



Crossroads home show | Page 3

Celebrating

THE WOMEN OF NOTL



A large crowd of Niagara-on-the-Lake women gathered at the gazebo in Queen's Royal Park on Monday morning to mark International Women's Day. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

See our pull-out Souvenir Special Section celebrating International Women's Day and the women of NOTL, Pages 13-24.

Honour roll of NOTL women

Read about inspiring NOTL women who were nominated by our readers. **Page 14**

Our town's women firefighters

Rebecca Van der Zalm and Taylor Rodrigue are standing up to the heat as firefighters. **Page 16**

Shaw's Kimberley Rampersad

Associate artistic director Kimberley Rampersad is leaving her mark on the Shaw Festival. **Page 16**

Women's employment rebounds

The "She-Covery" has made some great strides post-COVID, but major challenges remain. **Page 17**

Success brews for pub owners

Behind the scenes with Robin Ridesic and Jovie Joki at the Exchange Brewery and Irish Harp. **Page 20**

Building positive futures

A look inside the classrooms at NOTL's Royal Oak Community School. **Page 15**

NOTLers lead the way for International Women's Day

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The women of Niagara-on-the-Lake made Queen's Royal Park their stomping grounds on Monday morning.

About 125 women came out to the second annual International Women's Day photo shoot hosted by The Lake Report at the park.

Many were standing on the shoulders of the woman giants who came before them.

For Kathy Taylor, it was her grandmother Kathleen Drope.

"Growing up, I was able to spend a lot of time with her," said Taylor, who volunteers with St. Mark's Church.

"I admired the way she projected herself in the communities that she lived in," Taylor said.

Taylor credits her late grandmother for the confidence she enjoys today.

Patty Garriock thinks of

her mom on International Women's Day, which is celebrated every March 8.

Garriock said her mother, Mary Lloyd McCabe, was born in 1918 and graduated

Continued on Page 3



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Feds inject \$177 million into extended winery program

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

There was a lot to like about an announcement that the federal government was investing more money in the grape and wine industry, Erwin Weins says.

“It’s a support for the local growers, the local wineries, the local worker, the manufacturers,” Weins said. “It helps out with sales, it helps out with equipment and education.”

Weins, a farmer who also sits on Niagara-on-the-Lake town council, was referring to a \$177-million investment in the sector being made over the next three years.

The funding, which was announced by Lawrence MacAulay, the federal minister of agriculture and agri-food, on Friday, March 1, at Trius Wines in NOTL, is an extension of the government’s Wine Sector Support Program.

The program was originally launched in July 2022 and provides financial support to wineries across the country. The new money brings the



Lawrence MacAulay, minister of agriculture and agri-food, announced a \$177 million investment in Canada’s wine sector at Trius Winery in NOTL on March 1. RICHARD HUTTON

total commitment by Ottawa to \$343 million.

“There’s three pillars to selling wine,” Weins said. “You’ve got the farmers, the wineries and the government.”

MacAulay, in making the announcement, called Niagara “one of the top wine regions in the world and is a player in the \$11 billion

injected into the Canadian economy annually.”

But there have also been times of uncertainty, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit tourism hard — wineries in Niagara are popular destinations for visitors — and now an increasing number of extreme weather events brought on by climate change.

This is where the government can help, MacAulay said.

“Our new funding will continue to help Canadian wineries meet the challenges and to compete and make sure we have successful generations to continue on.”

Despite the challenges, the future is bright, he said.

“I have no doubt that the new funding will help you to capture new markets around the world.”

After making the announcement, MacAulay told The Lake Report the government wants to support the sector and help it thrive in an increasingly competitive global market.

“We have some expertise in this country to make sure that we’re able to keep on the cutting edge,” MacAulay said.

“It’s important to realize we’re at this, but all other areas in the world are at this, too, so if you don’t keep cutting edge, you lose.”

Dan Paszkowski, president and CEO of the Wine Growers of Canada, said the funding will encourage growth in the sector and “accelerate the billions of economic impact the grape and wine industry contributes to the local, regional and the national economy.”

Every dollar the government has invested will result in a return on investment of \$6.20, he said.

“This translates into \$341 million per year, or \$1 billion over the three-year

period of the program.”

In addition to the announcement of the \$177 million in support for wineries, MacAulay unveiled a further \$6.7 million to the Canadian Grapevine Certification Network for two initiatives — its AgriScience Program (\$5.9 million) and its AgriAssurance Program (\$836,220).

Debbie Zimmerman, chief executive officer of the Grape Growers of Ontario, said that money will help growers prepare for a future under the spectre of extreme weather conditions fuelled by climate change.

“That’s absolutely critical for growers and you can see what’s happened (a major crop failure in British Columbia) when we don’t get the right weather at the right time,” she said. “If the plants are not clean, and they’re not virus-free, they don’t have the strength to survive.”

Research will play a pivotal role in keeping the industry healthy, she added.

“You find ways to do things differently. That’s what we need to do.”

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Crossroads home show another big success

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

There was a little something for everyone at the Crossroads Public School's 14th annual NOTL Home, Garden & Craft Show.

It's one of the largest fundraisers for the school.

The show opens up the school, with vendors lining the gyms and classrooms, offering all sorts of items, like handmade jewelry, jams, candies, fresh baked treats and more.

There was also a Home Depot kid's zone, where kids could build a variety of kits, a bouncy castle, a magic show and a barbecue to keep the kids entertained.

St. Davids resident and Lion Ken Lamb was there selling Mitchell's Soup kits, Niagara-on-the-Lake Fire Services were out reminding people about the impor-



Issie, Jennifer and Lincoln Thwaites build truck kits in the Home Depot-sponsored Maker's Room. RICHARD HARLEY

tance of smoke alarms and dozens of other familiar NOTL faces were greeting people, offering draws and other prizes.

There were about 90 vendors in total, each offering something a little different, but all themed to your home in some fashion.

The whole thing takes a long list of volunteers,

school staff and students "hundreds" of hours to put together, said principal Kate Fish.

"It's unbelievable," she said, of the amount of support for the event.

"And then in addition to all the prizes that get donated from places in town, we also have the vendors who contribute oftentimes

to a raffle prize. And then each of the classrooms does a theme basket and so all of the kids and families contribute to those and you'll see that most of those are designed for other children."

Fish was thankful for everyone who played a role.

"I could thank every single person in this building, because it's such a wonderful way to support our school and support our community. It's such an event," she said.

"It's not just about the fundraising aspect of it, like the kids are running around having a good time and the parents get to see their kids and caregivers get to see you know, their kids coming in and seeing all their friends and sort of showing them their classrooms. And it's a really fantastic community event. I really look forward to it every year."

Women are still 'under pressure,' but it's getting better

Continued from Front Page

from McMaster University.

As she put it, McCabe almost went to law school but "met a man" and settled down to raise four kids instead.

Her aunt Lois Lloyd Smallman was a practising doctor in her time.

She was accepted into the University of Toronto's medical school, though the men didn't want her, Gariock said.

"It's women who are the inspiration of the world but they don't get enough credit for it," she said.

Gail Kendall and Velma Burke, who are active volunteers around town, felt appreciated for the work they do in the community.

Now 80, Burke said she has never felt ignored or undervalued in her community.

On reflection, Taylor said much had changed for women in the past 40 years.

Schools used to enforce dress codes and behavioural expectations more strictly, she said.

And though she preferred a more traditional approach to family life, many of the changes she's seen in educa-

tion since her youth are for the better, she said.

She and Margaret Louter, who joined her at Queen's Royal Park, agreed schools are doing more to address the social needs of children than they were when the women were younger.

Louter, vice-chair of the municipality's committee of adjustment, pointed out women continue to be under pressure today.

Day care, especially, has women under the gun, as there are many more kids in need of its services than there are workers to supply it.

Louter, who works as a law clerk, pondered who her female role models were.

Law was a man's world when she was cutting her teeth in the profession, she said.

"There weren't very many women in the areas that I was working in," she said. "It's better now. But 40 years ago, it was not the same."

"The whole thing about 'We can have it all' — it's not that easy," she added.

In the world of law, "there's a lot of demands put on them for their time" and if women want to have a family, they need to be



Valerie Pringle spoke last week at a WINspirational Women talk at 124 Hotel & Spa. The broadcaster is a member of the Order of Canada, and the recipient of the 2023 Women in Business Award Lifetime Achievement Award from the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

"aware of those challenges," she said.

Freelance photographer Julie Siggers said it takes a lot of passion to be successful in what you do, especially in the world of business.

"You have to be really passionate and really love what you're doing," Siggers told The Lake Report.

"It's hard to succeed if you're not super passionate," she said.

Siggers, after 20 years being in business for herself, said she's had many moments of self-doubt.

"But I love it and it's what I do," she said. "And if I won \$55 million today, I would do what I do for free."

She's encountered her share of rejection and pushback on her career path, but it's never stopped her, Siggers said.

"The most empowered I feel is when I get the 'no,'" she said.

"I am a strong, independent woman. And I can do things on my own," she added.

She gets a lot out of building up other women and takes inspiration from those around her, she added.

Among her personal role models she cited Megan Vanderlee, The Lake Report's advertising manager, and Amanda Gamble, executive director of the Friends of Fort George.

— With files from Molly Bowron

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Council **disqualifies** Kaiser from transportation committee

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Around and around we go: The issue of a proposed roundabout in the heart of St. Davids has become a thorny one for Niagara-on-the-Lake's nine council members.

At a meeting Tuesday night, council received close to 1,400 signatures from residents asking the town to reject a roundabout and preserve the village charm of St. Davids.

After a short discussion, council agreed to send the petition to the region.

Coun. Erwin Wiens said if the residents get their way, and the roundabout gets canned, the only other option is traffic lights.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor, citing a motion endorsed during the previous term of council, said councillors were against the traffic circle plans because the region had failed to account for St. Davids Public School when it planned the roundabout.

She also said the plan had no regard for the region's streetscape guidelines, which say roundabouts are safer for drivers but not for pedestrians.

O'Connor said the region had never responded to the town's request for a meeting to discuss these concerns.

And head of operations Darren Mackenzie, said council also requested the region consider a stoplight instead of a roundabout.

"I'm always concerned

when we say we just don't want something," Wiens said. "If we don't support the roundabout, the only option is lights."

Coun. Gary Burroughs countered that, "We're not suggesting what the answer is. The answer isn't a roundabout."

Wiens said Frank Tassone, the region's director of transportation services, has responded to the town's concerns by email multiple times.

Tassone, along with Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser, spoke to council about the roundabout and other transportation plans for NOTL at a meeting Sept. 26.

This was the second time in two weeks council has discussed the roundabout.

Last week, council decided it would not nominate Kaiser to a position on a regional transportation advisory committee.

The advisory committee is a newly created body meant to provide the region with advice on transportation policy.

"Coun. Kaiser has indicated that she is in favour of the St. Davids roundabout and is trusting the current process," O'Connor said.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa interrupted O'Connor several times as she tried to argue Kaiser could not adequately represent council on the advisory committee if she was in favour of the proposed roundabout.

"We have had two motions passed, which are still in force, against the St.

Davids roundabout," she said. "How can she represent council on this committee if it's against council's wishes?"

In an interview later, Kaiser said she had been elected by the people and would not answer to council should she be appointed to the committee.

In fact, she said she would withdraw her name if council nominated her to the position with any such strings attached.

O'Connor, citing a memo brought to council, said the appointee was to represent council, not residents, on the committee.

Kaiser said O'Connor was "playing a little bit of politics" and the issue of the roundabout was "not directly related" to the work of the committee.

"Councillors should be trying to bring the community together and be collaborative," she said.

In rejecting her appointment O'Connor was being divisive, Kaiser said.

She also took issue with O'Connor's characterization of her position on the roundabout.

"I am not, like, standing on the side of the road going 'We need a roundabout. We need a roundabout,'" Kaiser said.

However, contrary to the claims of residents, Kaiser said the region's assessment of the area was not flawed.

"I accept what the environmental assessment is saying."

"I just felt like it's kind of a moot discussion, because



Andrea Kaiser.

it's already been approved," she added.

Despite public pushback, Kaiser said there was no consensus, one way or the other, on the roundabout.

She told The Lake Report a resident had just expressed support for the project to her in a phone call.

Wiens said it was a mistake to withhold support for Kaiser because of one issue.

"Every issue that was ever questioned by residents of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has been addressed by the region," he said.

"To disallow — disavow somebody based on one incident, because of a political decision is not germane. It doesn't make sense to do that," he said.

Kaiser had been a good advocate for the town, he said.

Couns. Maria Mavridis, Nick Ruller, Adriana Vizzari, Burroughs and O'Connor all voted against nominating Kaiser to the transportation advisory committee.

Couns. Tim Balasiuk, Wendy Cheropita, Wiens and Zalepa supported her.

O'Connor attempted to have Vizzari considered for nomination to the committee but Zalepa said she would have to submit it as a notice of motion, to be discussed at a later date.

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Great Lakes municipalities can benefit from working with Conservation Ontario when it comes to addressing climate change goals, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says. FILE

Zalepa advocates for **team approach** to fighting effects of climate change

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

An agreement between Conservation Ontario and the group representing municipalities along the Great Lakes will help in the fight against climate change – and, preserve the economic health of municipalities and residents’ well-being, Gary Zalepa says.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake lord mayor is the town’s representative on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Mayor’s Commission on Coastal Resilience.

The group has entered into a memorandum of collaboration with the provincial conservation agency.

The agreement was signed at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto, held Jan. 21 to 23.

The two groups will work together to help cities and towns prepare for increasing risks from flooding, erosion and severe storms along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

“Shoreline erosion and issues around that all could be massive risks,” Zalepa said in an interview with The Lake Report.

The Great Lakes group is currently working on a list of priorities. Zalepa said he’ll be attending a meeting of the Ontario region group within the initiative to learn more.

“They’ve got a list of things they’ve been working on,” Zalepa said.

Locally, concerns about flooding and shoreline erosion have been mounting for years.

The Lake Report has reported extensively on instances of flooding as far back as 2019, when it produced a special edition and an accompanying documentary “Falling Into The Lake,” which investigated the shoreline erosion at Niagara Shores Park.

Additionally, Parks Canada has undertaken work to extend the break-wall to protect the shoreline along the Niagara River at Fort Mississauga and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club.

Locally, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority will work with Niagara officials on implementing strategies, communications, fundraising and bridging gaps in science.

Currently, the conservation authority plays a role in shoreline management within its jurisdiction between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

Conservation authority board chair and Lincoln regional councillor Rob Foster welcomed the partnership.

“Having a collaboration like this in this day and age is a good thing,” he said. “We’re working in the same general direction, combin-

ing resources and moving forward.”

The conservation authority can bring a lot to the table for the partnership. It is in a unique situation among conservation authorities in the province.

“We look after the shorelines of two Great Lakes,” he said. “The NPCA is already doing a lot of work surrounding flooding (and) shoreline erosion.”

Like Niagara-on-the-Lake, Foster’s home municipality of Lincoln is facing shoreline erosion along Lake Ontario and he said that the conservation authority is doing what it can to stem the tide.

“The NPCA is involved in a number of projects and trying to mitigate this as best we can,” he said.

In a news release announcing the partnership, the conservation authority said it’s in the process of updating its hazard management plan.

This will serve as a guide to best protect people and infrastructure along the shorelines of both lakes and contribute to “the enhancement of the diverse coastal communities and ecosystems that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.”

Foster elaborated on that: “We want to make sure we preserve a shoreline where people can go and make use of it for years to come.”

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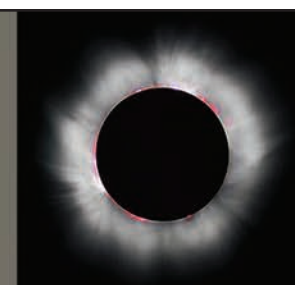
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Stewart family has **final say** on fate of appeal

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It will be up to the family of a man who was injured while working as a seasonal agricultural worker in Niagara-on-the-Lake if an appeal of the denial of benefits by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board will continue.

That's according to David Arruda, the caseworker from the Toronto-based Industrial Accident Victims Group Ontario community legal clinic who was to represent Jeleel Stewart at an upcoming appeal hearing.

Stewart, 51, was to have an appeal heard by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal but he died at home in Jamaica in January. Arruda said he could not shed more light on what may come next.

"At this exact moment I can't give you too much information," Arruda told The Lake Report.

"There has to be further discussion (with Stewart's family)," he said.

The WSIB has said it is up to the tribunal to decide



Jeleel Stewart.

on the Stewart appeal while a spokesperson for the tribunal said it could not comment on individual appeals.

Stewart was working at Mori Nurseries in 2008 when he was seriously injured in an accident involving a forklift. His left hand was crushed, severing tendons and nerves.

Jane Andres of Niagara Workers Welcome, the Niagara-on-the-Lake group that advocates for and provides support to seasonal agricultural workers, has

followed Stewart's case for years.

"We dared to hope that Jeleel would live long enough to experience justice," Andres said in a news release announcing Stewart's death.

"He was just 51 years of age and a few weeks away from having his appeal heard when he passed away."

Previous appeals to the tribunal on behalf of Stewart were denied.

But last September, when ruling on another case involving four other seasonal agricultural workers, the tribunal said the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board was wrong to deny the compensation claims of the workers.

They were hired under the federal Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the tribunal said the four workers were entitled to proper loss-of-earnings benefits and retraining support.

That decision prompted a new appeal on behalf of Stewart's case.

The appeal was scheduled to be heard this summer but given the state of Stewart's declining health, a request

was made to have the appeal moved up.

Stewart had a stroke last summer and was left unable to speak. He also had a stent implanted in 2022 to alleviate ongoing heart issues.

Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates has taken up the cause at Queen's Park with Bill 57, a private member's bill he reintroduced late last year that would help seasonal workers receive compensation if they are injured on the job while in Canada.

Workers like Stewart are victims of what Gates referred to as "deeming," which occurs when the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board decides a worker is able to earn money they are not actually earning, on the basis of suitable and available work they do not actually have.

The bill, however, has yet to have come up for second reading at Queen's Park and is currently collecting dust.

Meanwhile, Niagara Workers Welcome is raising funds to help cover funeral costs for Stewart's family.

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Student **summer jobs** open up at Fort George

Staff
The Lake Report

That time of the year is here once again: the Friends of Fort George is now accepting applications for student summer positions at Fort George National Historic Sites and Brock's Monument.

For the past 37 years of its existence, the Friends of Fort George have given young people in Niagara the chance to work at its key historic sites as hundreds of people visit every year during the tourism season.

To date, more than 400 students have worked at Fort George and Brock's Monument, primarily as historical re-enactors, but also at Fort George's gift shop and as heritage interpreters providing on-site tours.

Most students hired by the Friends of Fort George are employed as members of the infantry squad.

"These students play an important role in enhancing the visitor experience at Fort George," states a media release from the group.

Dressed as period soldiers, these students are taught military discipline



The Friends of Fort George is accepting applications for students interested in working in the infantry squad, the gift shop and Brock's Monument. SUPPLIED

and order, they receive lessons in the history of the fort and the town so they can answer questions from locals and tourists alike.

As well, they are taught how to march, work with flintlock muskets, and the proper handling of black powder.

One former student, Craig Burney, was first told when he started working at Fort George that it would be "the

best job you'll ever have."

"He could not have been more correct," Burney said. "Beyond the immersive experiences of embodying history, with colourful uniforms, drums, cannon, and fire smoke, there is no singular experience I have accumulated that has done so much to broaden and enrich my understanding of Canada, its people and the world we live in."

Students are also hired to work at the Fort George gift shop, which the Friends of Fort George says is one of its most successful fundraising initiatives and allows students to gain retail experience at a national historic site.

Also being hired are heritage interpreters, who work at Brock's Monument at the Battle of Queenston Heights National Historic Site.

They provide guided tours to thousands of school children each year, monitor the climbing of the steps and oversee the museum and gift shop at the base of the monument.

Gavin Watson, a student working at Brock's Monument in 2023, said of his experience: "Brock's Monu-


ment has been an amazing and humbling experience in welcoming students from around Ontario, tourists from around the world, and locals who have spent their entire life looking at the monument and visit regularly."

Andrew Laliberte, another interpreter, said it has been a great way to learn to interact with people from all walks of life.

"Some are more interested or knowledgeable than others, but learning how to share such important and evolving histories with everyone is one of the most gratifying experiences," Laliberte said. "It is especially rewarding when they become interested and engaged with us, the stories, or the imposing experience of the monument, and leave with more knowledge about Canada and its peoples."


The Friends of Fort George is accepting applications for students interested in working in the infantry squad, the gift shop and Brock's Monument.

For more information on available positions, visit the group's website at friendsoffortgeorge.ca.



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Niagara
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HYDRO

BOARD MEMBER UPDATE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro Inc. is seeking applications to fill existing vacancies on its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for providing overall direction in the management of the affairs of the company.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro Inc. is a trusted partner for our customers and continuously seeks to provide low cost energy delivery, high reliability and high power quality.

QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Interested individuals should have sound business experience, analytical skills, be strategic thinking and understand organizational dynamics and effectiveness. Knowledge of the electricity sector, the regulatory process and previous experience on boards of corporations would be assets.

The Board of Directors meets most months for usually less than 2 hours. Meeting preparation and committee work or one-off assignments add to the expected commitment.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested individuals can send their resume and covering letter by March 31, 2024 to:

Attention: Board of Directors Application
Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro Inc.
P.O. Box 460 8 Henegan Road
Virgil, ON L0S 1T0

E-mail: director@notlhydro.com

We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those chosen for an interview will be contacted.



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Contributors: Dr. William Brown, Brittany Carter, Penny-Lynn Cookson, Kevan Dowd, Linda Fritz, Patty Garriock, Steve Hardaker, Zahraa Hmood, Richard Hutton, Evan Loree, Brian Marshall, NOTL Museum, Ross Robinson, Julia Sacco, Kyra Simone, Tim Taylor, Jill Troyer, Dave Van de Laar, Janice White, Joanne Young and many more members of the NOTL community

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Contributed by Patty Garriock

“Always find opportunities to make someone smile, and to offer random acts of kindness in everyday life.” - Roy T. Bennett

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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Mailing Address
 PO Box 724, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S1J0
Have a lead on a story?
 Call 905.359.2270 or send an email to editor@niagaranow.com

Pickleball for a cause



Gary Walker of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Pickleball Club participates in the Smash the Guts Pickleball Tournament at the NOTL Community Centre last Saturday. The Crohn's and Colitis Canada charity tourney was a fundraiser for inflammatory bowel disease research. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

A show of strength and solidarity

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

From newborn to their nineties, the women of Niagara-on-the-Lake turned out this past Monday morning in a show of strength and solidarity.

Tomorrow — Friday, March 8 — is International Women's Day and for the past three years The Lake Report has taken the opportunity to highlight and celebrate the women of NOTL — their contributions and accomplishments.

It started out rather small two years ago, with some front-page stories about women from the community, plus a few more pieces inside the paper.

Last year, we expanded it and invited women to gather in the middle of Queen Street for a mass celebratory photo on the Monday before International Women's Day.

We had no idea how many would show up. When just over 100 women turned out and urged us to do it every year, we promised them we'd make it an annual affair.

So, we put out the word



again and this week women descended upon the gazebo at Queen's Royal Park.

And the crowd grew larger still. More than 125 women came out — while about two dozen others sent last-minute regrets that work, family and health matters wouldn't allow them to make it.

The numbers are impressive but are not the real story. This is an organic community happening and because women feel that the gathering is a worthwhile endeavour means it is a tradition we should continue.

Coupled with the mass photo on Page 1, in this week's edition you will find a 12-page Souvenir Special

Section dedicated to the women of NOTL.

In its pages you can read stories and vignettes about some of the remarkable women of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Our focus this year was women in the business community and education.

So, we asked readers to suggest and nominate women whose stories should be told. To be honest, the results were overwhelming.

You contributed way more ideas than we had space or time to accommodate, but we have managed to produce articles, large and small, highlighting about two dozen women from the community.

Please take the time to read about these accomplished and interesting women, a real cross-section of the community.

As well, we thank those businesses that opted to purchase advertisements in the Souvenir Special Section. Their ads are evocative and beautiful.

By offering a limited number of advertising spots, we were able to produce the section at cost

and in turn we have committed to donating a portion of the revenue to two women-focused charities: Gillian's Place women's shelter and NOTL's own Pink Pearl Foundation, which supports women dealing with cancer.

We are happy and proud to do so.

On Monday at Queen's Royal Park, a number of women remarked that even though NOTL is known to be home to a lot of older people, a great many of those who made the effort to be on hand for the mass photo were in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

That was wonderful and encouraging to see. And it is a reflection of how engaged the younger generations of NOTL women are in matters of community and womanhood.

International Women's Day is marked every March 8, so let's plan to get together again on the first Monday in March of 2025 and beyond. Highlight next March 3 on your calendars. We'll see you then, at a location to be determined.

editor@niagaranow.com

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LETTERS OF THE WEEK

Mind-boggling ignorance about town's tree bylaw

Dear editor:
 We read the article about town council's discussion regarding our present tree bylaws ("Restrictions on tree cuttings are unfair, councillors say") in the Feb. 22 edition of The Lake Report.
 Oh, dear. We really are in trouble when councillors are unfamiliar with the town's tree bylaws.
 Planting a replacement tree for the one cut down seems to be a foreign concept to some members of town council.
 Just as bewildering is council agreeing to give permission to cut down a healthy tree, as detailed in the same story.
 It is simply mind-boggling.
 If we read the tree bylaw correctly, even with permission to remove a tree on private property, depending on the circumference at a given height of the tree to be cut down, a property owner in the urban area of NOTL is automatically required to plant a minimum of two replacement trees.
 Yet Coun. Erwin Wiens stated that "we don't have

a tree policy in the town to plant more trees," even though there clearly is such a bylaw.
 Perhaps the bylaw department should offer a brush-up workshop to the councillors who are unaware of Niagara-on-the-Lake's tree bylaw?
 In the Niagara Region, we used to grow tender fruits: peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots, cherries and more.
 The whole peninsula was a sea of fruit trees and we did feed a lot of people with good, healthy fruit.
 Now we are "wine country."
 Farmers make a lot more money by growing grapes and the government receives substantially more revenues from wine than from fruit.
 We enjoy a good glass of wine as well as the next person.
 Is Councillor Wiens hoping that if we drink enough of the good stuff, we might all ignore reason and eat whatever he is trying to feed us?
**Margret Walker
 and Mary Kilmer
 NOTL**

Time to change thinking about our environment

Dear editor:
 I am reading in amazement about "messy" trees and making room in yards for completely unnecessary landfill toys (the manufacturing process and environmental impact of these items alone is shocking).
 All trees are "messy" and a potential danger and they provide shade, anchorage and oxygen for our burning planet.
 So much benefit and beauty for so little work. You can always opt to live far away from trees if the danger and mess concern you, but remember it will be 42 C in July.
 Even Parks Canada is cutting down old growth trees at the NOTL Golf Club to make way for much-needed shoreline protection.
 I see the need for drastic measures like this but, am I missing something or do trees no longer stabilize shorelines?
 Have a walk on the golf course if you want to see the replanting that was

promised in the first round of shoreline protection.
 It's laughable. They are twigs at best.
 I was part of the public process of getting a tree bylaw enacted in Niagara-on-the-Lake and thought we had made great strides.
 I'm feeling pretty naive now.
 It has become profoundly obvious to me the only messy thing on our planet is us.
 We continue to destroy and consume and rationalize that we can't make a difference.
 If you save one tree in your own backyard, you have contributed.
 And for those of you with children, perhaps consider more trees and less plastic if you picture them having a viable environment at all.
 And be aware that your yard is going to be smoking hot without trees. We have to change our thinking now.
**Beth Macdonald
 NOTL**

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Julie Taylor is the owner of the pharmacy, which opened in 2019. She was born and raised in Virgil and graduated the University of Toronto in 2008.
Kate Wojtowicz is a licensed pharmacist who joined our team in November 2021. She graduated with a nursing degree from McGill University followed by the pharmacy degree at the University of Toronto in 2014
Krista Makinson joined our team in February 2022 as a pharmacy assistant. She has worked in both the hospital and community fields and has over 25 years of experience in pharmacy!

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What's **wrong** with this picture?



Brian Marshall
Columnist

Within the foreseeable future, Glendale will be home to 20,000 – or more – residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

That's likely to be over half of the town's projected population.

This will inevitably alter the complexion of our local government, as the concentration of political representation shifts from the historic population centres to Glendale to fairly reflect the needs of the majority of voters.

Bluntly, if action is not taken now at this pivotal moment in time to embrace and fully integrate Glendale into the town's existing warp and weave, the character of Niagara-on-the-Lake will be irrevocably altered.

And, not by the will of existing Glendale residents, most of whom have expressed their desire to be embraced into that character through sympathetic town planning and development.

If we allow the construc-

tion of isolated islands containing the up-thrusting phallic symbols of a failed, unsustainable 20th-century human "warehousing" model, it will be the occupants of those cubicles in the sky that will dictate the future of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

On Jan. 31 this year, town staff brought forward the White Oaks application for official plan and Zoning amendments – to the mixed-use high-rise density zone – for consideration by the urban design committee.

Specifically, asked for committee comments on building materials, building design, height, building locations, community connectivity and any additional comments on matters related to urban design.

My objective in today's column is to simply explore each of these criteria against the proposed White Oaks development rather than comment on the committee's discussion.

Should you wish to see that meeting, it can be found on the town website, under "Meetings, Agendas & Minutes," scrolling down to "Past Meetings" and looking under the urban design committee tab for the meeting video: notl.com/council-government/meetings-agendas-minutes.

Let's start with a brief description of the proposed development.

There are two buildings (containing two towers respectively) arranged in a



Brian Marshall says highrise condo towers in Glendale would be a mistake. SUPPLIED

rough V-shape with the apex of the V located at the Glendale and Taylor roads intersection with the V's widest point facing the QEW.

The two buildings are completely separated on the right side of the apex by a pedestrian walkway, while the building on the left side of the apex is punctured by a pedestrian tunnel walkway at ground level.

The contiguous base of each building is five storeys tall – these bases are surmounted by four towers: one at 17 storeys; one at 18 storeys; one at 21 storeys; and, at the apex of the V, is one at 25 storeys.

The interior of the V is principally given over to a private access road with a terminus loop and hard-scaped walkways punctuated by container plantings.

Due to the pie-shaped lands available for this development, there is very little space available for in-ground plantings and, at best, would necessitate the use of bushes, shrubs and small columnar form trees.

From the drawings included with the application, the building materials above the first storey appear to be the typical glass, concrete and metal commonly used in these types of high-rise residential buildings.

Where present, the balconies stand proud of the buildings presenting a gentle sawtooth pattern complemented by metal mesh railings and provide the singular saving grace to what would otherwise be simple linear columns (something that is evident where balconies on the buildings are absent) dominated by glass surfaces.

By contrast, the buildings' first storeys – particularly on the street facades – show a much more diverse use of materials, colours, textures and patterns which, complemented by its gently curving lines, provide a richer visual experience in comparison to the dominant and largely generic storeys above.

So, as proposed, there will be two five-storey buildings running parallel to Taylor Road and Glendale Avenue respectively – each of which presents an over 50-foot high barrier to the street, effectively walling the development off from the general Glendale community.

On the corner of the Taylor-Glendale intersection will rise the tallest (27-storey) tower standing akin to a watch tower over a fortress.

Yes, there is a "gateway" gap between the two buildings on Glendale Avenue, however, given the development's north-south orientation, that gateway will fall within a building's shadow for a significant portion of the day.

Further, that gateway will lead into an interior space that will also experience a fair amount of shadow.

Speaking of that V-shaped interior space between the buildings, I raise a real concern vis-à-vis noise pollution therein.

Think of that space as a funnel, the mouth of which directly faces the QEW with its "bottom" closed off by a 25-storey high building.

I suspect that today's barely noticeable road noise in this location would increase to a cacophony in

that proposed interior space should this development proceed as designed.

Moreover, the reflected noise could have a deleterious impact on the existing White Oaks Resort and Spa.

Moving on to the question of building height, it is no secret to my regular readers that I consider high-rise buildings to be dehumanizing.

This position, informed and supported by a multitude of experts and academics on a global basis, encompasses the facts that residential high-rises are not on a human scale, increase isolationism with resultant derivative physiological disorders and associated healthcare costs, create barriers to community integration and decrease housing affordability.

To demonstrate this last point, allow me to quote Dr. Suzanne Crowhurst Leonard, director of the Making Cities Livable International Council, who observed the following: "Tall buildings offer increased profits for developers. However, the higher a building rises, the more expensive is the construction."

These increased costs are expressed in higher per-square-foot purchase prices.

And she continues, "Tall buildings inflate the price of adjacent land, thus making the protection of historic buildings and affordable housing less achievable."

However, my opinion vis-à-vis the unsustainability of high-rises is not limited to only these considerations but is further reinforced by much more practical and climatically important matters.

A study conducted in 2016 by Lighthouse Environmental Consulting Ltd. for City of Vancouver, Metro Vancouver, Surrey, Victoria and the Building Owners Association of B.C. found the energy performance of low-rise/medium-rise multiple-unit residential buildings was 22 per cent better (per square meter) than high-rise multiple-unit residential buildings.

The City of Seattle's data set – derived from its Energy Benchmarking and Reporting Program – indicates that multi-family buildings higher than nine stories currently use 60 percent more energy per square foot than comparable four-story or five-story buildings.

Indeed, in an article written by Ruth Saint and Francesco Pomponi from Edinburgh Napier University, in which they spoke of the results of their study, reported that "densely built, low-rise environments are more space and carbon efficient, while high-rise buildings have a drastically higher carbon impact."

They went on to state their findings show that high-density low-rise (buildings under 100 feet tall) cities, such as Paris, are more environmentally friendly than high-density high-rise cities, such as New York.

Looking at the fixed population scenarios, when moving from a high-density low-rise to a high-density high-rise urban environment, the average increase in whole life-cycle carbon emissions is 142 per cent.

In any case, in White Oaks, we have a proposed development that will lack – in the real sense – community connectivity, is divorced from the surrounding landscape, with an architectural design and materials completely distinct from, and unrelated to, anything in Niagara-on-the-Lake – natural or built.

Furthermore, its high-rise towers are unsustainable on multiple levels.

High density? Sure. High-rise? A complete mistake.

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



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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

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

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **14795 NIAGARA RIVER PARKWAY, GLENCAIRN HALL (PART LOT 9, PLAN 30R-7836, PART 2)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

The subject property is called the Glencairn Hall and is located near the Queenston urban area on the Niagara River Parkway. The residence has a substantial setback from Niagara River Parkway and is partially visible from the road. The Glencairn Hall is located on a large estate lot. The estate faces the Niagara River on the east and formally designed gardens on the west. The estate is enclosed in a stone boundary wall.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

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

14795 Niagara River Parkway is a representative example of the Greek Revival style. The two-storey residential building features a square plan with a wing addition on the south elevation. Other elements representative of the style includes, the high-pitched truncated hip roof, overhanging eaves with moulded frieze details, rectangular window openings with wooden trim and apron details, the Doric and Ionic columns located on the east elevation, the pair of roman arch window openings above the entryway, red brick chimneys and the stringcourse that runs through all the elevations. It features a typical Greek Revival doorway with a semi-elliptical arched opening, decorative classical cornice and an entablature on the top, it also contains side lights with wooden panels underneath.

Glencairn Hall displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value as seen in the doorway and column details of the house. The doorway features a semi-elliptical arched opening with decorative classical cornice and an entablature on the top. It also contains side lights with wooden panels underneath. The wooden pilasters that vertically separate door and sidelights are also fluted.

The large estate lot has historical and associative value as being the residence of the Hamilton family, constructed by John Hamilton. The Hamilton family had an important presence in the Niagara Region as well as the City of Hamilton. John Hamilton was a businessman from Queenston, he was a member of the legislative council, the senate and the Chairman of the board of trustees of Queen's college. Glencairn Hall is also associated with being the residence of John D. Larkin. Larkin was a prominent businessman from Buffalo and was also the owner of the Larkin Soap Company. Larkin was a close friend and associate of the modernist architect Frank Lloyd Wright who visited Glencairn. Larkin owned multiple farms along the Niagara River Parkway on which he constructed a number of cement workers houses and barns.

The subject property has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of the Greek Revival style resurgence in Canada. Research has yielded information that the integrity

of the Greek Revival house is exceptional and may contribute to a better understanding of the structures and architecture of the early to mid-1800s. The estate is also among the few surviving examples of such style of architecture.

Glencairn Hall was designed by the architect John Latshaw. John was born in America but moved to Canada in 1829. Soon after he was commissioned by Alex Hamilton to design Willowbank (14487 Niagara River Parkway) in 1834. Similar to Glencairn, Willowbank is also designed in Greek Revival style. John Latshaw was one of the first designers to introduce the style in Ontario.

Glencairn Hall lies on the Niagara River Parkway and is important in maintaining the character of the area. It is part of the 'Scenic Route' of Niagara River Parkway. The area majorly comprises of large estate lots and farmhouses with substantial setbacks from the road. The estate lots have winding driveways and landscaped lawns with mature trees.

The subject property is also historically linked to its surroundings. Towards the south of the subject property is a Part IV designated property. It contains a number of buildings that were once part of the Glencairn property including a small stone structure that was used as a schoolhouse, and a large cement carriage house. The property at 14785 Niagara River Parkway also contains the remnants of Vrooman's Battery which is a National Historic Site.

14795 Niagara River Parkway is considered a historical landmark because of its location and vicinity to Vrooman's Battery. Glencairn Hall was placed on a promontory facing the Niagara River in the centre of the original 8-acre estate. The placement of the structure on the tip of the slope was intentional so that it could be visible from the road, the river as well as from across the river. It takes full advantage of its picturesque landscape setting.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of the estate at 14795 Niagara River Parkway in Niagara-on-the-Lake include its:

- Two storeys Greek revival style residence
- White clapboard siding
- Doric and Ionic columns on east elevation
- Decorative entablature on the east elevation
- High pitched truncated hip roof with balustrade roof trim
- Overhanging eaves with moulded frieze
- Four red brick chimneys
- Rectangular window openings
- Pair of Roman arched windows on west elevation with ionic capital details • Wooden trim surrounds, and wooden sills on window openings
- Stone foundation
- Wooden stringcourse
- Main entryway on west elevation with semi-elliptical arched opening, decorative cornice, entablature, sidelights and fluted wooden pilasters.
- Location along the Niagara River Parkway
- The winding driveway lined with matured trees
- Substantial setback from the road
- Location on a promontory facing the Niagara River
- Historical connection to Vrooman's Battery

Objections

Any objection to this designation must be filled no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to Grant Bivol, Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **April 5th 2024**.

Queries

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

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 7th day of March 2024
GRANT BIVOL, CLERK



NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

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

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **1 PAXTON LANE, LOCUST HALL (PART TWP LOT 90)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

1 Paxton Lane was named Locust Hall due to a large number of locust trees found on the subject property located at the intersection of Paxton Lane and York Road, towards the west of Paxton Lane. The residence has a moderate setback from Paxton Lane and a substantial setback from York Road. The residence is set on a rise of land which slopes down to the Four Mile Creek located towards the west of the subject property.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

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

The residence is a representative example of the Neo-Classical style. The Neo-Classical style influences can be seen in the doorway design as well as the second storey window and the semi elliptical windows below the gable ends. The two-storey rectangular plan residence has a side gable roof with return eaves, symmetrical façade with five bays, cornice details, twelve over twelve double hung windows, the Neo-Classical doorway and brick and stone finish. The balanced, simple and symmetrical side elevations are also characteristic of the neo-classical style.

1 Paxton Lane displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value as seen in the doorway detail of the house. The doorway features a semi-elliptical arched opening with decorative classical cornice and an entablature on the top. It also contains side lights with wooden panels underneath. The wooden moulding details on the doorway contains egg and dart and classical motifs. The wooden pilasters that vertically separate door and sidelights are also fluted. The intricate wooden craftsmanship is also featured in the second storey window above the main entrance. These details are said to be the work of shipwrights in their off-season or the winter months.

The Locust Hall has historical and/or associative value as being the residence of the Woodruff family. The settled community of St. Davids was founded by Richard Woodruff who was also known as King Dick. King Dick was a leading businessman, a veteran of the war and also a member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada. Richard also formed a partnership with his younger brother William as a merchant. They also built and operated the first steam powered grist mill in Upper Canada. The Woodruff family has been an essential part of the economic and social fabric of St. Davids and still maintain the ownership of the house.

1 Paxton Lane has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of the Woodruff family and the life of the early United Empire Loyalists who settled in the Niagara region. The house is situated in close proximity to the Paxton House, which was the primary residence of the Secord family and is a designated property on the Municipal Heritage Register. Research into the house has yielded information that the integrity of the Neo-Classical house is exceptional which may contribute to a better understanding of the structures and architecture of the early 1800s.

Locust Hall has contextual value because it is important in maintaining the character of the area. 1 Paxton Lane is part of the historic fabric of St. Davids urban area. It lies in close proximity to various other historic buildings and also buildings listed on the Municipal Heritage Register. It acts as a character supporting resource for St. Davids. Historically, the house was named after the many Locust trees that were found in the area. These trees could still be found along Paxton Lane and along Four Mile Creek.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of the dwelling at 1 Paxton Lane in Niagara on-the-Lake include its:

- Two storey Neo-Classical style residence
- Symmetrical five bay façade
- The neoclassical main entrance and the second storey window
- Side gable roof with return eaves
- Cornice and sash details below the roofline
- Rectangular window openings
- Brick finish
- Stone quoins
- Red brick chimneys
- The woodwork on the façade
- Carriage stoop located at the border of the driveway and pedestrian pathway.
- The continued association of Locust Hall with the Woodruff family
- Location of Locust Hall within St. Davids at the intersection of Paxton Lane and York Road
- Mature trees and landscaped lawns

Objections

Any objection to this designation must be filled no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to Grant Bivol, Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **April 5th 2024.**

Queries

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

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake this 7th day of March 2024

GRANT BIVOL, CLERK

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: #InspireInclusion

Celebrating

Niagara-on-the-Lake has a long history of important contributions by dedicated and enthusiastic women. With International Women's Day on March 8, The Lake Report celebrates the women of NOTL with this Souvenir Special Section.



When we again asked women to come out to recognize and celebrate the women of Niagara-on-the-Lake, they answered. About 125 turned out to the town's iconic gazebo this past Monday morning for a mass photo to celebrate womanhood and women's contributions to our community. Enjoy our 12 pages of stories and photos in this Special Section saluting the women of our town.

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of **Niagara-on-the-Lake**

International Women's Day 2024

An honour roll of NOTL women

Staff
The Lake Report

Women make the world go 'round – in NOTL and everywhere else. So, we asked readers to nominate women from NOTL who they felt we should feature in stories.

We were inundated with dozens of suggestions, far more than we could include in this 2024 International Women's Day commemorative section. But please enjoy these vignettes, a sort of honour roll of just a few of the many NOTL women who are deserving of recognition.



Linda Grimo.

Over the nearly 25 years that **Linda Grimo** has been managing the family business, Grimo Nut Nursery, she has become a leading authority on growing cold hardy nut trees, which produce a food crop, says Syme Jago.

Her dedication to developing a sustainable food source that can be grown in more northerly climates goes beyond supporting commercial growers. She encourages and assists backyard growers to include functional food source landscape trees in their own gardens, Jago says. While her "roots" are here in Niagara, she is a highly respected lecturer across North America and provides support to growers throughout Europe.

Trisha Romance has been a resident of NOTL for almost 40 years and

is widely respected for her artistic talent. Her paintings depicting scenes from the town's past are iconic treasures. Over the years, thousands of people have expressed their appreciation for her work by collecting her prints and paintings.

Sharon Brimsmead-Taylor was suggested by Carrie Robinson, who says she is "a staple of the community who has held multiple positions over the years that help our community shine and come together. After a long time in the wine industry, she now works to coordinate the Niagara-on-the-Lake Farmers Market @ the Village." Robinson says she has seen first-hand her "insurmountable work ethic, passion, commitment, warm heart and ability to build community and raise up other small businesses (including many female-owned businesses and female farmers)."

Julianne Enns is carrying on a family legacy, having taken over operation of Enns Battery & Tire on Four Mile Creek Road from her parents Rudy and Dorothy. Founded in 1971 by Jake Enns and his wife Anne Marie, the business is now in its sixth decade of operation. The company sells and services thousands of tires annually for area drivers and farmers. Plus, if your vehicle needs a battery, they'll probably have it.

Daniela Kozak and her colleagues at **Lida Kowal's** accounting practice nominated their boss for "showing her caring and compassion nature not only within our office but with our clients and the community." As well, "Lida has been an active participant in many local endeavours, giving freely of her time and expertise on many occasions and with diverse groups."



Melissa Achal.

Melissa Achal, president of NEOB Lavender, was nominated by staff member Sharon Chelmecki, who cites Achal for being one-half of "the successful partnership that is NEOB Lavender — a local business that has thrived as a farm for more than 14 years on Niagara Stone Road, and as a relative newcomer to the quaint heritage district of Queen Street in downtown NOTL, in addition to three other locations across Ontario."

"I have been overwhelmed by her generosity both with her staff and with her community involvement," she says. "She's often very quiet about her contributions — frequently participating anonymously to assist local businesses, countless charities, individuals and staff interests no matter where they're located."

Separately, Achal singled out Chelmecki and boutique associate Mackenzie Curry. As well, Achal notes assistant manager Tracy Kent "is an outstanding employee who makes a positive impact on our team. Her enthusiasm and commitment is a bright light in our company."

"I always call my dear friend **Babs (Barbara Worthy)** the infamous Babs," says entertainer and producer Juliet Dunn. "She's a legend in Niagara."



Yemi Shifatu, Sandy Ritter and Catherine Porter.

Sean Simpson nominated three women from Simpson's Pharmasave for their contributions: **Sandy Ritter, Catherine Porter and Yemi Shifatu.**

Ritter has been providing outstanding service and patient care at Simpson's for over 20 years and recently announced her retirement after 40 years as a pharmacist. "Her warmth, caring and compassionate manner will be missed missed by customers and staff alike," Simpson says.

Porter is the store's operations manager and serves on the board of directors of Niagara-on-the-Lake Palliative Care. "Catherine is well known and appreciated for her great sense of humour and her willingness to go above and beyond for her customers."

And Shifatu, the pharmacy manager at Simpson's Virgil location, is a certified diabetes educator. "Yemi has been instrumental in bringing in new services to Simpson's, including the recent approval as a Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre, which will be integrated with our new virtual travel clinic," Simpson says.

NOTL Hydro CEO Tim Curtis suggested **Sara Engels**, the utility's manager of corporate services, is deserving of recognition.

"She is responsible for most of the customer-facing activities at NOTL Hydro," he says. That includes managing the customer service staff and ensuring all electricity and water rates and government programs are properly set up — "a real challenge with electricity rates given

all the different rates and government programs."

She also makes sure all the bills get out accurately each month and that service requests from customers are provided to the operations staff for speedy service. "While this may not be as exciting as some of our tourist-serving businesses, her performance is a key to ensuring NOTL businesses get the best electricity rates and service possible," Curtis says.

Artist Marilyn Cochrane has high praise for **Margie Galita**, from the new Mann Gallery at Niagara's 13th Street Winery. The St. Davids resident, formerly from the Moore Gallery in Toronto, is responsible for organizing all future exhibitions at the Mann Gallery in her new position. "Margie will bring in rich and diverse art shows to our NOTL area, helping to expand the visual arts draw for our residents and many visitors. She is a qualified and committed art lover," says Cochrane.

With Howard Zemsky of Buffalo, NOTL's **Sue Murray** was part-owner of Niagara's Finest Inns before it was sold to the Lais Group. She and her husband, architect Wayne Murray, designed and built the Harbour House Hotel, now also part of Niagara's Finest. Lyle Hall, who nominated Murray, notes "her depth of experience in hospitality goes much further back" and includes the Millcroft Inn and Pinestone Resort. As well, she was the first female member of the CAA Niagara and CAA Canada boards, "no small accomplishment," says Hall. In 2007, she was named Canada's Hotelier of the Year.

#InspireInclusion

Royal Oak teachers pave positive paths

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It's carpet time. Krista McMackin, a teacher for the past three years at Royal Oak Community School, is herding kids into a group for a math lesson after recess and morning snack.

As the small class of about 10 gathers round their teacher, sitting above them in her pink chair, McMackin blows the kids a great big kiss and stretches out her arms, inviting them to get closer.

There are a few giggles among the already rowdy roundup.

"I basically get to be a big kid," McMackin, or Ms. Krista to her students, says while her class is out for recess.

"They keep me young. They keep me playing," she adds.

For her, teaching is "just such a fun job."

And head of school Julia Murray says she's "always found a lot of joy" working with kids.

"Children and dogs are my jam," Murray says as Duke, her big, curly-haired Bouvier poodle mix, circles her desk.

Robin Forlin, a 20-year veteran of Ontario's classrooms, says she always wanted to be a teacher.

She recalls how her father set up a chalkboard and a few desks for her and her friends to play with in her basement when she was growing up.

And to hear her tell it, Forlin was always the teacher.

Data from Statistics Canada shows up to 75 per cent of all teachers in Canada are women.

And at Royal Oak, 10 of the 11 teaching and support staff are women.

"I think gender roles probably have a little bit to do with why the profession is so female dominated," Murray says.

"Women generally are quite nurturing and caring, and it's certainly a trait that's necessary for the profession," she adds.

But McMackin says she tries not to steer her students into prototypically feminine or masculine professions.

"Just because you're a woman, it doesn't mean that you have to fit into those



Top: Early years teacher Krista McMackin blows her kids a great big kiss as they gather for a carpet time lesson. Middle: From left, Robin Forlin, Julia Murray and Krista McMackin are a small part part of the woman-led team at Royal Oak School. Bottom: Art teacher Leah Tobin gives instruction to eight-year-old Frankie Aubin-Clemmer.

stereotypical female jobs of teaching or nursing," she says.

Murray sees teaching as more about understanding individual kids than it about funnelling them into socially dictated roles.

"We celebrate difference. We try to let children shine for whoever they are," she says, noting she and her staff work hard to respect

individuality, however it is expressed through gender.

McMackin tries to use gender neutral language like "friends" instead of "boys and girls" when addressing her class.

"You get kind of a mixed bag of needs in a class," she says and meeting the needs of every single student is one of the most challenging parts of the job.

But for Forlin, seeing what she calls the "aha" moment in a child's eyes, is well worth all the work and effort.

"There will always be children who are going to struggle in different areas," Forlin says.

"It's hard for me to accept that because I want them to all be successful."

She, too, tries to main-

children.

Like Murray, Forlin wants the girls in her class to grow up independent.

"I want them to be able to stand on their own two feet and not need a partner, even my own children," says the mother of three young adults.

Forlin says one of her biggest inspirations was her Grade 3 teacher Anne Sicotte, whom she describes as "very stern."

But Murray remembers Aimee Bruner, a camp counsellor she once had.

Bruner was the type of woman who would not stay quiet just because she was expected to.

"She was very kind, very confident, musical, supportive but very driven by her values."

One of the lessons Murray took from Bruner was that women shouldn't always be accommodating others.

"Pleasing other people should not be your primary goal," she says.

"I think that the pleasing gene can be strong in the way that children are raised in our society," Murray adds, but it is important to be truthful to yourself and stand up for what you believe.

"If you're doing that, well, you're ruffling some feathers along the way," she says.

In McMackin's class, sexism manifests itself mostly in stereotypes.

Sometimes her kids will comment that trucks and Lego are boy toys and pink is a girl's colour.

McMackin says she'll usually reinforce that kids can dress and play as they wish, while Murray just sees sexism as another "teachable moment."

"If somebody does say something or acts in a sexist way, it's addressed right away," she adds.

Educators will then explain the impacts of such beliefs or actions and that "usually is the end of the story," Murray says.

Far from just being disciplinarians, though, Murray says teachers have to wear "many different hats."

"I'm a principal, but I'm also their coach. I also run the cross-country club."

It is so important for kids to see women in those roles, she says.

"Being a role model, a strong female role model, is really important. And the kids see that."

tains a gender-neutral class, saying it's easier to know the individual needs and identities of your students when the classes are small, like Royal Oak's.

It's much more difficult in public schools, when teachers are in charge of 25 to 30 students, she says.

But with 58 students at Royal Oak, there's almost one teacher for every six

International Women's Day 2024

Nothing stops NOTL's women firefighters

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

At Niagara-on-the-Lake's fire station in Glendale, women stand shoulder to shoulder with men, and go toe to toe with fire.

Rebecca Van der Zalm has been on the team of volunteer firefighters since 2019 and Tayler Rodrigue got her black helmet in June 2023.

Together, they form an integral part of NOTL's volunteer fire department.

"No matter your gender, you are capable of doing whatever you put your mind to," says Van der Zalm.

Despite working in a traditionally male-dominated field, neither woman feels out of place in the emergency services sector.

"There really isn't any sexism present in our department. They have built a really good safe space for everyone," Rodrigue says.

There's the odd joke at each other's expense, but it's all in good fun, she adds.

Muscle matters when lives are on the line, though. You never know when you may have to pull someone out of a dangerous situation, whether it be a wrecked car or a burning building.

Both women say men, because of their larger physical builds, tend to fit more naturally into the job.

"Males are naturally stronger," Van der Zalm says.

But Rodrigue thinks it's not so much about gender as it is about body type.

"I'm 5 foot 3 and petite, I probably can't carry as much weight or tools as someone who's taller," she says.

Rather than comparing herself to one of her male colleagues, Rodrigue cites Van der Zalm as an example of a physically strong firefighter.

A few inches taller and with broader shoulders than her peer, Van der Zalm doesn't have the same issues as Rodrigue, but still has to commit to an active lifestyle to stay in the game.

"I go to the gym, six days a week. On top of that,

I play soccer, and I play rugby, so I am very active," she says.

The greater challenge in fighting fires is the need for emotional strength, she says.

Van der Zalm hasn't been on too many traumatizing calls yet, but others at the Glendale station have seen their fair share.

The toughest call, she says, was at the scene of a car crash where she had to keep a patient calm and still as her fellow firefighters cut into his truck to get him out.

The patient survived, but it was "probably my worst call."

Everyone has different strengths, says Rodrigue.

Some are small, like her, and others are taller, like Van der Zalm, but no one is defined by their weaknesses, she says.

Rodrigue says her smaller frame comes in handy when she needs to fit into a tight space, which happens often in emergencies.

Van der Zalm says she came to firefighting after trying her hand at public education, but the shoes



Tayler Rodrigue, left, and Rebecca Van der Zalm are two of three female firefighters working out of the Glendale district fire station.

didn't quite fit, so she traded them for the rubber smoke stompers she wears on emergency calls.

When she's not in the gym or firehouse, she works as a pharmacist's assistant at Simpson's.

Rodrigue works full-time as an insurance broker and volunteers a few nights a week as a cheerleading instructor.

Van der Zalm and Brenda Lowes, the third woman firefighter at Sta-

tion 5, were a big source of inspiration when Rodrigue joined up.

"It was much easier coming into the job knowing my station already had two amazing, strong women to mentor me," she says.

As much as she has inspired Rodrigue, Van der Zalm says she turns to her own mom for inspiration.

"My biggest role model is my mom," she says. "Nothing, stopped her," not even her eight kids.

"If she needed to do it, she would get it done. No questions asked."

Mothers helped pave the way for both women, though, as Rodrigue also feels her mom has also been a source of enduring support. "She basically raised me on her own."

Even at her weakest moments, Rodrigue says her mom always had a little bit of strength to spare for her daughter.

That helps in her role as a firefighter.

"Don't let anyone tell you it's a man's job," Rodrigue says.

"It's not. It's a job for anyone who is willing to risk their lives for a complete stranger."

INCLUSION

Shaw's Kimberley Rampersad a role model and mentor

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Kimberley Rampersad plays a leading role in the Canadian theatre scene, as an accomplished performer, director, choreographer and mentor — and for the past four years, as the associate artistic director of the Shaw Festival.

Like her predecessors in the position — Kate Hennig and Eda Holmes — she also is a role model and, as artistic director Tim Carroll's right hand, has a major influence on the creative aspects of the festival.

Growing up in Winnipeg, the daughter of immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago who encouraged their children to partici-



Kimberley Rampersad.

pate in the arts, she was exposed to a rich array of experiences from ballet and opera to the symphony and Indigenous culture. And a whole lot more.

She's "very fortunate" to have been raised in

such an atmosphere, says Rampersad, who now calls Niagara-on-the-Lake home.

"My parents put my sister and myself into dance class when we were very young, a chance to learn to be graceful and have a beautiful activity" to enjoy, she says.

They didn't expect it would be something the girls necessarily would follow.

But it built a foundation for a lifelong love of the arts for both Kimberley her sister Penelope, now a cardiologist at the Cleveland Clinic.

Their father Jerome spent most of his career in hotel management and "is the most elegant man I know," Rampersad says.

"He modelled respect for me," she says. "Respect for myself and for others."

Her mom, June, may have been her biggest influence.

An "amazing" and "formidable businesswoman," now retired from a career in finance in the non-profit sector, she gave Kimberley valuable advice to help deal with life's ups and downs, as a woman and as a woman of colour.

Among those maternal suggestions — and one she passes along for the next generation coming up — "Transform every obstacle into an opportunity because it becomes exhausting and it's not sustainable to attack every obstacle."

"The system will put obstacles in front of us as

females, because that's what it does," she says.

Instead, focus on being "joyful or energetic when we push through them, go around them, go over them or take a new path."

"To do that with joy and to see that as an opportunity is much more sustainable than understanding the injustice of it," Rampersad says.

"It doesn't take away from the injustice. But what it does is it gives us a lift in our spirits, because another obstacle is coming."

Her mom did that a lot in her career, she says, and it was "remarkable" to watch.

Rampersad says working with up-and-coming members of the company is one of the most rewarding

aspects of her role at the Shaw.

"I love working with the young people" and helping them develop as performers and individuals.

Looking back at her own career, she has a few words of advice for young performers.

"I would remind them that their path is uniquely their own," she says. "Even though they can model things and they can try and emulate, there will be divergent paths, and to embrace those."

And from her mother: "My mom would always say, 'Show up to the meeting first and speak last.' It's one of the greatest pieces of advice my mom has ever given. She's given me so much wisdom."

#InspireInclusion

The 'She-Covery'

Women's employment rebounds post-pandemic, but challenges remain

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

As Julia Ventresca was preparing to graduate from Brock University last spring, job prospects seemed few and far between — especially for an English language and literature major.

"I was definitely very nervous entering my post-grad era," she says.

However, just as she was wrapping up her final classes, she landed a full-time position as a membership services representative and donor manager with the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

She hopes to celebrate her first year on the job in April. "It's been wonderful," she says.

Ventresca is among thousands of women who have found their place in the workforce after the pandemic saw the female labour participation rate sink to a historic low.

Now, with the female employment rate in January 2023 hitting a record high of 82 per cent, women have made a successful recovery back into the workforce in what some are calling the "She-Covery."

"Women's employment has rebounded from the loss that we experienced in 2020 and 2021, so this is really good to see," says Mishka Balsom, president



Left: Mishka Balsom, president of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, says women have largely rebounded from the pandemic's disproportionate economic effects. Right: After nearly one year at her first post-grad job, Julia Ventresca says she's enjoyed working for a company that supports its employees' well-being and offers flexible hours.



of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

According to Statistics Canada's labour force survey for January, the employment rate of core-aged women (25 to 54 years old) in Canada was 81.1 per cent, while the employment rate of core-aged men was 87.2 per cent.

In both March 2020 and January 2021, the monthly decline in employment among core-aged women was more than twice what it was for core-aged men.

"It was absolutely alarming," Balsom says of the job losses among women at the time.

In 2020, her organization highlighted a report from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, titled "The She-Covery Project," which described five ways the

gender-related recovery gap can be remedied.

Balsom cites one strategy, flexible work arrangements, as particularly successful: the work-from-home setups that developed in 2020 have meant more remote or hybrid job opportunities today — a bonus for women with young children.

A study from 2023 by Abacus Data found that 65 per cent of Canadian women wanted to work from home, compared to 52 per cent of Canadian men.

And the spike in working from home and hybrid alternatives after COVID has helped to close the gender gap, Balsom says.

Ventresca commutes to the Shaw Festival's office in Old Town three times a week, a 45-minute drive from her home in Fonthill.

She works from home the other two days.

"One good thing that's come out of COVID is we're able to be a little bit more flexible with our work schedules," she says.

However, accessing child care, Balsom says, still stands in the way of closing the workforce gap between men and women.

While the provincial and federal governments are trying to make child care more affordable, with its \$10-a-day agreement in March 2022, Balsom says the main problem is child care centres need more staff so they can accept more kids.

"They need to raise the wages for those educators to entice more people, to attract more people, to retain them in that field," she says.

Another trend is the downward trajectory of the work participation rate of young women: in January, it was at its lowest level since May 2000, falling 4.2 percentage points from last February among both students and non-students.

Kristen Nilsen is vice-chair of NEXTNiagara, the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce's advisory council for young professionals.

One key issue young women face in the workplace, she says, is having more trouble moving up in the organizations they work for.

"There are simply barriers for women that prevent them from getting the same opportunities," she says.

As organizations face rising costs, priorities such as equity, diversity and inclusion awareness and addressing the gender pay gap may be "pushed to the backburner."

"It's basically about continuing to have those conversations and make sure that women's issues, EDI, all of this remains at the forefront," she says.

Ventresca feels lucky that a lot of women hold high-ranking positions where she works, including on the board of directors and board of governors.

"It's hard to be taken seriously and respected the way men are respected,"

she says. "It's going to take years to be on an equal playing field."

For this year's International Women's Day, Balsom says the Chamber is focusing on women's mental health in the workplace.

The organization is zeroing in on how pay inequity, caregiving responsibilities, harassment and underrepresentation in the workplace compound to affect a female employee's well-being.

"The stress factors on women are high and often they haven't made it to the forefront," she says. "They're often being doubted in a quieter way."

Ventresca says she has her share of mental health struggles and taking care of herself is a priority.

At her job, she appreciates that there's an open mental health and wellness policy, a 35-hour work week and an emphasis on work-life balance.

"It's been nice to work for a company that sees me as a human outside of just being a worker," she says.

Overall, the demands women face are still high, Balsom says: their responsibilities — both personal and family-related — are what's keeping some of them out of the workforce.

"I think a lot of people are pleased to see the flexibility, but we still have a long way to go."

A lifetime of learning starts at Niagara Nursery School

Molly Bowron
The Lake Report

It's a typical morning at the Niagara Nursery School, with dozens of children flowing in and teachers setting up for the day ahead.

Amid the hustle and bustle, a woman with curly blond hair and a wide smile walks the halls greeting the beaming youngsters.

As the school's executive director, Candice Penny says one of the biggest rewards of overseeing its four classrooms and 73 enrolled children is "the smiles on the children and how they get excited to see me and the other teachers."

Part of her job is to make sure everything is organized and updated so the school



Candice Penny.

runs smoothly and the teachers have the proper resources to do their jobs.

It was tough during the COVID pandemic, but like so many institutions they found a way through. The

pandemic's aftermath has brought new challenges.

"The initial struggles were just navigating all the safety measures and what that looked like in a child care setting," she says.

"It was quite a lot to take in at the time" but strong communication from regional health officials and the co-operation of the parents and children helped a lot.

Other than the teachers having to wear masks, the school tried to maintain a sense of normalcy for the children.

In the wake of the pandemic, though, like a lot of employers, she has noticed one major change: "I'm seeing a real decline in having registered early child care educators," which causes

staffing issues and makes it hard to accommodate things like maternity leave and sicknesses.

"It's been a struggle, but we've come through it and have a really strong teaching team," she says.

Penny has been with the nursery school since 2011 when she first joined as a teacher and has been executive director for a decade.

Born and raised in Mississauga, she moved to NOTL 15 years ago with her husband David when he took a job as an executive chef.

That's when she discovered the Niagara Nursery School.

"I just remember walking in and feeling like, 'This is where I want to be. This is home.'"

Their son William, now 10, attends the facility's before-and-after-school care. He started at the nursery when he was 27 months old.

Over the years, Penny has seen the school go through many transformations, including a major 4,700-square-foot expansion that created separate rooms for infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age children.

The school has been operating in the community since 1972 and Penny says she strives to maintain the same level of passion and commitment as the founders brought to it.

"We are custodians," she says. Throughout the school's history "keep-

ing those core values of community and family has always been what I loved most about the school."

"It's amazing to see how many generations the school has impacted and being a part of that journey and the history of the school is just an honour." From babysitting in her teenage years to her first day shadowing a teacher, Penny says she loves the job.

"I just like the continuous learning of it. You don't know everything, you will never know everything and that's the beauty of it," she says.

"Each child teaches you something new and it is a very humbling profession in that regard."

WOMEN LEAD THE WAY IN



Photography by Dave Van de Laar

I NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE



International Women's Day 2024

Success brewing for this pair of NOTL pub owners

Richard Hutton
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Jovie Joki and Robin Ridesic are like two different branches of the same tree.

One runs a successful pub while the other owns a craft brewery in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town district.

Joki is the driving force behind the Irish Harp on King Street while Ridesic can be found on most days tending to business at the Exchange Brewery on Queen. They are both women rising to the top of a field that normally is dominated by men.

Joki, for one, has found a great deal of satisfaction at the Harp. But after 11 years of ownership, she says she has finally learned she needs to take some time for herself.

She was involved in the operation of a pair of establishments with then-partner Trevor Smith — Taste the Healthy Option on Queen Street and the Harp.

But when Smith died in 2013, she took over the King Street pub and closed down her eatery on Queen.

Since then, she has found being a bar owner has its benefits.

"The rewards are from the customers and the staff for what you've done — that appreciation for the work that you do," Joki says.

That being said, there are challenges, she

acknowledges it's lots of hard work.

"The hours that you're away from family, I guess, would be the biggest thing for women getting into being owners."

With the help of her current partner Jeremy Buckrand, she has learned that there is more to life than the business.

"(He) has made sure that I take certain time now for me where I never used to," she says. "I'm spending more evenings at home and not being bogged down with the restaurant 24/7."

Ridesic, meanwhile, has taken a different approach to work-life balance, running her own business and raising a family of four after moving to Niagara-on-the-Lake a decade ago.

"What's nice is that with living in a small town, everything in my world is very close together," she says.

"My house, the business, my kids' school are all within two blocks of each other and taking out kind of the commute out of getting around to everything you're doing actually does help."

When she started the Exchange, she found few barriers holding her back in what is a male-dominated business.

"I had the benefit of having two business degrees and had been a management consultant for 10 years and I think that probably might have overwritten any sex-related biases," Ridesic says.

As a woman, she works to attract more women to the industry and give them a chance to experience the business as she has.

"I think we've done a good job at the Exchange attracting women to come work with us," she says, adding that the diversity of perspectives has helped the business on both the production side and the creative side.

For both women, owning a business has had its rewards.

For Joki, it's the people she meets that come to mind most often. She recalled an elderly couple who were visiting NOTL and stopped in at the Harp.

"They were probably in their late 90s and they told us a story when this was a grocery store way back in the day."

As a seven-year-old, the man, who had been caught throwing eggs at the grocery store window, was told to stay and clean it up. That made him late for school, which resulted in him getting a detention.

On his way home he was going through Simcoe Park when he saw a girl about his age on the swings. They talked, they became friends and began dating when they got older. Finally they got married.

"And if it wasn't for this place and the grocery clerk they wouldn't have this really sweet story."

Ridesic, meanwhile, says her interest in craft beers peaked when she



Top: Irish Harp owner Jovie Joki has struck a balance between work and her personal life. Bottom: Robin Ridesic's love of beer launched her on a path to a career in the craft brewing industry and the opening of the Exchange Brewery on Queen Street.

spent time in the United States.

"I've always been a beer drinker, but like everybody who was drinking beer in the '90s, in the 2000s, I drank bland lagers, because that's what we have on offer here."

But in the U.S., it was a different story, she says.

"I was down there and got introduced to really hoppy IPAs and sour beers and a much broader range of dark beers ... and that's when I decided that I needed to start a brewery in Ontario

that focused on these more niche styles of beer and help introduce Ontarians to craft beer."

Women were traditionally the ones who crafted beer and wine throughout history and now are rediscovering the craft, she says.

"Ale wives and brewers, they were called," she says. "Originally brewing was considered part of basically the cooking responsibility. And so it was for centuries, women were the primary brewers."

"It's kind of getting back to our roots," she says.

INCLUSION



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#InspireInclusion

She made her mark in a male-dominated business

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

Heather Campagnola has had a lot of practice standing her ground.

When she started in the trade show industry four decades ago, she was one of the few women in the business.

So, she's dealt with people underestimating her capabilities.

"It was really tough and it was a fight," she says.

For example, in 1998, she was a senior project manager for a Toronto company and was in charge of setting up an exhibition in Paris during the FIFA World Cup, leading a 50-person team.

"The main labour source, he said, 'You should go shopping.' And I said, 'Oh, should I?' And he said, 'Oh yes, we've got this. You go shopping.' He would not take instruction from me."

At one point, she fired nearly every worker in a shift because they wouldn't listen to her.

However, she found a solution.

"The people that stayed, I paid them double," she says. "The word got around



Heather Campagnola's business is based in Niagara-on-the-Lake but does work internationally. Campagnola and her team designed the Ormco exhibit at a 2023 trade show at Chicago's McCormick Convention Center.



departments — including mechanical and purchasing.

She worked for two more companies, including one where she was a senior project manager leading international exhibits, before launching Total Area in August 2000.

Reflecting on how times have changed, Campagnola says today there's more gender equality in the industry.

"I would say today it's at least 50/50. It's greatly changed."

These days, she's winding down from work and wants to focus more on collaborating with local companies, including wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and mentoring other women in business.

"That's probably how I'm going to give back in my retirement," she says.

While her career hasn't been without its struggles, worrying about what people think of her as a woman in charge has not been one of them.

"I do what I do and I know I'm good at it," she says. "I feel I'm going to be recognized by the right people and those are the clients that I want."

and then all of a sudden, people wanted to work with me."

Today, Campagnola is the president of Total Area International Exhibit Management, which provides trade show exhibits in the United States, Canada and Europe. Her company has

been based in Old Town for 11 years.

She started as a receptionist for an exhibit house in the early 1980s, a summer job after her first year of college.

She says she loved the atmosphere there and decided to join the production

team soon afterward.

Back then, being a young woman in a male-dominated industry meant she had to navigate things differently.

"If I went to a show site, say, at the CNE, or the International Centre in Toronto, I had to be es-

corted, because I was only 17 and it wasn't safe for me to be out on the show floor because there were no females at all," she says.

Campagnola plugged away at her work behind the scenes: she spent 10 years with the company, gaining experience in other

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International Women's Day 2024

'No limits' for women, says Marcia Penner

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

The name Penner literally is a landmark in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Penner Home Hardware Building Centre is a destination, the go-to place for home "stuff" and a long-standing family-run business.

Marcia Penner is one-half of the duo who run the operation, working alongside her husband Kevin.

"He has his roles and I have mine and we work super well together," Marcia says.

When Kevin was beginning to take over ownership of the store, which was in its third generation at the time, Marcia gave up her career in nursing to help out.

"Leadership skills came into play huge. As a nurse at Pleasant Manor for a number of years (I was) an acting leader so I honed my



Marcia Penner admires strong women and cites 100-year-old Mary Snider as one of her influences. Penner and her husband Kevin operate the Home Hardware store in NOTL.

leadership skills and managerial skills," she says.

The compassion and care she learned as a nurse come into play every day when serving the community.

Changing career paths, there "was a learning curve

for sure. We've been married for almost 30 years now so I had learned a little just from him talking," Penner says.

Being able to work together with her family and serve her community made

the learning a very fun trade-off.

While her husband takes care of much of the hands-on tasks of a major lumber yard, Marcia's day consists of lots of administration and customer care.

"The most rewarding part is our customers. They're the reason we do it," she says.

She hopes that her work in the NOTL business community inspires other women to remember that "they can do just about anything."

"There's no limits. Strong women doing strong things. I admire them so much. Women rock," Penner says.

She has worked to inspire the women around her, including her daughter Kelsey Overbeeke, who has gotten involved in the family business along with her brother Kyle.

Overbeeke and her mom own Keke Boutique together. It opened in 2016 and operates inside the lumber store's loft area.

"My daughter is a real strong woman and she continues to impress me," Penner says.

She credits her son and husband, who proudly

encourage strong women to shine, for creating a perfect family and business environment.

But Penner is thankful for the influence of women she knew growing up — in particular Mary Snider.

Snider, who just celebrated her 100th birthday last month, led the Virgil Stampede for decades.

And Penner, who also serves on the Virgil Business Association as secretary, has taken over Snider's former role.

"She has been a huge influence on me because she has always worked with just men," Penner says.

Snider's ability to keep her strength in the face of adversity has been an inspiration.

"She's always been influential to me. Her outlook is 'Don't limit yourself, don't take any crap, do what's right and work hard,'" Penner says.

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The Lake Report



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ENGEL & VÖLKERS
NANCY BAILEY

NOTL songwriter releases **new singles**

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

Jenny Scott has been surrounded by music for her entire life.

“Well, my grandmother was a piano teacher, so growing up it was kind of like you didn’t have a choice,” Scott joked.

At first, she resented learning music and practising scales.

“Later on I was grateful for it,” Scott said, adding that her time learning music and later singing in the church choir was what first interested her in making music.

At age 13, she picked up an old guitar and started writing music — and now at 21, Scott, who is known professionally as JENNY, has released three original songs.

Her most recent releases, two singles titled “Indie Upbeat” and “Leave Me Too,” were written after moving to Niagara-on-the-Lake and are the first pieces of music she produced on her own.

“It was very confusing,” she laughed. “Writing is the fun part. It’s doing all the other things that I’m still getting the hang of.”

She found production more rewarding since everything she had to do everything on her own.

“It takes time from when



Musician Jenny Scott has released new music she wrote after moving to Niagara-on-the-Lake. JULIA SACCO

you start writing, to when you learn all of the skills you need to make what you want, out of the ideas in your head,” she said.

After moving to Niagara to study, Scott fell in love with nature and the slower pace of life.

“I moved here from Hamilton, so this is definitely a lot calmer,” Scott said

As she’s transitioned to the lifestyle in a quiet city, her mentality has changed, which has translated into her music.

“Going from one extreme to the other has had a really good effect on me mentally and in my writing as well,” she said.

“Indie Upbeat” and “Leave Me Too,” her second and third singles released to Spotify on Nov. 7, were inspired by a summer spent around Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“I spent the whole summer walking around and writing. I spent time at the Anchor Community Church and writing there, going to the lake,” Scott said.

“I live on a farm, so I go to a lot of vineyards. I was able to find a lot of inspiration through that,” Scott said.

She singled out Christ Church McNab as a peaceful place to collect her thoughts.

“I would just kind of sit there and it was very peaceful. It’s just a good atmosphere to connect with,” she said.

While in Niagara, Scott said she has been to several open mic nights but has been more focused on producing than doing in-person gigs.

Now, she’s ready to get out and perform again.

“Now that I have more access to certain things I’ve been able to experiment more with my music. One of my songs is more heavily produced and there’s different instruments on it,” Scott said.

“But I am partial to just an acoustic guitar and someone singing,” she continued, saying that some of her favourite artists are folk musicians.

“I listen to a little bit of everything: jazz in the morning, metal at noon, pop in the evening,” she said.

Her favourite of all time, though, is Amy Winehouse.

Scott has yet to decide if she will stay in NOTL after finishing up her time in college, but said if she does leave, “it will be with a lot of good memories.”

To hear more from JENNY on upcoming releases or performances, check her out on Spotify or Instagram.

juliasacco@niagaranow.com



This week’s riddle is “Jeopardy!” style.
Category: TV

This sitcom centres on a Korean-Canadian family that runs a store that rarely closes.

Last issue:

Category: CHEW ON THIS

Clue: The name of this hard-to-chew candy literally says it could fracture your mandible.

Answer: What is a jawbreaker?

Answered first by: Susan Hamilton

Also answered correctly (in order) by:

Margie Enns, Bob Wheatley, Jane Morris, Lynda Collet, Claudia Grimwood, Brianna Rhi, Sheryl Christenn, Susan Dewar, Katie Reimer, Jim Dandy, Barry Woods, Patricia Fraser, Sylvia Wiens, Pam Dowling, Sheila Meloche, Wade Durling, Carol Durling, Nancy Rocca, Catherine Clarke, Marla Percy, Rich Merlino, Rob Hutchison, Daniel Smith, Tuija Johansson, Mike Gander, Margaret Garaughty

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

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Sailing is more than a sport for Rod Gardner

Lucy Hopkins
Special to The Lake Report

Sailing has a long and storied history, but a volunteer at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club is bringing the sport to a new generation.

Rod Gardner spends his time as the director of the Learn to Sail program at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club, a not-for-profit organization.

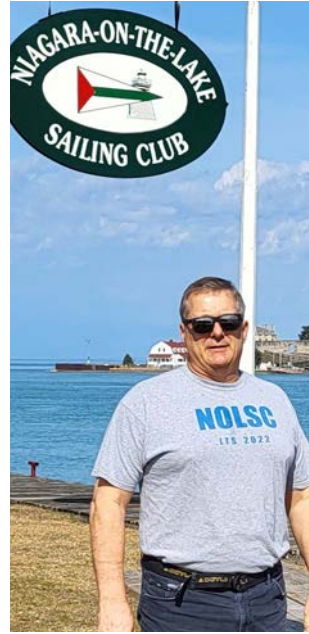
The club runs a three-week-long program in July and August, teaching local campers – as young as nine – how to sail.

“The most rewarding part is watching young kids have fun over the summer and learn to sail and the outcome of just having a good, fun summer,” Gardner said, adding that campers show growth through their time in the program.

“I just see a maturity in terms of learning to handle and operate a sailboat confidently, in some tricky conditions.”

Gardner sees sailing as not just a sport, but a learning experience as it gives youth an educational and behavioural experience.

“Sailing is Mother Nature



Rod Gardner.

and water and wind, so you’re facing the elements and using the physics of sailboats. These are engineering and science kind of skills,” he said.

“Also on the social side, you have to be able to work with your crew on the boat effectively,” he added. “So those communication skills are required, following the leader, following instruction, those are key parts, and then the big parts like learning water safety.”

Gardner hopes that these

learning experiences will help young people in the program grow careers and hobbies they are truly interested in for the future.

“If kids and adults fall in love with the sport and buy a boat, that’s a great outcome – if they decide to join the Coast Guard, or the navy, or get into merchant sailing, or naval architecture or design, those are all where we’ve seen a lot of our kids over the last 50 years end up,” he said.

Gardner is passionate about spreading the love for sailing, as he has been on sailboats since the age of two.

“I just fell in love with the sport the first time I touched the sailboat,” he said.

Now, he’s at a stage where he has the time to channel his passion into youth programs.

“That’s really a passion of mine, to grow the sport, get more younger families involved in sailing, and show them the pathway,” he said.

Sailing itself has a very broad audience, Gardner said, as it is an affordable sport – if you do it properly.

“It’s got a perception of being a very expensive

sport, but I own a boat called a Shark: they were designed and built in Niagara-on-the-Lake and they’re very affordable to buy,” Gardner said.

“You need to put some work into them, they’re all old, but you can buy one of those for a couple thousand dollars, fix it up over a few years and have a working sailboat.”

Sailing is not only inclusive financially but is available to any age, he added.

This year, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club is offering a program for adults as well as youth.

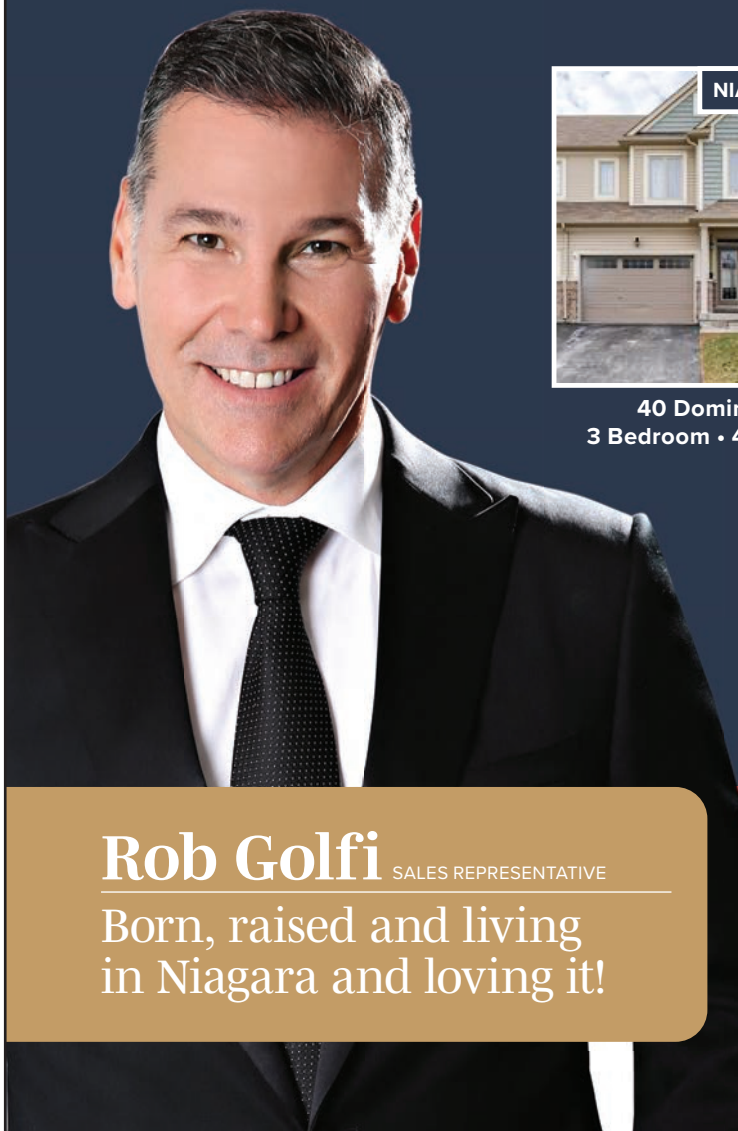
“We’ve never done this before. But we think there’s a lot of opportunity in the community, for folks who have their days off or want to take some time off work to do something different,” Gardner said.

“It’s been a passion of mine my whole life, so the more the merrier.”

If you are interested in sponsoring this nonprofit organization or joining one of its summer programs, check out the Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club website at niagaraonthelakesailingclub.com.

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NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

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

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property at **1294-1296 MCNAB ROAD, FORMER ANGLICAN PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, (CP 5 PART LOT 23)** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

Description of Property

The subject property is located on 1294-1296 McNab Road and is called the Anglican Christ Church or better known as Christ Church McNab. The church building is located at the intersection of McNab Road and Lakeshore Road, towards the west of McNab Road. The church has a considerable setback from McNab Road. The church building is set on a picturesque forest covered rise of land, surrounded by oak, maple and pine trees. The 8 Mile Creek flows towards the west of the church.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property has cultural heritage value or interest for its design and physical values, its historical and associative values and its contextual values.

The subject property is a representative example of the Gothic Revival style. The one-and-a-half storey rectangular plan church has a large steeply pitched front and rear gable roof, lancet and pointed arched window openings, stepped buttresses, red brick and buff brick voussoirs, and interior stained-glass windows which is typical of Gothic Revival structures. The symmetrical façade with symmetrical elements and symmetrical side elevations and detailing are also typical of the Gothic Revival style in places of worship.

Christ Church McNab has direct association with being a community centre for the surrounding farming and immigrant community. Since its inception in 1853, the church has held volunteer services to help those in need in the surrounding communities. The church has a history and connection with the migrant workers in the surrounding communities. Even in the recent years, the church has been associated with volunteer programs such as providing meals, transportation, medical help to those in need of it and translated information for bilingual church goers.

The subject property has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of the community and the struggles of the black slaves that escaped the American civil war through the Niagara River. The subject property also contains a plaque on the west side towards the Eight Mile Creek that commemorates the loss of life. Research indicates that the slaves may have settled in the area for a period of time and are an essential chapter in the subject area's history. The subject property also has the potential to offer knowledge of the other immigrant communities in the area. It is suggested through research the church parish has been comprised of various ethnicities that include the Spanish and the Mexican Roman Catholic farm workers.

The Anglican Christ Church was designed by William Thomas. William Thomas was born in Britain in 1799. He practiced architecture in Birmingham, England, till 1843, when he moved to Toronto with his family. He has designed various housings, religious, educational, commercial and cultural buildings throughout Canada. He has designed over 100 buildings in Canada but was well-known for his church designs. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, some of his well-known works include, the Court House on Queen Street, the Sir Isaac Brock Monument in Queenston, and the Grace United Church. The Anglican Christ Church also shares some architectural similarities to the Grace United Church.

The subject property has contextual value because it is important in maintaining the character of the area. Anglican Christ Church is part of the historic fabric of the Eight Mile Creek rural area. It lies in close proximity to the various farmsteads along Lakeshore Road and McNab Road. The church is also physically linked to its surroundings. The building is constructed of red brick that was made on site from the flats below the church. Historically, the church is linked to its surroundings as it was also called Christ Church McNab, after the original settlers in the area that were John and Colin McNab. Even the road that connects the church to the Lakeshore Road is named after these settlers.

Description of Key Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that embody the heritage value of the church at 1294-1296 McNab Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake include its:

- One and a half storey Gothic Revival church
- Steeply pitched gable roofs
- Projecting chancel on the west side
- Tower with steeple on the façade
- Symmetrical side elevations
- Red brick construction in common bond
- Stepped buttresses
- Radiating voussoirs with wooden sills
- Entrance doorway with the wooden double doors, trim and mouldings details • Pointed arch window openings
- Tower window with leaded glass in diamond shape
- Band of buff brick with diamond motifs
- Buff brick string course with beveled top and bottom faces
- Buff brick corbel table
- The plaques on the subject property
- Location of Former Christ Church McNab within rural area of Niagara-on-the-Lake facing the Eight Mile Creek

Objections

Any objection to this designation must be filled no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the Notice of Intent to Designate. Objections should be directed to Grant Bivol, Town Clerk, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1T0. The last date to file a notice of objection is **April 5th 2024**.

Queries

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

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The snowbells are in bloom, tulips are nudging through soil and this week's record-setting temperatures across Ontario prompted golfers to hit the links in droves. Queenston and St. Davids golf courses were packed, especially on Monday and Tuesday. This foursome at St. David's was one of dozens who got out to enjoy a sunny round. There's no word yet on when the NOTL Golf Club will be open for the season. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Advertising inquiries?

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NOTICE OF PASSING EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY USE BY-LAW 4316EG(2)-24 Temporary Extension of Restaurant and Bar Patios

The Council for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake approved an extension to the existing Temporary Use By-law and passed Temporary Use By-law 4316EG(2)-24 on February 27, 2024 under Section 34 and Section 39 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended.

By-law 4316EG(2)-24 permits the extension of restaurant and bar patios onto public and private lands, subject to the Town's Temporary Patio Program requirements, for a period of up to eight (8) months without application of any provisions of Zoning By-law 4316-09, as amended (urban areas). The Temporary Use By-law expires on February 28, 2025. A copy of the By-law is available on the Town website, www.notl.com/business-development/public-planning-notice or at Town Hall.

The Temporary Use By-law applies to all lands within the urban area boundaries (Old Town, Virgil, St. Davids, Queenston and Glendale) of the Town.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, March 7, 2024
 Grant Bivol – Town Clerk (clerks@notl.com or 905-468-3266)
 Town Hall, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road,
 P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON, L0S 1T0

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TEAM OF THE WEEK

U15 Local League Wolves



The NOTL Minor Hockey Association's U15 Local League team is The Lake Report's featured Team of the Week. Pictured are, front row: Goaltenders Lucas Remple and Jack Robinson. Middle row: Josh Kroeker, Noah Moes, Nathan Velocci, Jayden Polgrabia, Lucas Friesen and Ariel Carr. Back row: Coach Mark Polgrabia, Ryder Heideman, Toby Clarke, Cam Teissen, Max Logue, Dylan Kroeker, Blake Lepp and coach Ace Densley-Burrows. Absent are: Sam Hamilton, Peter Froese, Talon Biggs and coaches Helen Clarkson, Shawn Hamilton and Jeremy Froese. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



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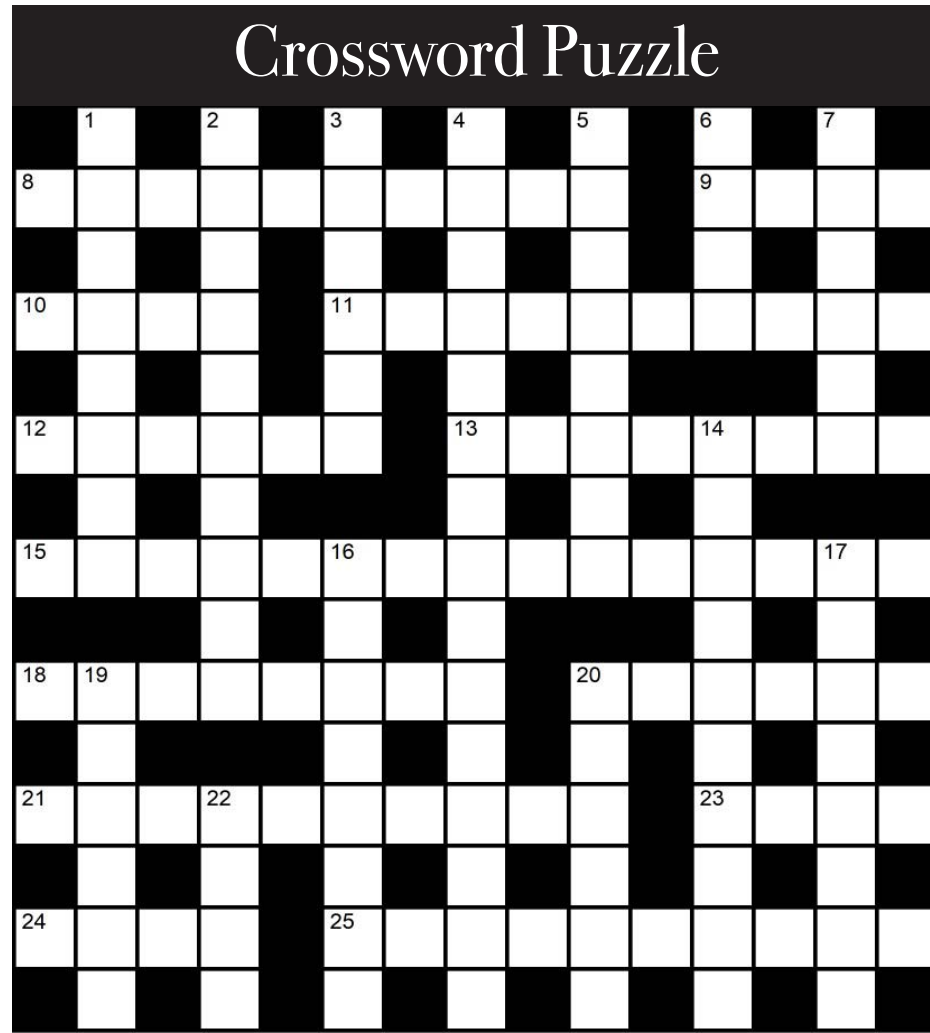


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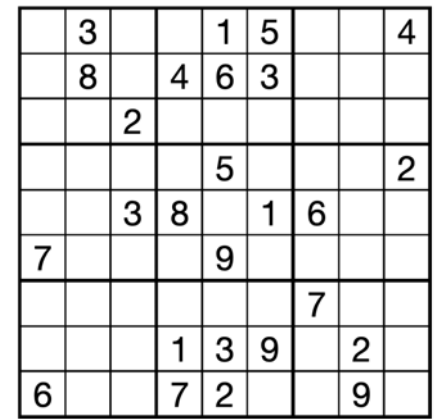
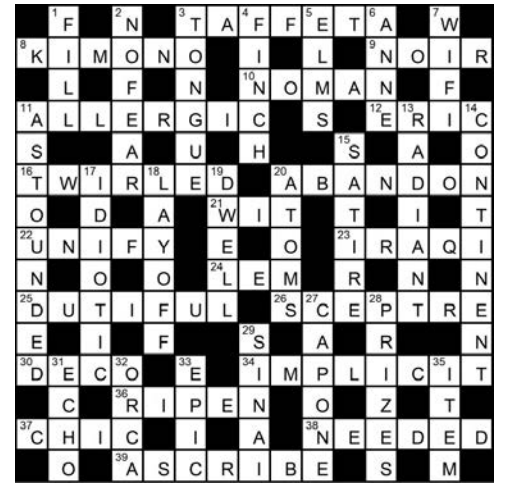
- 8. Middle period of many stays at university (6,4)
- 9. Boater's floater (4)
- 10. Pronto (1,1,1,1)
- 11. Wreck site (5,5)
- 12. Parched feeling (6)
- 13. The Bard's wife (8)
- 15. Increasingly near (6,3,6)
- 18. Former Berkshire county town, now in Oxfordshire (8)
- 20. Ice cream feast (6)
- 21. Code writer (10)
- 23. Cut, maybe (4)
- 24. A half-way house, perhaps? (4)
- 25. "Actually, I like that more" (4,6)

Down

- 1. Discoverer of Uranus (8)
- 2. Assessment of one thing against another (10)
- 3. Expert (6)
- 4. Calling requirement (9,6)
- 5. Wildly excited centre if messed about (8)
- 6. First Biblical murder victim (4)
- 7. Colombian capital (6)
- 14. Decorations (10)
- 16. Sends out (8)
- 17. Grilled (8)
- 19. Lighters (6)
- 20. Surgeon's outfit (6)
- 22. Secure (4)



Last issue's answers



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AI programs getting progressively better and reliable



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Columnist

Some form of artificial intelligence had been imagined by fiction writers in the 1800s and the first half of 1900s.

But it was Alan Turing, a mathematician and computer scientist, who in the 1950s developed the theoretical basis for what became the field of artificial intelligence, an early hardware version of which was a machine, aptly called the Turing machine.

In the last two decades AI made real progress in science by linking powerful computers with algorithmic programs loosely based on the architecture of the brain and capable of teasing out meaningful patterns from masses of data. In later versions, it even writes its own code.

But when the first ChatGPT was released in November 2022 by Sam Altman's Open AI, there was a storm of interest as the public for the first time could harness the power of AI coupled with large language programs, to do what they wanted to do – whether planning trips, writing proposals or checking out almost anything they were interested in. Sort of Google on steroids.

Now Google with Gemini (formerly Bard) and other high-tech firms have released competing versions of ChatGPT.

Professionals were captivated, too. Scientists and graduate students were among the first to use versions of ChatGPT to help them write papers, grant proposals, do literature searches and reviews, and more.

On the science journal front, many top-notch journals made it clear they would not accept any AI-created articles due to concerns over authorship.

Since then, the field has swung wildly between hype and failures, to stunts such



as high-profile trouncing of humans at games such as chess, Go and Jeopardy, and more impressively I'd say, figuring out the molecular structures of a wide range of molecules with pharmaceutical promise as drugs.

In the last decade there have been many triumphs such as employing AI to read X-rays, CT and MRI scans.

What really launched AI, in the eyes of scientists and the public was the creation of a product, in which powerful AI programs trained

on large publicly available data sets are coupled to language tools trained on huge language data sets.

This made user-friendly communication possible and harnessed AI to create whatever the user wants – from literature searches to reviews, summaries, pictures, and even music and PowerPoint presentations.

ChatGPT was an instant success in the marketplace but remains far from perfect. But new updates are working on its flaws.

Early on, problems

include the unintended fabrication of stuff (called hallucinations), which could be hard to spot, or data sets might be skewed by excluding important information in the data sets.

This is especially important in health care where race, sex and age can have a huge effect on symptoms, findings, prevalence and management of some medical problems, such as diabetes and hypertension.

There's also the thorny question of where the data comes from, an issue brought to the fore by writers and publishers. The New York Times has announced it will sue companies that use content from their paper without consent.

From a health care perspective, data used by AI programs must come from reputable sources, which if it comes from hospitals or should be screened to exclude errors and ensure privacy.

There isn't space in a few articles to cover the potential of AI has for improving medical care for people in Ontario who often wait as much as a year or more to

see specialists, or if you happen to live in a remote area, with even less coverage.

For these bottlenecks, AI could offer first-look screening, follow-ups and even referrals for patients.

No one knows it all these days. Medicine has become too complex, so AI makes sense for analyzing data, making notes and even assessing patients in collaboration with overworked human health care staff.

Physicians make mistakes in diagnosis and management – sometimes serious ones – that perhaps future versions of AI with access to high-quality data bases from the best sources, could provide as trusted assistants to health care professionals.

Disclosure: This article was not written by any version of AI, but included important input from the NOTL Public Library's Debbie Krause.

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



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EXPLORING HISTORY
WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Margherita Howe, 1942

Before Margherita Howe became known as an environmental champion and the co-founder of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Conservancy, she enlisted on Jan. 2, 1942, to help serve her country during the Second World War. She was one of the more than 50,000 women who enlisted and could be found working as switchboard and radar operators, mechanics, clerks, nurses, truck and ambulance drivers, and more. Howe was sent for training at the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC) motor vehicle course in Toronto where she became an ambulance driver. She was assigned to transport prisoners of war from the Chorley Park Military Hospital, which was part of “Camp M,” to the Christie Street Hospital and back. She wrote that “the German prisoners seemed very morose or possibly they were apprehensive with a female driving!” She would also spend two years in eastern Canada with service corps. In 1945, she stated that she “retired” from service. Perhaps it was the war years that gave Howe such an indomitable spirit because in the decades that followed it was her determination, passion and fierceness that resulted in landmark rulings that have protected drinking water for Niagara and the entire Great Lakes ecosystem. During Women’s History Month, we raise a dry gin martini (a beloved drink of hers) to Margherita Howe!

Library’s **artificial intelligence** series shows how little I know



Ross’s Ramblings

Ross Robinson
Columnist

May I encourage more locals to come out to seminars and workshops organized around our town?

So much to learn, so much work done by the presenters — and so few attendees.

I learned a long time ago that the more a person learns, the more they know they don’t know.

When we graduated high school, we knew a whole lot, almost everything there was to know.

If someone earns a PhD, they realize how many books are in a library and how few they have read.

They realize how little they know. Is that clear?

The multi-part Wednesday afternoon service presented at our magnificent Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library, called “Exploring the Basics of AI (for Beginners),” was a case in point.

Presented by Lake Report columnist Dr. William Brown and the library’s Debbie Krause, the seminars talked about the power, limitations and practical uses of artificial intelligence.

Way over my head. I have never even seen a “Star Trek” episode and I can’t spell cryptocurrency.

Two months ago, I understood nothing about artificial intelligence.

Now, I understand a little bit. Is it really just a shortcut to Google searching?

Artificial intelligence is not coming — it is here. It is in its infancy, but definitely here and part of our lives. Today!

Brown has a knack for summarizing topics in easy-to-understand language.

For example, he posits that the weak link in AI is us. Our legislators do not understand or have the will to understand and harness AI.



Dr. William Brown’s info sessions on artificial intelligence have worried columnist Ross Robinson and forced him to question if his own intelligence might be artificial. ROSS ROBINSON

He looks like an academic and he talks like an academic — therefore, he must be an academic.

He meticulously researches his subjects and then “dumbs it down” for us mere mortals.

One overhead mentioned “ventral and dorsal organs” — way too deep for me.

Then, Brown showed something even I could

understand: his overhead of “the hockey stick graph,” which attempts to illustrate climate change over thousands of years.

Michael Mann, a former Pennsylvania State University climate scientist, and his team flirted with a Nobel Prize nomination and attracted much attention with the hockey stick graph.

On a personal note, I had

the good fortune to meet Michael Mann twice in historic Boalsburg, Pa.

Boalsburg, the purported home of Memorial Day, lies just outside of State College, Pa., in the bucolic Nittany Valley.

Don’t worry, I chatted superficially with him about Memorial Day, deftly avoiding any talk of climate change.

AI depends on what we feed it. Weak data, therefore, results in weak AI responses.

Sort of like the computing acronym “GIGO”: garbage in, garbage out.

Another interesting fact from the seminar: the United States government spends more on its military than Russia, China, India and a bunch of other nations combined.

The Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier cost billions to build and there are some 5,000 sailors on board.

How much does this cost per year?

To fly an F-22 or F-35 fighter jet costs about \$35,000 per hour. And that’s U.S. dollars, NOTLers.

The world’s militaries are huge users of AI.

About 10 years ago, I read a book predicting the next 100 years of history.

It explained fairly clearly that the U.S. loves having the world’s largest military, by far, so America can control the oceans.

Every ship on the seas is there with the tacit permission of America — oil tankers, Canadian “destroyers” and more.

A few centuries ago, it was, “Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves. Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.”

And then, the Spanish Armada showed up.

That same book explained so much to me. One chapter called the “U.S. Founding Fathers” was brilliant and prescient.

They realized that a hugely powerful and expensive military would create the world’s greatest make-work project.

Every military base has surrounding secondary support businesses and employment.

Think about it — and attend a seminar.



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FEATURED



Water features and sculptures can be the focal points of your garden, says Joanne Young.

Every garden needs a focal point



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young
Columnist

If you know me at all, you know that I am plant-obsessed.

I love all the many details of a plant: its flowers, the texture of the leaves and its branching habit.

I would be one of the first to agree with this statement: "There is a plant for every spot and a spot for every plant."

As a designer, though, there are times when, no matter what plant you place in a certain spot, it just doesn't pop like you want it to.

Or, you may have a place in your garden where it is impossible to plant something because of tree roots or other obstacles.

Sometimes, when plants are partnered with the right decorative item, it lifts a garden to the next level. I do draw the line at pink flamingos, though.

Decorative features can

create the vital focal points that every garden needs. Focal points are used in garden design to draw and direct the eye.

Think of a garden, large or small, that is just a swath of plants. Your eye sweeps along, not knowing where to land.

A sense of flow may be nice, but without a focus, you can't really take a garden in – it is quickly passed over.

With the proper placement of a decorative item, your interest concentrates there.

Your eyes will naturally stop at that point, then start to branch out and notice other plants and features in the garden.

A focal point will cause your eye to stop and rest for a bit at that feature. The garden is slowly discovered rather than swept through.

It is easy to remember the definition of "focal point" if you associate it with the word "focus."

It is an item distinguished from the other items in a group as being the centre of attention.

Likewise, when you "focus" your thoughts on something, you are directing your attention to that thing – to the exclusion of others.

Properly placed focal points give your garden a sense of purpose and order.

Without focal points, your garden becomes just a careless collection of plants and objects.

A focal point should not be an afterthought: it should be that item that the rest of the garden revolves around.

Think about the style of garden that you want and make sure that your focal point adds to it.

If you have a more formal garden, that decorative piece may be a sundial, fountain or statue.

For a more cottage-style garden, an old wood bench or twig arbour may be better suited.

A modern garden may contain a bold sculpture with very simple lines.

Even the material that the item is made from can help convey the desired effect, be it wood, concrete, metal or stone.

Be creative when choosing what to use for your decoration. It should enhance the garden theme and reflect a bit of your personality.

Where do you place your decorative items? Here are some things to consider:

- Make sure you look at your garden from all different points of view both inside and outside before deciding where to locate your focal points.

- Remember that we spend almost half of the year

(November – April) viewing our gardens from inside the home. Wouldn't it be nice to be standing at your kitchen sink doing dishes and have a wonderful point of interest in your view?

- Are there any ugly eyesores that you need to draw people's attention away from? Placing a decorative item away from the eyesore leads people's eyes away from the ugly view as well.

- Where is your eye naturally drawn when you enter your garden area?

- For a front garden, the best place to locate your focal point is near the doorway. The goal for any front yard design is to direct people's attention to your front door.

- The closer you will be when viewing your garden, the smaller your focal point can be.

As we wait for spring to arrive (or maybe it already has?), take time to assess your yard and see what areas of your garden need something special to capture your attention.

What would best suit your style and create the desired mood?

Then, the fun of searching for that perfect piece begins.

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

Obituary

Robert Chapla

CHAPLA, Robert Michael -
1958-2024

Robert passed away at home with his beloved Kaiya at his side. He lived his life to the fullest, and loved the life he had created in Niagara on the Lake. Rob was the cherished son of Beulah and Frank Chapla. He will be dearly missed by those who loved him and those who knew him well.

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