



The art of cupcakes | Page 5



Oast House Brewery's Aska Koabel and Mary Beccario.

## Glasses raised for **farmerettes** at Oast women's day celebration

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A Niagara-on-the-Lake brewery is paying homage to the women who ran the

family farms while the men were away during two world wars.

Oast released Farmerettes, the newest instalment in its Farmhouse Ale Collection, last week in conjunction with

International Women's Day.

The special batch, a fruity Saison-style beer with lots of head and a goldenrod colour, honours the women who were called farmerettes.

Senior brewer Aska

Koabel wrote the recipe in November after Oast co-founder Cian MacNeill came up with the idea of crafting a special batch for women's day.

Koabel said the beer gets

most of its flavour from Niagara-grown tender fruit, including strawberries, cherries, apples and pears.

She wanted it to be a

*Continued on Page 13*

## Memorial sculpture urged for NOTL's Black burial ground

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

NOTL's Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground deserves a memorial to the survivors of slavery and an organization led by a Brock University professor wants to make it happen.

"It's really to memorialize the African diasporic people who lived, worshipped, were educated, were married, died and lived in this region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries," Prof. Lissa Paul told a presentation at the St. Catharines Public Library last week.

The talk was titled "Making Decolonization Visible on the Ground."

Paul is working with PhD student Hyacinth Campbell and Toronto artist Quentin VerCetty on the project.

The memorial would be about six feet tall and would be installed at the cemetery, formerly known as the Negro Burial Ground, on Mississagua Street in

*Continued on Page 3*

## '30 seconds in' he heard **four snaps**

### NOTL wrestler wins provincial gold, then dislocates elbow at nationals

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

He remembers hearing four distinct snaps.

Eden High School wrestler and Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Zubin Gatta was coming off a winning streak.

He had just placed first at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations' wrestling championship on Wednesday, March 8, in Ottawa and boasted a 25-0 high school record this year.

Next stop, the national championships two days later in Waterloo.

With gold and bronze medals around his neck after competing in the Canada Summer Games last August, he's developed a reputation as a winner.

Despite his success, he says he's at a bit of a disadvantage, competing at 56.5 kilograms in the 57.5-kilogram weight class.

In fact, he's actually pretty used to having his back to the mat.

"I go to practice and I get beat up every day," he said, explaining that he trains with the Brock University wrestling team.

Still, he had humble aspirations when he faced off against



Despite dislocating his left elbow, Zubin Gatta is looking forward to his next bout. SUPPLIED

Treye Trotman from Western University in his junior division match at the Canadian Wrestling Championships in Waterloo on Friday.

"He's definitely the best in my weight class right now. In the country," Gatta told The Lake Report.

But Gatta felt he could be a top six competitor at the national competition.

When he went up against Trotman he wasn't expecting a repeat of his winning experience at OFSAA, just a chance to stop his opponent from pushing him around.

"It was my first match at nationals," said Gatta and it was all over "30 seconds in."

"I popped my elbow," he said. "I heard it really loud. And then I looked over and then I saw it."

Gatta was on all fours defend-

*Continued on Page 16*

## No end to phone, text and door-to-door scams, experts say

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

First in a two-part series  
With Fraud Prevention Month well under way across Canada, so are

telephone, text message and door-to-door scams.

One scam in particular has been on the rise — the grandparent scam.

That's when someone calls a senior on behalf of a loved one claiming to be a

government official, family member, police officer or even a lawyer.

The scammers then scare the individual into giving money by saying the loved one is injured or needs help.

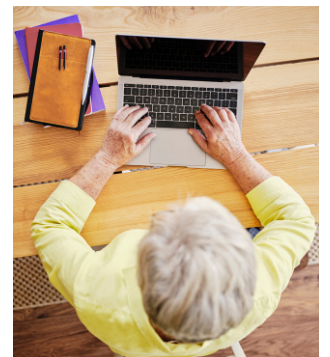
"They are targets because

these are where scammers (and) fraudsters really think they have this opportunity, that seniors are more vulnerable," Mary Shkoury from Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario told The Lake Report.

Her organization provides public education and awareness about elder abuse.

According to a news release from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, more

*Continued on Page 4*





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# Donations, federal funding gave Shaw **big boost** in 2022

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



The Shaw Festival is adopting a “new normal.” “Turns out that there might be no such place as normal. And maybe that’s all right,” artistic director Tim Carroll told the Shaw’s annual meeting Friday afternoon.

The board of directors shared some tempered optimism.

While the revenue still paints a picture of a production company in recovery, executive director Tim Jennings said the festival has had some good fortune compared to other industry groups.

“By the end of the year, we’ve managed to hit about 65 per cent of our 2019 attendance,” Jennings said.

“In some ways that 65 per cent number was a pretty good one because Broadway and many urban theatres across North America didn’t crest 50 per cent,” he added.

“Generating \$35.7 million in revenues in the year when

we were only at 65 per cent of our normal attendance was a significant feat,” he said.

Jennings stressed that the accomplishment was only made possible by the charity of the Shaw’s supporters and government support programs.

“We were made whole this year through donations and personal philanthropy,” he said.

Treasurer Gregory Prince told the meeting that the

Shaw received an “extraordinary investment” of \$6 million from the federal government through its Major Festivals and Events Support Initiative.

And board chair Ian Joseph said 2022 was “the single best individual fundraising year in our history,” with \$11.8 million in donations.

Together, these streams of revenue helped to protect the jobs of the company’s more than 600 employees.

Executive director Tim Jennings said the Shaw Festival reached \$35.7 million in revenue for 2022 with the support of donors and government support programs. SUPPLIED

“This funding recognizes the almost \$220 million per year impact of the Shaw on the Niagara region,” Prince added.

Joseph pointed out that when the year began, theatre seating capacity was still capped at 50 per cent, and even as restrictions were lifted, audiences remained hesitant.

A significant decrease in lost performances helped.

The Shaw rescheduled 28 of 811 performances in

2022 compared to more than 300 in 2021, Joseph said.

On top of that, the Shaw boasted a small operational surplus of \$7,000.

“While our operations effectively broke even, for the first time in several years, we are reporting an accounting deficiency totalling \$1.1 million,” Prince said.

The loss, Prince said, is due to the depreciating value of the company’s capital assets.

Last year was the company’s “largest and longest” festival season ever, Joseph said.

After adapting some shows to outdoor stages in 2021, the company saw a continued appetite for open-air productions, Carroll wrote in the company’s annual report.

“The outdoor events were a huge hit,” Carroll wrote. “We had to keep doing them.”

In 2022, as a result, 109 of the Shaws 783 performances were held outdoors, the report said.

As well, the festival has almost \$13.5 million in

“earned revenues,” meaning income generated by ticket sales and other profitable ventures.

Prince said this is up from just \$3.9 million in 2021, but down from \$21.1 million in 2019.

So while fundraising is up for the festival, earned revenue is still catching up.

Carroll pointed out that many of the festival’s heroes have been unsung.

“Next time you come to a show here, make a point of expressing your appreciation to whoever helps you,” he said.

Carroll said that many of the festival’s support staff had the unenviable job of announcing bad news, such as cancelled shows.

“The sales staff, the box office staff, all of those people really have to bear the brunt quite often,” he said.

Carroll also made special mention of the performers and understudies who had to learn each other’s parts in case one of them got sick.

“Some of the efforts and energy put in last year was really heroic,” he said.

## Solmar seeks permits to **demolish** some Rand Estate buildings

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

SORE and Solmar will be facing off again soon after the town called a special meeting to review applications to alter or demolish buildings on the old Rand Estate.

On the demolition applications, Solmar general manager Giuseppe Paollicelli outlines plans for structures on 588 Charlotte St. and 200 John St. E.

The Calvin Rand summer house, carriage house, stable dwelling and several small sheds would all be demolished, the application says.

However, “The wall and pillars on Charlotte Street will be repaired and restored,” the document says and several structures will be repaired.

The tea house and the walls, pillars and gazebo

at the Whistle Stop will be restored.

The bath pavilion will be moved nearer to the teahouse and the old landscaping surrounding the teahouse will be restored as near in likeness as possible to the original Dunington-Grubb gardens.

The applicant also proposes to build a modern pergola in place of the original one, which no longer stands.

The municipal heritage committee received the completed applications from town staff last Wednesday night.

According to a staff report the applications were filed Feb. 17.

The applications can be viewed on the town’s Join the Conversation Page about the Rand Estate.

The staff report said the applications will be brought to council April 24 after the heritage committee reviews them.

Both SORE (Save Our Rand Estate) and Solmar will have 30 minutes to speak at the council meeting.

Kate Lyons, a lawyer representing SORE, told The Lake Report that Brendan Stewart, an expert on heritage landscapes, has been retained and he has advised that the structures slated for removal are quite significant.

“Calvin Rand was one of the founders of the Shaw Festival. So there is a what’s called a historic association as well as architectural heritage importance to the building,” Lyons said.

The permits to alter and demolish are meant to allow the development of a subdivision that was brought to council last June.

Lyons said the worst possible outcome of the meeting for SORE would be if the town approved the applications without conditions.

## Virgil construction to **expand road**

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Niagara Stone Road is all chewed up after a seven-year plan finally hit the road. Literally.

Anyone driving through Virgil should expect traffic delays while construction workers give the regional road some much-needed attention.

For now, most of the construction will run from the intersection at Four Mile Creek to Line 1 Road.

That phase of the project is expected to wrap up in the fall.

Once completed, the region will begin work on the stretch from Line 1 to East and West Line, says a report from the region.

Residents can expect multiple improvements from the construction, including improved storm sewers, road conditions and car capacity, said Marah Minor, a spokesperson for the town.



Construction is backing up traffic in Virgil. SOMER SLOBODIAN

According to the region’s report, a middle lane for left-turning vehicles will run from Four Mile Creek to Line 1.

The workers will also be installing new signals, sidewalks, crosswalks, overhead lighting and landscaping features.

The town will be paying about \$1.4 million to cover the cost of the landscaping additions, Minor said.

The region will be footing almost 80 per cent of the nearly \$10.1 million contract, though, a regional spokesperson said.

The region is also working with NOTL Hydro, which is using the construc-

tion as an opportunity to move overhead wires and infrastructure underground.

NOTL Hydro president Tim Curtis said it was a little more cost-efficient to do that now.

Curtis said the utility is spending just over \$1 million on the project.

In the long run, he expects it to be cheaper to maintain as well, despite it being more expensive in some cases to repair buried hydro infrastructure.

“You’re less likely to get outages from accidents, people running into poles or from weather events, because it’s better protected underground,” Curtis said.



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# New e-permit system to streamline process

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has introduced a new labour-saving online program that will allow residents to obtain building permits electronically.

The new service makes it easier to accept permit applications and issue ap-

provals, a staff report said.

Chief administrator Mar- nie Cluckie told The Lake Report in an email that it was too soon to know how many hours of staff labour will be saved, but she was optimistic it would mean “great time savings” to both staff and people ap- plying for permits.

“Applicants save time not just by minimizing

travel to town offices but also by reducing back- and-forth communica- tion,” she said.

She added the system allows people to check the status of their applications.

According to the staff report, the program also will be used to schedule building code inspections and take application pay- ments.

Cluckie called it a “one- stop shop” for applicants.

The e-permitting soft- ware, provided to the town by Cloud Permit, is being funded through a grant un- der the Ontario Municipal Modernization Program.

The town received a modernization grant of \$122,366 in 2022 and bud- geted \$35,000 of it for the e-permitting program.

# Man, 72, in critical condition after Glendale crash

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A 72-year-old man is in critical condition after suffering a medical epi- sode and crashing his car into a guard rail on Glen- dale’s diverging diamond

interchange early Tuesday afternoon.

When they arrived on the scene, officers learned that the man was in medical distress, Niagara Regional Police Const. Barry Rav- enek said in an email to The Lake Report.

Police have not released

the name of the victim.

Niagara Emergency Medical Service paramedics transferred the St. Catha- rines man to hospital in critical condition.

The man was driving a Toyota Matrix on the diverging diamond inter- change on Glendale Avenue

at York Road when his car struck a guard rail.

The cause of the collision is still under investigation and no charges have been laid.

Anyone who witnessed the collision is asked to call the lead detective at 905- 688-4111 and pick option three, extension 1009577.

# Sculpture would stand six feet tall in cemetery

Continued from Front Page

Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The sculpture would be created using 3D printing and digital sculpting tech- nology. It would cost about \$65,000.

VerCetty, known for cre- ating a statue of abolitionist Joshua Glover in Toronto, says the monument should feel like “a family portrait.”

“I want (it) to feel like you’re looking into history, but also looking outside of history and being a part of history,” he said.

He has created a digital draft of the sculpture online. On the draft, an archway encircling the monument was inspired “by quilts that many formerly enslaved people would make for themselves,” he said.

In the centre are eight different people who repre- sent the farmers, workers, families, blacksmiths and children who were enslaved.

“I want to show as many representations of the com- munity as possible,” he said.

A church and a barn are visible behind the people, with sun rays pointing to the sky.

The memorial features two birds — an eagle on the left and a Canada goose on the right.

The eagle represents



An example of what Quentin VerCetty’s six-foot sculpture would look like at the Black burial ground. SUPPLIED

former slaves who came to Canada and the goose represents Canadian Black loyalists, he said.

VerCetty wrote a poem that will be engraved on the sculpture.

It will say, “For the African ancestors who are known, and for those whose names we are yet to recall, whose remains sleep here, this marker is to honour you, a veneration of your presence, your story and contribution to the regions,” he said.

The existing historic plaque at the burial ground mentions John Oakley, a white pastor of the old Baptist church. Next to the plaque are the tombstones of Oakley and his daughter.

The new monument would represent the “en- slaved individuals who resolutely resisted day after day, year after year, century

after century, the sadistic brutality of their enslavers,” said Paul.

Tim Kenyon works at Brock University and has lived in Niagara for about five years. A few years ago he visited Niagara-on-the-Lake for the first time with his son.

It was mid-summer and the streets were packed with stop-and-go traffic. It just happens that they were stopped right beside the burial ground.

“We saw the sign and we saw the headstones. And I was profoundly ashamed,” he said.

The other part of the proj- ect is a website Campbell has set up called Memorials to People in Fugitive Ads.

It aims at following the people who were listed in “fugitive-slave” ads in newspapers.

Along with the ads, Campbell found more than

20 first-hand accounts writ- ten in 1856 by slaves. The can be read on the website.

The first-hand accounts are from The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada, part of the eCampusOntario Public Domain Core Collection, the website says.

Campbell read five testi- monials from the website during the presentation.

“Where I came from, it would make your flesh creep, and your hair stand on end, to know what they do to the slaves,” Campbell said, quoting James Sea- ward, a fugitive slave from St. Catharines.

The audience was silent as each word sank in.

Though VerCetty has read these testimonials before, “It still hits me,” he said, shaking his head.

There’s still lots of work to be done. First, the three will need to go before Niagara-on--the-Lake coun- cil and present their idea.

They know what needs to be done and how they want it to look, now they need to get the town’s approval. Then they can start the funding process.

To get the memorial built “would mean that there is interest to improve society (and) improve the commu- nity,” said VerCetty.

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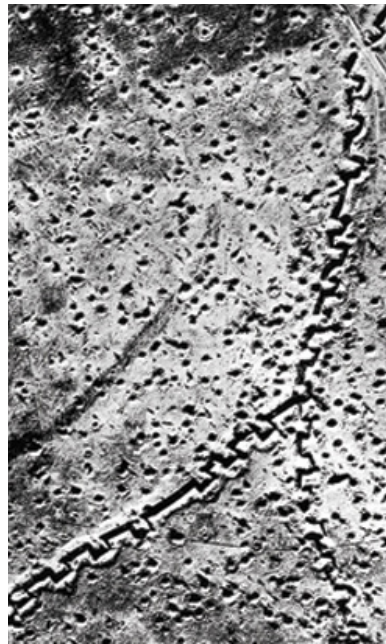
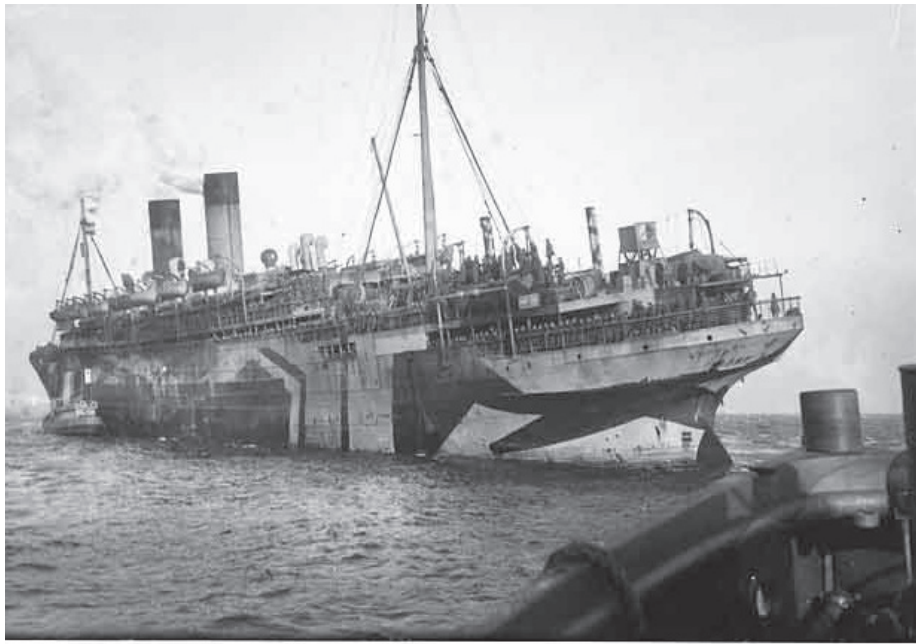
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The troopship Empress of Britain took many Canadian soldiers, including Niagara's Harold Budd, to England to fight in the First World War. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS An aerial view of Regina Trench. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

## Seven NOTL phone scam cases in 2022

Continued from Front Page



than \$9.2 million was lost to frauds like grandparent scams last year. However, while vulnerable people like seniors in Niagara-on-the-Lake reportedly lost no money to fraudsters — there were multiple fraud attempts in NOTL.

In 2022, there were seven reported cases of telephone scams in Niagara-on-the-Lake involving people aged 60 and up, Jeff Horncastle, of the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre told The Lake Report.

And two NOTL seniors were victims of bank investigator and service fraud, though neither lost money, he said.

This could be an indication that seniors in NOTL are on their guard, considering reports to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre hit a historic high in 2022.

There was a total of \$530 million in victim losses last year — almost a 40 per cent increase from 2021.

Shkoury is surprised at how little reported from Niagara-on-the-Lake given the aging population, however she thinks the real numbers are much higher.

This is because “only about 5 per cent of victims come forward,” she said.

Many scammers count on people not reporting, she added.

Const. Barry Ravenek of the Niagara Regional Police said five grandparent scam incidents were reported this year in the region, but none in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Aside from grandparent fraud, there are others that target seniors, such as romance and government-related scams.

As well, fraudsters have pretended to be police officers and targeted seniors for money.

There's also another one going around that is worrying people, especially MPP Wayne Gates.

An increasing number of companies are offering people rebates for work or home services (like hydro, air-conditioners or water heaters), he said in an interview.

It can happen over the

**“Fraudsters really think they have this opportunity, that seniors are more vulnerable.”**

MARY SHKOURY  
ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION ONTARIO

phone or right on your doorstep.

Anyone can fall victim, but “they seem to target seniors and new Canadians,” Gates said.

In 2022, 68 people were victims of such a door-to-door scam, Horncastle told The Lake Report.

More than \$320,000 was lost.

There were no reported incidents in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The sales associates promise the victims that they'll save money, lock them into a contract that is hard to get out of, then never follow through on their promises.

“They really take advantage of seniors because obviously seniors are looking at maybe an opportunity to try to save some money,” Gates said.

Instead, it costs them more money in the long run.

“Some of these contracts go on for over 10 years, and seniors are sometimes paying three and four times what the cost of the product,” Gates said.

Simply Green and Ontario Green Savings are two companies that have allegedly taken advantage of vulnerable individuals like seniors. Both are on the consumer beware list with multiple charges.

“There have been over 400 complaints filed against Ontario Green Savings with Consumer Protection Ontario,” Gates' constituency assistant Shannon Mitchell said in an email.

**Next week:** How to avoid becoming a victim of scammers.

# THE MONUMENTS MEN

## Harold George Budd fought at Battle of the Somme

*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

On March 30, 1913, the passenger steamer *SS Tunisian* docked in Halifax after a nine-day voyage from Liverpool England.

Disembarking was 26-year-old Harold George Budd, planning to start a new life in Canada.

He was the second and youngest son of farmer John Budd and Lucy Lancaster of Sussex.

Harold had been employed by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railroad but resigned in 1911. When he arrived in Canada two years later, he described himself as a fruit farmer, and reported that his planned destination was

Welland.

It was natural that he would gravitate to Niagara.

The First World War had been raging for a little over a year when Budd resolved to volunteer to fight in Europe. On Oct. 4, 1915, he enlisted in the 84th Overseas Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, at the Hamilton Armoury.

At the time of his enlistment there was a common rumour heard across Canada that volunteers over the age of 27 would not be assigned front-line duties but would be employed in logistical tasks far from the field of battle.

A great number of men, on enlisting, wanted to experience the supposed adventure, excitement and glory of fighting and did not relish the idea of spending the war performing mundane tasks.

Many men lied about their ages, taking a few years off if they were over 27 and adding a few years on if under 18.

Budd stated on his attestation form that his birthday was Dec. 28, 1890. He was actually born on Dec. 28, 1887.

On June 18, 1916, Budd was back at the dock in Halifax. His unit boarded the *SS Empress of Britain* and 11 days later landed in Liverpool.

There, the 84th Battalion was broken up to bring the

75th and the 73rd battalions up to full strength. Budd was assigned to the 75th Battalion.

On Aug. 12, the 75th Battalion men disembarked at Le Havre, France. The 75th was mustered into the 11th Brigade, 4th Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Budd first experienced the hell of trench warfare later in August when his battalion manned front-line trenches in Belgium.

In September the battalion was sent to the Somme battlefield to reinforce the British and participate in the bloody Battle of the Somme in France. The Battle of the Somme was a long offensive, lasting from July 1 to Nov. 18, 1916, and achieving little.

For Budd and his comrades, their primary battle was the capture of the Regina Trench, a strong enemy position known to the Germans as the *Staufen Riegel*.

This battle within the larger Battle of the Somme lasted from Oct. 1 to Nov. 11.

Attacks by other divisions were unable to capture the trench for the first few weeks of October. Finally, the 4th Division, including Budd's 75th Battalion, went “over the top” on Oct. 21, and drove the Germans from the western portion of the Regina Trench.

The following day they were able to repulse three major German counterattacks but suffered heavy losses in the action. Finally, on the night of Nov. 10-11 the 4th Division captured the eastern portion of Regina Trench.

Of all the Canadian casualties during the Battle of the Somme, most were suffered during the capture of Regina Trench.

In all, 14,207 men were killed, wounded, captured or missing in action. The Germans suffered heavier losses, including 1,000 men taken as prisoners of war.

Any thoughts of adventure and glory were dashed by the actual horror of the vicious trench warfare.

Budd was able to dodge bullets, bombs, shells, grenades, bayonets and poison gas, but became a casualty of the dreadful conditions faced by soldiers in the First World War.

On Jan. 6, 1917, he was admitted to the #18 Casualty Clearing Station medical facility and diagnosed with lobar pneumonia.

While he was reported as being slightly improved three days later, it was a false hope. He died on Jan. 17.

Harold George Budd lies buried in the Lapugnoy Military Cemetery in Pas de Calais, France, and is commemorated on the Queenston War Memorial.



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## SWEET SUCCESS

# Following dreams to create perfect cupcake

Molly Bowron  
The Lake Report

Laura Crocco swirls the top of each cupcake with sweet buttercream, adding colourful sprinkles and just the right touch of love. The result: beautiful, edible works of art, each made from scratch. On this day, with 20 dozen custom cupcake orders to prepare for Valentine's Day, the Niagara-on-the-Lake business owner is up early. Many days she rises at 4 or 5 a.m. to ensure her afternoon orders are ready.

That is the lot of bakers – toiling away in the dark, early-morning hours to create their delicious confections.

Crocco moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake 24 years ago from Thunder Bay with her husband, Jeffrey.

She launched her company, Cupcakes by Laura, after he died in 2020.

He was the executive vice-president of the World Wide Travel One Agency Group in St. Catharines and “he wanted me to open up a cupcake business and we were going to open up a store downtown,” she said.

“After he passed, I figured now’s the time. Life’s short, right?”

Crocco does all the baking herself from her home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, along with the help of her two kids, Victoria and Chris Crocco, who both attended Parliament Oak Public School.

Victoria is in charge of the photography and Chris takes care of the business’s finances.

Before she opened Cupcakes by Laura, Crocco sought advice from Rebecca deBoer and her sister Mandy Visser, who both own businesses in NOTL.

DeBoer and her husband Steve own Zoom Leisure Bikes, while Visser runs deBakker, an online bakery in town.

“Rebecca said to do it in your house for a year because you never know. You want to make sure you really love to do it before you start investing,” Crocco said.



Laura Crocco makes custom cupcakes at home with the help of her two kids. MOLLY BOWRON

Two years later, Crocco is thankful she started from home because of how COVID-19 wreaked havoc on small businesses.

Despite the challenges of COVID and losing her husband, Crocco said going into business was the right choice.

“I’ve been baking since I was a teenager, 12-13 years old, so I just enjoy it.”

As for downtime, Crocco laughed, “There is no time.”

Ordering is easy online, she said. Search “Cupcakes by Laura” to get to her Google site, then click the how-to button and follow the steps.

Crocco’s creations also can be found on Instagram through clb.bakery and on Facebook under Cupcakes by Laura.

The baker offers free delivery in Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Davids.

Delivery is \$10 for orders outside that zone – or clients can pick them up at her home.

Crocco also does cupcakes for weddings.

“My smallest wedding was about 20 people and the largest one was 400, and that one was quite the adventure.”

Orders can be placed the day before with a minimum of a dozen cupcakes, said Crocco.

“Oreo, vanilla, chocolate, the gamut. Whatever you’re really interested in, I can probably do.”

Her most popular cupcake is chocolate and peanut butter fudge.

Crocco makes each of them with a Reese’s peanut butter cup at the bottom, then a chocolate cupcake, chocolate and peanut buttercream, and a peanut butter cup on top.

The buttercream is made with real butter and no shortening, which means they’ll only last around two or three days.

She also makes sweet dog treats called “pupcakes.”

“It’s all-natural, it’s perfectly healthy for dogs, and mine loves it,” she said.

Crocco is always working on new cupcake concepts, such as a peach cupcake for the annual Peach Festival in NOTL.

And she also has an idea to help people grab cupcakes on the go when walking in downtown NOTL.

Once Crocco has a retail store, instead of wrappers she plans on using cones to hold the cupcakes – easier, no mess and it eliminates waste.

“Hopefully, this year, we are going to open up with a storefront downtown,” she said.



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

## COVID Tracker

**NOTL active cases (last 28 days): 19**

**Region active cases: 387**

**Region deaths: 718**

**Region total cases: 51,904**

*\*March 15 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**

"Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next." = Gilda Radner

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## A winter walk



Linda Lillie and Leah walk in the snow on Saturday. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

## Editorial

# The future of old NOTL hospital

Kevin MacLean  
Managing Editor

There are a lot of important issues facing the new Niagara-on-the-Lake town council.

Councillors are wrestling now with the annual budget, so we will soon know how this council's 2023-24 vision will translate into the dollars and cents of an annual tax increase – and what its many priorities will be for the coming year. And beyond.

But that is just one of the big issues and tough decisions council has to deal with. Development- and growth-related files also await them, among many others.

Perhaps the file requiring the most vision is what to do about one of the most prestigious and important properties in town – the site of the former Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital.

The previous council under then-Lord Mayor Betty Disero went through an extensive process of seeking proposals for the site and then decided not to accept any of them.

Given the unveiling of the Niagara Creative Cultural Community Hub's idea, as outlined in detail in The Lake Report last week, perhaps that non-decision by council in 2022 was prescient and fortuitous.

This collaborative group of non-profit organizations, with a veritable who's who of movers and shakers from various sectors of the arts and cultural communities, says it has already secured a \$2-million donation to help get rolling with its interesting and innovative concept.

In short, the people behind this group have offered to assume the operating costs of the old hospital building so various com-

munity groups can continue using it as a communal space.

Plans also include a multi-million dollar renovation of the old building – something it sorely needs.

As one of the hub's proponents, Robin Ridesic, noted in outlining for council the usefulness of the hospital as a community space, it is an important site.

"It is the last zoned community facility property that could be renovated to meet the needs of current small to midsize community non-profits," said Ridesic, who owns the Exchange Brewery.

She and her group have hit on a grand and forward-thinking idea and it is one about which we will have more to say in the near future.

As some in the community have already commented – and letter writers

have suggested to The Lake Report – a cultural hub, in that location makes a lot of sense. But so might a medical facility and/or residential community for aging seniors. Or all of them, together.

We don't anticipate that however the property is changed – or redeveloped – will satisfy everyone or all of NOTL's needs. But all of these possibilities are worth considering. None of them will be wrong.

What we don't want to see happen is for the old hospital's future use to become mired in studies and reports and indecision. Let's act promptly – after due diligence, of course – and without delay.

So, for now, we simply ask that council give the Niagara Creative Cultural Community Hub concept serious thought and take action quickly, one way or the other.

## 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 Mississagua St., NOTL.

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## Celebration of NOTL women was **well done**

Dear editor:

I was very impressed with the large section featured in the March 9 edition of The Lake Report, "Celebrating the Women of NOTL," that was dedicated to recognizing International Women's Day and all the accomplished and interesting women who were included throughout its 12 pages.

I've never seen anything like it – it's an award winner.

Also, I hope the proposal for a cultural hub project at the old Niagara-on-the-Lake

hospital will be well supported, ("Non-profits want old hospital to be community hub").

It is an amazing opportunity to support different groups and keep them in staying in town.

The project has endless possibilities and seems to be already well thought out – one of the best proposals for repurposing of a in-town site that I have ever seen.

It is well worth support from all parties.

**Christopher Allen**  
NOTL



NOTL women gather beneath the clock tower for a photo to celebrate International Women's Day. SUPPLIED

## Wonderful support for the women of NOTL

Dear editor:

Thanks so much for the wonderful support for the women of Niagara-on-the-Lake with your "Celebrating the Women of NOTL" special sec-

tion to mark International Women's Day in the March 9 edition of The Lake Report.

It was a fantastic idea and it may be the start of a new tradition.

I found the event very heartwarming. We live in anxious, troubled times and the good work that everyday people do needs to be promoted and appreciated.

I really appreciated the opportunity to meet with other women who work hard to make a positive difference in the world.

**Sharon Frayne**  
NOTL

## Diane Hemmings **missed** in women's celebration

Dear editor:

I must congratulate The Lake Report team on an excellent edition on March 9 recognizing International Women's Day, ("Celebrating the Women of NOTL").

It was timely and important – and women make a major contribution in the Niagara-on-the-Lake community.

I was very disappointed that the late Diane Hemmings, PhD, was not included in the listing of women who have made a difference in the town.

Diane always had a strong sense of being a responsible volunteer in NOTL, making it a better place for all. Her accomplishments spread

across many community organizations. These is just a few examples of Diane's contributions.

Diane chaired the town's Communities in Bloom committee for several years and took the lead in helping NOTL win the International Communities in Bloom contest twice.

The two books she compiled on the town's activities, interests and environment were a unique reflection of NOTL and greatly impressed the judges.

Diane was also co-president of the NOTL Horticultural Society and rewrote the constitution to meet government standards



Diane Hemmings.

and establish the basis for a stable, well-managed community-focused organization.

She also served on the board of Music Niagara, helping to bring sensible management to the acclaimed performance academy for young musicians and the leadership of Music Niagara.

She was a skilled fundraiser, raising over half the necessary funds for the first Choral Festival. Diane was on the NOTL Newcomers Club board and was a member of many organizations including the Shaw Guild and the NOTL Museum.

With a significant professional and academic health care background, she was a talented woman and shared many interests and skills that helped make the community a better place.

I lived in NOTL for 10 years and saw first-hand Diane's commitment and hard work for the betterment of our community.

**Marion Boon**  
NOTL

## NOTL needs to **solve** pickleball's court problem

Dear editor:

Having recently spent a few weeks in Grand Cayman, I recognized how popular the sport of pickleball has become.

I'm told it's now the fastest-growing sport in North America and I'm not surprised.

A simple, inexpensive game that cannot only be good for you health-wise,

but can be a great way to socialize with friends.

In Cayman, pickleball has taken over the island, now with more participants than tennis or golf.

Public and private courts are everywhere.

So, why have we been so restricted in NOTL. My understanding: one individual noise complaint shut down the outdoor courts. How silly.

It's time the parties come together and figure out a reasonable solution. Playing in an indoor arena in the summer is not the right one.

Can we not find an appropriate site? I'd be first to put my hand up to help fund it. Maybe it could be a joint venture with the tennis club.

I have no doubt in the next couple of years, the club will appreciate the popular-

ity of the sport and consider allocating one or two of its courts to pickleball.

Two weeks ago I watched more than 20 new pickleball participants learn the sport at the community centre.

NOTL is hosting a major tournament in June, though sadly, it will be inside an arena.

**Glenn Young**  
NOTL

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# ‘Slow architecture’ vs. buildings ‘designed for the moment’



Brian Marshall  
Columnist

Back in 1986, the fast-food giant McDonald’s opened a new outlet close to the Spanish Steps in Rome.

To say that McDonald’s got pushback from the citizens of that city (and Italy in general) would be a vast understatement.

Within months, Carlo Petrini had founded Arcigola, an organization to oppose this fast-food, industrial food production overture.

In a few short years, the central tenets of Arcigola had spread far beyond Italy and in 1989, delegates from 15 countries met in Paris to sign the founding manifesto of the Slow Food movement.

Promoting food quality rather than quantity, it supports the preservation of traditional cuisine based on regional and sustainable food production by small farms and businesses.

Today, Slow Food operates in 150 countries around the world, has founded a university of gastronomic science, sup-

ports seed banks preserving heirloom varieties, and encourages public education in the benefits of organic and sustainable food production, among many other endeavours.

Further, the central ideology has spread into various aspects of culture and lifestyle to become known as the “slow movement,” which has influenced education, entertainment, medicine, travel, cities and architecture.

Now, let’s put a little definition around the word “slow” in this context because it doesn’t mean what you might think.

Among adherents to this movement, “slow” refers to a deliberate, measured approach to living driven by thought and understanding rather than a frenetic, single-minded one path drive toward completion.

Interestingly, this mindful approach can be much more productive, yielding additional side benefits, over a defined period of time.

So, what’s slow architecture?

In a recent article published in Dwell magazine, ml Robles of Studio Point Architecture + Research in Colorado suggests it partially evolved out of a reaction to the commoditized housing produced by the development model.

“So much of what’s happened in the last 30 to 40 years was about consumption. What’s happened



Avalon House in Australia is designed in accordance with the principles of the slow architecture movement, says columnist Brian Marshall. MICHAEL WICKHAM

is that architecture has become a commodity,” he states.

“So you’ve got, sort of built in, this turnaround — anything that’s a style is going to be out of style ... and that’s why we have the crazy environments that we have, and most people are so dissatisfied with their built environments.”

“It’s because they have been designed for a little tiny space in time, with little regard for the past, or really, a long-term future. They’ve been designed for the moment.”

“Slow architecture, I think,” says Roble, “was a pushback to architecture that was about a trend, a pushback to architecture or urban development that was about erasure, and it was a pushback to the commodification of interior finishes and furniture.”

Not surprisingly, slow architecture strives to design spaces that support a measured lifestyle of the occupants that encourages both thought and understanding by carefully considering the needs of the client and other occupants while enfolding the ecosystem in which the building sits.

In other words, spaces in which one can responsibly live their best life.

The objective is to create a long-lasting structure, made of durable, local, sustainable materials, that will integrate into its surroundings (whether natural or built) and age in context with the site.

It is not uncommon for an architect of this movement to engage in careful research of historical and vernacular precedents to inform the development

of culturally relevant and long-lasting architecture.

Both the architect and the client are required to consider the long term, understand the history of the property, embrace local culture and to massage the construction process in order to produce a thoughtful, meaningful and contextually responsible finished design.

As a part of the sustainability ethos, slow architecture encourages, where possible, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Not only are locally sourced and available materials used, but the appropriate inclusion of old, previously used materials (brick, stone, wood, trim, paneling and other elements) is highly encouraged.

As an aside, this reclaim and reuse of materials previously installed in

another building has a long history in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In fact, I suggest the majority of NOTL’s historic houses contain a mantel or panelling or trim (and the list could go on for some length) came out of another 19th-century home.

Of particular note, is the design process followed by “slow” architects starts with the design of spaces before that of form. To paraphrase Louis Sullivan’s famous “form follows function” directive we could say, “form follows lifestyle.”

Which is the direct antithesis of the common practice employed by the last 75 years of suburban development wherein one starts with the design of the “box” (form) and then followed by the layout of the spaces.

As Robles says, “Designed for the moment.”

Slow architecture is about creating a building that will serve the individual, the community and the environment permanently — which celebrates craft and local tradition. Something truly great architects have always been doing.

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

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



## St. Davids knows all about incompatible development

Dear editor:

I had to somewhat stifle a tongue-in-cheek chuckle after reading Wayne Murray’s letter in the March 2 edition of The Lake Report regarding the proposed Parliament Oak school development not compatible for the area.

It might be a suggestion for Mr. Murray, along with other concerned Old Town residents, to take a short trip through the Four Corners of St. Davids to see what compatibility is really about.

This is one of the most historical corners in Niagara-on-the-Lake (the region and province), which dates back hundreds, if not thousands of years.

Many neighbouring resi-



The intersection of York and Four Mile Creek roads. FILE

dences are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and several others on the town’s historical register are all within close proximity.

The “Corner” has always been the core of the village.

Surely architects, in their

professional expertise and wisdom, can design structures that can blend in and be compatible with the surrounding area. Not so with two recent new structures.

It was also interesting to read columnist Brian

Marshall’s last paragraph in the March 9 edition of The Lake Report submission: “it is no more expensive to build good architecture than bad architecture, but the former adds to the community while the later scars it for decades.”

What’s next for us in St. Davids, an architecturally compatible roundabout? I think not.

Residents of Old Town should remember the old saying: what’s good for the goose is good for the gander.

Look what happened to us in the south end of town. Now that’s compatibility!

**R. J. Woodruff**  
St. Davids

## Inappropriate developments don’t deserve kudos

Dear editor:

Letter writer Peter Rusin, a former Burlington resident and a real estate professional specializing in expropriation, appears to be a cheerleader for developers (“A positive viewpoint on two new NOTL projects,” The Lake Report, Feb. 9).

He also seems to not be aware of the clear-cutting done by developer Benny Marotta’s company on the Rand Estate in 2018, nor the fact the Mary Street apartment proposal is the second time around for this sow’s ear.

Neither inappropriate development deserves kudos.

The multi-storey apartment building on Mary Street near Mississagua dwarfing the area houses, backing up traffic and announcing to visitors that Old Town isn’t the picturesque village it once was, is hardly something for which to be grateful.

And although the few dozen saplings Mr. Marotta planted to dress up the grande allée into his new Stone Eagle Winery are nice, they hardly atone for the majestic old-growth forest his company cut down in 2018.

**Bob Bader**  
NOTL





# Liberals, NDP need to act to stop privatized health care

Dear editor:

Please consider this an open letter to the NDP and Liberal parties of Ontario. As Premier Doug Ford seeks to privatize more and more of Ontario's health care facilities, citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake (as well as all other Ontarians) should be concerned.

For instance, Ford maintains that services such as surgeries at these private clinics will be paid for with your OHIP card and not your credit card.

Unfortunately, this is just another in a long list of his shameless lies. He knows that is a bogus statement since capitalism will find a way to stick it to patients.

To wit, my brother-in-law recently required an iron infusion. He was told by his doctor that if he took the iron supplements orally, it would take several months for his iron numbers to reach a therapeutic level.

Or, he could be infused and cut that time down substantially. He chose the latter method and was referred to a clinic (obviously private) in the doctor's building.

Of course, when it came time to settle up, he paid for the infusion with his OHIP card. But then he was presented with an additional invoice for \$75.

When he asked what it was for, he was told it was for the rental of the chair in which he was infused and the services of the nurse who administered the infusion.

Incidentally, the private clinic would only accept his credit card and not his OHIP card for payment.

If Ford gets his way and brings in these private, for-profit clinics, rest assured, you are going to be paying for something out-of-pocket. ("Oh, you'd like anesthetic with your hernia repair?")

So, how do we stop a Conservative party hell-bent on slowly killing public health care by allowing private companies to access the public purse?

Sadly, in Canada, a majority government is the closest thing to a dictatorship in a democratic society. With no checks or balances, they are free to do what they want.

The only way to control them seems to be to shame

them. And when you have someone as shameless as Doug Ford at the helm, that simply doesn't work.

Therefore, it is time for the leaders of the New Democrats (Marit Stiles) and the leader of the Liberals (if they ever find one) to proclaim long and loud and often that all the private, for-profit health care companies clustered at Ontario's borders be aware that when power changes hands (and it will) these new, private health care facilities will be immediately closed.

The Ontario health care dollars that previously flowed into their private coffers will then be redirected into public health care, where we will get more bang for our buck since there is no profit factor diluting effectiveness.

Then let's see how many private health care clinics rush into Ontario to build new, expensive surgical facilities to serve the greed of their shareholders when they know that their shelf life might only be three years.

**J. Richard Wright  
NOTL**

# Let people buy better health care if they can afford to and want to

Dear editor:

Why is it so wrong for people to want to purchase better health care?

Why is it evil for individuals who can afford it to improve their lives?

The answer to these questions is a resounding, "No, it is not wrong or evil." You have the right to better your life through private health care.

As letter writer Lorie Daniels stated, yes, privatization will "result in lining the pockets of business owners" (of which I am not one) but it also will "benefit the majority of Ontarians."

Yes, individuals will make money. This is not scary. In a free market, to make money you have to provide value.

Also, as I've stated before, individuals "don't just take profits and sit on them ... they reinvest these profits in new ventures and goods and services," improving the lives of Ontarians.

Yes, public health care is, in fact, unequal. Maybe this will snap Ontarians

out of the notion that it is OK that we all suffer, as long as it is equally, under public health care.

Shortages of staff are a direct result of our public health care system distorting the supply and demand equation. In a private, free-market health care system there would be no shortage of staff or shortages would only be short-term.

I am all for regulated staff but privately regulated, not publicly. I personally would want regulated staff working on me but why is it so scary that someone should have the choice to have unregulated staff work on them? We should be free to choose.

There's no doubt that there are "marginalized and disadvantaged" individuals that are struggling - but the answer isn't more failed public health care.

It's private competition lowering the cost of health care with private charity meeting the needs of those who can't afford it.

Finally, I agree, "let's provide the level of care we all want and deserve"

but the only way to achieve this is through moral private health care.

To be clear, I love nurses. My goal is to free entrepreneurial nurses from the constraints of their unions and governments.

I want the best and brightest nurses utilizing their talents to become multi-millionaires by providing innovative ways of delivering private health care. "I want more multi-millionaire nurses now." How's that for a slogan, NOTL?

No matter what you think of my views on health care, please at least see how these nurses and their unions are acting as "gatekeepers" preventing you from receiving better health care.

You have a right to improve your life through better health care unfettered by governments and unions.

Now, does anyone have any actual opinions on my views about development in NOTL?

**Alexander Evans  
NOTL**



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## DEBATING FUTURE OF THE OLD HOSPITAL

### Rather than cultural hub, NOTL needs **medical facility**

Dear editor:  
I have been following with great interest the articles concerning the old NOTL hospital building and property, including “Non-profits want old hospital to be community hub,” (The Lake Report, March 9).  
I am astonished that I

have not read one article about any proposal related to health care of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s aging population.  
Has anyone thought of an urgent care facility, diagnostic imaging clinic or a senior’s residence that could also house these services?

Perhaps rather than a cultural hub, a health care proposal might better service Niagara-on-the-Lake.  
It seems to me that NOTL residents in the 1950s had more foresight and interest in the well-being of the people who live here to be able to find the resources to

construct a small hospital that adequately served its population.  
We all know our health care system is broken and probably won’t be repaired in my lifetime.  
But something has to be done now to address the wait times to make an ap-

pointment to receive a CT scan, MRI or ultrasound, not to mention the wait times in the emergency departments of Niagara’s hospitals.  
We all have heard horror stories about the St. Catharines and Niagara Falls hospitals.

I know that my opinion won’t have any impact on the decision for the hospital property, but I would like our elected officials and decision-makers to think about the health care of NOTL residents.  
**Marlene Sibbald**  
NOTL

### Council needs to quickly approve **cultural hub** for old hospital

Dear editor:  
The Niagara Creative Cultural Hub has proposed a new use for the old NOTL hospital site that makes sense, (“Non-profits want old hospital to be community hub,” The Lake Report, March 9).  
Arts and culture play an important role in NOTL.  
We have the Shaw Festival, Bravo Niagara, Music Niagara and a plethora of galleries and museums.  
These institutions employ hundreds of people and not just artists; they hire technicians, office staff, crafts people, maintenance workers, etc.

But the biggest driver of NOTL’s economy, outside of agriculture, is tourism.  
It employs 3,350 people and generates millions in revenue for the town and local businesses.  
Tourists come here for NOTL’s beauty and to have an experience they can’t get elsewhere: attend a play at a world-class theatre, go wine or beer tasting, see a musical performance at venues like Jackson-Triggs, or learn about the area’s history at the museum.  
John Peller recently spoke publicly about the importance of building a premium wine-based experience

in NOTL to sustain and grow our economy, (“Grand new vision unveiled for Niagara wine and tourism sector,” The Lake Report, March 2).  
This is vital in providing career opportunities for young adults who want to live and raise their families in NOTL.  
Drive through Napa on any weekend and many of the wineries offer live music or art shows to enhance the wine and food experience.  
Live music is “sticky” and a premium experience that keeps visitors at the wineries longer and spending

more money.  
How does the Niagara Creative Cultural Hub fit into this? This group is proposing a major renovation to the hospital that will then house numerous cultural groups including the Shaw, Plenty Canada, Yellow Door Theatre and Royal Oak Community School.  
The hub has already secured \$2 million in donor funding and is not asking the town for money.  
Educating artists and creators is part of the hub’s plan. If we are to enhance the cultural experience in NOTL we need artisans and performers who are trained

in their crafts and want to live and work in the area.  
A facility that supports artists and other cultural workers with education, community and work space is a big piece in making this happen.  
Niagara College is crucial to NOTL’s tourism industry, offering relevant education in food and beverage, wine-making, beer brewing and more.  
Go to almost any winery or restaurant in NOTL and you will see Niagara College graduates at work. Imagine how much more difficult it would be for these businesses to find

qualified workers if not for the college.  
The hub could provide a similar role for arts and culture.  
With the sale last year of the Laura Memorial Second School in Queenston to a private developer, facilities in NOTL that offer space for artisans to learn and create are rare.  
I urge NOTL council to support this project and not waste an opportunity to transform the hospital into a community facility that benefits both residents and the tourism industry.  
**Stewart Hall**  
NOTL

### Hub at hospital is short-term solution but **home for aging seniors** needed

Dear editor:  
I agree with those who are proposing to use the old hospital building in Niagara-on-the-Lake as a temporary location for community non-profit groups on a short-term basis, (“Non-profits want old hospital to be community hub,” The

Lake Report, March 9).  
This gives them time to find a more permanent home and not necessarily to all be co-located.  
Since I follow The Lake Report regularly, there is one regular suggestion that is not addressed in the above proposal.

Tim Taylor’s March 9 article about Magdalena Titian (“For longtime NOTL artist, gardens offer inspiration”) contains a good example.  
Her plea that “there’s no place to go in Niagara-on-the-Lake” when you reach a point where you no longer want to maintain a house

and garden has been made before.  
It will be repeated by those who wish to age in place rather than go to a nursing home.  
The new style for a retirement home for these older adults is in specially built condos or townhouses that

allow for support staff to provide services for a fee as required.  
The fees allow for good quality gardens and ground maintenance suitable for the area.  
Many developers would come forward with good designs if the old NOTL

hospital property was used as a permanent home for aging seniors.  
Let’s reward some of those long-term residents who have given to this town over the years and want to continue to do so.  
**Karen Gansel**  
NOTL

## ‘Lines in Nature’ featured in solo Pumphouse exhibit

Aimee Medina  
Special to The Lake Report

The works of Kimberley Laspa will be featured in an upcoming solo exhibit titled “Lines in Nature” in the Joyner Gallery of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre from March 30 to April 30.

The show provides viewers with the artist’s vision of various landscapes, including the countryside, mountains and escarpment.

Laspa uses black outlines in some of her works to bring out the brightness of colourful vistas.

“When I create my abstract versions of nature, my focus is on line, shape and colour. I transfer my drawings to the canvas, choosing just the right size and orientation to suit,” she says.

“I don’t always have a plan for the colours immediately. It comes to me. I usually put down two coats for good opacity. Outlining the shapes in black brings out the vibrancy of



Kimberley Laspa with her work “Lines in Nature 3.”

the colours,” she adds.

Her desire for painting comes from a love for expressing and portraying what she sees in nature and she derives inspiration from her travels and local scenery – and other artists.

She hopes each viewer sees something different.

“I would like people to look and think about the simple shapes and the colours and how they might feel about it.”

The opening reception for Laspa’s show is Sunday, April 2, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Information about the show can be found at [niagarapumphouse.ca/exhibitions](http://niagarapumphouse.ca/exhibitions).

## Lizards, crocs and snakes – oh my!

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Legless lizards, a crocodilian and corn snakes – all of those and more were out for kids to see on March Break.

On Tuesday morning the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library hosted a reptile show, presented by Samuel Bylsma from the Reptile Kingdom.

Based in Fonthill, the Reptile Kingdom not only does educational shows, but it rescues reptiles that can no longer be taken care of by their owners.

“I want to talk about what kind of reptiles make great pets and what kind of reptiles maybe not so great pets,” Bylsma said.

More than two dozen children and parents showed up for a chance to see, and touch, some scaly and possibly slimy reptiles.

Eight-year-old Alyssa Nickel particularly liked bearded dragon because of the way he felt – like sandpaper, she said shyly.

The family heard about



Sage Frederikson, 5, reaches out to pet one of the snakes at the reptile show at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library on Tuesday. SOMER SLOBODIAN

the show through a pamphlet handed out at St. Davids Public School, said her mom Corrie Nickel.

Bylsma brought all sizes of reptiles like corn snakes, a tiny spectacled caiman, a tortoise and a very large and very thick python snake.

“Why is it so chunky?” one child asked Bylsma.

Most kids were eager to touch the snake, while some shied away.

“The reason that she’s so chunky is because she’s got a lot of fat and muscle on her,” said Bylsma.

His favourite reptile to show the crowd is Pinto,

a spectacled caiman from the crocodilian family.

She was tiny but feisty and the crowd had to be very quiet so that she didn’t get stressed out.

“I love crocodilians. She’s so cool,” he said.

Pinto seemed to be a crowd favourite, as was Paco the redfoot turtle.



  
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 **FEATURED**

# Drag performers earn **ovations** at Ironwood

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Drag performers got a much different welcome in Niagara-on-the-Lake than a similar show received in Welland.

During a drag brunch at Welland's Vegan Hippy Chick in December, the Pride Niagara performers were greeted by a small group of protesters outside the restaurant.

During the recent Queens and Ciders night at Ironwood, they were greeted with cheers and applause.

At Ironwood, the audience sang, danced and laughed along to the stylings of Macy Manolo, Rhonda Richards and Empress Claudia Silva.

From Mariah Carey to Meghan Trainor, the three performers synched their hearts out all night, leaving guests with smiles on their faces.

It was much different than the hate the performers encountered a few months earlier.

"It was shocking, but at the same time, it's not shocking," said performer Empress Claudia Silva, who also is a member of the board of Pride Niagara.

"It's not shocking that this type of hate still exists because it's something that the queer community has to deal with all the time," Silva said.

"They don't want children knowing drag exists, that people who would like to drag or identify with that community exist until their child is 18 and can make up their own minds. They would like them to have no other option other than the hetero-norm."



Above: Macy Manolo gave the audience a little bit of TLC during her lip sync performances at Queens and Cider at Ironwood. Left: The "Queen Mother of Drag" Rhonda Richards made a special appearance. Right: Empress Claudia Silva stunned the audience with her vibrant outfits and even more vibrant one-liners. JULIA SACCO



Silva said the people protesting outside the Vegan Hippy Chick were from Kitchener, Hamilton, Toronto and Stoney Creek and are constantly trying to erase the queer community.

"I think they thought that with a smaller municipality (like Welland), they would have a better chance of being the bullies, but they were drastically outnumbered," said Silva.

Their NOTL performance was met only with praise.

"I thought it was beautiful. We actually had a lot of people that are part of the queer community that live in NOTL that we don't usually see at other events," Silva said.

"Having an event where they can say, 'Oh I feel represented here. This is my space right now,' that was great."



Partnering with Ironwood for Queens and Ciders was an especially positive experience, Silva said. The performers didn't have to reach out to Ironwood – they were sought after by the venue.

"They didn't want to just do a show and google drag queens from Toronto. They saw the significance of hiring a queer organization in Niagara, run by

queer Niagara for queer Niagara," Silva said.

In cases like municipal flag raisings, Pride Niagara usually has to approach organizations and officials first, but Silva was moved that a NOTL business showed the initiative instead.

Robyn Brown, head of marketing and events at Ironwood, said partnering with Pride Niagara was

imperative in ensuring the cider house upheld its company values.

"It's really important to us that we have a lot of diversity in our events and that we're putting it out into the public that we're a diverse and inclusive place," she said.

"We thought that a performance like a drag night would be a great way to welcome the 2SLGBTQ-IA+ community," she said.

"Also since we're starting to offer weddings, we want to put it out there that this is a safe place for everyone."

Hospitality manager Devon Ryback added that from an art curation standpoint, drag adds something special to Ironwood.

"Drag is another form of art to add to our gallery and we thought that would be important to showcase, too," she said.

Brown said a few hateful comments were posted online, but in-person the event ran smoothly with only positive feedback.

"It was actually something that we were really happy to see," she said.

"We heard there could be a bit of pushback since NOTL is a very small-town vibe, but we were happy to see that everyone was very welcoming and a lot of locals came out to support," added Ryback.

Brown said Ironwood has plans for more events in conjunction with Pride Niagara, including one in June.

"We're definitely planning to do something for Pride Month, so we will probably do a drag show and a whole pride party."

  
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# Beer celebrates NOTL's farmerettes

Continued from Front Page

"nice looking beer" with a good amount of foam and "higher carbonation, like champagne."

At a gathering last week for the release of the beer, Shawna Butts, assistant curator of the NOTL Museum, spoke about the history of the farmerettes.

"We don't always reserve a spot in the history books for what's going on on the homefront," Butts told the audience.

The world wars called many men away from their homes and left behind a "vacuum" in the labour market.

"Women from all walks of life gave up their summers to pitch in and lend a hand on farms, and they became known as the farmerettes," she said.

Farmerettes first came to Niagara on a government labour program in 1917.

Butts said there was some pushback from farmers who were reluctant to employ young, inexperienced women.

There were also objections from people who were not used to seeing women in pants.

"People couldn't imagine women not wearing skirts while farming," Butts said.

This elicited a few laughs from the audience.

"Due to the success of the program during the First World War, there was much less opposition when they were needed again during World War Two," Butts said.

There were 2,400 farmerettes in the Niagara region alone, Butts said, and they worked on farms in modern-day St. Davids, Queenston and Virgil.



Top: Aska Koabel, senior brewer with Oast, shows off a special batch brewed in honour of the farmerettes. Left: Shawna Butts shares the history of the farmerettes with a crowd of about 20 to 30 people. Right: Diners and drinkers sample Oast's latest special batch in celebration of International Women's Day. EVAN LOREE

Farming in Niagara was an attractive summer job for women at the time.

"This job allowed them to earn their own money and achieve a sense of independence," she said, adding, they "really helped crack the glass ceiling."

"So, cheers to these farmerettes and to Oast for honouring them with this beer," Butts said.

As Butts toasted, sisters Rosemary Finlayson and Charlotte MacDougall clinked glasses at their table.

The two were visiting with their partners from Mississauga.

Their mother, Jean MacDougall, worked at the Troup Family Farm in Jor-

dan Station when she was about 15, said MacDougall.

"My mom talked about it all her life," said MacDougall.

The former farmerette died last year at the age of 93 and left behind a treasure trove of stories for her children.

The sisters said their mother was given a puppy to take home with her to Sault Ste. Marie at the end of the program.

"She had so much fun being a farmerette," Finlayson said.

"She loved the tomatoes and the peaches," added MacDougall.

Her mother used to carry salt with her while picking in the fields so she could

season the tomatoes as she tasted them.

"My grandparents were mortified when she came back in September because my mother had put on so much weight," MacDougall said, bursting into laughter.

Asked where he got the idea to produce the special batch, MacNeill said he thought it was a "really neat story."

"I'm surprised that I've never heard of that story before. It kind of reminded me a little bit about the 'League of their Own,'" he said, referring to the 1992 film.

"I think all the ladies that really got behind this really appreciated it," he said, adding that Oast would "absolutely" like to do it again next year.



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.  
Category: COMPOUND WORDS

**This "Wizard of Oz" character says the only thing he's afraid of is "a lighted match."**

Last issue:

Category: WE ARE A TV FAMILY

Clue: "On the next" this sitcom, Portia de Rossi tells Jessica Walter, "Did you enjoy your meal, Mom? You drank it fast enough."

Answer: What is Arrested Development?

Answered first by: Claudia Grimwood

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Bob Wheatley, Jim Dandy, Nancy Rocca, Pam Dowling, Wade Durling, Hedy Wiebe, Alison Parsons, Patricia Fraser, Elaine Landray

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

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## Art & Blooms exhibit returns to RiverBrink

Staff  
The Lake Report

RiverBrink Art Museum and the Garden Club of Niagara are partnering for Art & Blooms 2023, their third joint venture.

On display at RiverBrink in Queenston from March 24 to 26, the event features floral designs by members of the Garden Club of Niagara, each inspired by art from the collection at RiverBrink.

And for the first time, inspiration also comes from pieces in an exhibition by a local artists group, SWFT (Supporting Women, Femme and Trans) artists.

Barbara Bedell, Garden Clubs of Ontario president and a Niagara-on-the-Lake resident, also participated in the 2011 and 2017 exhibitions.

She says creating a design inspired by a work of art

is different from making a floral design for a room, or from the work of decorating for the annual Christmas display at McFarland House.

A work of art presents a smaller focus, concentrating colour, composition, direction or sense of motion.

Grimsby's Lil Haworth was inspired by the soaring architecture in the painting "Vue de Paris" by German/French artist Olivier Foss (1920-2002). Her floral design with strong verticals and incorporated rectangular components won the Visitors Choice award.

SWFT Group artist Mori McCrae is well-known in the Niagara art community and has participated in other multimedia presentations. McCrae is eager and curious to see how an essence of her own creation will be transformed into something else.

Similarly, Rajshree Jena, whose own work is influ-

enced by folk art traditions of her native India, appreciates the concept of inspiring floral design, and is happy to be part of the event.

The weekend begins March 24 with a ticketed preview reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Garden Club floral designers and SWFT artists will be on hand.

Art & Blooms includes Breath of Spring, a floral arrangement demonstration, on March 25 at 11 a.m. by Bedell and Haworth.

And that afternoon at 3:30, art historian Penny-Lynn Cookson will speak about "The Power of the Rose" – a symbol of love and romance, religious faith, war and of hidden meanings.

From Friday through early Sunday afternoon visitors will be able to cast a vote for their favourite art and floral design pair.

For more information visit [www.riverbrink.org](http://www.riverbrink.org).



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NANCY BAILEY

# Two NOTL teams **skate to wins** in March Break Classic

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

NOTL's March Break Classic hockey tournament gives more than 40 teams the opportunity to take part in what for some is their only tourney of the year.

This past weekend the Centennial and Meridian Credit Union arenas hosted 10 Niagara-on-the-Lake home teams and 33 out-of-towners ranging from U9 rep all the way up to U18 house league.

"The atmosphere is great," said the tourney's chief organizer, Gino Patterson.

"We usually get a good turnout from the U9s because a lot of them haven't even played a tournament yet, so they come down and they're very excited."

Two Niagara-on-the-Lake teams made it to the championship final – and won, including the U13s coached by Matthew Unruh and Steve Lidstone's U15 team.

Unruh's team had an exceptional tournament,



Coach Unruh's and Cwiertniewski's U13 teams from NOTL, right, both made it to the semifinal. It was a close one, but Unruh's team won 3-2. JULIA SACCO



winning 10-1 during their final round-robin game, facing off against the other NOTL U13 squad in the semifinal and ultimately winning the championship after three overtime periods and a shootout.

"The game was really close and for them to end up

winning, it's really awesome," said hockey mom Stephanie Tribe.

Tribe said her son Ty Sherlock, who was named MVP, was thrilled and excited.

Unruh said that the team had high hopes going into the tournament and now

they're hyped up for more competition.

"This team had a really great season. We're actually still looking forward to going to the semifinals in our league championship."

"We met (the other NOTL U13s) in the semifinals so there was some good

friendly competition. Half of those kids are on the select team I coach, so we were also making sure nobody got hurt during the game," Unruh joked.

The tournament was a great success for all teams involved and Patterson extended a thank you to all

the volunteers and helping hands for making it all possible yet again.

"We have a great community, the mayor was out flipping burgers, and Jo Zambito was out there again running the show at the barbecue. It was a great weekend."

## Take the tourism strategy survey

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake recognizes the importance of a comprehensive Tourism Strategy that will provide a foundational framework for a sustainable tourism economy.

With this, the Town, along with the CBRE Tourism Consulting team, are soliciting feedback from all residents and visitors via two separate surveys. The intent of the surveys is to help guide the Tourism Strategy process with input from those who live in and visit the Town.

The surveys will be open from Wednesday, March 15, to Wednesday, April 5.

Residents and visitors of Niagara-on-the-Lake can participate. Registration for both surveys is required. Participate for a chance to win \$50!

Take the survey at [jointheconversationnotl.org/tourism-strategy](http://jointheconversationnotl.org/tourism-strategy).



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# NOTL wrestler dislocates shoulder at nationals

Continued from Front Page

ing against his opponent.

Trotman, looking for the take down, rolled to the left and took Gatta with him.

Gatta attempted to stabilize his position by placing his left hand farther from his body.

It didn't work.

Trotman rolled over Gatta's left side, trapping the younger wrestler's arm between the floor and his body.

The torque on Gatta's elbow mounted with Trotman's motion and that's when Gatta heard what he described as four distinct snaps.

"It was bad," he said.

Bad enough to be his worst athletic injury and bad enough to put him in a cast for the next four to six weeks.

Gatta said it felt exactly as you might imagine it would – "getting your arm snapped behind you." But it was more scary than painful.

What scares the young wrestler more is the long-term toll from such an injury.

Serious injuries like this one could "stay with me my

whole life," making him wonder, if only briefly, it all is "worth it."

Fears aside, he intends to keep wrestling.

"I'm going to Brock. I got accepted," he said, adding that he's been talking to the coaches at the university about his future weight class.

**"Funny thing is this same injury happened to my brother when he was wrestling at about my age as well."**

Gatta already practises with the wrestlers at Brock and feels committed to his journey as a wrestler.

He even describes his future physiotherapy like it's meant to get him back into competitive shape.

Gatta is in Myrtle Beach now with a friend, unwinding from his victory at OFSAA and his injury at the nationals.

"I had to get used to sleeping comfortably on it," he said.

"I'm doing everything a little bit slower than the rest of them," he added.

Gatta remembers what happened on the mat in Waterloo pretty clearly, despite getting a little woozy at one point.

"I look up and I see the medic running over and she's yelling at me not to



NOTL's Zubin Gatta, right, wrestles an opponent at the OFSAA championships, where he won gold. SUPPLIED

look at my arm, look away," he said.

His dad got to the mat at around the same time.

"I just tell him to tell my mom that I'm fine," Gatta said, adding he didn't want his mom to panic.

The medics on scene tried to pop his elbow back into place but it didn't work, so Gatta ended up leaving in the back of an ambulance.

When they lay him down to wait for the ambulance, "everything starts going

quiet and muffled," like he was about to pass out.

"My dad was with me the whole time. He kept telling me – like – keep breathing," Gatta said.

"It helped a lot."

It was about five hours from injury to operation.

"It was right in the beginning of that snowstorm that we got, so the ambulance was going a little slow."

In the summer, while competing in the summer games, Gatta sustained an injury to the same elbow while wres-

tling Eekeeluaq Avalak in the semifinals of the men's 52-kilogram weight class.

The latest setback is unrelated to his previous injuries, he said.

"Funny thing is this same injury happened to my brother when he was wrestling at about my age as well."

His brother Cyrus told him to be prepared for when the cast comes off because his arm will be "pretty weak."

He said his father Kekoo, who coaches the Brock Bad-

gers junior wrestling team, has been very helpful and supportive.

"I'm gonna have to work really hard at the physio," Gatta said, paraphrasing the advice of his family.

The day after his injury, Gatta hopped in a car with some friends for the 13-hour ride to South Carolina.

Despite the seriousness of his injury, he thinks he's pretty lucky.

"There's people that have lost limbs, so I'm lucky enough that I got mine."

## Three NOTL skaters qualify for provincials

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Three members of the NOTL Skating Club have qualified to compete in the Skate Ontario provincial championships.

Ashleen Hale, Samantha Frydryk and Ophelia Xie will skate in the competition set for the Stratford Rotary Complex from March 24 to 26.

Their performances extended the club's tradition of having skaters compete in the Ontario championships every year for more than two decades, said spokesperson Darlene Dortono.

The only years missed were 2020 and 2021, when COVID cancelled the competition.

Hale qualified in both her events – STAR 9 O14 Women and Gold Women.

At the end of the qualifying round, the Niagara-on-the-Lake teenager was ranked number 1 in Ontario in STAR 9 O14 Women and fifth in the province in Gold Women.



NOTL Skating Club members Ashleen Hale, Samantha Frydryk, Ophelia Xie will compete in the provincial championships. SUPPLIED

At last year's provincials, Hale finished third in Gold Women and fourth in STAR 9, while Xie was eighth in the STAR 5 U13 Women event.

Those results earned them spots on the Skate Ontario development team, said Dortono.

That meant they could attend a development camp and train with Skate Canada technical specialists and elite-level athletes.

Frydryk, from St. Catharines, is making her first

trip to the provincials and ranked 24th in the STAR 5 O13 category.

Xie, from Niagara Falls, finished 33rd in her STAR 6 Women's event to qualify for Stratford.

The three skaters all are coached by Judi Boyle-Krzeczkowski, the NOTL club's director of skating programs.

"These girls are terrific role models within the club," Dortono said.

"On top of their four to five days per week train-

ing schedule, they also volunteer their time four to five per week as on-ice program assistants for our CanSkate programs," she added.

In addition, they are top students at school and are involved in other extracurricular activities, she said.

The provincial competition will be live-streamed again this year and, once expected skating times are available, the NOTL club will post links on its Facebook page.

## NOTL pickleball tourney attracts 260 competitors

Staff  
The Lake Report

The NOTL Pickleball Club now has 260 players – from 18 to 84 – signed up for its inaugural international tournament in June.

"With so many players, plus husbands and wives, the tournament will bring major benefits to the town as a whole," said John Hindle, co-chair for the event.

"It's rewarding to see how pickleball in this case is dovetailing perfectly with NOTL's well-known image as a tourist venue."

Players from as far away as Alaska, California, Florida and New York will join competitors from across Niagara and the NOTL club.

There will be about 180 teams spread across the men's, women's and mixed doubles events – as well as three age brackets and three skill level categories.

The club is partnering

with Cogeco YourTV to televise the professional exhibition matches on Friday, June 9, and tournament games on June 10 and 11.

The Lake Report is the event's major print media sponsor. Several local corporate sponsors have signed on, including Quinn Wealth Management, the 2024 Virgil Stampede, Eye Wellness, One Earth, Sandtrap Bar & Grill, Hotel 124Q, Bella Terra Vineyards and Selkirk.

And more sponsors are welcome, Hindle said.

The NOTL Pickleball Classic begins with the professional exhibition matches on June 9, "an excellent opportunity for the audience to see just how the game is played at the top level, in this case by eight of Ontario's top professionals," co-chair Ian Lagden said.

Tickets for that night are \$10. Admission is free for all the weekend matches on June 10 and 11.





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# No end of ways to continue enjoying garden **in winter**



## **GROWING TOGETHER**

Joanne Young  
Columnist

Have you had enough of winter yet?

I know we all are eagerly awaiting spring and, for most of us, it's just not coming fast enough.

With the heavy snowfall last week, though, I am reminded of just how beautiful the garden can be in the winter.

When you think about it, we pack up our gardens by late October/early November and really don't give them a second thought until March or April.

It is a shame to think that we do not appreciate our outdoor spaces for five months of the year if only through the window. Here are some ways to make

your backyard more of a winter wonderland.

One way to bring life into your garden in winter is by hanging some bird feeders where you can see them from inside. I love to sit and watch the birds come and go and sometimes even fight over the food.

It's entertaining and makes me wonder how such tiny creatures can tolerate such cold temperatures when we complain about any slight chill.

Even better than bird feeders is adding native plants that will provide berries or seed heads in the winter.

Not only will they provide food for the birds but they can also add beauty.

Some of the native shrubs that will provide berries into the winter are Highbush Cranberry Viburnum (*Viburnum trilobum*), Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) and Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*).

Just seeing the birds sneak into the garden to steal some berries brings me a lot of joy.

Some of the native perennials that have interesting seedheads for the winter



**PHOTO GALLERY**  
See more pictures at niagaranow.com

Plants with berries or seeds can attract birds and add a bit of colour to your winter garden.

are coneflowers (*Echinacea*), hyssop (*Agastache*), asters (*Symphotrichum*), bee-balm (*Monarda*), Joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*), black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*) and turtlehead (*Chelone*).

Birds are more quickly attracted to native species they are familiar with.

When you leave the seed heads there for the winter it not only attracts the

birds but the remaining leaves and stalks also act as a haven for beneficial pollinators.

Several butterfly and bee species use plant debris for overwintering. With an increased awareness of the need to protect our pollinators wherever possible, now is the time to rethink the traditional autumn ritual of clear-cutting our perennial gardens.

Ornamental grasses are also great plants to leaves up in your garden all winter as the seeds provide food for birds and the dried blades add a different texture to the landscape. Even the sound of the blades rustling in the winter wind provides an additional element.

The most obvious way, of course, to add interest to your garden in winter is

to make sure that you have included some evergreens.

They come in different shapes, sizes and textures – from small, short needles to large-leaf rhododendrons. The frost, snow and icicles are added bonuses.

Even if you are not a fan of evergreens, a couple of well-placed shrubs can make quite an impact. Whether you have a sunny or a shady location, the choices are many.

Another way of making the most of your garden in winter is by adding a fire pit.

They are becoming more and more popular in the home landscape and can be used year-round. They are great to gather friends and family around to enjoy some hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows. It's a great way to spend a wintry day.

So until spring officially arrives (next week, officially) and we can get back out in our gardens, reflect on how you can extend the pleasure you get from your garden.

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



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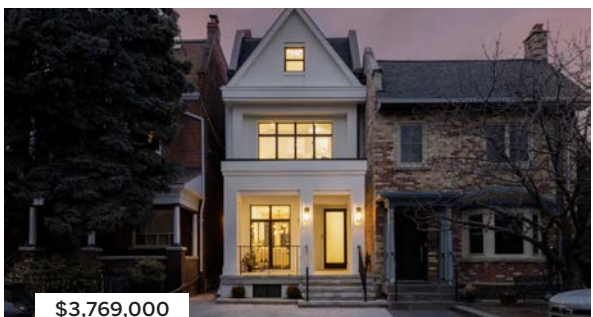
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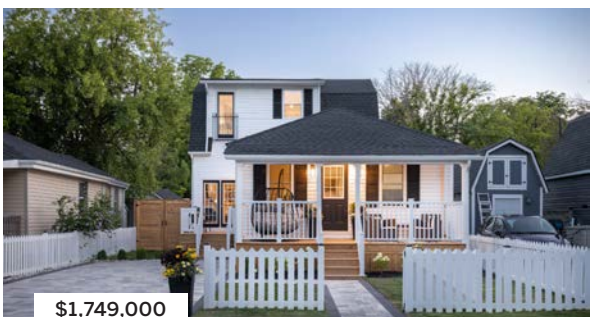
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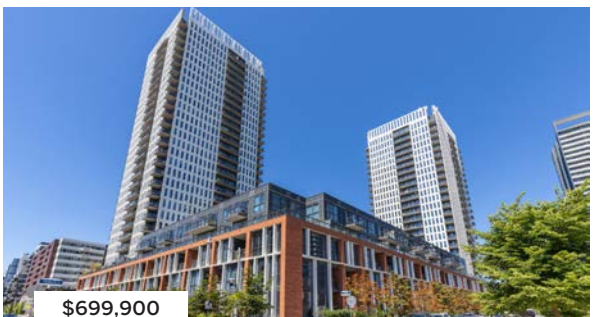


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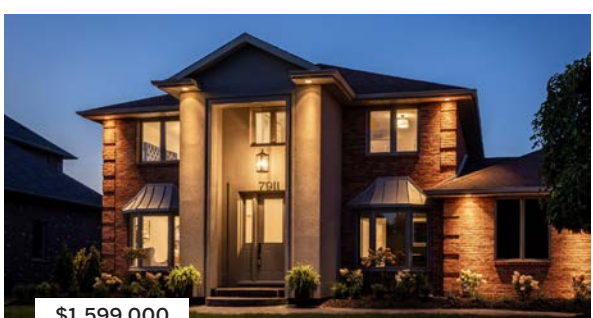
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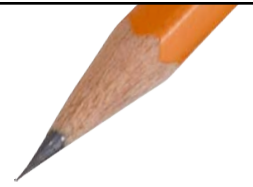
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*Have some fun*

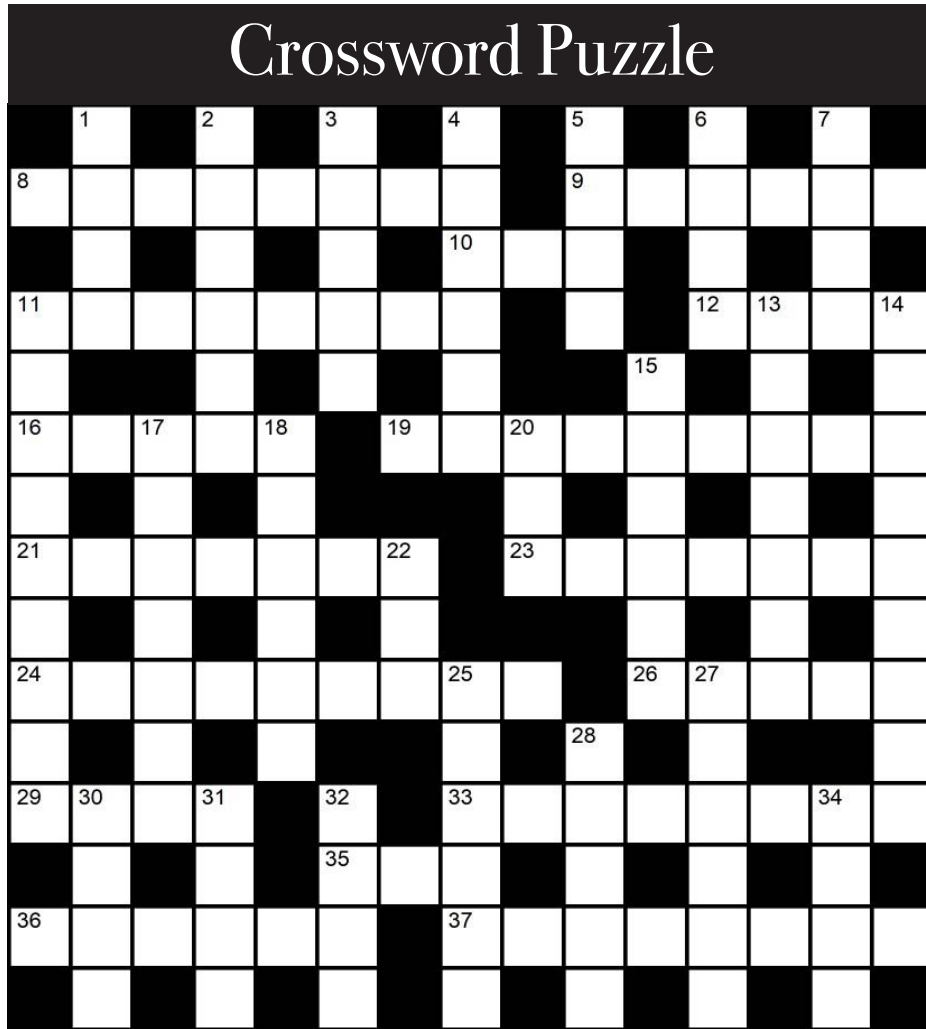


**Across**

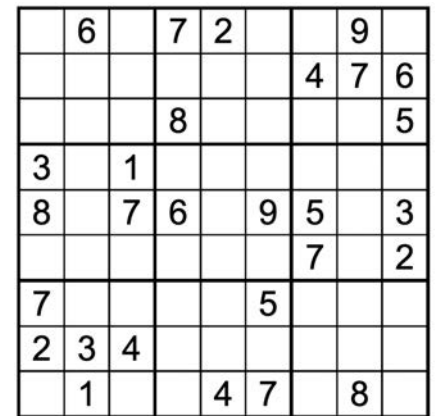
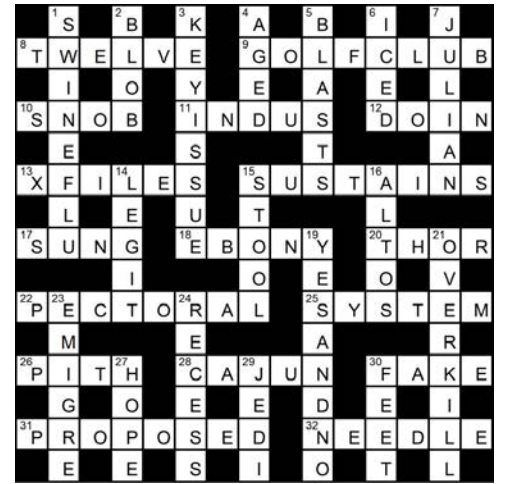
- 8. Statuette (8)
- 9. Loudness (6)
- 10. Very small (3)
- 11. Eurasian religious symbol, now with appalling associations (8)
- 12. Belle's boyfriend (4)
- 16. Alleviates (5)
- 19. Numbed with fear (9)
- 21. It supplies tees and caddies (3,4)
- 23. Mythical horseman? (7)
- 24. Father of North Korea's 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)



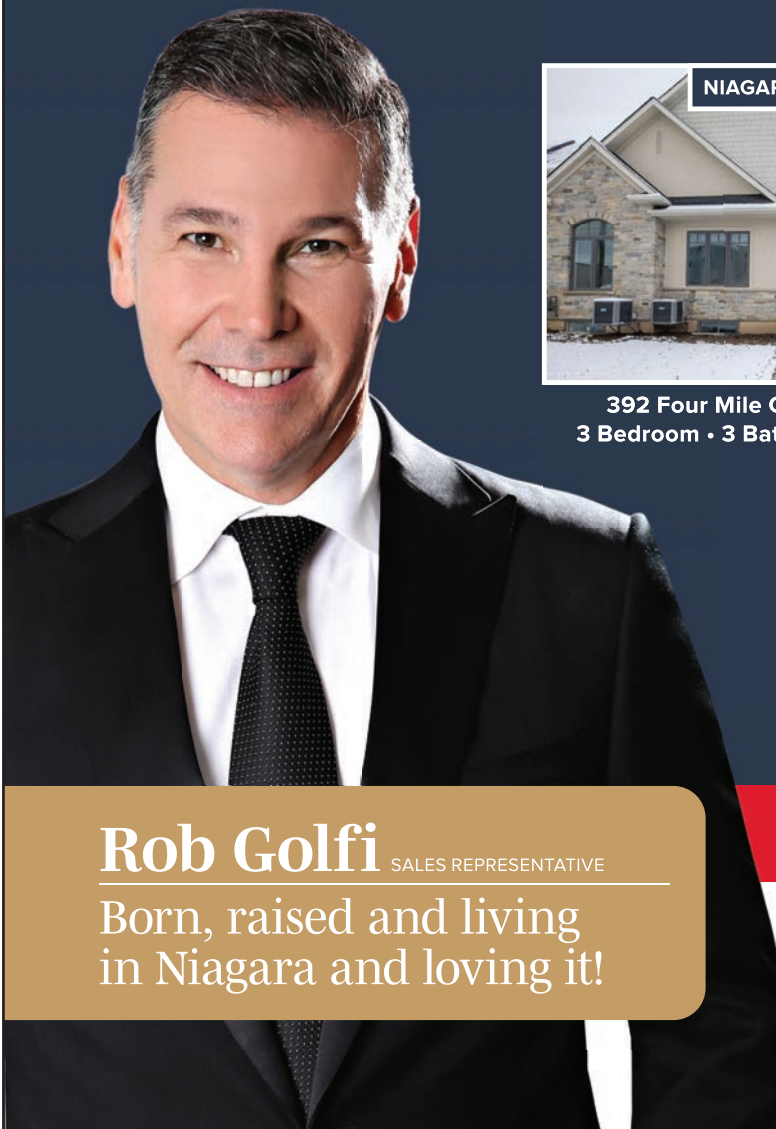
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# Progress in treating **brain tumours** and berry aneurysms



**DR. BROWN**

Dr. William Brown  
Special to The Lake Report

One of the most common benign brain tumours involves the vestibular nerve. During my training and early practice years, these were major challenges for neurosurgeons because there were no CT and MRI scans, and most of these tumours were discovered late when they were large and hard to deal with.

In their late stages, some of those large tumours were big enough to cause deafness, loss of sensation in the face, facial paralysis and clumsy movement in the limbs, all on the same side as the tumour – plus loss of balance walking.

Located in the space between the back of the temporal bone, brainstem and cerebellum, those large tumours were hard to take

out without further damaging the cochlear (hearing) division of the same nerve, injuring neighbouring cranial nerves or even the brainstem, sometimes with severe disabling or even fatal consequences.

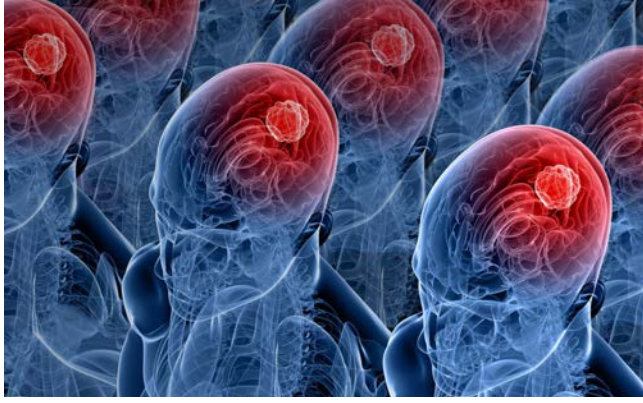
The crowded nature of the surgical field made them challenging for the best of neurosurgeons.

Fast-forward 40 years to today – most vestibular schwannomas are much smaller and often picked up incidentally by CT and MRI examinations carried out for other reasons.

These days when small vestibular schwannomas are found unassociated with symptoms or perhaps only a little deafness on the affected side, the question is often whether surgery is necessary.

The wiser course would be to wait, following the patient and repeating MRI studies to see whether the tumour grows and begins to produce significant symptoms.

Roughly half such small tumours increase a little in size. Even with somewhat larger tumours, especially in older patients, many surgeons and physicians



Science has made progress on the treatment of brain tumours, says columnist Bill Brown.

take a wait-and-see attitude because many grow slowly enough that they probably won't present much of a problem in the patient's lifetime.

There is another option – radiosurgery, one version of which is aptly called the "gamma knife."

As the name implies, these techniques involve focusing radiation on the tumour with as little spillover into healthy tissue as possible. As you might guess, radiosurgery works best for smallish tumours – less than three centimetres in diameter.

These days surgery is usually a team effort, which involves specialists in ENT (ear, nose and throat) and

neurosurgery, with a special expertise in excising these tumours, especially the bigger, more challenging ones.

Surgery is often carried out with monitoring of the nearby cranial nerves to minimize injury to hearing and facial movement, as well as monitoring the integrity of the brainstem.

The larger the tumour, the greater the surgical risk to all neighbouring structures. Sometimes it's impossible to avoid injuring the facial nerve and/or vestibular nerves because these are often buried in the tumour and hard to tease out.

Most of the time with the bigger tumours, complete removal is impossible – there's too much risk, which means

the tumour may regrow, usually slowly.

Despite the challenges posed by the bigger tumours, the outcomes are much better than even the best neurosurgeons were able to accomplish years ago. That's progress.

The evolution of the assessment and management of these tumours is similar to other changes in neurosurgery and more broadly in medicine over my career.

One example involves the treatment of berry aneurysms at the base of the brain. Rupture of a berry aneurysm can be devastating for patients depending on its location and the extent of the hemorrhaging that occurs.

Forty-years ago, once the acute situation settled down, surgeons usually clipped the base of the aneurysm, a manoeuvre that was tricky because at any moment the aneurysm might rupture, creating a nightmare for the less skilful.

That was bad enough, but clipping aneurysms at the base of the brain was especially tricky because the view was often limited and it was all too easy to fail to see tiny arterial branches

feeding the brainstem. If they were clipped by mistake, it was usually disastrous because of the ensuing brainstem stroke.

In London, Ont., we had one of the best surgeons in the world at carrying out such high-risk surgery – Dr. Charles Drake. He was a hero of mine because of his excellent judgment, skill and lovely manner with his patients

The field changed in the late 1980s when surgery from within the artery became possible by threading a catheter into an artery in the groin all the way up to the site of the aneurysm and fixing it from within by releasing a coil.

It was transformational and has become the standard way of treating most berry aneurysms and vascular malformations involving the brain.

Two examples of revolutions in neurosurgery in my time that transformed care – with more to come.

*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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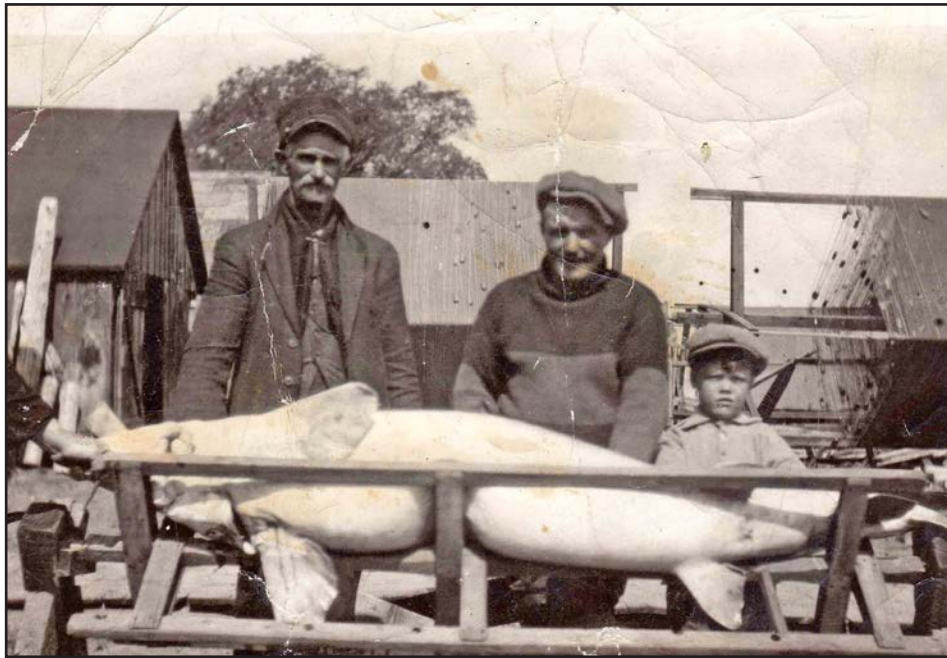
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## Fishing for sturgeon in Niagara River

This circa 1920s photograph is of two local fishermen, William Ball and Jim “Pud” Patterson, with a young child and a sturgeon caught in the Niagara River. Lake Sturgeon are native to the Great Lakes Basin and have been called a living dinosaur. Some say they look part shark and part alligator. They were initially viewed as a pest as they would often damage fishing gear. Their economic importance was discovered in the 1850s and they were heavily fished until the early 1900s. Sturgeon have a life span of 50 to 100 years and have been known to grow up to six feet long. They are now an endangered species.

### Obituary

## Isobel Chapman



CHAPMAN, Isobel  
1932 – 2023  
CHAPMAN, Isobel Leonard (b. Aug. 1, 1932), passed peacefully on March 1, 2023 in her 91st year after a long, happy life filled with family, friends and accomplishments. She was predeceased by her husband Donald Nelson Chapman (August 2020). Survived by her sister Doreen Valleau,

predeceased by her mother and father Elizabeth and Duncan McColl, her sisters Jean Tyson and Heather Burr. She is loved and remembered by her children Reid and Susan, Lisa and Patrick, Gregory and Sarah, and her dear grandchildren, Lloyd, Juliette, Christopher, Ryan and Abigail, and her many cousins, nieces and nephews across Canada.

*“And my heart is warm  
Midst winter’s harm  
Rest then and rest  
And think of the best.”*

The family would also like to thank the staff at Pleasant Manor in Virgil, the team from Rose Hill Lane, and Dr. Christine Bertothy and staff for their superb care. Arrangements have been entrusted to Morse & Son Funeral Home, 5917 Main St., Niagara Falls. A private family service will take place at a later date. In lieu of flowers, for anyone who wishes, please make a donation to a charity of your choice. Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at [www.morseandson.com](http://www.morseandson.com)



## Broken glass on Commons off-leash trail

A reader of The Lake Report found shards of broken glass strewn along the off-leash pathway at the Commons near Butler’s Barracks this week and picked up a few handfuls. Pieces were on the path and in the mud and snow alongside it. Pet owners were warned to be careful and check their dogs’ paws for tiny slivers. The reader suggested it didn’t look like an accidental bottle drop. These bits were found near the intersection of Brock Road Trail and Athlone Road Trail in the northwest corner of the dog-walking area.

## HORSING AROUND ON MARCH BREAK



Eleven kids are registered in Benchview Equestrian’s March Break camp. The camp includes crafts, horsemanship and two hours of riding. Pictured from top are: Hazel Lackapelle, 9, (riding Obom), Clara Ritchie, 9, (on Charlie), Adalyn Lackapelle, 5, (riding Toby) and Lian Skilnyk, 10, (aboard Bal). SOMER SLOBODIAN

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