



## Chief librarian **fired** over column in The Lake Report

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Cathy Simpson, the CEO of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, was fired Tuesday morning over the controversial content of an

op-ed column published by The Lake Report.

The Feb. 22 opinion piece, "Censorship and what we are allowed to read," focused on Freedom to Read Week, but drew strong criticism from a few in the community

over its promotion of some of the principles espoused by the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR).

The column prompted the library board to suspend Simpson on March 8, not

long after she returned from vacation, chair Daryl Novak said.

"Cathy has a right to free speech. Her right to free speech needs to be protected. That's not the issue," he said in an interview.

"There was never for a split second any issue about Cathy's rights to free speech as an individual. However, our rights to free speech get curtailed somewhat when



Continued on Page 5 Cathy Simpson.

## Tickets? Oh yes, readers got **speed cam** tickets

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

When we asked last week if any readers had received a surprise in the mail in the form of a ticket for speeding through the school zone outside Crossroads Public School in Virgil, wow, did we hear from you.

The automated speed camera has been operating for about two months now but Niagara Region, which installed it, hasn't been too forthcoming about how much over the limit you need to be going in order to get dinged.

But from the tickets we've heard about, it seems that around 11 km/h over the limit is threshold.

And dozens of people are receiving fines from \$75 (for 51 in a 40 km/h zone) to \$257.50 for 27 over in the same zone. One unlucky speeder got two tickets, totalling about \$325.

Continued on Page 6

## Is this NOTL's **most senior** citizen?

Almost 154 in dog years, little Chico lives large on steak and chicken diet



Chico the Bichon Frisé is about 22 years old, according to his family. They credit a diet of healthy food for his long life. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Julia Sacco | The Lake Report

**E**sther Battista's family pet Chico is almost 154 years old. In dog years.

Even among Niagara-on-the-Lake's famously aging populace, that is far older than any other resident.

Battista's family got the Bichon Frisé when she was just 11 years old and now she's turning 32, married with a baby — and Chico is still a part of the family.

His exact age is unclear. Records from examinations of

Chico's molars during one of his first veterinary visits estimate he was born in October 2003, making him almost 21. But Battista says he is even older.

Because in February 2003, when her family got Chico

through an ad in the Toronto Star, the breeder said he was already two to three months old, making him nearly 22 in human years.

Continued on Page 7

## Rural fires present **unique** challenges for firefighters: Plato

Richard Hutton  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

With its many farms and wineries, Niagara-on-the-Lake is a town with deep agricultural roots.

And with that comes the risk of fires that threaten buildings, livestock and the livelihoods of farmers.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, firefighters can face numerous challenges when it comes to fighting rural fires.

"In rural areas in general ... a water source is the first thing we think of," said fire chief Jay Plato.

With that in mind, the town invested in two new tankers two years ago — at a cost of \$425,000 each —

for the volunteer department. The trucks were delivered in 2023.

The trucks help out immensely in places where there are no hydrants available.

Such was the case for a

fire earlier this year at a rural property at Lakeshore Road and Firelane 13.

One of the new tankers and portable water pond were deployed to ensure



Continued on Page 3 Fire chief Jay Plato.



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# 160 homes could replace rural woodlot in Virgil

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A new subdivision plan is in the works for Virgil, which may mean the death of up to 800 trees.

Developer Grey Forest Homes plans to put 160 homes on a lot currently used as a growth operation for coniferous trees and which historically has been used as farmland.

The lot consists of some land without an address well as land at 1537 Concession 6 and 448 Line 2.

The developer wants to build 52 single-family units, six on-street townhouses and 102 units in block townhouses.

The build-out represents the second of two phases for the Konik Estates subdivision.

Residents heard the details of the planned subdivision at a virtual open house on Monday night – and some shared they weren't happy with the plans.

"I just want to express how much of a shame it is to be removing 800 mature trees in an area that doesn't



A map of the proposed subdivision. SOURCED

have a lot of mature trees," said resident Catherine Lowrey.

Lowrey said the trees are home to thousands of nesting birds and disputed the claim that the tree removal poses no significant threat to wildlife.

During the meeting, Brian Marshall, resident and Lake Report columnist, said this area is home to the red-headed woodpecker, a threatened and endangered species.

In May 2021, the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario listed the red-headed wood-

pecker as endangered in Ontario, at the time reporting that the species is down to approximately 6,000 individuals across North America.

A planner from Upper Canada Consultants, William Heikoop, said researchers didn't record any sightings of the species when conducting its assessment but would look into it further.

Lowrey asked why the town's forestry bylaws do not apply and if the developer would have to pay to cut down each tree.

Heikoop, who the devel-

oper retained to assist with the project proposal, said environmental policies flow down from the region.

These dictate whether forests and woodlands require protection.

The site did not meet the region's "significant woodlot" criteria and therefore is not protected, he said.

The developer is not "exempt" from the town's tree bylaw though, he said, and would have to get permits from the town to cut them down.

"It would be very difficult to accommodate those existing trees while we try

and ensure there's proper swales and drainage," Heikoop said.

Lowrey estimated it would cost up to \$200,000 to cut them down but Heikoop said he would not speculate on the cost of the cuttings.

Tanya Rice, a Line 2 Road resident, was more concerned about traffic.

She suggested the traffic study submitted with the application, which was completed in December, is out of date.

Traffic down Line 2 has increased since Niagara Region placed a speed camera on Niagara Stone Road and has "become a speeding zone," she said, as drivers cut through the street to avoid the speed camera.

She asked if the developer would build fewer homes on Line 2 to reduce the additional impact on traffic levels.

Heikoop said there was not much he and his team could do to address her concerns.

The town is planning to upgrade Line 2 Road and would be introducing additional traffic safety mea-

asures as part of the future roadwork, he said.

There are also no plans to build a park in the new subdivision, Heikoop said, because the town asked for cash instead of parkland and those funds would be used to upgrade existing parks.

Marshall was most concerned about drainage in the future subdivision.

Heikoop explained when Grey Forest Homes designed the first half of Konik Estates, the town wanted only one stormwater management facility for the subdivision.

Marshall said stormwater on Concession 6 flows back towards the proposed development.

The resident said he recalled plans for swales that would redirect flood water back toward the stormwater management facility in the first phase of the subdivision.

The developer is planning to construct swales in the rear yards of the houses, Heikoop confirmed, and it plans to build on Concession 6 which would help manage the stormwater.

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## Signs point to family continuing Jeleel Stewart appeal, legal rep says

Richard Hutton  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

The fight to compensate a seasonal farmworker injured on the job in Niagara-on-the-Lake is likely to continue despite the man's death earlier this year.

David Arruda of the Toronto-based IAVGO Community Legal Clinic was to represent the man, Jeleel Stewart, 51, at a hearing that was scheduled for last month.

Stewart's latest appeal was to be heard on Feb. 1 but after years of declining health precipitating from his workplace injury, he died on Jan. 24, just days before his hearing.

Arruda has spoken with Stewart's widow, Suzan, and they are contemplating what to do next.

"Although it's not the norm, it's not uncommon for the estate to take on the

case," Arruda said.

"What we need to do is get confirmation from (his) family. I don't think, in theory, that will be a problem. We're just trying to figure out how to proceed."

Stewart was in the midst of appealing a previous Workplace Safety and Insurance Board decision, denying the Jamaican man compensation for an injury he sustained while working at Mori Nurseries in 2008.

He was seriously injured in an incident involving a forklift, resulting in his left hand being crushed, severing tendons and nerves.

He was subsequently denied compensation by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and two subsequent appeals were denied by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal.

New life was breathed into Stewart's case, however, when the tribunal ruled in

favour of four other injured seasonal workers, including one who was working in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In the case involving the four workers, the tribunal said the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board was wrong to deny claims to compensation by the workers who were hired under the federal Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and that the workers were entitled to proper loss-of-earnings benefits and retraining support.

In response to the decision, the board has launched a review of the policy. Earlier this month, board spokesperson Marianna Ciappa said that the review is ongoing.

Stewart's Feb. 1 hearing was originally scheduled for April 9 but was moved up due to his declining health.

NOTL residents Jane Andres and Jodie Godwin have been advocating on behalf



Jeleel Stewart.

of Stewart. The pair first met him at a church service back in 2007 and have helped support his family since he was injured.

"Jodie and I are preparing an impact statement which we will send to IAVGO and will be available when his appeal is being presented," Andres said.

Arruda, meanwhile, said IAVGO would look into survivor benefits for Suzan.

The main thing, he said, will be getting the appropriate documents to Stewart's family and getting them filled out.

"If (Suzan) is the estate, it's likely that she gets the award," Arruda said.

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## Town adds two new tankers to fire fleet

Continued from Front Page

firefighters had what they needed to conquer the blaze.

The added pumpers were necessary, given NOTL's mix of urban and rural areas.

Sometimes, the department can rely on help from nearby crews in Niagara Falls and St. Catharines but neither of those, however, have a pumper available that is close enough.

"The closest one would be coming from Thorold and that is far," Plato said.

According to the latest statistics available from the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal, there were 152 barn fires in the province in 2021, causing just over \$54 million in damages.

In NOTL, converted barns are more of a problem than those still being utilized for agriculture, Plato said.

"That's a bigger concern. We had a pretty big fire (on a former chicken farm) where the barn had been converted to storage."

The fire Plato referenced took place at three converted barns that housed



NOTL Fire and Emergency Services use portable ponds as a water source, instead of fire hydrants, when fighting back flames in rural parts of town. FILE

several businesses back in 2021.

A faulty electrical system was found to be the cause of the blaze, which caused \$2.5 million in damage.

Other challenges in situations involving rural fires can be access for firefighters. "Fire lanes can be tricky to get down," he said.

To raise awareness of the issue of barn fires, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has embarked on a campaign with the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs highlighting the importance of fire safety and prevention.

As a part of the campaign, the federation hopes to have members from local fire departments join organizational representatives at farm shows across the province to engage directly with farmers about how to protect their farm buildings and livestock.

"Fire is an ever-present but preventable threat for Ontario farmers and we appreciate being able to promote and share resources about what can be done to minimize those risks to keep people, animals and buildings safe," said Drew

Spoelstra, Binbrook farmer and the agriculture federation's president.

However, NOTL does not have a program specifically tailored to farms, Plato said.

Very few farms in town, he said, are of the variety where livestock is front and centre.

"We have the vineyards, we have orchards," Plato said. "We don't have a lot of animal farms where there is livestock."

Instead, the department approaches fire safety by conducting risk assessments for different areas in town.

Using the Old Town district as an example, a fire on Queen Street could have catastrophic consequences.

"Losing Queen Street could be devastating," he said, adding that tourism contributes a lot to the local economy.

He counts the town as being fortunate because large barn fires are few and far between.

"We're fortunate we haven't had a lot of huge farming properties that have had issues," Plato said.

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## Expansion will make museum **accessible**



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

Richard Hutton  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

There aren't too many things Ben Buholtz likes better than visiting his local museum.

He loves it so much, in fact, that he became a member of the board of directors for the Niagara Historical Society, which operates the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum on Castlereagh Street.

But as it stands right now, Buholtz is unable to take in the whole museum experience.

He has mobility issues and relies on a wheelchair to get around.

Until accessibility improvements are made at the museum, it will remain that way for the Niagara-on-the-Lake resident and others with accessibility needs.

"One of the big challenges is just getting in the front door," he said. "This one isn't too bad but I don't know how many places in Niagara we've been to.... There's no accessibility at all."

He'd also like to see improvements made to the width of doorways inside the building as well.

"Getting through is hard, especially with a monster like this thing," he said, drawing attention to his wheelchair.

Visiting the museum's upper galleries is also a challenge, as the only access to them is via stairs.

Museum managing director and curator Sarah Kaufman said this is something that will be addressed in the museum's expansion, along with several other design changes to make the museum more accessible.

"The intention with the design of the exhibits is



Ben Buholtz is a member of the NOTL Historical Society board, joined by partner, Jodey Porter, right, and NOTL Museum curator Sarah Kaufman. RICHARD HUTTON

to be accessible both for physical but visual and for hearing and such," Kaufman said. "We want to get the proper accessibility consultants to give us the advice."

Improved accessibility is one of the main drivers of expansion plans for the facility.

To that end, the museum has embarked on its Building History, Strengthening Community fundraising campaign to help finance an 8,000-square-foot expansion.

The new space will nearly double the museum's current size of 10,000 square feet, add much-needed storage and exhibition spaces and provide space to deliver programs for the community.

The expansion project will pay special attention to accessibility, with the addition of an elevator, to help the museum meet accessibility requirements by Jan. 1, 2025, as set out under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

"The big thing for me is it's not just so visitors are comfortable, but also staff who might have mobility or sight issues to be able to get

around," Kaufman said.

"To a person who has some mobility issues or sight issues, the right to independence is an important one, and we want to be able to provide that with the museum as well."

Through the campaign, the museum hopes to raise \$5 million to cover half of the \$10-million cost of the project, which will include a two-storey addition to the rear of Memorial Hall and more basement space for storage.

Buholtz's partner, Jodey Porter, hopes that one day she, too, will be able to experience the museum more fully.

Porter, a museum member, is visually impaired. While she can navigate her way to the museum on Castlereagh Street from her home a few blocks away, once she's inside, there is little that can help her take in the exhibits.

Instead, she relies on voice-activated smartphone apps.

"There are things now called Good Maps that I've used," Porter said. "If I hold my phone up, it will say straight ahead of you there are washrooms on your right or straight ahead

of you is a hallway to the exhibit hall."

Porter uses an app on her cell phone called Open My Eyes AI. Using the phone's camera, the app will describe to a tee exactly what's around her.

During the interview for this story, Porter demonstrated the app. Taking a photo inside the main entrance to the museum, the app told her the following:

"This picture was taken inside a well-lit store with bookshelves and various items on display. In the foreground, there is an elderly man seated in a motorized wheelchair."

The scene being described by the app was the museum's gift shop. The "elderly gentleman in the motorized wheelchair" was Buholtz.

"Be My Eyes is actually a worldwide network of volunteers – I think 8 million volunteers – and 300,000 blind people log on (to the app) any time of the day," Porter said.

Setting aside the accessibility act's requirements, Kaufman said, the museum is anxious to get going on making the facility accessible to all despite the fact the expansion won't be completed in time for the act's Jan. 1 deadline.

"There's no word from the government of what's happening with that if they're delaying it or whatever, because of COVID but either way, the board here and staff we all believe that accessibility needs to happen anyways," she said.

"Once everyone can get in, there's no barrier to learning about the history here in the community... I want all of them to feel comfortable and to be able to come to our programs to learn about our exhibits."

Hopes are for the expansion to be completed by 2026, which is the 100th anniversary of the death of the museum's founder, Janet Carnochan.

Donations to the campaign can be made in person at the museum, at 43 Castlereagh St., during operating hours, 1 to 5 p.m. seven days a week, or online at [canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society](http://canadahelps.org/en/charities/niagara-historical-society).

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# Controversial column sparked backlash

Continued from Front Page

we associate ourselves with an organization.”

FAIR officials couldn't be reached for comment on the criticism.

Simpson declined to discuss her termination but said the views she expressed have been misrepresented by her critics.

She also said that prior to her firing she received several messages of support from the community, professional organizations and other librarians — “but they are afraid to speak up out of fear of retribution.”

In part, Simpson's column cited what she called “hidden library censorship,” which she said takes two forms — “the vigorous defence of books promoting diversity of identity, but little to no defence of books promoting diversity of viewpoint, and the purchase of books promoting ‘progressive’ ideas over ‘traditional’ ideas.”

“I began talking with librarians who believe in library neutrality and pluralism a year ago” and learned about FAIR, she wrote.

An American organization, FAIR has been criticized by some for campaigning against diversity and inclusion programs, and fighting against anti-racism initiatives.

A few letters to the editor of The Lake Report and presentations to the library board last week have been highly critical of Simpson's references to FAIR, while others have dismissed the notion and sided with her.

Other than content related to FAIR, “the balance of (Simpson's) article, you can't really criticize,” Novak said.



Niagara-on-the-Lake Library chair Daryl Novak.

“The whole thing about intellectual freedom, about being able to choose what we look at etc.” was not a problem, he added.

As well, he noted, “Cathy was highly regarded and a lot of people are very fond of her.”

In her role as chief librarian, Simpson, 60, oversaw the growth and development of the organization for the past 11 years.

But when Simpson wrote her article as CEO of the library, it sparked “a lot of controversy” for the organization and after The Lake Report published a letter from resident Matthew French criticizing her, “all hell broke loose,” Novak said.

The implication is that what she wrote is actually the library's position, “and it wasn't,” he said.

“The board didn't have an inkling that this was being written or published,” he added.

And, “this is the first time in my memory that a staff person or CEO has ever written anything which has political leanings and political implications.”

A number of meetings were held with her over the past few weeks to discuss ways to deal with the fallout from the column, including an in camera session after

the regular monthly meeting on March 13, Novak said.

Last week she was asked to come up with a plan to “rebuild and build the confidence of the board and the confidence of the staff and move forward,” but Simpson's strategy was rejected by the board, he said.

After being unable to come to agreement on how to proceed, he said the board met again last Friday and voted unanimously to fire Simpson.

“Essentially, we realized that the relationship was broken and not fixable,” he said.

The decision was delivered on Tuesday morning in a short meeting with Novak, vice-chair Wayne Scott and an outside human resources consultant.

The library received legal advice and consulted with the Town of NOTL's human resources department prior to firing her, Novak said.

As part of their due diligence, board members also researched FAIR “and we all came to the same conclusion,” he said.

In the aftermath of the column, in addition to complaints from the public, some members of the library staff issued a letter to the board saying they were “uncomfortable” with the piece and citing their own concerns with what Simpson wrote, Novak said.

“The staff were not behind her. She basically lost the confidence of the staff,” he said.

It was then that “we knew the relationship had deteriorated so badly over time that at least two or three other senior people would quit as soon as they could,” Novak said.

He said that as part of her goal to add different

viewpoints to the library's collection, Simpson brought in some controversial books, such as “How Woke Won: The elitist movement that threatens democracy, tolerance and reason.”

“I think the what it really came down to is the way Cathy was interpreting our policies and what she wanted to do to balance the collection was at odds with what the board feels and what the staff feel in relation to our policies, and our statements on, our mission, vision and values, about equity, diversity, and so forth,” Novak said.

“That's really where the breakdown came.”

Looking ahead, he said the library might have to update its policies or add some new ones.

The board is “not in a big hurry” to hire a new CEO and has appointed library manager Laura Tait as acting CEO in the meantime, Novak said.

The library likely will bring in an outside human resources consultant to help it figure out what needs to be done differently in the future, he said.


With possible municipal amalgamation on the horizon and having to pay Simpson a sizable severance, the board will take its time to fill the job, he said. The post pays about \$120,000 annually.

Novak said he hopes the public understands why the board felt it had to dismiss Simpson.

“It's unfortunate, but it seems there was a fairly significant difference of opinion on what's appropriate social, political involvement and how that affects collections development.”

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# Newark Neighbours short on participants for porch pickup

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Cindy Grant and volunteers have been busy putting together 130 Easter hampers for clients of Newark Neighbours to be distributed on March 28.

Porch pickups will be held on Saturday, March 23 and the organization is short on

supplies needed to fill the hampers.

“Shelves are extremely bare. I don't think I've ever seen them this bare, so we are really in need of everything,” Grant told The Lake Report.

For Saturday's porch pickup, only 26 addresses have registered to help so far, compared to the usual

100 to 120 participants.

“I'm crossing my fingers that they start to flood in this week,” Grant said.

Items required for the hampers include stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, canned gravy or gravy mix, cranberry or apple juice, canned pineapple, applesauce or canned fruits, canned corn, canned green

beans, canned peas, snack crackers and cookies.

General items are always required including nonperishables and things such as household items, toiletries and condiments.

To be included in the porch pickup on March 23, call Cindy Grant at 905-468-7498 or email Newark-Neighbours1@gmail.com.



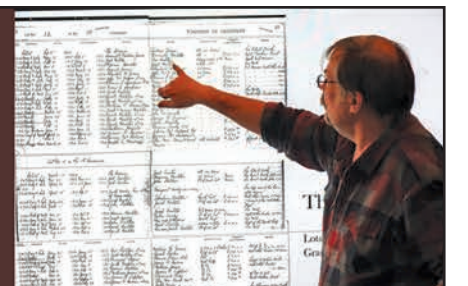
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## NEWS

### Councillors have mixed feelings on illegally paved conservation land

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report



This road was illegally built on protected land.

The issue of a roadway illegally built on conservation land in Glendale may be resolved, but it raises questions about what the town can do to protect the natural environment.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council endorsed a zoning amendment on Feb. 27 to retroactively legalize an illegal parking lot and private roadway.

The road work was done in 2018 by developer Vrancor to expand the parking lot for the Holiday Inn Express and Staybridge Suites hotels off York Road, near the QEW in Glendale.

How it all happened and why it took more than five years to resolve remains a bit of a mystery.

The town now says the work was done before the council of the day could approve it. What's not known for sure is if council at the time would have approved it.

"This was part of their phase two. And they thought that that had been approved when it had not been approved. So they just went ahead and did it," Coun. Sandra O'Connor said in an interview.

Vrancor president Darko Vranich, whose name is on the zoning application approved by council, did not respond to messages before deadline.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa said he thinks the unapproved work was likely a mistake in the process.

Now, rather than fining the developer, the town is requiring that Vrancor plant twice as many trees and shrubs as it destroyed.

They'll be planted at a nearby site to offset the loss of the conservation land that was paved over.

This is a process that's called offsetting.

"I'm normally not a fan of offsetting. I don't think it works," O'Connor in an interview.

"You can't create the same environment, particularly if there are any rare species."

Coun. Gary Burroughs agreed.

"Typically, when you've got an environmental area, you can't just move it," he said.

But developers attempt to do just that, when they plant fresh trees elsewhere to compensate for the losses caused by their projects, he said.

"You can't replace a tree,

if you've cut it down illegally," Burroughs said.

Zalepa said he was satisfied with the recommendations staff made in February.

With respect to development proposals, he said there was a "good process" in place for staff to recover lost tree growth.

But he also said he'd like to see council's desire to protect and expand the tree canopy better reflected in policy.

The current tree bylaw is a "bit of a failure," he said.

O'Connor said she remains concerned about impact on wildlife in the conservation area, though an environmental assessment commissioned by Vrancor said no at-risk species or significant habitats were harmed in the construction.

Neither Burroughs nor Zalepa were concerned the town was setting any legal precedent in its handling of the situation.

"What we need to do is fix what's wrong and move ahead doing it correctly in the future," Burroughs said.

"I think there's some responsibility on both sides to prevent it from happening in the future," he added.

But Zalepa said he did not think the situation was "identifying any broad policy needs."

"It's not something that happens a lot. So, I don't think it's a chronic issue."

evanlore@niagaranow.com

### Ticket threshold seems to be about 11 km over

Continued from Front Page

All fines include a victim surcharge and costs ranging from \$20 to \$55.

We'd like to hear from more readers about their experience. So, if you received a ticket and want to talk about it, let us know.

Email editor@niagaranow.com and include a snapshot of your ticket and tell us your story, briefly. And no, we won't publish your name — unless you ask us to.

In April, the Virgil camera is scheduled to move to York Road near St. Davids Public School.



Drivers should keep to 40 km/h if they want to avoid a ticket. EVAN LOREE

### Pleasant Manor spring bazaar is March 23

Staff  
The Lake Report

The ladies auxiliary at Pleasant Manor is holding its annual spring bazaar and bake sale on Saturday, March 23.

The event at the Virgil long-term care home will feature baked goods in the Oakview Chapel, plus a new dollar sale and tea room in the Arbourview dining room.

The sale runs from 10 till 11:30 a.m.

People should bring their own bags to the cash-only event, sale chairperson Anne Litke said.

Proceeds of the sale support any special needs that the home's managers might have, she said.

In the past, the auxiliary has helped purchase Montessori programs for residents with dementia,

supplies for social activities including tables, updated TVs in the gathering rooms as well as a sound system and a new electric keyboard, furniture for sitting areas and dining rooms, Litke said.

"And lots of plants for all the gardens. Right now we're updating the bowling alley with some new features and perhaps fixing a gazebo."



# Owners estimate family pet is 22 years old

Continued from Front Page

But one thing that's for sure, he is one old dog.

Bichon Frisés have an average lifespan of about 14 years, according to the Bichon Frisé Club of America but there have been media accounts in the U.K. and Florida of the breed living to 18 or 20 years.

And Wikipedia claims "there are reliable records in various North American surveys" documenting Bichons living up to age 21.

Which makes Chico a super senior canine citizen.

Now enjoying his twilight years, Chico still lives with Battista.

"My parents got him for me. He was a family dog but he was always my dog," she said.

In 2020, when she moved to Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake from Brampton with her husband Justin Palaio, Chico came along.

Battista chalks up Chico's long life to his sociability.

"He's a really good dog. He's always loved being around people," she said.

While in his old age he tends to keep more to him-



Esther Battista and Justin Palaio with Chico, who gets a bowl of milk before bed. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

self, Chico has always been playful and loving toward other dogs and people.

"It's funny because in the last two years I would say dogs interact with him differently. They're a lot more careful. It's like they know he's old," she said.

At home, Chico enjoys cuddling.

"He loves his comfy bed.

If you put anything on the floor that's comfy, like if you were to drop a sweater or anything that's soft he will just assume that's for him and he'll go lay on it,"

Battista said.

Like most older dogs, he sleeps a lot. His hearing is diminished and cataracts compromise his vision.

In the two or three hours a day Chico is awake, he loves to be pampered. The 10.5-pound pup will take short walks around the house and outside in the morning and at night.

Chico also happens to have a pretty special diet for a family pet.

"He's a very picky dog," Battista joked.

No ordinary dog food for this guy.

Since he was a puppy, Chico has eaten homemade meals, including steak and dark meat chicken.

"He's never really eaten kibble," Battista said.

"They're good cuts of meat, too. Some of his steaks are what I eat," Palaio joked.

As a senior, Chico gets a bowl of milk before bed every night.

He may not walk up the stairs any more, but bundled in his favourite sweaters and cuddled up with his family on the couch, Chico is still just like a pup at heart — even at 154.

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Send a letter to the editor to [editor@niagaranow.com](mailto:editor@niagaranow.com)



### PUBLIC NOTICE

## SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION IN THE CHAUTAUQUA AREA

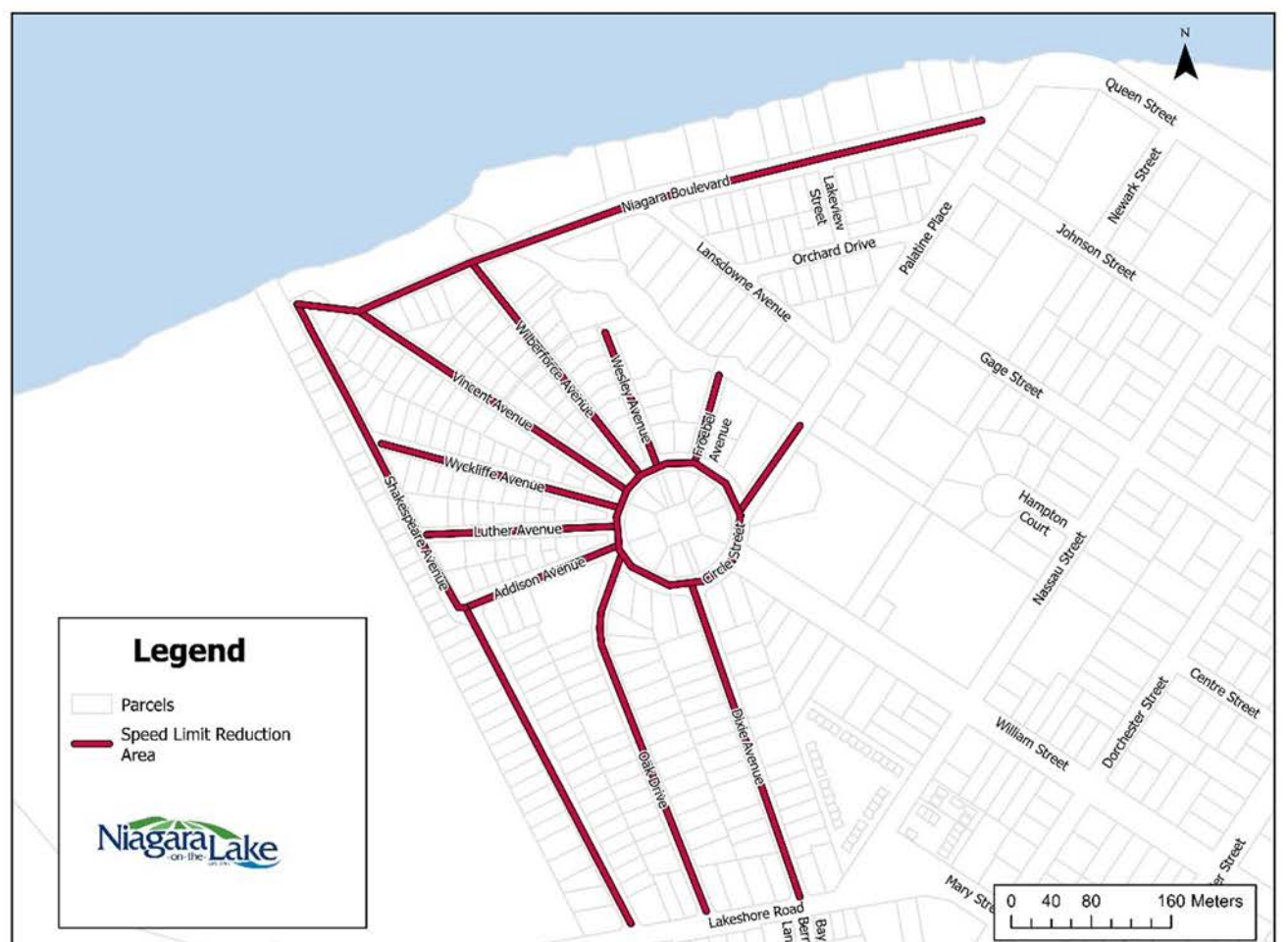
**WHAT:** The posted speed limit in the Chautauqua area will be reduced from 50km/hr to 30km/hr to enhance pedestrian safety, improve traffic flow and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

**WHEN:** The new signs will be installed on April 1 and 2, 2024, with enforcement taking effect immediately thereafter. The Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) has been informed of the impending change.

**CONTACT:** Should you have any questions, please contact Darren MacKenzie, Director of Operations, at [darren.mackenzie@notl.com](mailto:darren.mackenzie@notl.com) or by calling 905-468-3266.

**COMMUNICATION:** Notices will be placed in the local newspapers, on the Town's website and on social media channels to ensure residents and visitors are aware of the upcoming speed limit reduction and the enforcement measures in place.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation.







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**Contributed by Patty Garriock**

“Dream and give yourself permission to envision a you that you choose to be.” - Joy Page

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## Green is in for a Limited time



Danny Keyes, co-owner of Limited Distillery, used Jalapeno Moonshine in the St. Patrick's Day jalapeno margarita, a sweet and salty festive-coloured drink. JULIA SACCO

### Editorial

## They paved paradise, put up a parking lot

Kevin MacLean  
 Managing Editor

We laud and respect the hard work and countless hours for too-little pay that our elected municipal leaders put in to try to serve the best interests of our community.

It's a tough job, thankless in many ways, and decisions are second-guessed regularly by everyone from the electorate to other wannabe politicians to know-it-all newspaper editors.

More than five years ago, Vrancor, the company building the Holiday Inn Express and Staybridge Suites hotels near Glendale and the QEW, did something it shouldn't have.

It paved over protected conservation authority land to make room for an access road and an expanded parking lot. They literally paved paradise and put up a parking lot, to quote Joni Mitchell.

That was in 2018. The council led by then-Lord Mayor Betty Disero was involved in trying to get to the bottom of the situation — and failed.

To be honest, we're not sure what happened both

politically and on the ground. The Lake Report contacted both the Town of NOTL and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority at regular intervals over the past four years, published some stories about the problem early on but basically got stonewalled and told that negotiations were “ongoing.”

Unfortunately, as investigative journalists, we failed to vigorously pursue answers, as other news usurped priorities.

Time marched on and nothing was resolved.

In defence of the new council led by Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, it got stuck having to deal with something the Disero council and conservation authority should have quickly resolved years ago. But they didn't.

There's an unfortunate tradition in NOTL of kicking the can down the proverbial road and that's apparently what happened here.

With so much time having passed, holding Vrancor to account for its illegal action is nearly impossible, according to the town's chief planner. It's now been

deemed a simple mistake: “They thought the town had approved its paving plans.”

That might be true, but we have a hard time with such an explanation.

Because, really, if that was the case, why wasn't this issue resolved years ago?

More than five years since the infraction and finally there's a negotiated settlement. Five years: world wars have lasted less.

Now, the hotel developer will have to plant a slew of new shrubs and trees — twice as many as it destroyed — as compensation for its transgression.

It amounts to a stern finger wag and “don't do it again” admonition.

The company will spend several thousand dollars, perhaps, but the principle of protecting conservation land will be a casualty.

Perhaps we're dead wrong and this really is the best outcome given so much time has passed.

However, it feels like the ball was dropped by our municipality and the conservation authority — and instead a convenient “swap” known in planning jargon as “offsetting” has been agreed to.

So, we are forced to accept that there's nothing more that could have been done in the case of this illegal paving debacle.

But what of the next one? Or the one after that?

Will Niagara-on-the-Lake be able to hold future developers to account if they cross the line and do something untoward that violates planning rules or statutes?

Has the town now set a precedent for how other developers can proceed? Will “offsetting” become more of the norm when dealing with conservation land or other vulnerable properties?

We hope that is not the case and we hope that the town and other public agencies allot higher priority to policing transgressions and resolving them. But hope is a fool's errand.

“Negotiate, don't litigate” is one of the buzz terms we've heard from the current council.

We can abide by that idea in many instances. But let's not take years to do so and let's not allow developers to run roughshod over NOTL.

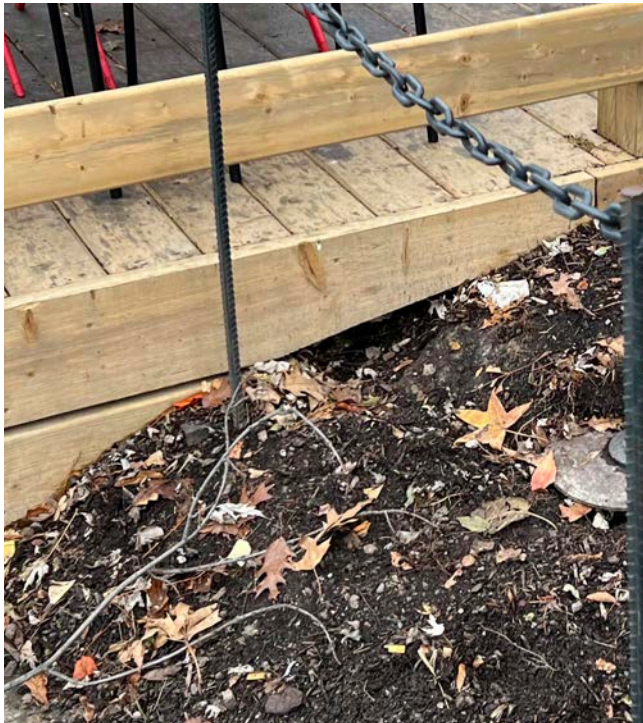
Let's not allow the tail to wag the dog.

editor@niagaranow.com

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**LETTER OF THE WEEK**



Reader Rob Bongard says NOTL's temporary patios are dirty, ugly and home to vermin like skunks. ROB BONGARD

**Temporary patios filthy and attract vermin**

Dear editor:  
 Temporary restaurant patios on Queen and King streets in Old Town NOTL are filthy, ugly, unfair, unsafe and they take up valuable parking spaces, including those for people with disabilities.

These COVID-era patios give unfair preference to half a dozen already-successful businesses, at the expense of all others in the area. They create road hazards for vehicles and pedestrians alike, because they obstruct the views of the street.

They reduce parking revenues for the town by taking over parking spots. For most days of the year, these ugly, poorly built and poorly maintained structures sit depressingly empty, providing shelter for stray garbage, skunks and

other vermin. Let's bring back the displaced flower beds, lawns, street parking, and straight, beautiful lines of Queen and King streets, by getting rid of these COVID-era blights  
*Rob Bongard  
 Toronto*

**Librarian's opinion piece was misinformed**

Dear editor:  
 I read Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library CEO Cathy Simpson's opinion piece about Freedom to Read Week, ("Censorship and what we are allowed to read," The Lake Report, Feb. 22).

Unfortunately, it was misinformed. Simpson correctly says, "The American Library Association reported book ban requests in 2023 were the highest on record," but she omits the context that "the vast majority of challenges were to books written by or about a person of colour or a member of the LGBTQIA+ community."

She also says "hidden library censorship" happens by the "defence of books promoting diversity of identity, but little to no defence of books promoting diversity of viewpoint ... librarians are quick to defend books written by authors from 'oppressed' groups and books that promote critical social justice."

The reason librarians would be defending books on topics such as racism, queer issues, decolonization, equality, etc. is because those books are intended to remedy such social issues. These are not alleged

issues. These are real problems, affecting real people. To name a few, supported by statistics: Black males being stopped by police more often, people with an English-sounding name being hired more often, high rates of incarceration of Indigenous people, and harassment of transgender and non-binary people. Simpson says books with positive messages about such groups or tackling social issues related to them need to coexist with books with "other points of view." That assumes these issues are simply opinions. They are not. They are violence and bigotry toward people in our community, people you know. It makes sense to only have books defending oppressed groups and not books intending to continue oppression. But it doesn't sound very nice when you put it like that. So people will use statements about "viewpoints" and "opinions" to hide the fact the ideas they want to spread are based on continuing oppression.

Another example of this is using the term "transgender ideology," as Simpson does. Transgender people are not an ideology. They are people who are simply living

as they are by transitioning, just as you live as you are. All of these marginalized people are neutral. They just exist and the act of acknowledging the issues they face is neutral. No good will come from providing information that tries to denounce that. The second way libraries supposedly censor books is "the purchase of books promoting 'progressive' ideas over 'traditional' ideas," Simpson says. I am not sure what she means by traditional. If she means ideas intended to contradict social justice, then I firmly disagree with the idea books like that should be bought for a library at all. Perhaps she means books that have straight, white characters. If that's the case, I could not find any data saying libraries are not buying books with these any more. Simpson also writes about the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism. Known as FAIR, it has stated it is "at the forefront of efforts to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives," which letter writer Matthew French noted, ("Opinion piece espoused right wing talking points," Feb. 29).

According to FAIR's website, among other things, it doesn't believe in white privilege, doesn't want students punished for exposing the gender identity of other students and fought against scholarships in memory of George Floyd specifically for BIPOC students. Simpson also wants publishers to "no longer prioritize an author's identity over their work's merit." But identity plays a factor when that's what a book is about. Even if we're ignoring that, the opposite of what Simpson claims is actually what is true. Jim Milliot of Publishers Weekly discovered that "white contributors accounted for 76 per cent of books released in the 2019-2021 period" by Penguin Random House. I implore anyone who read Simpson's article and agreed, and Simpson herself, to consider these points. Marginalized people are seen as inherently political or "ideologies" just for existing. We shouldn't encourage books that have a "differing viewpoint" on their existence and the issues they face.  
*Sophia Voogt  
 NOTL*

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# How architecture **holds history** of its inhabitants



**ARCHITEXT**

Brian Marshall  
Columnist

At the corner of King and Mary streets stands a large white building that recalls the early days of the Town of Niagara.

In 1800, the renowned Mohawk leader Joseph Brant purchased the one-acre lot from Robert Pilkington, due – it is thought – to the property's proximity to the Indian Department Council House.

Brant was continuing to ardently negotiate for the rights of his people to obtain title to the lands of the Grand River Valley.

He sold the property in 1805 to the son of Chief Justice William Powell, John. It was he who built a substantial house on the lot for his wife, Isabella, and their family circa 1809.

Isabella's father and sister, Sophia Shaw, were regular visitors to the Powells, as was, apparently, a senior British Army officer and colonial administrator, one Sir Issac Brock.

And now we enter the realm of urban legend, for it was widely believed and repeated at the time that Sophia Shaw and Brock were an "item."

In fact, it was suggested that the couple were engaged to be married at the time of Brock's death during the Battle of Queenston Heights.

Sophia was said to be heartbroken and remained single for the rest of her life.

Whether that story is fact or fiction, the Powells' fine house was lost during the torching of the town as the American occupiers withdrew.

Interestingly though, many historians – citing the inordinately modest amount in Powell's war loss claim – suggest that



Facing King Street and hidden behind a hedge, Brockamour's facade has changed little from the 1840s with the exception of the columned porch added circa 1890 to 1900. BRIAN MARSHALL

perhaps one original wing containing two rooms and the kitchen survived and was incorporated in the rebuilt ca. 1816-1818 home.

The Powells spared no expense to ensure this post-war house was built to withstand the vicissitudes of time and any future conflict with the Americans (a common fear during the decades following the War of 1812).

Solid masonry, its walls are four brick wythes thick.

At the time it was built three architectural styles were in vogue: Georgian, neoclassical and early Regency.

For their new house, the Powells chose a two-storey cubic three-bay Regency form with its typical hip roof and tall chimneys.

The main entry statement was neoclassical incorporating a glorious semi-elliptical fanlight similar to those found on the Breakenridge-Hawley House (Mississauga & William) and the Clench House (Johnson & Mississauga) for example.

The window openings are a statement in and of themselves. Oversized for this period in Upper Canada, each boasts 30 panes of glass (15 over 15) – at a time when glass was the most expensive material used in a building.

In 1824, the Powells sold the property to Thomas McCormack, its owner for the next 12 years whereupon it was acquired by the very successful barrister, James Boulton.

During the 1840s, Boulton added several additions to the house, including a formal ballroom topped by a second-floor nursery (think dormitory) – likely required for the abundant number of children born during his three successive marriages.

This remodelling extended to the original house massing as well.

Drawing inspiration from the new Court House on Queen Street, brackets were added under the eaves and, I suspect, the original brickfields were

coated with smooth stucco that was incised to mimic ashlar stone.

This stucco treatment would not only have "modernized" the building's presentation but also served to integrate the original building with the new additions.

As with any home, the property continued to be passed from owner to owner – benefiting from, or suffering under, each owner's treatment.

The historical record appears to indicate that most of Boulton's alterations survived through the 19th century when such notables as Duncan Millroy – a significant figure in Great Lakes sail shipping – and Dr. Frederick Morson, who served as the doctor for the Rye (Great Western) Home, were numbered amongst those owners.

That would end in the early 20th century when Boulton's ballroom addition was demolished.

Then, in the mid-20th-century, a house fire caused

the loss of more interior elements. Battle-worn and weary, the old warrior survived.

So ... fast forward to today: the Powell-Wisch House has been fully restored – including rebuilding the ballroom – and was heritage designated in 2002.

It functions now as an elegant B&B, operating as Brockamour Manor.

Here we have a story of success wherein a grand and gracious home, an irreplaceable piece of the town's built heritage, was saved, restored and designated by caring individuals who recognized the importance of its place in history.

This is certainly not a rare occurrence in Niagara-on-the-Lake: it is a rare street, road, line or concession, which does not have an example of our shared built heritage that has been restored and given new life.

It is one of the things that sets this town apart from virtually all the other villages, towns and cities in Ontario.

Townfolk have celebrated, worked and sometimes fought to preserve that heritage.

Has that effort always been successful?

No. Witness the fact that the Kirby House on Front Street is the only remaining heritage asset on that part of the street – the others have all been demolished and replaced with contemporary houses.

Look, I fully understand that saving and restoring a historic building is an expensive undertaking.

So is funding a university archive or a museum collection – but we all understand and accept the value inherent in those investments.

Simply put, an original work displays the mind and hands of its creator and it connects us in a very fundamental way to those who have used and or experienced the work over time.

It's something that no reproduction, no matter how fine or accurate, can do.

I find it strange that some don't put the same value on a dwelling that has been home to families for centuries and has captured that history and those individual experiences in its very walls.

For someone to suggest demolishing a 200-year-old house because the cost of saving it will be more than its worth, is not only guilty of proposing to vandalize the historic warp and weave of this community,

but further, is denying current and future generations the opportunity to directly interact with our heritage while relegating the experiences of previous generations to the trash can.

Whether a humble cottage or a grand mansion, every piece of built heritage tells a story which would otherwise go unheard.

The preservation and protection through designation provide a richer community for us all.

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



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## Sunset from the sky



A drone captures the beauty as the sun sets over Niagara-on-the-Lake, casting an orange glow over the town on Friday, March 15. One might think it's a fall photo, with all the red colours. JOHN DELORENZI

## Mennonites have experienced suffering

Dear editor:

Thank you for publishing Kit Andre's Letter to the editor, "Mennonites want ceasefire in Israel-Palestine conflict," (March 14).

I am both a Methodist (by tradition) and a Mennonite (on confession of faith) and I am a "red-letter Christian" in that I take the teachings of Jesus seriously.

I agree that Mennos have a history that ought to make them particularly attuned to people who are suffering.

Two of my Menno friends are in their 90s and fled

from Ukraine in the 1940s.

One woman can remember wrapping her arms around her father as he was being abducted by the Russian NKVD.

He went to a gulag and she never saw him again.

Another recalls fleeing to Germany and — en route — her mother would hide her sister and her in haystacks while she went to look for food. Some family members died on the journey.

And even arriving in Canada, these women and so many other Mennos

were not welcomed, at least initially.

They were poor, they were seen as German or Russian, which was not popular, to say the least. And Mennonites were seen by some as being part of a cult.

Mennos — and indeed all Christians — should have a commitment to upholding the people who are referred to Jesus as "the least of these" and "blessed."

I agree with any movement in any country torn apart by war — including Palestine — for ceasefire

(peace), humanitarian aid (relief) and rebuilding (development.) The Mennonite Central Committee has as its maxim: relief, development and peace in the name of Christ.

Most Mennonite Christians are not white or of European descent, and they don't have horse-driven buggies. About 84 per cent of Mennos are African, Asian or Latin American and of this group, the majority are Ethiopian.

*Jan Carrie Steven  
St. Catharines*

## Hamas must be accountable for its actions

Dear editor:

Your letter writer Kit Andres speaks of the Mennonite duty to condemn violence ("Mennonites want ceasefire in Israel-Palestine conflict," (March 14).

This is a duty that all of us have as well as those who claim Mennonite ancestry.

However, there is not a single word in the letter that protests the Hamas organization (elected by the

people of Gaza). By its own admission, Hamas started this latest round of violence and is responsible for the horrendous massacre and hostage-taking incident against Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023.

This organization has sworn death to Israelis and the elimination of Israel while at the same time members have embedded themselves with civilians in

Gaza for their own protection against the Israeli response.

We all know that Palestine's call — "From the river to the sea" — can only mean one thing. Under these circumstances, Israel has every right to defend itself.

Nevertheless, the damage and suffering of many innocents in Gaza caused by the violence and as stated by the Gaza authorities is

without any doubt appalling and cannot continue.

However, the immediate and permanent ceasefire called for by Andres is, in my opinion, naive and does not address the nature of the combatants, the history of indiscriminate military action or the issue in dispute and what the likely end result would be.

*Derek Collins  
NOTL*

## Ambassadors' photo wasn't Cheropita's idea

Dear editor:

As a town councillor I am always open to and welcome residents to contact me by phone or email.

I want to listen to their concerns, discuss ideas and find solutions to the issues that the town and all of us face each day. I am committed to representing the community with honesty and integrity.

I was disappointed when

I read the letter in The Lake Report on March 14 by Samuel Young, "Is tourism strategy report being skewed by town?"

Mr. Young did not present any facts to support his accusations or statement. He simply accused me of having my fingerprints all over the recommendation to include in the tourism strategy committee's report a photo of

the NOTL Ambassadors group.

That suggestion came from a proud member of the Ambassadors, not me. The group now has about 60 members, volunteers who devote their time to welcome visitors to NOTL's heritage district every weekend from May to October.

Sam, why would we not include a photo of these good people?

I am happy to speak directly to Mr. Young to discuss ideas and hear his concerns on any topic.

But a letter to the editor that does nothing more than hurl personal insults at me or any other member of council is not productive or reflective of our small-town community culture and values.

*Coun. Wendy Cheropita  
NOTL*





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# YWCA's April leadership summit aims to embrace the 'Bold and Unapologetic' you

Staff  
The Lake Report

The YWCA Niagara Region's 10th annual Leadership Summit for Women is coming this spring — with a call to arms for women leaders to embrace authenticity, assert their worth and fearlessly pursue their goals and aspirations.

Tickets are on sale now for this year's summit, taking place on April 6 at Brock University, featuring keynote speakers, panel discussions, workshops and networking opportunities for all in attendance.

Every year, the summit brings together a diverse collection of women, girls and nonbinary individuals from across Niagara who have been leading the way in their careers.

The theme for this year's summit is "Bold and Unapologetic": the goal, its organizers state, is to foster a culture where women feel empowered to lead without apologizing for their success or downplaying their achievements.



Tickets are on sale now for the YWCA's Summit for Women on April 6. SUPPLIED

"By connecting, collaborating, and celebrating successes, we strive to address the primary causes of societal challenges rooted in gender inequity and social injustice," Elisabeth Zimmerman, the YWCA Niagara Region's executive director, said in a media release.

"Our mission is to create a space that not only empowers women, girls, and non-binary individuals but also builds a community where everyone thrives together."

This year's keynote address, "Designing Delight: The Bold Blueprint for Women Leaders to Ignite,

Excite and Delight," will be led by Crystal D'Cunha, an award-winning customer service specialist and president of the Inside View Inc., where she puts her expertise into practice.

The summit will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. There are eight workshops in total, split between the morning and afternoon, on topics such as self-confidence, self-expression, cultivating a positive workplace culture, project management and more.

Tickets for the Niagara Leadership Summit for Women are now available online, and the organizers encourage the community

to secure their spots early for this event.

Attendees can purchase a ticket for \$30 or opt to sponsor a delegate, allowing women who may face financial barriers to attend and take the next steps on their leadership journey.

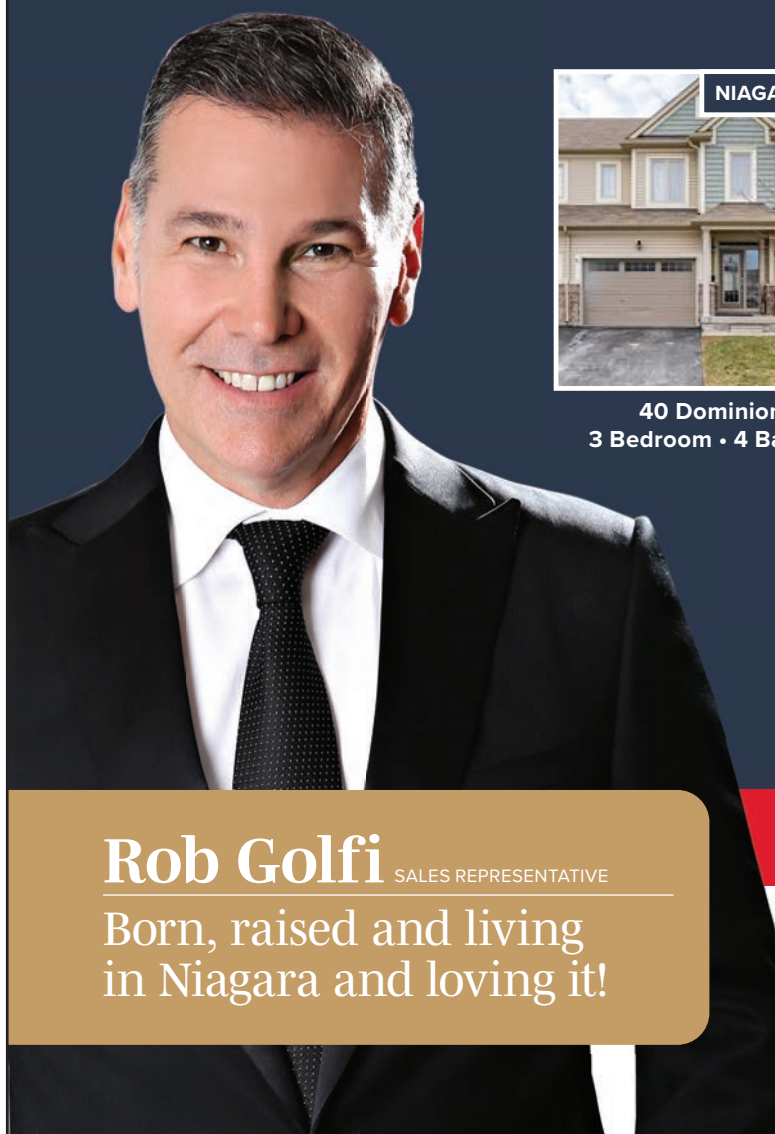
General admission tickets also include a lunch provided by the summit.

To explore the lineup of inspiring speakers and their sessions, and to purchase tickets, visit the official summit website at [ywcaniagararegion.ca/nlsw](http://ywcaniagararegion.ca/nlsw).

For more information, call YWCA Niagara Region at 905-988-3528.

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# Stumped hikers rescued on **wrong side of fence**

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Maybe they thought the grass was greener on the other side?  
Niagara-on-the-Lake fire chief Jay Plato says he isn't wholly sure how two men came to be in need of rescuing Monday at about 8:30 p.m.  
But the chief let slip a few smiles while relaying the story of how his department responded to a call in the Chautauqua neighbourhood

to assist two men who found themselves stuck on the wrong side of a fence.  
They appear to have been hikers who somehow wandered into the old federal rifle range on Lakeshore Road, he said.  
He could not say if the two were residents or visitors. In fact, a language barrier between the emergency responders and the two hikers makes it hard to determine much of anything  
"It looks like they may have gotten lost and ended

up in the DND lands somehow," he said.  
Possibly, they wandered into the area after entering near Niagara Shores Park, he said.  
And because that enclosure has barbed wire, "they got to the fence and they got jammed, and were not sure how to get out," he added.  
As Plato tells it, all the volunteer firefighters had to do was lift up the fence from the ground so the hikers could squeeze through.  
He was reluctant to label

the call silly.  
"You might look at a call afterwards and kind of chuckle about the situation," he said.  
But he maintained that every situation needs to be treated seriously.  
"Anytime somebody calls us they believe they're in their worst moments of life," he said.  
He recommended people have a general idea of where they are and where they are going to avoid similar situations.

# Easter egg hunt and **Bunny Trail** returns March 30

Lucy Hopkins  
Special to The Lake Report

Every Easter weekend, local kids and families gather at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre to participate in the annual Bunny Trail and Easter egg hunt.  
This year's Bunny Trail is happening on Saturday, March 30 at the community centre, with the egg hunt starting at 10 a.m.  
"It is definitely a way to bring the community together," said executive director Candice Penny.  
"That's what our school has always been about — our community and families and supporting them, and having a fun event to bring

everyone together and have some fun and support the school," she said.  
There will be various fun indoor and outdoor attractions for families and kids to participate in. Alongside the Kinsmen egg hunt, Eggs the Bunny will pay a visit and the community centre will host a petting zoo, a magician, a bake sale, musical groups, colouring stations and more.  
But the day is more than just activities for kids — it is also a big opportunity for the nursery school itself.  
"This is an event that has been going on since the early 1990s, and it's become an annual event for the school and the not-for-

profit fundraising and is a major part of our existence," Penny said.  
"It allows us to ensure we have the much-needed resources, equipment, and materials for the kids, it's an important event to allow us to do that."  
All of the profits go back directly to those items.  
This year, organizers are fundraising for new tables and chairs for both preschool and school-aged students, along with other playground resources.  
"We're so appreciative of the support that we receive each and every year and the funds that we're able to raise through it to benefit the school as a result."

The egg hunt will start at 10 a.m. sharp, rain or shine, while other activities at the Bunny Trail will take place from 9 to 11:30 a.m.  
Cost is \$5 per child and \$15 for three or more children.  
Food will be available for purchase on-site, including pizza made by Ruffino's Pasta Bar and Grill, and hot dogs.  
With a fundraising goal of \$15,000, everything raised from the Bunny Trail goes directly into programs and much-needed educational resources for our students and staff.  
For more information visit the school's website at niagaranurseryschool.ca



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

**Flooding in Venice has been aggravated by these Italian-named winds that originate in northern Africa**

Last issue:

Category: LATIN PHRASES

Clue: I'm so sorry! It's "through my own fault!"

Answer: What is mea culpa?

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Claudia Grimwood, Lynda Collet, Jane Morris, Bob Wheatley, Bill Hamilton, Nancy Rocca, Pam Dowling, Sheila Meloche, Wade Durling, Katie Reimer, Mike Gander, Jim Dandy, Marla Percy, Barry Woods, Catherine Clarke, Esther VanGorder, Edna Groff, David Spencer, Hedy Wiebe, Howard Jones, Tuija Johansson, Daniel Smith, Elaine Landray

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

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# Tiny tots *get cooking* at library

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Somethin's cookin' over at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Kids came out to make apple crumble and miniature pizzas at the library for one of its March Break activities last Thursday.

It was a messy good time for six-year-old Mark Stewart, who displayed great enthusiasm when it came time to smash graham crackers for the apple crumble topping.

"I just loved the library programs," said Mark's mother, Julia Stewart. "We come all the time."

Stewart brought Mark and his two brothers to the makeshift culinary event.

The boys were joined by their cousins, three-year-old Cullen Stewart-Teichgraf and five-year-old Brendan Stewart-Teichgraf.

Their mother, Jenny Stewart-Teichgraf, said the boys also love to cook with their parents at home.



Three-year-old Cullen Stewart-Teichgraf cooks with his parents at home, too. EVAN LOREE

Cullen appeared to be in it for the savoury taste of the marinara sauce.

He snuck a lick of the tomato puree off his miniature pizza before library worker Sharon McDonald had a chance to throw it in the air fryer to cook.

"I love working with children and I like that they have a place to come to explore different things," McDonald told The Lake Report.

She said libraries have a "bad rep" for being quiet, stuffy places.

The activity room at the NOTL library was anything but stuffy, though.

It was full of shouts and giggles when the kids moved to the floor for an activity break as McDonald cooked their pepperoni pizzas.

As they played, six-year-old Aryana Aleo shouted "The floor is lava," and kids scrambled atop their chairs

to avoid getting cooked themselves.

It was all over in an hour though.

A couple of parents filtered in to pick up their kids as they sampled their miniature pizzas fresh out of the air fryer.

Bright-eyed and grinning ear to ear, the kids left behind three tables full of bread crumbs and pizza sauce.

evanloree@niagaranow.com

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# Donating gives **new life** to your old ‘stuff’



From junk drawers to overstuffed basements, many of us have a lot of “stuff” we no longer need. This four-part series will help you deal with it and maybe give new life to old items.

Denise Ascenzo  
The Lake Report

An important step on the long journey to cleaning up after ourselves is to try to donate as much of our “stuff” as possible.

That’s a philosophy espoused by Margareta Magnusson in her book, “The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning,” and it’s an excellent way to help local charities and give new life to your old items.

Cindy Grant, who heads the Newark Neighbours thrift store and food bank, deals with donations almost daily.

The big question, though, is “What shouldn’t we donate?”

Newark Neighbours does not want, nor can it handle, large furniture such as bookshelves, old TV stands, couches, dining room sets or large appliances.

Ditto books, CDs, vinyl records or DVDs. All these items are hard to sell and Newark is in the business of selling items to stock its food bank.

The store, on Niagara Stone Road in Virgil, welcomes dishes, pots, pans, cooking utensils, small appliances such as kettles or toasters, sheets, towels and even table linens.

It can take in some small furniture such as end tables or small cabinets that are easy to handle.

“Surprisingly a big seller in the store is decorative pieces such as vases, lamps, china, crystal and unique items that can be displayed on shelves,” Grant said.

“As well, good costume jewelry sells quickly, but please make sure it is not broken.”

For women in particular, getting rid of clothing can be problematic. We hesitate to part with a good outfit, a lovely dress or something too small that we might eventually get into.

If it is still good, then donate it now for another woman to enjoy. If you loved wearing it, ask yourself why



Cindy Grant amid the racks of clothing at Newark Neighbours. DENISE ASCENZO

it is hanging untouched at the back of the closet.

Finally, should you lose those extra pounds to fit into that old outfit, why are you not buying a new outfit to congratulate yourself for a job well done?

Newark Neighbours accepts almost any clothing item — except baby and young children’s clothes as there is not a large market for them in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Boots, winter coats, hats, scarves and mittens are popular, but more so during the colder months. Remember, if that coat or those hats have been buried in the back of the closet, why not donate them during the season they are most needed?

Still, some people drop off items that Newark Neighbours cannot use. When that happens, the agency works with recyclers, in particular the Cerebral Palsy for Kids group, Grant said.

That organization picks up clothing and pays Newark Neighbours by the pound.

The Salvation Army and Diabetes Canada also have good connections for recycling clothing and other material items. Even those torn jeans or stretched-out T-shirts can be repurposed.

Newark Neighbours also works closely with Westview Centre for Women (formally known as Women4Women and Survival-4Women) in St. Catharines.

It takes women’s clothing as well as children’s clothes, towels, blankets and household items in good condition.

Brittney Kranz, a volunteer with the Farmworker Hub since 2021, explained the organization came into being during COVID “when many people realized that our foreign field workers were in total isolation like the rest of our community.”

Volunteers were organized to go around to different farms to see what was needed.

Men’s jeans, men’s hoodies and winter coats were and still are the greatest need.

Another need not recognized at first was for large pots and pans as the men generally cook once for the entire week. Blenders as well are handy to make nutritious drinks for when working in the orchards and vineyards.

The Cornerstone Town Campus at 1570 Niagara Stone Rd. in Virgil is the location for all drop-offs.

Sorting day is Tuesdays between 9:30 and 12:30. However there is also a drop-off bin at the front door of the building if you can’t come on a Tuesday morning.

Like Newark Neighbours, which work in partnership with the Farmworker Hub, they do not take large furniture, décor items or dress clothes.

“The Farmworker Hub creates a welcoming community for the Niagara-on-the-Lake seasonal agricultural workers during their stay in Canada,” Kranz noted.

Electronics such as keyboards, old computer towers and monitors are not accepted at most charitable locations, however they can be recycled.

Niagara Computer Systems in Virgil will welcome flat-screen TVs, computer monitors, tower computers, old laptops, iPads, cellphones and landline phones.

Owner Dennis Den Besten only asks that you call in advance to book a time to bring in your items so that they can be assessed first. Don’t just drop in.

One area that many of us dread is sorting through family photos. Several professional organizers suggest leaving this task to the very end because memories and emotions will stop many people from finishing other tasks.

To help clear out these photos, Arlene Stephenson of Downsizing Divas suggests going through them once and eliminating out-of-focus shots, scenery and pictures of people you do not know.

Throw out all the negatives because with scanners today they are no longer needed. Sort through the photos a second time, throwing out duplicates and repetitive pictures. After all, how many shots of the Tower of Pisa do you really need?

Finally, make a pile for yourself and for each child. Then give them their pictures. Remember, you are not the caretaker of their things.

As you look around and feel the relief of getting your home in order, you’ll realize it’s more important to leave your children memories than stuff.

**Next: Selling off some “stuff” can be an option.**

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# TEAM OF THE WEEK

## U13 Rep Wolves



The 2023-24 hockey season is winding down and the members of the NOTL Minor Hockey Association's U13 rep team are The Lake Report's final featured Team of the Week for this year. Pictured along with coach Joshua Montalbo on the home team bench at Meridian Credit Union Arena are: August Felice, Isaac Trapasso, Dean Olson, Malcom Buffington, Jayden Dulas, Liam VanGent, Eli Perng, Luke Fratangelo, William Marinis, Brett Hubbard, Rory Dudek, Hunter Froese, Nello Pagnotta, Mason Nichols, Tomas Nolan and Miller Davis. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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# U18 Wolves weather storm to earn key **playoff tie**

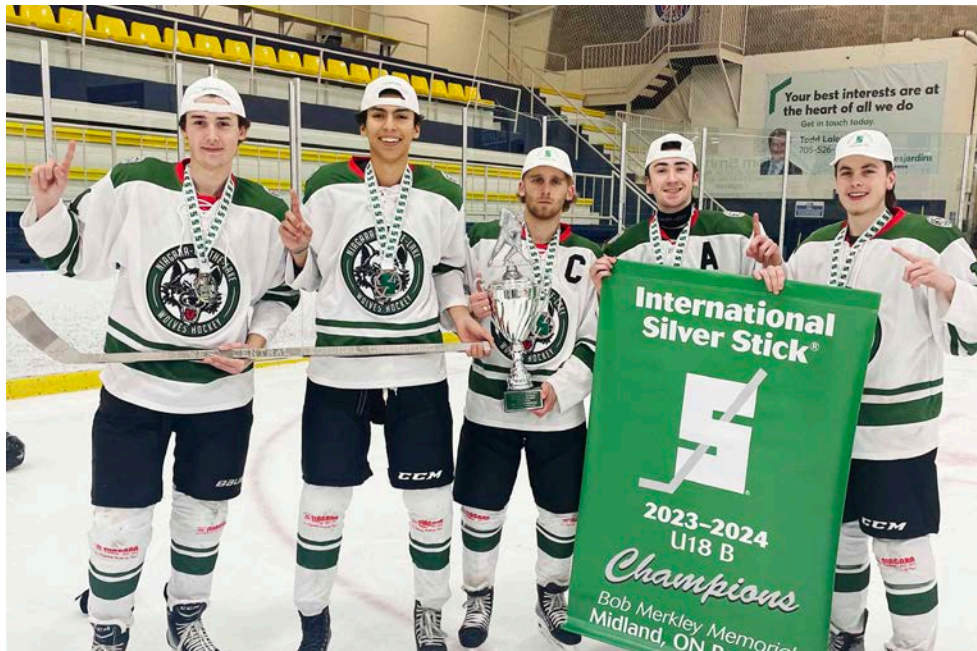
Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

Down two men for more than six minutes, late in the second period and into the third, the NOTL Wolves U18 rep team dug deep and weathered the powerplay onslaught by the Fort Erie Meteors on Monday night.

Defending a 5-on-3 can be exhausting but Niagara-on-the-Lake emerged largely unscathed, giving up just one goal over the span and holding on to earn a 1-1 tie on the road in Fort Erie.

It was the first game of a best-of-three Niagara District playoff series and up for grabs is a chance to represent the region in the Ontario Minor Hockey Association Tier 1 championship tournament in Kingston April 5 to 7.

For five members of the Wolves, it would be a chance to end their minor hockey careers on a high



Five members of the U18 rep team are in their last year of minor hockey, from left, Logan Smythe, Nick Munera, Marco Gruosso, Lucas Roberts Ramos and Carter Lalonde. SUPPLIED

note, competing for a provincial title.

Captain Marco Gruosso, assistant captain Lucas Roberts Ramos, Logan Smythe, Nick Munera and Carter Lalonde are all in their final year of eligibility with NOTL hockey.

So, Monday night the intensity was at a fever pitch and the arena was rocking.

NOTL led 1-0 after a late first-period goal from Noah Whyte, assisted by Marco Gruosso and Nick Munera.

The Wolves carried that lead into the second but

with 3:57 left in the middle period, the penalty parade began.

Slashing, three consecutive head contact penalties, a delay of game minor when the net got knocked off its moorings and another head contact call just seconds

into the third forced NOTL to play two men short for what likely seemed an eternity.

Aggressive defence and a rock-solid performance by goaltender Quinten Davis ensured the Wolves kept the Meteors at bay.

Instead, NOTL effectively now has home-ice advantage, with game 2 scheduled for Wednesday evening in Virgil, game 3 back in Fort Erie and a final, tie-breaker game, if needed, back in NOTL on Friday night.

Head coach Devon Neudorf was proud of his team's performance.

"It was a hell of an effort from the boys," he told The Lake Report.

The game was a real barn burner, he said, and "it was great to see the boys dig deep and hold on to a point nonetheless."

"It was really just a solid effort up and down the lineup where everyone put forth their best effort," he said.

Fort Erie is one of the few teams NOTL has a losing record against, but the games have been close. The teams are evenly matched, but play different styles, Neudorf said.

"They're a bigger and heavier team than us and kind of leverage that to their abilities. And I would say that we're a smaller, faster, more skilled team."

"Now we've got them at home (Wednesday) night, in Fort Erie Thursday and, if needed, back at home Friday night for a tie-breaker game."

The series is not a standard win two out of three, but rather the first team to four points.

"So, the tie is a bit of a reset where we take on the home-ice advantage now moving forward," Neudorf said.

Results of Wednesday night's home game weren't known until after press time.



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Newark Neighbours, together with our partners from the NOTL Rotary, NOTL Kinsmen and St. David's Lions Clubs, are holding a porch pick-up food drive. On Saturday March 23, 2024, teams are available to pick up your food donations anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you wish to donate in support of our food bank, please call 905-468-7498 or email us at [newarkneighbours1@gmail.com](mailto:newarkneighbours1@gmail.com) to register your address for pick-up.

**ITEMS REQUIRED FOR EASTER HAMPERS:**

Stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, canned gravy or mix (turkey or chicken), cranberry and/or apple juice, apple sauce, canned fruit and vegetables (corn, pineapple, green beans, peas), snack crackers (any type), cookies (any kind), chocolates for Easter baskets.

**ITEMS REQUIRED ON AN ONGOING BASIS:**

Canned salmon, canned tuna, Sidekicks and ramen soup packets, canned chili or spaghetti or ravioli, peanut butter, granola bars, cookies, Chunky Soups - any kind or flavour canned beef stew, Habitant soups, canned ham, corned beef or Spam, Flakes of Ham, Chicken or Turkey, Jams (any flavour), canned fruit, soda, soup crackers, Kraft Dinner, canned beans (kidney, chickpeas, lentils), canned tomatoes, canned potatoes, instant mashed potatoes, tomato sauce, pasta, rice, pudding cups (any flavour), cereal and oatmeal, coffee (any kind — instant/regular/ decaf), tea, shelf stable milk (e.g. condensed, powdered, rice, etc.), paper towels, toilet paper, household items ie. dish soap, laundry detergent, cleaning products, condiments (salad dressings, mayonnaise, sauces, HP Sauce, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, etc.), dried spices, salt & pepper, toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, hand and body lotion, mouthwash, feminine products).









# Have some fun



**Across**

- 2. Islands known for giant tortoises (9)
- 8. "This is horrible!" (2,2)
- 9. Diana Rigg's Emma --- (4)
- 10. Early "Enterprise" engineer (7)
- 11. Noncontagious skin condition (6)
- 12. Clone (4)
- 15. Old fellow (6)
- 16. Visiting the area (2,4)
- 17. Where Paddington was originally (4)
- 18. Palestinian leader Mahmoud --- (5)
- 21. Put up with (5)
- 23. Huge expanse (5)
- 25. Hero of "Pride and Prejudice" (5)
- 28. "I'm already doing this" (2,2)
- 29. Italian fashion house (6)
- 31. Potatoes au --- (6)
- 32. Continuous dull pain (4)
- 35. Disparages (6)
- 36. Early designer of flying machines (2,5)
- 37. Club-like weapon (4)
- 38. Jot (4)
- 39. Wistful feeling (9)

**Down**

- 1. Carried when one shoulders the blame (3,3)
- 2. Circumvent (2,6)
- 3. Layered Italian dish (7)
- 4. Adage (7)
- 5. What a candle in the wind does (7)
- 6. Blueprint detail, briefly (4)
- 7. Harvest (4)
- 13. Corpulent (5)
- 14. The two of us (3,3,1)
- 16. Deeply unconscious (2,1,4)
- 19. Fluffy scarf (3)
- 20. Symbols of simplicity (1,1,1)
- 22. Hibernian (5)
- 24. Macao bid crazily for a Vietnamese neighbour (8)
- 25. Obtains (7)
- 26. Circular building (7)
- 27. Pulling with a quick motion (7)
- 30. Leonid's predecessor (6)
- 33. Stuff (4)
- 34. Paradise (4)

### Crossword Puzzle

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

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# Subatomic particles really are **no small matter**



**DR. BROWN**

Dr. William Brown  
Columnist

Last week, in the first of this five-part series “Middle Land: worlds beyond our senses,” the focus was on the events surrounding the beginning of the universe.

This week, we switch to the subatomic world of particles.

The existence of the Higgs particle — what’s been called the God particle — was first proposed by Prof. Peter W. Higgs as the key particle which imparted mass to other particles.

Proof that it existed came in 2012 through the efforts of a large team of scientists and engineers employing the giant particle accelerator at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland, and artificial intelligence

to analyze the humongous amount of data generated by the studies.

Without the Higgs particle, there would be no mass in the universe, and without mass, no universe as we know it, and certainly, no life — that’s how key that discovery was.

Higgs and Francois Englert shared the Nobel Prize in 2013 for this work.

Then, a short time later, a Canadian, Arthur McDonald and Takaaki Kajita, from Japan, showed that neutrinos — tiny ephemeral particles, countless numbers of which, pass through us, and everything around us, every second — turned out to have mass, albeit not much.

This led to the granting of the Nobel Prize in physics to McDonald and Kajita in 1915.

Those triumphs in astronomy and physics illustrated the power of humans to extend the range of what we can see well beyond our senses, to cosmic and subatomic particle levels.

In 1900, astronomers thought the Milky Way was all there was, only to find out later that there were



two billion galaxies, some very much larger than our Milky Way.

In short order, we learned that the universe was far from the static unchanging affair assumed by Isaac Newton and most astronomers and even physicists, including Albert Einstein.

It was, instead, expanding rapidly under the influence of an enigmatic force called dark energy.

That was followed in 2016 by evidence that there are trillions, not billions, of galaxies.

With the latter finding, the odds increased considerably that life exists elsewhere in the universe, well beyond the few thousand potentially habitable planets found in our small corner of the Milky Way.

Then, there’s the whole question of time. Is time

fixed or relative?

In the world we inhabit day-to-day, time marches forward in a highly predictable fashion, measured out in the wristwatches we wear and the clocks we use in our homes, offices and cars. And so it was in Newton’s world.

Everything changed, however, in 1905 when Einstein made his startling proposal that although the speed of

light is fixed, time is not.

He showed, counter to all our experience and intuition, that time is not fixed — time is relative to the speed with which we travel.

True, whirling about the Earth at thousands of miles an hour in the space station for several weeks may shave a few seconds off your age relative to your Earth-bound colleagues.

But there was little sense that such minuscule changes might be important in our daily lives.

We were wrong.

The fact that time is relative to speed (and mass) is important for those who use GPS navigation systems where precision depends on taking into account the relative speeds and precise timing of signals from the several satellites on which GPS calculations depend for their accuracy.

Next: The beginnings of life, evolution and genetics.

*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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## Palatine Hill

In the late 1600s, the Servos family was living in the German Palatinate area. The patriarch of the North American family arrived in the province of New York on the Charlotte River in 1726 with a letter of introduction. During the American Revolution, four Servos brothers remained loyal to the Crown with two brothers, Captain Daniel and Lieutenant Jacob serving with the British Indian Department. They and their families arrived at Niagara as refugees in the early 1780s with only a few possessions. Daniel operated grist and sawmills as well as a general store on the Four Mile Creek, where he erected his home, Palatine Hill. It was the earliest surviving house in Niagara until it burned in the 1950s. The artist insignia is A Wyomch/Cornacehia/1954.

## Gouge by the gorge eclipses Y2K hype



### Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson  
Columnist

I tend to resist media hype and I chuckle at grandiose statements.

Been there. Done that. The next total eclipse in this area will be in 2044, so this is the chance of a lifetime for some of us. I hate to be a wet blanket, but enough of the hype.

Y2K preparedness was all the buzz in late 1999. IT consultants made piles of money playing on the mass fear of computer and traffic light and even plumbing shutdowns. Police and firefighters all had to work overtime, albeit at premium pay rates.

Hotels, cruise ships and fancy restaurants doubled, tripled and even shamelessly quadrupled prices for New Year's Eve 2000. There was an irrational fear that only at the last minute had the smart people in the computer world realized there might be a huge problem.

At the last minute, people gave their heads a shake and decided to enjoy house par-



Ross Robinson doesn't believe Niagara will see many visitors for the April 8 solar eclipse. FIREFLY

ties instead of breaking the bank. Cancellations poured in and the world's tourism operators took a severe financial beating.

We held our prices at the award winning "Oh Canada Eh?" dinner show and asked guests to bring two days worth of non-perishable food. And toothpaste and toothbrushes.

When the Y2K scare came and went without a problem, we donated lots and lots of food to Project Share. We packed our showroom, and what a win-win situation. The media loved us.

I admire Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati for his ability to deliver a timely and brief quote, always with

a straight face. We are long-time friends, since my days working in his city.

But I must insert some realism into the discussion about the April 8 total eclipse, and remember the Y2K and Nik Wallenda events. Not that long ago.

Wallenda's tightrope crossing over the Niagara gorge on June 15, 2012, was a big deal, until ABC and the Niagara Parks Commission dictated that he had to be tethered to his 1,800-foot highwire. Talk about raining on a parade.

He walked confidently over the mist-fogged brink of the Horseshoe Falls, but the edge was off because we knew he couldn't fall into the gorge.

His dad's words rang hollow that evening. "Life is on the wire. Everything else is just waiting." It was great television, as the mist swirled in the background.

Fallsview hotels took a financial beating, as they had to lower their inflated room rates. The expected mass crowds dwindled, as potential visitors took a deep breath. We were maybe 50,000 thrill seekers watching.

Now, Diodati is predicting over a million visitors for the upcoming total solar eclipse.

We lucky Niagarans are apparently on the "path of totality" and will get 99 per cent perfect views of what is being hyped.

So, all together now, let's gouge by the gorge. Hotel rooms that normally sell for under \$200 are being quoted online for well over \$1,000 on April 8. Say it ain't so, but for a three- or four-minute view of the total eclipse, hotel owners think people will pay big bucks.

And it better not be a cloudy or overcast day.

Not to be a pessimist, but I'll be shocked if over 90,000 solar eclipse lovers make their way to Niagara for the big day on April 8.

I wonder if Eclipse Hair on Mary Street was still around would its talented stylists be offering discount clips, in the spirit of eclipse totality?



The Cantilon Chamber Choir will perform at St. Mark's on March 26 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 plus tax per person.

## Music Niagara hosts Cantilon Chamber Choir at St. Mark's church

Staff  
The Lake Report

Music Niagara and St. Mark's Church are teaming up to present a performance from a chamber choir hailing from Western Canada.

On Tuesday, March 26, Edmonton's Cantilon Chamber Choir will be at the church on Byron Street for a performance.

"Under the visionary leadership of Heather Johnson, this choir has not only won international competitions but also touched hearts with their vibrant and emotive performances," says a media release from Music Niagara.

Their recent triumphs include sweeping awards at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, honouring their exceptional skills in both traditional and contemporary choral music.

"This concert, symbolizing the deep-rooted partnership between Music Niagara and St. Mark's Church, promises an evening of sublime musicality in one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's most historically rich venues," the announcement said.

The performance comes ahead of Music Niagara's annual Summer Festival, which will see the arrival of other youth choirs for performances throughout June and July.

Tickets are \$20 per person plus tax. The performance will begin at 7 p.m.

All proceeds from the Cantilon Chamber Choir's event will be shared between Music Niagara and St. Mark's, supporting its shared mission to enrich cultural life in Niagara-on-the-Lake.



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# Ready, set, **prune!**



**GROWING TOGETHER** 

Joanne Young  
Columnist

Even though it doesn't seem like we have had much winter yet, spring is definitely here — or at least, that is what a robin told me.

One of the first tasks in the garden is pruning deciduous shrubs.

I believe that the success, and longevity, of any garden is due to proper pruning techniques.

Pruning is more than just cutting down the tips of the branches. That is part of it, but it's one of the last steps in pruning.

Correct pruning techniques will affect how productive the plant is in flowering and/or producing berries.

Pruning will also open a plant's branching habit, which, in turn, improves the air circulation moving through the shrub and reduces insect and disease problems.

It helps to rejuvenate the shrub so that it does not die out prematurely.

Pruning also keeps the plants from out-growing their space or overcrowding other shrubs.

We know that we should prune our shrubs in the spring, but few know why pruning is necessary and the right way to do so.

Most of us stick with the "hack and hope" method: we hack away at it and hope that we have done the right thing.

Well, I am here to tell you that "hacking" or "whacking" are not proper pruning terms.

Understanding why we prune and when is the best time to prune, takes away some of the guesswork.

So, let's discover first why it is best to prune most



Garden columnist Joanne Young says it's important to prune out crossing branches.

deciduous shrubs late in the dormant period (late winter/early spring).

As we go into autumn and start seeing plants go into dormancy and the leaves start to turn beautiful fall colours, what we don't see is what is going on inside the plant.

All summer, the leaves have been storing up food from the sun in a process called photosynthesis.

As the fall approaches, all this stored energy starts to move from the leaves, down the stem and back into the roots by late winter.

In the spring, that same energy (food) then moves from the roots, up the stem and forces out new leaves.

If this whole process did not occur, a plant, when it dropped its leaves, would lose all its stored energy, resulting in a weakened plant.

As temperatures start to warm up in the spring, and we start to tap sugar maple trees to collect the sap to make syrup, we often say that "the sap is rising" and that is exactly what is happening.

The plant's food rises from the base of the plant into the branches and forces out the new leaves. This happens with all deciduous plants.

Therefore, if you are pruning in the fall, you may be removing much of the stored energy the plant generated that season, resulting in a weakened plant.

When you prune in the fall, the fresh cuts will not have enough time to heal over before winter sets in and could mean further winter dieback.

Early spring flowering shrubs and trees, those that bloom before or as the leaves are emerging, have set their flower buds the previous season's growth in late summer or early fall.

If you prune in the fall, you are also pruning off those flower buds for next spring.

This applies to shrubs such as viburnums, lilacs, bridal wreath spirea, forsythia, witch hazel, mock orange, deutzia, serviceberry, azaleas and rhododendrons.

You will not want to prune these shrubs until the blooms are finished and before their leaves have opened fully, or you risk losing the flowers.

Some early blooming ornamental trees that have the same pruning requirements (prune right after blooming) are magnolia, flowering cherries, flowering dogwoods and redbuds.

Wisteria is one of the vines that you will also want to finish blooming before pruning.

Another exception for pruning at this time would be plants that bleed.

As mentioned above, at this time the sap (or food) is rising from the base of the plant and back into the branches.

Some plants will bleed from the fresh cuts while this process is occurring.

Bleeding is when sap leaks from a wound or pruning cut on a tree, shrub, or woody climber.

Sometimes this may be a gentle seeping, other times a copious flow.

The loss of sap will rarely kill a plant, but it does weaken the plant.

Maples are the main ones that bleed. This goes for all maples including all Japanese maples.

Other plants that bleed in spring are birch, mulberry, hornbeam and laburnum.

These varieties are best pruned late summer to mid-winter.

In next week's article, I will be going through the steps of pruning a shrub.

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at [joanneyoung.ca](http://joanneyoung.ca).

## Obituary

### Lydia Kerber



KERBER, Lydia (nee Eckstein), cherished wife to the late Wolfgang Kerber (2014), mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt and friend, left us peacefully, on March 17, 2024, in her 93rd year at the Greater Niagara Hospital in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Born on October 9, 1931, in Plunkett, Saskatchewan,

Lydia's life was one marked by devotion to her family and her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

She leaves behind her two sons, Richard (Lillian); and Tom (Monica). Her legacy continues through her grandchildren, Leanne (Jason) and their children Tyler and Connor; Irene (Alistair) and their children Evan and Brooke; Julie (Mark) and their child Madelyn; Angela (Rob) and their children Jackson, Josephine, Evangeline, William and Jessamine; Krista (Nick) and their children Jillian, Amy and Bethany; Andrew (Nicole) and their child Lily-Jane.

Family and friends will be received at Bethany Mennonite Church at 572 East & West Line in Niagara on the Lake on Friday, March 22, 2024, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday March 23 at 9 a.m., one hour prior to the Memorial Service which will be held at 10 a.m. The service will be available live stream, please click on link to view <https://www.bethanymennonite.ca/>

Burial to follow at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery.

If so desired, donations to Galcom International <https://galcom.org/get-involved-give/> would be appreciated.

Online condolences at [www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca](http://www.tallmanfuneralhomes.ca)



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LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE &  
CRYSTAL SIMONS



3820 NUGENT ROAD  
PORT COLBORNE

**\$1,850,000**

LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE &  
CHARLES PLANTE



LOT 2 ANCHOR RD  
THOROLD | BUILD TO SUIT

**\$1,100,000**

LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE &  
CHARLES PLANTE



226 PALACE STREET  
THOROLD

**\$1,750,000**

LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE &  
CHARLES PLANTE



LOT 4 ANCHOR RD  
THOROLD | BUILD TO SUIT

**SOLD FIRM**

LISTED BY: ANDREW PERRIE



2600 BAXTER AVE  
CHIPPAWA



# EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

***Your home may be your largest asset. When selling, it should be handled with the utmost care to protect this asset and achieve the highest sale price possible. Deal with a Realtor you can trust!***

**Exceeding your expectations or you don't pay! Make the right decision, choose Angelika & Associates!**

## **HERE IS WHY...**

- World class videography, photos and drone footage, highest quality hard cover print brochures & advertising in print media
- Large social media presence and extensive unique marketing techniques
- Estate clean up/decluttering and packing services **(no extra charge)**
- Your property will be globally listed gaining world wide exposure and will be seen on 48 real estate boards in Ontario
- Home renovation expert (over 40 homes)
- Help Elderly Relocate **(no extra charge)**
- Passionate to be of service
- We offer a 24/7 open line of communication
- Several testimonials and 5 star reviews
- Exceptional sales record. #1 Top Producer & multiple award winner
- Respected by colleagues and community
- Long term presence in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Local Right at Home Realty Branch in NOTL (Over 6000 in GTA. Largest Independent Brokerage in Canada)
- Angelika previously owned a highly successful marketing/media business in Toronto for over 20 years. Built relationships with Fortune 500, big banks, CTV, Global, Olympics, Film Festival. Award winning. Over 10 years local real estate business.
- Abundance of knowledge in all aspects of real properties (waterfront, residential, agricultural, commercial and leases)
- Up to date on Mortgage trends and state of economy, strategy to sell
- Contribution to many charities
- Lead sponsor in Chamber of Commerce NOTL Golf Tournament 2023 and other events
- Wealth of knowledge



**NO OBLIGATION  
FREE HOME EVALUATION**

**DIRECT 289-214-4394**

**OFFICE 905-468-8777**



**#1**

496 MISSISSAUGA ST, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

**NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE TEAM**  
Bringing GTA Buyers to Niagara-On-The-Lake

**LARGEST INDEPENDANT  
BROKERGAE IN CANADA**

**Angelika & ASSOCIATES**  
LUXURY REAL ESTATE