.

If I want some companionship on a walk around our pretty town, I can just use DogShare. I could quickly find a dog whose owner wants someone to spell them for an hour. Easy peasy, a win-win, and an exercised and happy mutt.

How many times have friends of mine had to miss breakfast at Silk's after Wallbanger hockey on Sunday morning because they have to get home to walk their dog? Why be totally constrained by Rocky's schedule?

My tennis pal Sharon often needs to cut a thrilling set short to get home to her dog? Sonny and Cher sang about their faithful hound.

I will admit I sometimes feel excluded when I see dog owners stopping frequently for chats with their peers (not pee-ers).

Or, when I see members of the local West Highland white terrier club enjoying their monthly rally in Memorial Park. Dogs racing around, owners chatting, breathing in the fresh air.

Let's find a way to share the fun and good times.



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Discovery Pass gives NOTL a taste of Icewine Festival

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

From end-to-end, NOTL is overflowing with wineries offering delicious icewines.

On any given day it would be impossible to drink your way through them all, but with the Niagara Icewine Festival's \$49 Discovery Pass, ticket holders can try six different wine and culinary experiences over a weekend.

This year's pass features 15 Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries among those across the region, including De Simone Vineyards, Ferox, Inniskillin, Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate, Lakeview Wine Co., Marynissen Estates, Niagara College Teaching Winery, Palatine Hills Estate Winery, Peller Estates, Pillitteri Estates Winery, Queenston Mile Vineyard, Reif Estate Winery, Riverview Cellars, Trius and Wayne Gretzky Estates.

We visited a few.



Wayne Gretzky Estates hosted hundreds of guests during the first weekend of the Icewine Festival's Discovery Pass. JULIA SACCO

Wayne Gretzky Estates

One of the most popular stops for guests last weekend was Wayne Gretzky Estates.

Serving up the popular pairing of melted raclette cheese over rye bread with spicy Italian sausage and

Cabernet Franc icewine, the weekend was a "great one," as the winery attracted more than 500 visitors during the first weekend alone.

Walking through the doors into the tasting room one is greeted with the inviting scent of cheese

with a hint of wine, it is no surprise that this destination was so popular.

"The response was bigger than what we were expecting. It's great to have the numbers back to where they've been pre-pandemic," said assistant retail and experience man-

ager Warren Short.

Marynissen Estates

Tucked away on Concession 1, Marynissen Estates offered a unique and comforting icewine experience over the weekend, pairing a Cabernet Franc icewine with artisanal macarons and scones.

"We're pairing with the Grove (in Virgil). They made us apple pecan maple scones that we pair with our 2014 Cab Franc icewine because it has some nice rhubarb and raspberry flavours and she made dark chocolate and pistachio macarons that we unfortunately sold out of," said retail supervisor Cathy Roy.

"We will definitely be ordering plenty more for next weekend."

Roy said that the age on the 2014 Cab Franc brings out the strong baking spice, rhubarb and raspberry jam.

Inniskillin

A pioneer in the icewine industry, Inniskillin partnered with chef Tim Mack-

ie of Smoke and Griddle to create the ultimate pairing of its 2021 Riesling icewine with Korean fried chicken and icewine-infused kimchi.

At least 500 people were estimated to come through the winery over the weekend to try some wine from one of the first in the biz.

"It turned out to be a beautiful day, with a little bit of snow just in time for the Icewine Festival," said estate manager Sumie Yamakawa.

Outside the tasting room, Vidal grapes were being harvested all day from 3 a.m. and onward.

Frozen grapes on the vine provided quite the sight for icewine enthusiasts coming out to this important NOTL winery.

The Discovery Pass continues during the Icewine Festival's two weekends, Jan 20-22 and 27-29.

For more information visit <https://niagarawinefestival.com/discovery-pass>.

Fireside Fridays commemorate 210th anniversary of Battle of Fort George

Molly Bowron
The Lake Report

Parks Canada and the Friends of Fort George are commemorating the 210th anniversary of the Battle of Fort George this year, and are kicking things off with a speaker series called Fireside Fridays.

Speakers will detail history and showcase artifacts from the War of 1812 — with specific emphasis on the Battle of Fort George, which was fought from May 25 to 27, 1813.

The series runs from Feb. 3 to 24 at Navy Hall,



Peter Martin will be giving a lecture on the colours of the British uniforms from the War of 1812. MOLLY BOWRON

with four hour-long presentations.

Guests will get the opportunity to see and, in some cases, get their hands on historic artifacts, many

of which have not yet been seen in Niagara-on-the-Lake, said the Friends of Fort George in a news release about the series.

Dan Laroche, manager

of Fort George, will be speaking on Feb. 3, showcasing artifacts from 1812 during his presentation, "When Antiques Attack: The story of the Battle of Fort George as told through artifacts."

Some relics that will be included during the series are a bill plate from the 4th Lincoln Regiment, which fought in the Battle of Fort George, an original circa 1812 watch, a Kings 8th Regiment bayonet piece, and most likely a First Nations chief's pipe axe or pipe tomahawk, said Laroche.

The second lecture, "The British Army Gets the Blues," will be led by Parks Canada special events co-ordinator Peter Martin.

The Feb. 17 presentation will focus on the brave men who fought in the war and the uniform colours of the two opposing sides — and how there was some confusion.

Martin said most people think that during the war the British wore red and the Americans wore blue.

"But that wasn't the case. In the British army the second most popular colour was blue — which can be

challenging when you are fighting people wearing blue," said Martin.

Tickets for the Fireside Fridays in February can be purchased at friendsoffort-george.square.site/.

Other lectures include "A Grand Musical Experiment: Reconstructing the Band of the 41," on Feb. 10, hosted by Fort George's historic music program co-ordinator Peter Alexander and military animation co-ordinator Gavin Watt, and "Niagara's Women of War," led by Sarah Kaufman, managing director and curator of the NOTL Museum.

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Image Detail: Lauren Stewart Harris, Study for "In the World I, City Paintings", 1918, Samuel E Weir Collection, Riverbrink Art Museum.



Andrea Kaiser showcases a tasting flight of icewines at Reif Estate Winery on Sunday. JULIA SACCO

Wine guru Andrea Kaiser to speak about icewine and its history at NOTL festival

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Andrea Kaiser was born into the wine industry. The daughter of Inniskillin co-founder Karl Kaiser, she definitely knows her way around a grape.

And this year she'll be sharing her expertise, and a bit of history, with guests who attend the Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival.

Her wine journey began here in NOTL, just down the road on Line 3.

"(The winery) was where my dad worked, so obviously we spent a lot of time over harvest hearing about things and learning at the dinner table," Kaiser says.

As a teenager, she started her career in the industry by giving tours of the family winery, eventually receiving her education on wine in Bordeaux, France, leading to her purchase of

the now-closed Anchorage restaurant.

Between then and now, Kaiser has worn many hats, including chair of Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake and retail manager at Reif Estate Winery, a role that Kaiser cites as one that "encouraged (her) to keep (her) career evolving."

Now, sitting as regional councillor for the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and being the proprietor of her own wine brand, Drea's Wine Co., she has more than a little bit of experience under her belt.

"What I like about icewine is that it is such a complex wine, the layers and the complexity of the flavours are so intense, unique and elegant," she said.

"This festival really showcases the variety of things you can do with icewine, of course you can drink it on its own, or you could try a classic pairing which most

people think is weird: blue cheese and icewine."

"I always used to tell people at the winery, if you think you dislike icewine or you dislike blue cheese, I promise when you taste them together you will be converted," Kaiser laughed.

Those in attendance at the festival this weekend can look forward to hearing personal anecdotes from the daughter of one of icewine's pioneers.

"The very first time my father made icewine, he would go and check on the fruit every day," Kaiser began.

"One morning he ran into the house saying 'Oh my gosh, the grapes, they're all gone, the birds ate them!'"

"He lost the entire icewine harvest that year and that's why when you drive around Niagara-on-the-Lake, you have to understand that the nets are there to keep hungry birds away."

More than anything, Kaiser expressed gratitude for her father for introducing her to the wine community and all of the people she has met along the way, from our little community in NOTL, all the way to California.

"The people that I've met and the experiences I've had, always make me think back to what my dad and his partner Donald did for the Niagara wine industry," Kaiser reminisced.

"I look back 50 years and think I could never have met and had so many people from around the world touch my life in this industry, and I'm so grateful for my dad because he really opened that whole door to the world, beyond even the NOTL wine industry."

Andrea Kaiser will be presenting the history of Niagara icewine at the NOTL Icewine Festival Jan. 21 to 22 and the following weekend Jan. 28 to 29.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: 4-LETTER BOOK TITLES

In Chapter One of this book, "a great fish" severs a woman's femoral artery, the blood now "a beacon... clear and true."

Last issue:

Category: GERUNDS

Clue: A recital of a literary work, or a service performed by a psychic.

Answer: What is a reading?

Answered first by: Jane Morris

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Danielle Gault, Susan Dewar, Claudia Grimwood, Bob Wheatley, Pam Dowling, Wade Durling, Sylvia Wiens, Jim Dandy, Cathy DeBon, Jim Baird, KC King, Yvonne Des, Sheila Meloche, Bruce Robb

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

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Avery London, 9, wants people to donate items to Newark Neighbours for his birthday this year. He's pictured on top with some of the Amazon donations that have been arriving to support his cause. SUPPLIED

'Kind-hearted' boy wants food bank donations

Continued from Front Page

she told The Lake Report. His 10th birthday is on Feb. 6 and that's the day they plan to bring a load of donations to Newark Neighbours.

"My very first thought was, 'Oh my goodness, what an awesome kid,'" said Newark Neighbours board chair Cindy Grant.

Avery attends Crossroads Public School in Virgil. He lives with autism and experiences other people's emotions at a different level, said his mom.

It all started a few months ago when Avery came home from school and asked his parents if they could donate to the food bank. Curious about where this question came from, she asked him.

He said he learned how hard it is for many people at home, especially since the COVID pandemic.

He learned at school how "not everybody can get up in the morning and eat breakfast and come to school," his mom said.

She said Avery had no idea food insecurity was a reality for some people and he's wanted to donate to the food bank ever since he found out.

Asked why, Avery said, simply: "To help people."

His mom describes him as "kind-hearted" and the "unicorn of children."

He believes nobody should be without food or water.

While filming a TikTok video, his mom asked what he wanted for his birthday and donating to the food bank was high on his list.

His mom is a TikTok influencer with more than half-a-million followers.

So his mother used the opportunity to make a separate video to ask her, and Avery's, fans for help making his wish come true.

"He's always saying to me, 'You know, you have this big following because

of me, right?'" she said with a laugh.

She posted the video on Jan. 11 and was met with an avalanche of support.

Within 24 hours, the video received about 10,000 views. London said she had received more than \$200 in donations as of Tuesday, Jan. 17, and more than 50

Amazon boxes have arrived to their house.

At first, Avery had no idea his mom shared his wish on social media.

"He's going to lose his marbles," she said.

Within a few days, items like Pringles, crackers and diapers were arriving at their door via Amazon — and once Avery realized why, he was thrilled.

"I hope the people who are at the food bank like Pringles," said Avery.

Opening all those boxes made him happy, he said.

Going forward, Avery plans to be fully involved with the fundraising side of things — especially on social media.

Fundraising teaches kids that they can do so much more, said his mom.

Avery hopes to go on TikTok every day to talk about his mission and to show viewers some of the items that have arrived for Newark Neighbours.

He said it'll make him very happy when he gets to drop off all the donations.

"Most people have this idea that (people with autism) don't have kind of those emotional connections to people," said his mom.

"And I kind of think this proves people wrong, that it's not necessarily true," she added.

Anyone interested in helping Avery meet his goal can send an e-transfer to kristaontiktok@gmail.com, donate directly to Newark Neighbours or check out his Amazon wish list at [Tinyurl.com/dysh3uau](https://www.tinyurl.com/dysh3uau).

"I hope the people who are at the food bank like Pringles."

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The Town is currently recruiting members for the following Committees and Boards:

- Committee of Adjustment
- Irrigation Committee
- Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Municipal Accommodation Tax Committee
- Municipal Heritage Committee
- Urban Design Committee
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library Board
- Niagara District Airport Commission

The deadline for registration is Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

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Virgil arenas to host international pickleball tournament in June

Continued from Front Page

The NOTL Classic, which is co-sponsored in part by The Lake Report, will be played June 9, 10 and 11 at Virgil's twin hockey arenas, the Meridian Credit Union Arena and the Centennial Arena.

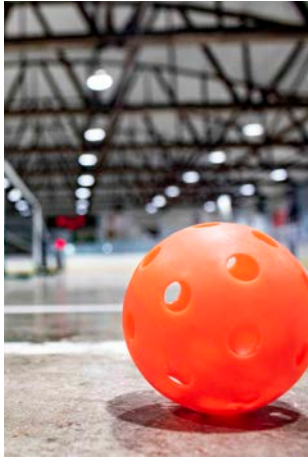
The event will be launched on the evening of Friday, June 9, with a series of professional exhibition matches of men's and women's doubles featuring professional Canadian pickleball players.

Full details on buying tickets for the exhibition matches will be available nearer the tourney date.

Admission to all the competitive tournament matches on Saturday and Sunday, June 10 and 11 will be free, offering spectators a chance to see what the game is all about, organizers said.

The tournament has been officially sanctioned by Pickleball Canada with support from Pickleball Ontario.

"We expect over 200



players from across Canada and the northern U.S., with events over three skill levels in each of three age groups," said John Hindle, the club's co-chair for the event.

A social event for players and their guests is planned for the Saturday evening at the NOTL Community Centre.

A wide spectrum of small and large area businesses are expected to be involved as sponsors, Hindle said.

Anyone interested in becoming involved as a sponsor should contact the NOTL club by email at

classic@notlpickleball.ca.

The Lake Report is the tournament's major print media sponsor and will be providing in-depth coverage of the competition in the paper and on our news website, www.NiagaraNow.com.

"We are looking forward to working with the NOTL Pickleball Club on letting the community know everything they'll want to know about this significant sporting event," said Richard Harley, editor-in-chief of The Lake Report.

"Pickleball has become a hugely popular sport, here in NOTL and around the world. Bringing a tournament of this calibre to town is a huge accomplishment for the NOTL Pickleball Club," he added.

Hindle said he is confident that the weekend event will provide considerable benefit to the town, with out-of-towners able to appreciate NOTL as a tourism destination "together with pickleball's traditional warm and welcoming atmosphere."

Predators' win puts them in fourth

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

Sunday morning the Jr. A Niagara Predators were in seventh place in their nine-team division. One win and less than 12 hours later and they had leap-frogged into fourth.

Finishing the weekend with a 5-1 decision against the Streetsville Flyers on Sunday following a 6-1 win over the Tottenham Thunder on Friday night, the Predators rocketed up the ranks despite a 5-1 loss to the Bradford Bulls the Wednesday prior.

With 10 games left in the Greater Metro Hockey League regular season, the Predators still trail the top three teams by more than 20 points, but now are neck-and-neck with the St. George Ravens and Tottenham Thunder to secure a fourth-place finish.

Predators coach Kevin Taylor said the revelation has put the wind back in his team's sails.

"It's starting to unfold the way we want it to, so it's looking good," said Taylor. "They are a little more excited now."



The Predators play Durham in NOTL on Friday. KEVAN DOWD

At home Friday night, Predators' Cameron Savoie started things off two minutes in with the only goal of the first period. Reese Bisci and Jaroslav Dohnal followed suit, sandwiching Tottenham's only tally of the night.

Dohnal netted his second 1:16 into the third, followed by Anthony Tropea four minutes later and Andras Kehl rounding things off.

Taylor felt the win was important to boost team morale after the Bradford loss.

Tyler Gearing managed Niagara's only goal against Bradford but the Preds would completely flip the script against Streetsville on the road Sunday.

Another quick start saw Tropea make it onto the scoreboard two minutes in.

He would add another in the second, combined with a marker from Savoie in response to Streetsville's only tally of the game and a 3-1 lead after 40 minutes.

Bisci upped the score to five halfway through the third with Nick Savoie finishing things off.

While Taylor said he is pleased with the way things are coming together for his team, he knows Friday's game against the third-place Durham Roadrunners will be a challenge.

"It'll be a good test for us. It's a way for us to really see how we're doing," he said.

The Predators face-off against Durham at the Meridian Credit Union Arena this Friday, Jan. 20, at 7:30 p.m.

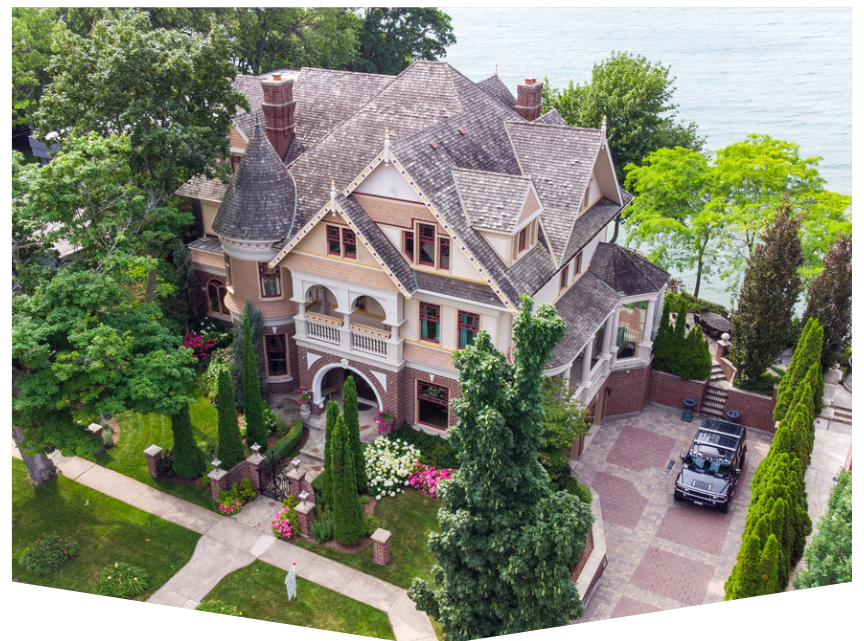
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NOTL pharmacists work overtime to find solutions to drug shortages

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Pharmacies in Niagara-on-the-Lake are still scraping the bottom of the barrel for adult cold and flu medications this winter after a countrywide drug shortage hit hard right before Christmas.

“It’s changed our workflow. We now spend a quarter of our day sourcing medication,” Julie Taylor, pharmacist and owner of Stone Road Pharmacy in Virgil, told The Lake Report, in an interview.

Taylor estimates staff used to spend about five per cent of their day seeking alternatives to their missing medications.

“We’re asking more questions about symptoms and trying to find alternatives that are available,” Taylor said.

This isn’t an isolated occurrence, though. Shortages are an ongoing issue in Canada, said Sean Simpson, owner of Simpson’s Pharmacy.

“Shortages have been chronically affecting our prescription drug supply for a number of years,” Simpson said.

Now, it seems “worse than ever,” he added.

Simpson said he and his staff are “working around the shortages” but they’re starting to do a lot of work they are “not getting paid for.”

Simpson said that pharmacies earn the majority of their revenue from insurance companies and the government, because most prescriptions are filled on a drug plan or covered by provincial programs.

These revenue streams do not account for the additional operating costs associated with a shortage, like finding alternative medications.

The pharmacy is expected to absorb the loss.

“It makes it more difficult to run a pharmacy. Plain and simple,” Simpson said.

The shortages began weeks ago and “more and more things are becoming unavailable,” she added.

The shortage of adult cold and



Sean Simpson and his team at Simpson’s Pharmacy are adapting by offering patients alternatives to common cough and cold medications currently in low supply. EVAN LOREE

flu medications follows on the heels of a lack of children’s pain and flu medications, which began last fall.

Health Canada announced in a statement that it would combat the shortage by importing the children’s medications from foreign trading partners.

Even after these imports, pharmacists in NOTL have a low inventory of children’s flu medications.

Adult cough and cold medications like NyQuil are also missing from the shelves.

Justin Bates, chief executive of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, said the United States is experiencing shortages of children’s pain and flu medications as well.

“What typically happens is one shortage creates another shortage,” Bates explained.

One way pharmacists adapted to the shortage of children’s fever and pain reliever medicines was to break up adult medicines for fever relief to create smaller doses that could help kids.

This was one of multiple factors that led to the shortage now being experienced at places like Simpson’s and Stone Road Pharmacy, Bates said.

“In the long term, we need to look at incentives for manufacturers to set up facilities and produce the product here,” said Bates.

Bates sees Canada’s reliance on imported pharmaceuticals as a “vulnerability in our supply

chain.”

At the very least, he thinks it would benefit the country to have a list of “essential or critical medicines” and to take steps to start “creating that stockpile.”

In the meantime, pharmacies are somewhat beholden to their suppliers.

The shortages are “hard to predict,” Simpson said.

Pharmaceutical suppliers won’t always warn pharmacists of an impending shortage because they “don’t want to raise too many alarms” in case people start hoarding products, he said.

Bates identified hoarding, also known as “panic buying,” as one of the drivers of the shortage.

“Once people started hearing about the shortage, people were buying more than they needed,” Bates said.

“Unprecedented demand” was one of the biggest contributing factors to the shortage on children’s Advil and Tylenol before Christmas.

“What manufacturers are reporting back to us is that they saw a 300 per cent increase (in demand) when compared to the same time last year in the late summer,” Bates said.

“(Manufacturers) don’t have the flexibility to deal with that kind of surge,” he added.

The surge was driven by a highly infectious wave of respiratory syncytial virus, influenza and COVID-19, which began in mid-October.

Police seeking info on Queenston vandalism

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Police are investigating an act of vandalism that occurred at Queenston Heights overnight on Friday.

In an email to The Lake Report, Niagara Regional Police Const. Philip Gavin said a vehicle drove out of the parking lot, causing significant turf damage to property surrounding Brock’s Monument.

“Police attended the location and determined that sometime overnight from Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, to

approximately 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023, drove onto the grass park, tore up the grass and then re-entered the parking lot,” Gavin said, in response to questions from The Lake Report.

He estimates there is approximately \$1,500 in damages.

“(Niagara Parks) is disappointed by the vandalism to the site,” said Niagara Parks spokesperson Chris Giles, in an email to The Lake Report.

Police are asking anyone with information to come forward.



Police estimate damage from tracks left on Queenston Heights property is \$1,500. JULIA SACCO

Obituary & In Memoriam

Lorraine Bogusat



BOGUSAT, Lorraine- It is with both sadness and relief that I announce the passing of my lovely Lorraine after many years of living with Alzheimer’s disease. She is most assuredly missed by her husband Howard, sister Karen Webb, and brother Clay Shipclark and his wife Evadene. Also missing her are her sister-in-law Ruth Opresnik, in-laws Walter and Alice Bogusat, in-laws Gloria and Kurt Meyer, as well as many

nieces and nephews spread across the country.

Lorraine was born in Ottawa, but because her father was an army technician, they moved a number of times, primarily living in Calgary and Victoria. Army pay was poor in those days, so her father often took her fishing and hunting, sometimes for two days. I got the feeling that her father wished he had a son, but as a tomboy I don’t think she disappointed him much. She worked for Alberta Gas and Trunk line, which is now part of Trans Canada (T.C. Energy). Later, she moved to Victoria, getting a job with a brokerage firm Loewen, Ondaatje, McCutcheon. They transferred her to Toronto. People there always spoke of attending the Shaw Theater so she decided to do the same. That Sunday she came to our church, which is where I met her. We strolled the town that afternoon and about five hours later I had a hunch that she was to be my wife, which happened in 1980. We built our house in 1981 and she lived there until her move into Upper Canada Lodge. Lorraine tried Real Estate sales, but it was the year when interest rates hit close to 20%. She then worked at the Lutheran Seminary by Brock University and really enjoyed her work there. In 1989 we formed Wood Be Perfect Ltd., doing hand carved signs in the area. Many of these are still visible today at Queen’s Landing Hotel, Prince of Wales Hotel, Angel Inn, and St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Gold Leaf became our specialty. We also did a number of interior projects, where it was Lorraine’s artistic abilities that were key to our success. While I did a lot of carving and lettering, she did the painting of the graphics and carving of faces etc.

When we retired in 2004, we were freed up to do more travelling. Over the years, Lorraine and I got to Europe twice, and added Portugal, Spain, and Tunisia later. Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, and Cuba were visited numerous times. She visited every province in Canada, including the Yukon and Labrador where we took the ferry up to Nain. Very few people can say that.

Lorraine was on the patron’s board of Upper Canada Lodge when her mother was living there. So, when it came time for her to move there, she was more than willing to go. Nurses who have worked in many of the long term facilities of the area will tell you that it’s a great place, so many thanks to the UC L. staff for her many years of excellent care. Howard.

Lorraine was resting at Morgan Funeral Home, 415 Regent Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, where her family received friends on Sunday, January 15th from 2-4 & 6-8 pm. Funeral service was held at Christ Lutheran Church, 140 Russell Ave, St. Catharines on Monday, January 16th at 11 o’clock. Interment followed at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer Society or to Haiti Lutheran Mission Society Feeding Program.

Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com



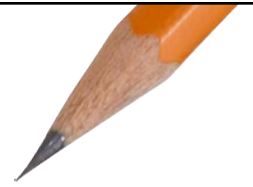
MacKenzie King
May 16, 1995- Jan 22, 2021

*The moment you were taken
my heart was torn in two,
one side was filled with heartache
the other died with you.
The tears in my eyes can be wiped away,
the ache in my heart is here to stay.
Love you, miss you,
The Kings*

To place an obituary or Memoriam,
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megan@niagaranow.com

- Across**
- Red bramble fruit (9)
 - Relinquish (4)
 - WWII US general --- Bradley (4)
 - Prognosis (7)
 - Energetic person (6)
 - Scat queen (4)
 - Chaise longue (6)
 - Governmental administrative unit (6)
 - Cut (4)
 - Advertises (5)
 - Clumps (5)
 - Otherwise (2,3)
 - Prepares for publication (5)
 - King Cole's fiddlers, for example (4)
 - Fit for service (6)
 - Manners of speaking (6)
 - Capital of Azerbaijan (4)
 - Samples (6)
 - Traumas played out southwest of Malaysia (7)
 - Long mediaeval spear (4)
 - Female servant (4)
 - Moral decline (9)
- Down**
- Poker call (3,3)
 - Signal of imminent attack (3,5)
 - Left waiting (5,2)
 - Incoherent (5)
 - Starts up again (7)
 - Symbol of slavery (4)
 - Irish legislative chamber (4)
 - Russian revolutionary leader (5)
 - What a gangrene sufferer may become (7)
 - Soak spot (7)
 - Male child (3)
 - Acquire (3)
 - Light sharp blow (5)
 - Frightening (8)
 - Constantly present (7)
 - Piano pedal (7)
 - Has a duvet day (4,2)
 - Plumped (5)
 - Middle Eastern bigwig (4)
 - Secondhand (4)

Have some fun



Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
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Last issue's answers

1	E	2	P	3	O	4	L	5	I	6	T	7	C	8	A	9	L	10	B
11	A	X	12	L	E	13	I	14	H	15	O	16	I	17	A	18	E	19	A
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A father's subtle life influences and NOTL's Nobel series



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

My father came from a family of English midland dyers of wool and he was the first to go to university, in his case, Cornell University in New York state where he became a chemical engineer.

He was a quiet, broadly read and educated man, with whom I spent many a summer's evening or day fishing for small-mouth bass on the upper Thames or Maitland rivers – with varying success.

Dad worked for a small chemical company in London, Ont., close enough to walk home for lunch – and to one night watch a frightening fire nearly destroy the chemical factory where he worked.

But throughout my childhood he rarely talked about

his work – nor did I ask, as I remember.

He was a naturalist of sorts who used his microscope at home to analyze microbes and insects inhabiting the plants and soil in his well-kept vegetable garden.

But aside from pointing out the odd microbe fixed on one of his slides he showed little interest in revealing those unseen worlds to me, nor was I all that interested.

It was only when Professor Baldwin in physical chemistry at Western University chastised me and threatened to tell my father about my lackadaisical attitude toward chemistry that I found out my father was a member and later head of the department's monthly speaker's program and much admired by the staff.

Fortunately for me, I mended my ways, completed medical school and went on to train in clinical neurology in Toronto.

In my final year of clinical neurology training, I made it my business to learn as much as I could about the physiology of the nervous system from the



Dr. Brown's love of chemistry might just be from his father.

best sources of the day.

This included texts by Mountcastle, and Ruch and Patton and key original papers by Phillips, Eccles and Henneman on the motor system, Hodgkin, and Huxley for the biophysics of the transmembrane potential and action potential, and Katz's very fine series of papers on neuromuscular transmission.

Of the nine scientists who wrote those papers, four won a Nobel Prize – so I was lucky. When in 1969, I went to Oxford, there were ample opportunities to meet all of them, one of whom, John Eccles, became a source of wise advice in my early scien-

tific career.

Like the Camelot period in physics between 1900 and 1940, there was a similar period of high productivity in basic neurophysiology between the 1930 and 1980, for which collective work, 14 Nobel Prizes were awarded to leaders in the field.

Still, it wasn't until I wrote my first book in 1983 ("The Physiological and Technical Basis for Electromyography") that I was forced to master the basics of electrical signalling in the human central and peripheral nervous systems, which formed the body of most of my research for the next 20 years.

By that time both my parents were dead and there were no more opportunities to share what was happening in neuroscience or what my father's own research had been about.

My education in modern-day chemistry began with the first of now six annual series here in NOTL on Nobel Prizes in the sciences – medicine or physiology, physics and chemistry, and they were eyeopeners for someone like me whose career in science had been narrowly focused (as it is for most scientists who don't teach basic courses in science to undergraduates).

Steven Weinberg, a theoretical quantum physicist who won a Nobel for his work in developing the Standard Model for quantum mechanics, once said the best way to learn science writ broad, was to teach it. He was right.

That's what the Nobel series in the sciences did for me, only my students were, and continue to be, the wider public in NOTL.

If my father were alive, I think he would have been very excited by the Noble Prizes that had to do with

chemistry and physics, especially the winning work by Francis Arnold on harnessing evolution to develop better enzymes in 2018, Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna's prize for gene editing in 2020 and this year's Nobel won by Carolyn Bertozzi, Morten Meldal and Barry Sharpless for clicking small molecules together to make big ones.

I miss not being able to share those studies with my father because he prized innovation and building better molecules for, in his case, industrial applications.

I am sure he would have applauded our Nobel series and the earlier InfoHealth Series, as ways of sharing the best of science and medicine with the public.

Professor Baldwin, the one who chastised me, later told me my father was a good teacher and so he must have been.

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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GROWING TOGETHER 

At this time of year, we are flooded with award shows like the Golden Globes, Grammys and Oscars.

But why should actors and singers receive all glory? Did you know that plants receive awards as well? There might not be any extravagant award ceremonies or wonderful banquets to attend (probably some drinks served though), but here are some of the plants that have received special honours for 2023.

Since 1995, the Perennial Plant Association has selected a perennial that is a standout among a list nominated by its members.

Nominations are based on

specific criteria that include suitability for a wide range of climatic conditions, low-maintenance requirements, relative pest- and disease-resistance, multiple seasons of ornamental interest and ready availability.

The association has named American Gold Rush Rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan) 2023's perennial of the year.

In a media release, the group said, "At the height of summer, American Gold Rush black-eyed Susan turns up the volume for a long season of dazzling colour right up to autumnal frosts. The bright golden-yellow flowers feature arching rays and a reddish halo surrounding dark chocolate cones."

"Three-inch flowers blanket the compact plant, only 22 to 27 inches tall, with a broader width to 40 inches if given room to grow."

The flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators in the summer months and its seeds help to feed songbirds into the winter.

The leaves and stems are



Limelight prime hydrangea is the Proven Winners hydrangea of the year for 2023. JOANNE YOUNG

covered with hairs, giving them a silvery cast. American Gold Rush is also more resistant to Septoria leaf spot than other varieties, looks great in mass plantings and is cold hardy to Zone 4.

The American Hosta Growers Association has awarded Neptune Hosta as its hosta of 2023.

This unique blue plant

makes a nice specimen in the home garden. In spring, the narrow, wedge-shaped leaves are bright glaucous blue and they hold their colour well. They turn more blue-green by mid-summer. The heavily rippled leaves also show some resistance to slugs.

It has a lovely cascading form as leaves arch over and it produces lavender-coloured, bell-shaped flowers in late summer to early fall.

It performs best in part-shade or full-shade locations with moist soil.

The foliage grows to be about 24 inches high and has a spread of four feet. Neptune is hardy to Zone 3.

Some garden companions that look great with Neptune are: Brunette Cimicifuga, King of Hearts Dwarf Bleeding Heart and All Gold Hakonechloa Grass.

Proven Winners, the leading plant brand worldwide, is comprised of leading plant propagators from around the globe.

The Proven Winners 2023 flowering shrub of the year

is hydrangea "Let's Dance Can Do."

The "Let's Dance" series of hydrangeas is a unique cross between hydrangea serrata (Mountain Hydrangea) and hydrangea macrophylla (Big Leaf Hydrangea).

Hydrangea serrata is a reblooming hybrid that bears lacecap clusters of flowers and is hardy to Zone 4a.

"Let's Dance Can Do" is a breeding breakthrough that brings something entirely new to cold-climate gardens. This plant sets its flower buds along the entire length of the stem, not merely at the tips. The flowers are strawberry pink.

Because of its repeat blooming habit, you can expect flowers from mid-June through October. Plant in a sunny, protected location that provides some shade during the hottest part of the day. It grows three to four feet high and three feet wide.

Proven Winners has named hydrangea paniculata "Limelight Prime" its 2023 hydrangea of the year.

"Limelight Prime" is an improvement over "Limelight" because it is more compact and will bloom weeks earlier, creating a long display of large panicle-like blooms.

This is especially valuable in colder climates, where "Limelight" might not have bloomed until August. As the lime green/ivory white blooms age, they develop pink and red tones that are far more vivid and showy than conventional hydrangeas. You can count on "Limelight Prime's" strong stems to hold its big blooms up all summer long.

Its compact habit will reach a very garden-friendly four to six feet tall and four to five feet wide. It is hardy to Zone 3.

I don't know about you, but I get more excited about these award winners than I do with all the celebrity award winners. Now we just have to wait for the garden centres to open again in spring.

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

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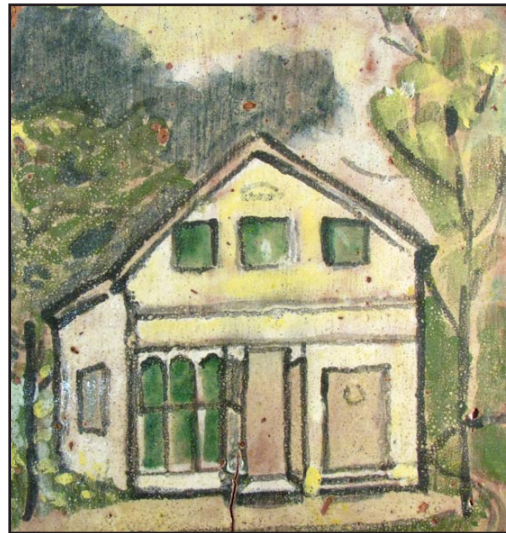
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EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Evans Cottage by RJR Pottery

RJR Pottery was produced in Niagara-on-the-Lake between 1950 and 1964 as a hobby and was mainly sold to friends. Each piece was a one-of-a-kind. The founding members were three close friends who used the first letter in their last names to create the RJR logo. Dr. Bruce Rigg was a local physician who used his knowledge of chemistry to formulate some of the early coloured glazes. He also prepared the raw clay for shaping and firing, turned plates and bowls on a potter's wheel, and decorated many of the pottery pieces. Mary Jones was a talented artist who decorated many of the pieces with scenes of local churches, old buildings, historic sites and other points of interest. Bill Richardson operated a local coal business and dug the clay from the Queenston dock area. It then would be fired in a kiln located in his coal yard until 1956. This featured piece shows Evans Cottage which was at 36 Picton St. It was known in the early 1900s as Evans Store, which sold candy and ice cream. The original building is now part of the Prince of Wales hotel complex and can be rented as the Evans Cottage Suite.



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